News coverage on Black Pete in the Netherlands: innocent tradition or racist stereotype?

A quantitative content analysis of Dutch newspaper articles on the Black Pete discussion
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Chapter 1: Introduction

“Black Pete is racism” (Algemeen Dagblad, 12-11-2011). Because of this sentence on their T-shirts, four people were arrested during the 2011 annual welcome ceremony of Saint Nicholas in the Netherlands. They were protesting against Black Pete: Saint Nicholas’ companion and servant. This Black Pete character is part of the Dutch tradition of celebrating Saint Nicholas’ birthday and is generally portrayed by actors who paint their faces black or brown and wear red lipstick, curly wigs and big earrings. Opponents of Black Pete, such as the protesters during the welcome ceremony in 2011, state that this character originates from the Dutch colonial past and that it refers to slavery. They argue that Black Pete is a racist phenomenon and, therefore, leads to discrimination of black and coloured (ethnic) minorities within the Dutch society. It is not something new that there are people who oppose Black Pete, but before, their opinions were most of the time voices in the wilderness (de Volkskrant, 23-10-2013). This all changed in 2011. From then onwards, every year a fierce debate between opponents and proponents comes up around the celebration of Saint Nicholas’ birthday. More specifically, this debate focuses mainly on the role and appearance of Black Pete within this Dutch tradition (NRC Handelsblad, 4-7-2014). Therefore, Black Pete has become a controversial figure in the Netherlands over the past years. The Black Pete discussion has been covered extensively by all Dutch media organizations. This thesis aims to investigate how this coverage on the Black Pete discussion has appeared, and more specifically, how it has been framed, in Dutch newspapers.

Relevance

This thesis is first of all highly relevant from a societal point of view. This research contributes to our understanding of how Black Pete and the Black Pete discussion have been covered in the Dutch media, which leads to useful insights on how racial issues are discussed in the Netherlands.

In August 2015, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCRD) published its periodic report on the status quo of racial discrimination in the Netherlands. The committee established that the presence of racism and discrimination is being depreciated in the Netherlands, and states that the appearance of Black Pete is one of the racist phenomena that lead to more discrimination of black and coloured minorities in the Dutch society (UNCRD, 2015, p. 4). Evidence for this claim can also be found in the huge increase of complaints of discriminatory practices that were filed at the Dutch College for
Human Rights in 2014. Compared to 2013 the amount of complaints has increased with 64 per cent (de Volkskrant, 29-08-2015). On the matter of Black Pete, the UN committee mentions that “even a deeply-rooted cultural tradition does not justify discriminatory practices and stereotypes, and the character of Black Pete leads to stigmatization of members of ethnic groups” (UNCRD, 2015, p. 4). The committee recommended the Dutch government to “actively promote the elimination of those features of the character of Black Pete which reflect negative stereotypes and are experienced by many people of African descent as a vestige of slavery” (UNCRD, 2015, p. 4). Furthermore, the report also focuses on other forms of discrimination that take place in the Netherlands, such as ethnic profiling by the Dutch police and discrimination on the labour market. By doing all this, the UN report clearly states that racism and discrimination is a problem in the Netherlands, and that racial issues such as the Black Pete discussion have revealed this. This discussion has therefore been chosen to be the main subject of this research project. The debate surrounding Black Pete has created very contrasting points of views, and opinions among different (ethnic) groups in the Netherlands. Ultimately, this has led to a strong division within the Dutch society between opponents and proponents of Black Pete. It appears that this strong division within the society has taken centre stage in this discussion about Black Pete, and hence this topic deserves much more attention.

This is not only the case with the topic itself, but especially with the media coverage on this issue. According to Nicholas Winter, “an understanding of race can powerfully shape our understanding of issues. Citizens do not create these understandings on their own; they need some help. (…) Journalists convey a particular perspective on these issues, and these perspectives come, of course, with suggestions for the best way to understand an issue” (Winter, 2008, p. 2). Media, therefore, play an important role in how the public comes to perceive racial issues in a society. A research project that investigates the news coverage on the Black Pete discussion is therefore highly relevant for the Netherlands.

The overarching question that this thesis wants to answer is how the Black Pete discussion has been framed in Dutch newspapers between 2011 and 2014. While doing this, special attention will be paid to the role sourcing practices of journalists played in this framing process. Therefore, the theoretical framework of this thesis consists of a literature review on, and a thorough explanation of, framing theory and sourcing practices. Framing and sourcing are two concepts that are important to study here because, according to Entman (1993, p. 52), every media text contains frames, and one way in which these frames are applied to the media
text, is by the sources that the journalist selects. Framing and sourcing are inherently connected, or, as Dimitrova and Strömback put it: “sources and information (…) in the news story (…) undoubtedly influence news framing” (Dimitrova and Strömback, 2011, p. 608). Furthermore, both concepts are discussed here, because according to Coleman, Thorson and Wilkins, framing analysis goes hand-in-hand with a study on the employed sourcing practices by journalists when covering an issue or event. “Journalists rely on sources for interpretation, and many argue that journalists frame their coverage via the sources they use” (Coleman, Thorson and Wilkins, 2011, p. 944). Therefore, frames and sources have an impact on how an issue or event is covered. How the coverage is done, so which frames are used and which sources are given a voice, is a matter of studying framing and sourcing practices in relation to one another, which makes both concepts worthwhile studying here.

When journalists cover something, they deliver information to the public. By doing this, they have a major influence on the views people have on issues, and how the public perceives these issues. This makes news coverage vital for public opinion formation. This is no different with regard to the coverage on the Black Pete discussion in the Netherlands. Henceforth this research project aims to show what news producers, i.e. journalists, do and write in order to further assess their performance and their contribution to public views on the Black Pete discussion.

Methodologically, the research has been conducted by a quantitative content analysis on newspaper articles of the Dutch newspapers *de Telegraaf, Algemeen Dagblad, de Volkskrant*, and *NRC Handelsblad* from January 1st 2011 to December 31st 2014. Entman (1993, p. 57) states that the most important task when discovering the meaning of a text is to identify the frames that are present in this text. A quantitative content analysis is the appropriate and relevant method to do this because it allows for an overall and well-balanced overview on how the Black Pete discussion has been framed, because, when conducting a content analysis that is informed by framing theory, all utterances in a text are treated as equally influential and salient (Entman, 1993, p. 57). This also goes for the sourcing practices of journalists when covering the Black Pete discussion because sources are an important factor in determining the angle of a story, because every source expresses a specific idea or opinion. By using a quantitative content analysis, all these different sources are treated as equally important and influential. Furthermore, a quantitative content analysis allows for a ‘systematic and replicable manner’ (Bryman, 2003, p. 274) that reveals the dominant sources
that were used in the coverage on the Black Pete discussion, and allows to see how the views and opinions of opponents and proponents of Black Pete were presented in the media. In short, a quantitative content analysis allows for reliable and replicable research results on the framing and sources practices in newspaper articles on the Black Pete discussion. This can provide for useful insight on how racial issues, such as Black Pete, are dealt with in the Netherlands.

**Thesis Outline**

Before moving on to the theoretical framework, this thesis contains a short introductory background chapter that provides information on the Saint Nicholas tradition in the Netherlands. After that, a literature review and thorough explanation on framing theory and sourcing practices follows in the theoretical framework. This framework provides for the fundament on which the actual analysis and discussion in this thesis are carried out. It makes it possible to analyse how the Black Pete discussion has been framed in the Netherlands and the kind of sourcing practices that were employed by journalists when covering this discussion. From these theoretical concepts, the different sub-questions and hypotheses are developed and the methodological framework has been created to answer and test these. In this part the codebook is introduced, as are the justifications of the research design, sample size and other methodological aspects. Then the research results and main findings are portrayed, which form the basis of the analysis part where the sub-questions are answered and the corresponding hypotheses are tested. More generally, this analysis provides with insights on how racial issues, such as the Black Pete discussion, are covered in the Netherlands and how the contributions of journalists on this, affect public views on racial issues. Lastly, a conclusion can be found were the main research findings are summarized and where an answer to the main research question is given.
Chapter 2: Background on Saint Nicholas, Black Pete and the Black Pete discussion

Since the main topic of this thesis is the Black Pete discussion that surrounds the character of Black Pete, and the Dutch tradition of celebrating Saint Nicholas’ birthday; the first part of this chapter provides the reader with some necessary historical background information on this tradition and the figure of Black Pete. Because the Black Pete discussion is all about the role and appearance of Black Pete, and the question whether this role and appearance should change, this part also focuses on how the character of Black Pete already has changed over the years. This is relevant information because it has an impact on how people in the Netherlands enter the current discussion and how media cover this. Afterwards, a part on the different points of view of opponents and proponents follows, so it is clear to the reader which arguments the opposing en proposing sides use in the debate.

Saint Nicholas and Black Pete: a short history
The tradition of celebrating Saint Nicholas’ birthday is an annual event and holiday that takes place from mid-November to December 5th, which is Saint Nicholas’ actual birthday. Saint Nicholas is accompanied by Black Petes who assist him during his stay in the Netherlands. Sinterklaasavond (Saint Nicholas’ Eve) on December 5th is the highlight of this tradition, when Saint Nicholas and his Black Petes give presents to the children in the Netherlands that “have been good” (De Kort van Dal, 2014, p. 11).

Saint Nicholas is a historical figure and was a bishop (270-343) in present Turkey. He was known for secretly giving presents to children and became the patron saint of children after the Catholic Church declared him a Saint (Blakely, 1993, p. 40). This bishop figure became the model for the Saint Nicholas we know nowadays. Black Pete is a relatively modern character and appeared for the first time in 1850 in a children’s book. Initially white people that played Black Pete painted their faces with black greasepaint. This changed over the years and at the moment the black greasepaint has been replaced with (dark) brown paint. The character has also changed in the sense that Black Pete from (more or less) 1850 to 1970 was a very strict and rigid man that punished children that had not been good over the year. The children were told they were taken away from their parents and had to go with him and Saint Nicholas to Madrid (Spain), where Saint Nicholas and the Black Petes live throughout the year when they are not in the Netherlands. From the ‘70s onwards, Black Pete more and more became a joyful, frolicsome and active man that was much more approachable for the children than the old Saint Nicholas (de Kort van Dal, 2014, p. 25 – 27).
The Black Pete discussion: Opponents vs. Proponents

The initial starting point of the Black Pete discussion was the statement made by people who oppose Black Pete that his origins and appearance are a remembrance of slavery and are a historical artefact of the glorification of Dutch colonialism. They argue that this traditional character of Black Pete is a racist phenomenon that includes risks of discrimination of ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands. This was, and still remains, the main argument of this group, such as for example the protesters who were arrested during the 2011 welcoming ceremony. This group of opponents particularly takes offense at what they see as racist features of Black Pete, such as the black or brown painting, the red lipstick and the curly wigs.

It is true that Black Pete at least has a certain connection to slavery. The children’s book that displayed Black Pete for the first time portrayed him as a black servant of a white Saint Nicholas (van der Pijl and Goulordava, 2014, p. 274). Around that time, in 1850, slaves, and Africans in general, were portrayed as “savage and lesser beings than their white colonizer” (Sheller, 2003, p. 109). According to van der Pijl and Goulordava, “it is not surprising that such representations (...) place the black body in a subordinate position within a larger system of white supremacy. It is in this historical context (ed.: the time period of slavery and colonialism that created a larger system of white supremacy) that the character of Black Pete was created” (van der Pijl and Goulordava, 2014, p. 275 – 276). According to van Helsloot, the tradition of celebrating Saint Nicholas’ birthday embodies the white supremacy – black inferiority paradigm: “Black Petes are present for the service of a white Saint Nicholas and the pleasure of a mostly white audience” (van Helsloot, 2005, p. 268). An example of this black inferiority that van Helsloot (2005, p. 268) mentions is that some Black Petes used to speak with a very childish accent that was meant to replicate someone who is not able to speak proper Dutch. However, nowadays this is something that does not happen anymore.

The debate surrounding Black Pete intensified heavily in 2014. When the mayor of Amsterdam granted permission for a local welcome ceremony for Saint Nicholas that included Black Petes, this was the last straw for the opponents of Black Pete. They decided it was time to go to the Dutch Court and tried to prohibit the welcome ceremony because of the, according to them, racist nature of Black Pete. Initially the judge ruled in their favour, but shortly after, the highest court in the Netherlands overturned this ruling (de Volkskrant, 12-11-2014).
Additionally, even more fuel was added to the fire when the United Nations (UN) became involved in the matter. A UN consultant, Verene Shepherd,¹ became involved in the discussion after she stated that the character of Black Pete was a racist phenomenon and asked for the abolition of this Dutch tradition (de Telegraaf, 24-10-2013). Because of this, the tenseness between the opponents and proponents increased even more. This ultimately led to protests of both groups turning violent during the 2014 welcome ceremony where 90 people had to be arrested (de Telegraaf, 15-11-2014). During this ceremony and throughout the entire stay of Saint Nicholas in 2014, Black Petes with other colours appeared, such as red, white, and yellow, besides the traditional black and brown. The proponents of Black Pete were furious, which again provoked the opponent camp, resulting in a situation “where both sides seemingly kept one another in a vicious circle of provocative actions” (de Volkskrant, 26-11-2014, original in Dutch, translated to English). This results in a very tense discussion that is still taking place.

For both sides, the discussion relates to more than the issue of the appearance of Black Pete alone.

For proponents of Black Pete, the Black Pete discussion has served as a platform and catalyst to express their concerns about other issues within the Dutch society, such as for example to immigration and asylum policy and an increased risk of terroristic threats from Muslim fundamentalists (Bas, 2014, p. 69). These issues, among others, are examples of things a lot of autochthonous Dutch people feel threatened by because they are afraid of ‘foreign things they do not know’ and losing their own identity, which has resulted in increased tensions among different ethnic groups in the Netherlands. This is also the case with the Black Pete discussion. For proponents of Black Pete, critique on Black Pete confirms their idea that there are cultural contradictions among different ethnic groups in the society that cannot be overcome: “You see! People from the ‘outside’ have ideas that clash with ‘our’ culture, which clearly shows ‘they’ do not belong in the Netherlands” (de Volkskrant, 29-08-2015, original in Dutch, translated to English). According to van der Pijl and Goulordava (2014, p. 267), “advocates of Black Pete defend the tradition more and more by making the direct link between the popular tradition, a national sense of pride and Dutch identity, and the fear of losing them.”

¹ Verene Shepherd is a social historian and university professor from Jamaica. She is the chairman of the UN “Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent”.

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Just as for the proponents, also for the opponents of the character of Black Pet the discussion served to express other concerns they have. They do not only oppose Black Pete because of his appearance that has racist features, such as the brown or black face painting, the red lipstick and the curly wigs, and his reference to slavery and the glorification of Dutch colonialism. They also oppose him because the entire discussion has shown that discrimination of ethnic minorities is still present in everyday life in the Netherlands. The opposing group feels that the autochthonous population does not take the concerns they have with the racist aspects Black Pete, and the discriminatory practices that can arise out of them, serious. A comment that is often made by the proponents of Black Pete is: “Black Pete’s facial color is due to the residual chimney soot acquired during the delivering of gifts” (van Es, van Geenen & Boeschoten, 2014, p. 1). Or: “Black Pete is merely a fun character and is part of an innocent tradition, aimed at children whose innocent pleasure would be free from racism” (Essed & Hoving, 2014b, p. 21-22). In other words, Black Pete’s facial color does not have anything to do with racism and the tradition should be kept the exact way it is. For the ones opposing Black Pete, comments like these increase the feeling of not being taken seriously. The fact that many politicians do not want to take a stance in the discussion because they regard the issue as ‘too sensitive,’ does not help. It only increases the feelings of the opponent camp of not being represented and listened to.

This historical background is necessary to understand that Black Pete has become a very controversial character over the last years. It shows that the discussion surrounding Black Pete has created tensions between proponents and opponents of this character, and gives insights on how the debate surrounding Black Pete has been up until now. To see how such racial issues as Black Pete are discussed in the Dutch media, and how the public comes to their understanding of racial issues such as the Black Pete discussion, it is important to take a closer look at the concept of framing and the role sourcing practices play in the creation of frames; in the theoretical framework.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework
This theoretical framework rests for an important part on framing. Framing refers to the way in which the media portray and issue or event and how these are presented to an audience. The main aim of this study is to analyze how the Black Pete discussion has been portrayed in Dutch media and how this discussion has been presented to the audience, which makes looking at the concept of framing vital for this study. The second concept that is dealt with in this theoretical framework is the concept of sourcing practices. One way in which journalists built frames is by the selection of sources, which makes both concepts, of framing and sourcing practices, interrelated (Coleman, Thorson and Wilkins, 2011, p. 944). Since framing and sourcing are inherently connected and sourcing practices influence framing, frames and sources impact the way in which an issue or event is covered (Coleman, Thorson and Wilkins, 2011, p. 944). This is also the case for the coverage on the Black Pete discussion. To discover how this coverage is done, is therefore a matter of studying sourcing practices and framing in relation to one another and make a connection between both, which makes it necessary to study both concepts for this research project. Only then it is possible to see how racial issues, like the Black Pete discussion, are covered and discussed in the Netherlands.

This theoretical framework starts with a literature review and thorough explanation on framing theory and sourcing practices, so both concepts can be connected to each other. Then, this theoretical framework focuses on framing of racial issues and sourcing practices that journalist use when covering these racial issues. This framework makes it possible to create a solid methodological approach to the topic, which makes it possible to look at how framing is done, and what sources are employed, when covering the Black Pete discussion in the Netherlands. This theoretical framework provides for the fundament to carry out the actual research and discuss and analyze the research results and findings in the second part of this thesis.

Framing theory
Frames can be found in every media text and have a huge impact on how an issue or event is covered in the media. Framing theory is a very popular concept in journalism studies research. However, there is no such thing as one single definition on what framing exactly is. When examining the existing pile of framing literature, many different definitions can be found (Entman, Matthes, Pellicano, 2009, p. 175). Gamson and Modigliani define framing as “the central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events”
(Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p. 143). Or as Tankard, Hendrickson et al. put it: “a frame is the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration” (Tankard, Hendrickson et al., 1991, p. 3). All these authors mean by this, that for journalists, when making a news story, frames are a tool to select and highlight some aspects of this story, for example by making a decision on which sources get a voice in it. Journalists use these frames to describe the world around them and give meaning to a story by placing it in a particular context. Journalists build frames through the selection and prioritization of information they gather when covering an issue or event. When constructing and building a media frame, decisions are made on how to express something that is being covered. When covering an issue or event, journalists use standard procedures for their newsgathering, often referred to as news routines (Allan, 2010, p. 75). News routines are a set of standard procedures that enable the journalist to describe what happened or what is going on in the world (Dimitrova and Strömback, 2009, p. 76). Building a media frame is such a news routine. Allan (2010, p. 75) mentions “frames help to render an infinity of noticeable details intro practicable repertoires by routinizing the unexpected.” This is something that most of the time happens unconsciously; Norris, Kent and Just state that: “the essence of framing is the selection to prioritize some facts, images, or developments of others, and thereby unconsciously promote one particular interpretation of events” (Norris, Kent & Just, 2003, p. 11). Or as Gitlin explains, frames are “principles of selection, emphasis or presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens and what matters” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 6). However, journalists also actively and consciously engage in the creation of a frame because journalists apply news frames to their stories, since these allow them to package the information that they want to transfer to their audiences, and therefore function as a working routine for them. This packaging of information within media frames enables the journalist to provide the audience with a specific angle to the topic he or she covers. These media frames can then be discovered when investigating if certain words, sources and phrases are present in a media text (De Vreese, 2002, p. 24).

When talking about media frames, within the existing literature and research on framing, a useful distinction is often made between generic frames and issue-specific frames. Most researches focus on either one of these two categories (De Vreese, 2005, p. 52). According to Vliegenthart, issue-specific frames “are tied to a specific issue, and often to a specific context or time as well” (Vliegenthart, 2012, p. 939). These kinds of frames are applicable to specific
The definition of framing that is used in this research project is the famous one by Robert Entman. He states that “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). For the first part of this definition, this means, for this research project, that when covering racial issues such as the Black Pete discussion, journalists select some aspects of the Black Pete debate and make these aspects more salient in their coverage on this issue. The journalists use frames in their media texts on the Black Pete discussion that appear in newspapers. These frames determine how we come to understand and interpret this debate, contributing to the public discourse on this subject, which is reflected in the frames that are used in the news articles on the Black Pete discussion. The second part of the definition by Entman; the promotion of a particular definition, interpretation, evaluation or recommendation, suggests that frames can influence public opinion by the promotion of specific definitions, interpretations, evaluations and recommendations that are conveyed to the public. Therefore, they affect the way Black Pete and the Black Pete discussion are presented in and by the media. This influences the public in such a way that the recommended interpretation by the media has an impact on how people think about the Black Pete discussion, and influences the public opinion on this matter.

This is the case because when journalists build frames, they have a certain influence on their audiences. According to Richardson and Lancendorfer, frames are important for two reasons: “(1) they reflect the larger public discourse and (2) they have an impact on public opinion” (Richardson & Lancendorfer, 2004, p. 75). This means that the frames in a news story, ultimately, determine how an issue or event is interpreted and how we come to see, understand, and talk about this issue or event. This leads to a larger public discourse on something that is happening in the world, which impacts how people think about the
occurrences in the world and sets the opinion of people on something, resulting in a public opinion on any given matter. In short, the frames that journalists build in their news coverage affect how people formulate opinions and make decisions on any given matter. Druckman states that this is the effect of framing (Druckman, 2001, p. 228). This also occurs with Black Pete and the Black Pete discussion. Entman, Matthes and Pellicano refer to this as “the considerations that come to mind after exposure to a media frame that may affect how individuals form their opinion on any given issue” (Entman, Matthes & Pellicano, 2009, p. 181). For this research project, the public opinion shaping character of framing is vital because it brings a contribution to the public views on the Black Pete discussion. Therefore, the next part of this theoretical framework focuses more in-depth on the relationship between framing and public opinion formation.

The relation between framing and public opinion

Busher states that the “influence of the media lies within its ability to frame” (Busher, 2006, p. 19). He argues that the way in which the media frame an issue or event, affects how the public comes to understand this. Accordingly, framing theory, especially theory of framing effects, offers an explanation on the influence the media has on the public, and in particular on how it forms a public opinion. How does this work? When someone receives information from the media, a specific issue or event is presented to him or her in a particular way that depends on how a topic is framed. The information receiver evaluates this information that influences the receivers attitude on any given matter (Chong and Druckman, 2007, p. 110 – 111). Then, the receiver can decide to adjust its attitude towards a subject in accordance with what is presented in the media frame (Entman, 2010, p. 392). This can change the evaluation of, and attitude towards, a topic (de Vreese, 2005, p. 52). According to Busher this occurs “because citizens do not seek out additional information, but instead look to credible sources for answers” (Busher, 2006, p. 19). Busher argues that a media text is such a source that provides the reader with information and answers. However, according to Gamson and Modigliani (1989, p. 9-10), the public is far from a “passive object on which the media work their magic”. They state that a process of psychological evaluation takes place after someone has received information from the media. Chong and Druckman argue that before a media frame influences the public, some criteria have to be fulfilled. They state that it is first of all necessary that the issue or topic that the media text, and the media frame(s) present, is (are) familiar to the public. One way this can happen is through repetitive framing by the media.
When a particular media frame about a specific topic is repeatedly presented to the public, it becomes familiarized with it (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 110 - 111). Entman, Matthes and Pellicano (2009, p. 177) argue that “repeating frames over time in multiple texts give a politically significant proportion of the citizenry a chance to understand, store and recall the mental association for future application”. Furthermore, it becomes more likely that the public takes over a media frame, when this frame is delivered to them by a credible source (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 112). Such a credible source can be a specific journalistic media outlet, but it can also refer to the people that are used as a source by the journalist in the media text.

Lastly Chong and Druckman (2007, p.110 – 110) argue that an important factor in the framing effect of the media lies in someone’s personal preferences, such as the personal norms and values he or she finds important. When someone attaches great importance to a specific value, then it is not likely that this person will take over a media frame that contains opposing values (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 112). This relates to someone’s attitude towards any given matter. It is also not likely that someone will take over a media frame when this frame does not match this persons’ personal view on, and attitude towards, an issue or event (Entman, 2010, p. 392). Moreover, the public is often not confronted with only one media frame on a topic. Often there are multiple media frames that compete for the public’s acceptance. When this is the case, people often tend to accept the frame that matches their personal views and existing ideas they already have on a particular subject (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 112-113). This is important for understanding how people view the Black Pete discussion, because it increases the likelihood that people only ‘accept’ the views that are presented in the media that match their existing ideas and views on this topic.

This research does not only focus on a total overview of how the Black Pete discussion has been framed in the media, and how that affects peoples personal views and the public opinion. It also wants to show how this way of framing, and thus the framing effect of influencing the public opinion, has changed over time. Therefore, the next part elaborates more on the extent of influence that media frames have on public opinion over time.

A research by Lecheler and de Vreese (2012, p. 164 -165) shows “news framing is characterized by recency effects; that is, the latest frame has the strongest impact on opinion formation” (Lecheler and de Vreese, 2012, p. 164). Knowledge about a topic works as a moderator on this opinion formation process. When people know more about a subject, the latest frame that they ‘received’ from the media texts they consumed, does have less effect on
the formation of the (public) opinion, than when they do not have any knowledge on the subject at hand. In short, when people have, or believe they have, prior knowledge about a subject, recency effects on the opinion formation process are less strong.

Matthes states that this is because when people receive opposing frames on a topic they (believe to) have knowledge about, such as in this case a pro-Black Pete frame and/or a contra-Black Pete frame, “there is no assurance that individuals will deliberately evaluate the opposing arguments” (Matthes, 2010, p. 30). That people do not evaluate opposing arguments that are provided to them by the media frames in this case can be explained by the existence of strong prior attitudes people may have towards a certain issue. A strong prior attitude can prevent that framed messages influence the opinion of people (Entman, Matthes & Pellicano, 2009, p. 185). To conclude, the longer a certain issue is in the media, the more likely it is that peoples’ knowledge about this issue increases. This causes the recency effects of a media frame to have lesser impact and influence on the opinion formation of these people. Therefore, over time, the opinion formation effect of a media frame diminishes.

As already mentioned above, it is more likely that the public takes over a media frame in its public opinion formation process when the media frame is delivered by, and contains, credible sources. This shows again that a relationship between framing on the one hand, and sources and sourcing practices on the other, does exist. The next section elaborates on sourcing practices in general, and afterwards the two theoretical concepts of framing and sourcing practices are connected to one another.

**Sourcing practices**

One of the news routines, as the set of procedures that the journalist uses in his or her reporting, is the reliance on different sources. Berkowitz define sources as “the people who reporters turn to for their information” (Berkowitz, 2009, p. 102). In newspapers the sources that are selected for news stories reflect “material through direct quotations or paraphrased statements by the reporter” (Zeldes, Alumit et al., 2005, p. 376). A source is someone who provides a journalist with quotes. He or she is in some way connected to the issue or event that is being covered, such as for example direct observers, government officials or experts, who can all have an authoritative voice on the topic. The authority of a source increases the credibility of the journalists because a credible media text contains sources that are perceived as credible by the audience. These sources then provide for “a verification of the news account” (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2009, p. 76). However, “it can also serve as a method of
providing competing arguments” (Dimitrova & Strömback, 2009, p. 76). This means, as Schoemaker and Reese (1996, p. 113) explain it: that by using sources, “journalists can report conflicting statements, which allow them to say that both sides of the story have been told”. For this research, typical sourcing practices in relation to racial issues are discussed later on in this theoretical framework.

The selection of sources by journalist depends on multiple factors, such as the knowledge of a source, a source’s status in a society and/or his or her position within a specific organization. According to Hickerson, Moy et al. (2011, p. 782), “certain times during an event’s coverage, some sources will be more quoted than others”. Since journalists want to use sources that are an authority on a certain topic (simply because it increases the journalists’ own credibility), it is likely that the journalists uses sources that hold a position of power in a society, such as the government or the police, or that represent a particular segment of a society, such as for example business (Hermida, Lewis et al., 2012, p. 1). These kinds of sources are often referred to as ‘elite sources’, and are sourced more often than other sources that do not have as much power within a society as the elites (Berkowitz, 2009, p. 109). According to Berkowitz, “most often, sources tend to be male authority figures and do not belong to one of their society’s minority groups” (Berkowitz, 2009, p. 109). Among elite sources, government officials are dominant in news coverage by the media (Hermida, Lewis, et al., 2012, p. 1). According to Hall et al. (1978, p. 58) this is because elite sources in general, and specifically government officials, are seen as the most credible sources. This leads to a situation where elite sources, and especially government officials, are the ones that set the news agenda. The credibility of elite sources increases and becomes further enhanced when journalists use them as a source (Tuchman, 1978, p. 210). This is the case because when an elite source is cited in the media; his authority on a specific subject is underlined once again, which leads to a situation where its credibility becomes even further enhanced. However, it should be noted that it is not only the journalist that does make use of the source. As Pearlstine argues: “Sources are rarely altruistic. They usually have an agenda” (2007, p. 175). With this is meant that the source itself also ‘uses’ the journalist. This is because the journalist provides the source with a platform where it can express its opinion, creating a symbiotic relationship between the two. This also goes for elite sources. The opinion and agenda of the (elite) source can be transferred to the public. However, the journalist still has the power to decide whether or not he selects the source to be part of the news story. This selection, of which sources get to say something in a news article, plays an important role in how an issue or event is
covered, and thus framed, in the news media. Therefore, how these sourcing practices and framing theory are connected and affect each other is discussed in the next part.

**How frames are affected by sources**

Sources and sourcing practices of journalists are an important part of the framing process, since the information sources provide, directly influences the news content. This is the case because, as already mentioned, framing theory and sourcing practices go hand-in-hand when journalists select certain sources. Journalists are provided with information by the sources they use in their news coverage, and these are used to interpret the issues or events the journalists cover. How a journalist covers, and thus frames, an issue is therefore partly determined by the employed sources. “Journalists frame their coverage via the sources they use” (Coleman, Thorson, et al., 2011, p. 944).

This source selection can lead to certain depictions that can then become the dominant way of thinking. The source selection process leads to “a particular selection of perspectives that are available to readers” (Schneider, 2011, p. 71). Schneider argues that this is the most important part in the construction of a story. “Journalists’ ability to choose who speaks (or does not speak) in news coverage enables them to frame news without appearing to do so” (Schneider, 2011, p. 72 – 73). Journalists produce a specific frame by the selection of certain sources, and by doing this, a “specific vantage point on the social order is propagated and maintained” (Berkowitz, 2009, p. 106). This means that a certain depiction of the event or issue that is being covered, is transferred to the audience, which can impacts the way in which the audience comes to perceive this issue. In the end, sources become the most important figures of the message that is transmitted (Hall, in Strömback et al. 2008, p. 119). Or, as Entman puts it: “sources of information are in itself a frame” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Thus, sources affect the content of a media text, and more importantly the frames in these media texts (Strömback, Negrine et al. 2013, p. 42). Therefore, making a connection between news sources and media frames is “theoretically important” (Strömback, Negrine, 2013, p. 34), and therefore vital for this research project.

Since it has been established that framing and sourcing practices are inherently connected, the next part of this theoretical framework provides a thorough explanation where framing, sourcing practices and the topic of race are connected. The starting point for this is a specific paradigm that sets and determines the discourse on these kinds of topics: the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ paradigm. Before this ‘us’ versus ‘them’ paradigm is dealt with, it is necessary to take
a close look at the discourse in which this paradigm is embedded. This is a discourse on identity and belonging in racial contexts.

**Discourse on (national) identity and belonging**

An explanation on how identities are formed, and the associated discourse on identity and nationality start with the concept of ideology. According to van Dijk (2009, p. 193), an ideology is the self-image that a group of people prefer to have, and because of this preference, share. Van Dijk states that ideologies are “axiomatic beliefs underlying the social representations shared by a group, featuring fundamental norms and values” (van Dijk, 2009, p. 193). With this he means that an ideology is a certain belief system, which is formed by a set of fundamental norms and values, that are shared by a group of people and which binds them together. The ideology that a group has is fundamental for the creation of a common sense of identity of, and belonging to, this group. This group formation process based on a common ideology is also present within nations, leading to a sense of nationality and nationalism. According to Anderson, nations are imagined political communities. They are imagined because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson, 1991, p. 6). With this he means that the previously mentioned group formation process based on a common ideology is what makes people feel that they are part of a community, which results in the construction of a national identity. He also argues that this “nationality (…), as well as nationalism, are cultural artifacts of a particular kind” (Anderson, 1991, p. 4). This means that a sense of national identity, nationality and whether one belongs to a specific nationality is a socially constructed concept, meaning that they are shaped by social-cultural interactions between human beings. To do this, a necessary element is to create an in-group and an out-group. This means that there are people who are part of the group (the in-group) and share a national identity, and people who do not (the out-group). Or as Pintak argues, “In order for us to be Us we need to create Them” (Pintak, 2006, p. 7). This creation of ‘us’ and ‘them’ leads to the inclusion and exclusion of people that is present in every community, society, and nation. Pintak (2006, p. 6) argues that: “Othering is the basis of the nation-state”. With this ‘othering’ in the nation-state is meant that the division between us (we) and them (the other) determines who is considered part of a nation and who is not. This is also present in the attitude that ‘we’ have towards ‘others’, such as other cultures and other religions, but also ethnic minorities. This is a crucial aspect in the identity construction of every community. This concept of identity construction, and the determination on who
belongs to the group and who does not, are part of the discourse on national identity and belonging. The ‘us’ versus ‘them’ paradigm is embedded in this discourse on (national) identity and belonging. Therefore, the next section deals more in-depth on this us versus them paradigm.

The Us versus Them paradigm

Everyone sees him- or herself as part of a group. Individuals see themselves as part of a group for different reasons, for example when they have common values and beliefs (ideology), or have the feeling they belong or connect well with other members of a group. These individuals integrate in a group with which they have shared attributes such as political and religious preferences, gender, ethnicity or race.

Mainstream media do play a key role in this process. Haider-Markel et al. state “racial group membership is made salient through the process of framing” (Haider-Markel et al., 2007, p. 588). Meaning that one way in which racial group membership becomes noticeable for people is through news coverage, and the way in which this coverage is framed. This is the case because mainstream media can attribute the ‘outsider status’ to people who happen to be part of a minority group (Park, Holody et al., 2012, p. 477). Berg argues that this outsider status often relate to the concept of race. He discusses the relation between media coverage and the portrayal of race and argues, “images of racial minorities (…) are part of a larger discourse on Otherness” (Berg, 2002, p. 4). According to Berg, this discourse on ‘Otherness’ is a vestige of colonialism that is still reflected in the language that is used in the West. A sense of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ can still be found in the West and inflects a language of “racial inferiority and ethnic superiority that still operates so powerfully across the globe today” (Hall, 1992a, p. 318). This is illustrated in the media because when covering minorities, there are tendencies to portray (racial) minority groups in such a way that they pose a “threat to mainstream values and thus provoke integrative concerns; showing that there are inherent cultural differences that create tensions” within a society (Poole, 2002, p. 20).

According to Gilroy, representations of ethnic minorities are often framed as ‘them’ in the media, whereas the indigenous white population in Western societies has contextually been framed as ‘us’ (Gilroy, 1987, p. 4). Cottle argued that because of this ‘us’ versus ‘them’ paradigm “members of the media audience are invited to construct a sense of who ‘we’ are in relation to who ‘we’ are not, whether as ‘us’ and ‘them’ or ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ (Cottle, 2000, p. 2). According to Saeed, those who have been framed as the ‘other’ group are more
and more identified as a group of ‘false nationals’ (Saeed, 2008, p. 460). With this he means that by creating the division between insiders and outsiders, a part of the population of country is being placed in a category of ‘secondary citizens’.

Within the context of the Black Pete discussion, this identification of a minority group as ‘false nationals’ can fuel the sense of the opposing group that their concerns about racism and discrimination in the Netherlands are not taken seriously by the autochthonous white Dutch population. Furthermore, in the Black Pete discussion, for proponents of Black Pete, critique on this character shows cultural contradictions that cannot be overcome. The proponents defend the tradition of Black Pete by making a link between this tradition, patriotism and the Dutch identity, and an anxiety of losing them (van der Pijl & Goulordava, 2014, p. 246). This relates to this research because it tests how the Black Pete discussion is presented in the media coverage, and how these media cover the views of both proponents and opponents.

**Us versus Them in racism contexts: framing race, racism and ethnic minorities**

To research how the issue of the Black Pete discussion has been framed in the Netherlands, a closer look at the framing of racial issues and minority groups in general is necessary. This is the case because, according to Winter, “Frames can subtly associate an issue with race (…) and thereby affect opinion” (Winter, 2008, p. 3). Or as Haider-Markel et al. explain: “Frames can influence attitudes about virtually any issue or event, including discrimination” (Haider-Markel et al., 2007, p. 588-589). Cottle argues, “the media hold a powerful position in conveying, explaining and articulating specific discourses that help represent (or misrepresent) minority groups” (Cottle, 2006, cited in Saeed, 2007, p. 444). When covering the Black Pete discussion, this can cause the opponent camp, which for a large part consists of people from ethnic minority groups, to be misrepresented and/or underrepresented.

Saeed mentions that minority voices are very often invisible and ignored in the media, while at the same time representation of minority groups is often presented in a negative way (Saeed, 2007, p. 444). This is an important point Saeed makes, because an audience relies on information provided by the media to make assumptions and inferences about people who are part of a group with which they do not regularly interact (Deo, Lee et al., 2008, p. 149). When minority groups are framed as ‘them’ and depicted in a negative way, this can lead to racism that happens subconsciously in our minds (Deo, Lee et al., 2008, p. 148). This is the case because when minority groups are framed negatively, the framing effect of the media on public opinion formation of the public can lead to a situation where the public also comes to think negatively about minority groups. Van Dijk (1991, p. 245) mentions that the media are
successful in recreating racism, not because an audience does always takes over the opinion that was provided in the media, but because of the framing effect of the media on the public, “strongly suggest how readers should think about ethnic affairs.”

However, it is important to state that normally it is not the case that the media transmit racist messages explicitly. Hall rejects the idea that news media are racist, simply because there are racist people working at the editorial offices of the news media (Hall, 1990, p. 20). Allan (2010, p. 173) claims that racism is rather covered up in present societies. This is what according to Allan and Hall can be described as ‘inferential’ racism. Hall defines ‘inferential’ racism as “media representations that enable racist statements to be formulated without ever bringing into awareness the racist predicates on which the statements are grounded” (Hall, 1990, p. 13). With this he means that inferential racism is something that is present in a media text, but that it is covered up in media texts where it is inscribed as a set of unquestioned assumptions. Further explain. This contrasts with ‘overt’ racism that Hall (as cited in Allan, 2010, p. 173) defines as media coverage where “explicitly and openly racist positions and arguments” are present.

The media have a great impact on “racist thinking and behavior, (…) including a denial of structural racism and the continued impact of past discrimination on today’s racial minorities” (Entman, 2006, p. 13). According to Winters (2008, p. 157), being blind to racial issues creates “ignorance in the way in which racial issues continue to affect the outcomes of policies and practices of institutions”, such as the media.

When certain issues are rejected or ignored in a society, this can also be the case in the media (or the other way around) and leads to “the construction of an issue that could ultimately benefit a particular issue” (Nelson, Clawson, e al., 1997, p. 568). This means that, as Entman argues, that when race issues and racism are ignored, the media may help to disseminate power to particular individuals, groups, or causes” (Entman, 2007, p. 165). When, for example, only one group within a society gets a voice in news stories, other groups are unheard and not represented, which gives the groups whose opinion is heard more power, simply because the other groups are not heard and not represented. When covering racial issues, journalists thus actively engage in the process of framing. This research wants to investigate how the process of framing, when covering racial issues like the Black Pete discussion, is present in the Netherlands. To do this it is necessary to look into a new form of racism that could play a role in the framing process of racial issues: ‘new racism’.

Framing ‘new racism’
According to Gilroy, the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ discourse around which racial issues are often framed in the media that could also be apparent in the media: ‘new racism’ (Gilroy, 1992, p. 53), that could also be present in the media. ‘New racism’ can be defined as a phenomenon where “in recent times biological notions of race have been replaced by cultural definitions that draw on discourses of national belonging and national identity” (Hall et al., 1992, p. 298).

What this means can be explained by an example Saeed gives. He mentions an example where a research in the United States of America (USA) in the 1980s showed that less people in the USA had the opinion blacks were racially inferior to whites. According to him, this did not mean that there was less racism. He argued that in exchange for the ‘classical racism’, more subtle, new, forms of racism emerged. He states that it is likely that this is the same in Europe (Saeed, 2008, p. 446). Gilroy mentions that ‘new racism’ has “successfully distanced itself from the crude notions of biological inferiority and instead forged links between race, nationhood, patriotism and nationalism” (Gilroy, 1992, p. 53). According to Saeed, racism is not a static thing. It changes, evolves and adapts to particular situations or circumstances. Racism is therefore no longer a purely biological matter but rather a cultural one, focusing on who is ‘insider’ and who is ‘outsider’. New racism has increasingly gained ground because of the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ paradigm. In the Dutch society there is more anxiety for threats to the mainstream values, which inflame integrative concerns about the existence of inherent cultural differences among different groups that create all kinds of tensions within this society. Therefore, media increasingly choose to frame a story in light of existing racist ideologies, based on cultural assumptions (new racism) (Hall, 1997, p. 270). Because of this, it is not always ‘visible’, but rather covered up, which can easily lead to situations where accusations of racism and discrimination are denied. Since, as the UN Report on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination already mentioned, racial issues are often denied in the Netherlands, because of for example the Dutch self-image, this can also be the case when covering the Black Pete discussion.

Furthermore, according to Deo, Lee et al. media frame racial issues by emphasizing one aspect of a story, which leads to the exclusion of other aspects. This can for example lead to “the general overrepresentation of whites and underrepresentation of people of color” and reinforces “the racial hierarchy by privileging whiteness” (Deo, Lee et al. 2008, p. 272). In this framing process, sources play an important role in the extent to which whites are overrepresented and people from ethnic minority groups are underrepresented in the media coverage.
Sourcing practices in the coverage of racial issues

When covering racial issues in the media, research on source diversity has found that there is a heavy domination of men and whites in the sources that are used when covering an issue or event (Zeles, Alumit, et al., 2005, p. 375). Schneider states that, “minority ethnic groups were quoted much less frequently than whites” (Schneider, 2011, p. 73). Rodgers, Thorson et al. (2000, p. 67) found that in newspapers white men dominated as sources, and when someone from an ethnic minority group was sourced, these sources tended to have a smaller role. Entman and Rojecki (2000) discovered that people from ethnic minority groups “were rarely presented as experts in the news and were more likely interviewed as sports and entertainment figures, victims of discrimination, and criminals” (Entman and Rojecki, 2000 quoted in Zeldes, Alumit, et al. 2005, p. 376). Kurpius (2002, p. 854) argues that, “people of color are generally missing from news coverage, unless it is coverage of crime and festivals”. Along these lines, Campell states that “while news is not entirely white, the infrequent presence of minority news sources dictates an otherness that is compounded when the coverage that does exist perpetuate traditional racist notions about minority life” (Campell, 1995, p. 57).

According to Entman, the underrepresentation of people from ethnic minority groups as sources leads to a situation where members of these groups receive “much less opportunity to convey their perspectives in their own voice” (Entman, 1992, p. 15). The reason for this is, according to Kurpius, that white, male officials are “often situated in proximity to the media organization and are easily regarded a providing credible information (Kurpius, 2002, p. 854). Therefore, it is not the case that journalists consider all sources equal. As the above quoted research shows, minority groups within society are likely to have a weaker position.

With regard to the Black Pete discussion, with the sources journalists select, the journalists have an impact on whose points of view (in the case of the Black Pete discussion: opponents or proponents) are made more salient in the coverage on the discussion. As Strömback, Negrine et al. (2013, p. 34) argue: “media themselves prefer frames that are culturally congruent and that may be successful in capturing audiences’ attention”. This means that media build frames that correspond with the views and opinions of the largest possible audience. For the representation of minorities in media coverage this can cause minorities to not be represented or to be underrepresented in the media coverage.

This affects the way this issue of Black Pete has been framed in the Dutch media, because when selecting sources, a journalist decides who gets to say something and show his or her sides of the story. This is an important part of framing and can lead to the underrepresentation of one group over another.
It is also important to take a closer look at who exactly the sources are that are used in news coverage on this discussion. This makes it possible to provide a better understanding of the sourcing practices of journalists in the coverage on the matter of Black Pete. Examples of types and characteristics of sources that can be looked for are whether they are part of an ethnic minority group or part of the majority (white) population. This can show which groups in the Dutch society get a voice in news accounts and if there might be a group that is underrepresented. All (types of) sources that are looked for in this research are addressed in the methodology chapter.

Before moving on to the research questions and hypotheses it is important to elaborate a bit more on the different kinds of newspapers that are part of this research project. This thesis focuses on framing and sourcing of the Black Pete discussion in different newspapers, of which some or quality newspapers and others or popular newspapers (e.g. tabloids). Therefore, the next part shortly addresses the difference between these two kinds of newspapers and some characteristics of each newspaper that is part of this research are described shortly.

**Different newspapers: quality versus popular**

There are a number of characteristics of newspapers that determine whether a newspaper is a quality paper or a popular paper. First of all, one of the most important ones is the balance between ‘hard news’ and ‘soft news’. A quality newspaper focuses more on hard news, meaning that the news is rational, balanced, and detached. But a popular newspaper focuses more on ‘soft news’; the news is in general emotional, concerned and personalized. Popular newspapers have the goal to entertain the reader (Lehman-Wilzig and Seletzky, 2010, p. 38). Secondly, there is a difference in genres between the two kinds of newspapers. Quality newspapers have more interpretive genres, such as news analyses that try to place an event or issue in a broader perspective, especially in the field of (foreign) politics and economics. Popular newspapers less often have these kinds of stories, since they tend to focus on emotional stories with a personal and human-interest angle (Gurevitch and Roeh, 1993, p. 62). However, this does not mean that popular newspapers do not bring objective journalism to the table. They simply select different kinds of stories and angles to their media texts. When making the distinction between quality newspapers and popular newspapers one has to
look at the balance between information on the one hand, and entertainment on the other (Gurevitch and Roeh, 1993, p. 62).

For this research project, four newspapers have been selected: de Telegraaf, Algemeen Dagblad, de Volkskrant and NRC Handelsblad.

- **De Telegraaf**

De Telegraaf is a popular newspaper, which has always been independent in the sense that it has never been bound to any kind of (political or religious) ideology. Nonetheless, the separation between fact and opinion is sometimes blurry and emotion and human-interest angles play an important part in the news articles of this newspaper (Ybema, 2003, p. 455-456). At the moment, de Telegraaf is the biggest newspaper in the Netherlands with a circulation of 671,860 in 2013 (www.oplagen-dagbladen.nl, accessed on May 3rd 2016).

- **Algemeen Dagblad**

Algemeen Dagblad is also a popular newspaper. And just like de Telegraaf it was never bound to any political or religious ideology or trend. After the merger of seven regional newspapers on September 1st 2005, it became the second largest newspaper in the Netherlands with a circulation of 489,748 in 2013 (www.oplagen-dagbladen.nl, accessed on May 3rd 2016).

- **De Volkskrant**

De Volkskrant is originally a catholic quality newspaper (Korteweg, Bruin and Elshout, 2006, p.9) and according to their own website a “progressive, reform-oriented newspaper” (www.devolkskrant.nl, accessed on May 3rd 2016). In 2013, the newspaper had a circulation of 298,065 (www.oplagen-dagbladen.nl, accessed on May 3rd 2016).

- **NRC Handelsblad**

NRC Handelsblad is also quality newspaper with a lot of attention for politics, foreign affair and economic developments. The fundament of the newspaper is a liberal ideology, meaning that the principle of freedom (in every area) is a cornerstone of its identity (Wijfjes, 2004, p. 455-456). In 2013 NRC Handelsblad had a circulation of 215,037 (www.oplagen-dagbladen.nl, accessed on May 3rd 2016).

**Research questions and hypotheses**
To recap, the central research question of this research project, as already mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, is: How has the Black Pete discussion been framed in the Dutch newspapers *de Telegraaf*, *Algemeen Dagblad*, *de Volkskrant*, and *NRC Handelsblad* from 2011 to 2014? To answer this, this question breaks down in a number of sub-questions, and corresponding hypotheses, that provide for an answer to the central research question. These sub-questions and hypotheses are informed by, and relate to, the aspects that are discussed in the previous part of the theoretical framework.

**Sub-question 1:**
What is the dominant way of framing by journalists when covering the Black Pete discussion? Is this done more from the opponents’, or proponents’, of Black Pete perspective?

**Hypothesis 1:**
The Black Pete discussion has been framed from a cultural perspective, instead of a biological one, which results in a way of framing that predominantly focuses on the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ paradigm, which also causes the phenomenon of new racism to be a dominant way of framing. Therefore, I expect to find that the dominant way of framing is that the Black Pete discussion has been framed in terms of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ and new racism. Furthermore, the way in which the Black Pete discussion has been framed is predominantly from the perspective of the proponents of Black Pete. Stromback, Negrine et al. (2013, p. 34) argue, “media themselves prefer frames that are culturally congruent and that may be successful in capturing audiences’ attention”. Since a large majority of the Dutch population, almost 83 %, is a proponent of Black Pete (Research by SCP (social-cultural research statistics institute in the Netherland), cited in *de Telegraaf* on 6-10-2014), it is likely that the issue of the Black Pete discussion has been framed predominantly from the perspective of the proponents of Black Pete.

**Sub-question 2:**
Is there a difference in the way the Black Pete discussion has been framed in popular and quality newspapers, and if so, what is this difference?

**Hypothesis 2:**
There is a difference in the way the Black Pete discussion has been framed in popular and quality newspapers. In the popular newspapers *de Telegraaf* and *Algemeen Dagblad*, the “us” versus “them” and new racism frames are more dominant than in the quality newspapers *de Volkskrant* and *NRC Handelsblad*.

According to Hall, both overt and inferential racism can consistently be found in popular newspapers and tabloids. This causes racism to become “acceptable, and thus, not too long after, true” (Hall, 1990, p. 13). It is therefore likely that framing in *de Telegraaf* and *Algemeen Dagblad* has predominantly be done from an, ‘us’ versus ‘them’ and new racism perspective.

Sub-question 3:
Has there been a change over time in the way the different newspapers framed the Black Pete discussion? If so, how has the framing changed?

Hypothesis 3:
The way in which the Black Pete discussion has been framed has changed over time. Matthes (2010, p. 30) stated that when covering an issue or event over a longer time period, the way of framing changes. Therefore, it is also likely that, with regard to the news coverage on the Black Pete discussion, the way this issue has been framed has changed over time.

Sub-question 4:
What were the main sources that were used when covering the Black Pete discussion in *de Telegraaf*, *Algemeen Dagblad*, *de Volkskrant*, and *NRC Handelsblad*?

Hypothesis 4:
Proponents of Black Pete are used more often as sources in articles that cover the Black Pete discussion.

According to Entman (1992, p. 15) ethnic minority groups receive “much less opportunity to convey their perspectives in their own voice”. Campell (1995, p. 57) adds to this that there is an “infrequent presence of minority news sources “. When covering the Black Pete discussion, this leads to the hypothesis that the opponents of Black Pete have fewer opportunities to voice their opinion than advocates of Black Pete. In accordance, I expect to find that the proponents of Black Pete are used more often as sources in the new coverage on this debate than the opponents of Black Pete. By using more sources that are a proponent of
Black Pete than opponents, sourcing practices have influenced the way the Black Pete discussion has been framed, in a sense that it leads to the underrepresentation of the opponents of Black Pete and an overrepresentation of the proponents of Black Pete in the Dutch newspapers.

How these different sub-questions are operationalized in the actual research process, is stated in the next chapter on methodology.

Chapter 4: Methodology – A quantitative content analysis
For the methodological part of this thesis a quantitative content analysis is used to discover
the dominant frames and sources in the news coverage on the Black Pete discussion. Weber
states that a content analysis is a “research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid
inference from text” (Weber, 1999, p. 9, cited in Macnamara, 2003, p. 3). In this research
project, this set of procedures Weber mentions has been set up in the form of a codebook.
Before addressing how the actual research is carried out and operationalized, the concept of
content analysis itself is explained.

Content Analysis
Alan Bryman (2012, p. 289) defines content analysis as “an approach to the analysis of
documents and texts (which may be printed or visual) that seek to quantify content in terms of
predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner”. Or, as Krippendorff
(2004, p. 8) puts it: “content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid
inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use.” In short, it is a
research method that allows a researcher to draw reliable conclusions from printed or visual
texts. A researcher that uses content analysis as a method wants to gain knowledge and
insights on a specific topic by analyzing the primary sources, such as newspaper articles, that
are looked at in the research process. To do this, a codebook has to be made, in which strict
rules and guidelines are provided. Within this research project, the codebook will consist of
an elaboration on the different frames and sources that will be looked at in the research
process. This codebook is an important part of a quantitative content analysis because this is
what makes the research replicable and reliable (Neuendorf, 2010, p. 2), meaning that when
the research would be done over and over again, the same results would be gathered when
conducting the content analysis.
A distinction can be made between two types of content analysis: quantitative and qualitative
content analyses. There are numerous discussions among academics about the advantages and
disadvantages of both types of research. According to Neuendorf, only quantitative research
falls within the scope of content analysis (Neuendorf, 2010, p. 2). Berelson agrees and
mentions that content analyses are conducted “for the objective, systematic and quantitative
description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson, 1952, p. 18). Quantitative
and qualitative content analyses can easily be distinguished from one another: quantitative
research looks at research results that are expressed and showed in statistics that are then
analyzed. This is not the case with qualitative research where descriptive data are analyzed.
Both approaches conduct a research in a different way (Punch, 2008, p. 3). With regard to how the actual research is done, a quantitative research is measurable, replicable and verifiable. This is difficult with a qualitative content analysis because it relies more on the interpretation of the individual researcher, which makes it more subjective. This is one of the reasons why, for this research project, a quantitative content analysis has been chosen to be the appropriate methodological approach.

Furthermore, in this research project, a quantitative content analysis has been carried out for various reasons. First of all, a quantitative content analysis allows for analyzing large amounts of data (i.e. a large sample of newspaper articles) with relative little resources. Since this research has a rather large sample of newspaper articles (see next section on research design and operationalization – sample) that have been analyzed, a quantitative analysis is the way to go. Secondly, a quantitative content analysis is a good way to examine the relationship between different variables, such as in this research project for example proponents and opponents of Black Pete. As Riffle et al. argue: “the data collected in a quantitative content analysis are then usually analyzed to describe what are typical patterns or characteristics, or to identify important relationships among the variables measured” (Riffle et al., 2005, p. 2). This means that a quantitative content analysis allows for the comparison of research outcomes over time and among different media outlets, which is exactly what this research does. Thirdly, “a content analysis informed by a theory of framing would avoid treating all negative or positive terms or utterances as equally salient and influential” (Entman, 1993, p. 57). Within this research, framing is a suitable theory to look at since, according to Vliegenthart, framing theory makes it possible “to systematically analyze the content of media and describe it in terms of the types and frequency of the frames used. It gives the opportunity to analyze the variation of this content – both across media as well as over time” (Vliegenthart, 2012, p. 937). This is exactly what this research will do. By analyzing newspaper articles published in different newspapers on the Black Pete discussion, the different frames that are present in these articles can be discovered. Furthermore, by comparing the outcomes on what kind of frames are present in the coverage on the Black Pete discussion, differences in coverage between media outlets and across time can be traced and discussed. This means that a qualitative content analysis allows for an overall and well-balanced overview of how an event or issue, in this case the Black Pete discussion, has been framed in the media. This is especially the case because a quantitative content analysis leaves the personal interpretation of the researcher out as much as possible when strict rules and guidelines are laid down in a codebook (Entman, 1993, p. 57). When a codebook is made that deals with the frames and
sources, and the corresponding rules for when a specific frame or source has to be coded as such, when looking at in the newspaper articles that cover the Black Pete discussion, this quantitative content analysis brings an as objective as possible description on how the Black Pete discussion has been framed and sourced in Dutch newspaper articles.

**Research design and operationalization**

**Comparative nature**

This research investigates how the Black Pete discussion has been framed in multiple Dutch newspapers over various years. Therefore, this thesis takes a comparative case study approach where the different research results for the different media outlets, and over multiple years, are compared to one another, leading to findings about the framing of one specific case: the Black Pete discussion. Firstly, this comparative approach towards the case of the Black Pete discussion makes it possible to see how the Black Pete discussion has been framed in different newspapers, and especially whether there are similarities and differences in the way this issue has been framed in these newspapers. This allows for a comparison across types of newspapers (quality newspapers and popular newspapers) and can show how each type of newspaper covers the issue of Black Pete differently. Secondly, the comparative aspect that focuses on the different years that are included in this research makes it possible to see how framing of the Black Pete discussion in these newspapers has changed over time.

**Newspapers**

The media texts that will be looked at are articles on the Black Pete discussion that appeared in *de Telegraaf, Algemeen Dagblad, de Volkskrant* and *NRC Handelsblad* between November 1st, 2011 and January 1st, 2015.

These four newspapers have been chosen because they are among the most read newspapers in the Netherlands. Furthermore, two of them are quality newspapers (*de Volkskrant, NRC Handelsblad*), whereas the other two (*Telegraaf, Algemeen Dagblad*) are more popular newspapers, written for a much broader audience (Semetko, Holli et al., 2000, p. 97).

By comparing quality and popular newspapers, there is an equal division between these two newspapers, which ensures that ultimately a good overall overview can be given on how the issue of the Black Pete discussion has been framed in Dutch newspapers, and that the final
conclusions do not only refer to one particular segment of print media outlets (either quality newspapers or popular newspapers).

Sample
The total amount of articles in the sample is 609 news articles. Below a table can be found that shows how many articles appeared in each newspaper on the Black Pete discussion in each year within the selected time frame of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 up until December 31<sup>st</sup> 2014. The sample has been generated by making use of the search engine *LexisNexis Academic*. The query that was used for all newspapers was “Zwarte Piet”. Initially this resulted in 1,579 articles. This initial result included a lot of opinion pieces, letters from readers and columns on the topic of Black Pete. These articles were excluded from the sample because they provide the reader with the opinion of an individual on the Black Pete discussion, and therefore do not show how the Black Pete debate has been covered by the objective journalists of the newspapers. Therefore, only news articles are part of the sample. This was also done because otherwise the sample size would simply be too large for the scope of this research project. Sometimes also articles were present that did not have anything to do with the Black Pete discussion, but still contained the words “Zwarte Piet”. By sifting through all 1,579 articles manually, these articles were deleted from the sample, and a total amount of 609 news articles on the Black Pete discussion remained. The sample is archived digitally and it is available upon request. This sample is the largest sample with news articles possible within this timeframe, which allows for giving a complete and comprehensive overview of how the Black Pete discussion has been framed in Dutch newspapers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper/Year</th>
<th>Telegraaf</th>
<th>Algemeen Dagblad</th>
<th>De Volkskrant</th>
<th>NRC Handelsblad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount per newspaper</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount</td>
<td>609</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The unit of analysis of this research project is every single article that has been included in the sample. The timeframe mentioned above has been selected because the discussion around Black Pete started in November 2011 when four people got arrested during the annual national Saint Nicholas welcome ceremony. For the end date of this analysis there has been chosen for roughly three weeks after Saint Nicholas left the Netherlands in 2014. Every year, from that moment onwards, the Black Pete discussion starts to fade to the background of the public discussion and appears less and less in the media. Although the discussion has already revived since the autumn of 2015, these articles are not included in this research.

The codebook
In order to see how the Black Pete discussion has been framed in the Dutch newspapers, a set of strict rules for coding the frames and sources in the newspaper articles has been laid down in the codebook. Macnamara (2003, p. 10) states that a codebook is the “key element for an extensive analysis”. The purpose of the codebook is to get reliable results that can lead to conclusions on the framing of the Black Pete discussion.

The codebook used for this research consists of three different parts: one that elaborates on the issue-specific main frames that can be found in the sample articles, and one that focuses on the topics that are dealt with in these articles. These topics are looked at because they determine how the main frames that are present in the articles are constructed. The last part deals with the sources that are present in the coverage on the Black Pete debate. How this codebook was built, is dealt with in the separate sections on each of these parts of the codebook. When building the entire codebook, an increase in the objectiveness of a quantitative content analysis can come from the inter-coder reliability. This means that a content analysis is “a measuring procedure that yields the same results on repeated trials” (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 11-12). However, since there is only one coder, this research lacks this inter-coder reliability.

With regard to framing, this research looks at both issue-specific main frames and the topics that are present within an article. With a topic is meant that within an article certain ‘topics’ can be found that determine the construction of the main frame. The possible topics are all laid down in the codebook, and are dealt with in the part below on the coding of topics. The coding of issue-specific main frames and topics in this quantitative content analysis is deductive. The main frames are coded for by looking at the head and lead of an article. Therefore, there is only coded for one main frame per sample article. Furthermore, it is
important to state that the decision has been made to count every topic that showed up in an article, since *multiple topics can be found within the same article*. This has been done because, according to Schneider, “a news item can present a variety of competing frames, and a series of articles on a particular topic might present a range of frames” (Schneider, 2011, p. 74). Since in every article, multiple topics can exist, they can be discovered throughout the entire article.

When coding for the different sources that can be found in the articles that are included in the sample, each source that appears in every article has been coded. These sources can be found in an article when the journalist uses a direct quotation in his or her article, but can also be identified by the use of words such as “according to”, “say”, “announce”, or similar words and synonyms. In case a source is mentioned multiple times in one article, it is also coded accordingly. When sources from for example the same organization can very clearly be detected as different sources (e.g. “politician X from political party A states… politician Y from political party A states…”), these sources will be coded differently. This is not the case when different persons cannot clearly be identified (e.g. “political party A says…political party A also says…”).

A detailed account of the codebook for frames, topics and sources can be found in Annex I. Also, the different frames, topics and sources that are looked for in this research are shortly addressed and explained below.

**Coding frames and topics**

The issue-specific main frames that are coded for are not derived from previous research, because of the lack thereof in the field of framing in the news coverage on Black Pete. Therefore, these main frames are selected by looking at the possible points of view there are in the Black Pete discussion. The issue-specific main frames that are coded for in this research are:

- *Proponent of Black Pete frame*
- *Opponent of Black Pete frame*
- *Neutral frame*

These issue-specific main frames can be found in an article by looking for the following indicators:
- Proponent of Black Pete frame: The story in constructed in such as way that it there is an emphasis on the view of proponents of Black Pete (who emphasize that the appearance of Black Pete should stay the same). The appearance of Black Pete and the Black Pete discussion are framed in such a way that an article covers it in a non-sympathetic light and/or in a negative manner towards the opponents of Black Pete and the discussion as such. In this case, an article covers the issue of Black Pete from a proponent perspective.

Indicators of words or (parts of) sentences for this proponent of Black Pete frame are: ‘Black Pete should stay the same’, ‘historical evidence supports Black Pete’, ‘the Black Pete discussion is totally overblown’, ‘it is not a real problem/it is not racism or discrimination’, alternatives or reforms are not necessary/should not be made’, ‘the people do not support the opponents of Black Pete’, ‘they support the traditional appearance of Black Pete’, ‘Black Pete is Black’, etc..

- Opponent of Black Pete frame: The story emphasizes that the appearance of Black Pete should change. The appearance of Black Pete and the Black Pete discussion are framed in such a way that an article covers it in a sympathetic light and/or in a positive manner towards the ones opposing Black Pete. In this case, an article covers the issue of Black Pete from an opponent perspective.

Indicators of words or (parts of sentences) for this opponent of Black Pete frame are: ‘against Black Pete’, ‘Black Pete refers to the Dutch history of slavery and colonialism’, ‘the Black Pete discussion is not taken seriously’, ‘it is a real problem/Black Pete is a racist phenomenon and leads to discrimination’, alternatives or reforms are necessary and should be made’, ‘they do not support the traditional appearance of Black Pete’, etc..

- Neutral frame: articles that have a neutral frame on the Black Pete discussion deal with the matter of Black Pete by framing it in such a way that an article covers it in both a positive and a negative light towards both groups of opponents and proponents that balance each other out. It could also be the case that in an article the issue is not discussed either negatively or positively.

There has been chosen to look at these issue-specific main frames since it is likely that they are at the core of coverage on the Black Pete discussion. Within this discussion there are two
strongly divided sides to which every statement or opinion can lead back to. You are either in favour, or against, Black Pete. However, when the coverage is balanced or the issue is not addressed either positively or negatively, there can be coded for a neutral frame. To detect how exactly an article on the discussion is composed, it is necessary to look at these articles on a more detailed, and less black-white, scale. Therefore, as mentioned above, within these issue-specific main frames, different topics can be discovered. Not only are they shortly explained below, there is also a short elaboration on why a specific topic has been chosen to be part of this research project. The topics have been selected by making use of two already existing researches, namely ‘Tracking the development of media frames within and across policy issue debates’ (Boydstun, Card et al., 2014) and ‘Media framing of graduated licensing policy debates’ (Hinchcliff, Chapman, 2010). The topics that are presented in these researches that are also relevant for this thesis have been selected to be part of this research project, because both researches refer to debates that are present in a society and provide for topics that are present in the news coverage on these debates. Since the Black Pete discussion has become a very tense and controversial debate within the Dutch society, the topics that are mentioned in these researches are also useful for this research project. Therefore, all possible topics that can be found in the sample articles are derived from these researches. However, there is one exception, which is the new racism topic. This topic was added because when covering racial issues, discrimination is often denied in the Netherlands. When covering a racial issue such as the Black Pete discussion, this topic may therefore also be present in the news coverage on this discussion, and was therefore added to this research.

- **Historical topic**

This code is applied when an article focuses on the historical background on the celebration of Saint Nicolas’ birthday and especially the character of Black Pete. This topic has been chosen because the whole discussion started with people who opposed the appearance of Black Pete, which was said to be a vestige of the Dutch history of colonialism and slavery.

- **Protest or rally topic**

Here, an article focuses on the protests that took place as the discussion intensified, by both opponents and proponents of Black Pete. This topic has been chosen because, ultimately, a lot of protests took place, of which some even turned violent, which will be reflected in the media coverage on the Black Pete debate.
- **Judicial topic**
When there is a focus on the judicial aspects of the discussion, for example when the opposing side went to the Dutch court, a judicial topic is present. This topic has been selected because, with the decision to go to the Dutch court, the Black Pete discussion suddenly had a judicial aspect, which can be present in the media coverage. A judicial topic is also present when the coverage focuses on the statement that both sides in the discussion can voice their opinion because of their right on the freedom of speech. Both opponents and proponents often state that they are entitled to say whatever they want in the Black Pete discussion because of their right on the freedom of speech that is laid down in the Dutch constitution. This can also be apparent in the newspaper articles that are included in the sample.

- **Human-interest topic**
When articles focus on personal, sometimes emotional, stories and experiences, they have a human-interest topic. This topic has been selected because, since the celebration of Saint Nicholas’ birthday and Black Pete are a Dutch tradition of which lots of people have childhood memories. This has resulted in a very tense, emotional discussion, which can lead to human-interest stories about this subject in the media coverage.

- **Political topics**
In case the political topic is present, there is a focus on how politicians react on the Black Pete discussion. When something is such a hot topic in a country as the Black Pete discussion in the Netherlands, it is likely that politicians respond to what is going on in the country. Therefore this topic has been selected for this research.

- **Media topic**
If coverage focuses on how the media respond to this intense debate within the Dutch society, there will be coded for a media topic. As the size of the sample of news articles on this issue shows, the Black Pete discussion was covered extensively in Dutch newspapers. This has also caused the media to reflect more on how the issue of Black Pete has appeared in the media, which is why the media topic has been included in the codebook.

- **Tradition topic**
The tradition topic is a topic that focuses on the statement that the appearance of Black Pete is a traditional phenomenon in the Netherlands. This topic has been selected because an often-
heard statement in this discussion is that Black Pete is an ancient Dutch tradition, which is probably also present in the media coverage. The tradition topic differs from the historical topic in the sense that the historical topic focuses on the Dutch history of slavery and colonialism, whereas the tradition topic focuses on the tradition of celebrating Saint Nicholas’ birthday and Black Pete.

- Reform-oriented topic
A reform-oriented topic is present when an article focuses on changes that should, or are already made, in the appearance of Black Pete. The topic of changing the appearance of Black Pete has led to a lot of reactions from both sides, and it is likely that the Dutch newspapers paid attention to this.

- Us versus them topics
Within this topic there is a focus on common Dutch values that are placed as an opposite of the values of ethnic minorities in the Dutch society. There are cultural contradictions between the two groups opposing each other that cannot be overcome. This topic draws on a discourse of national belonging and national identity. Since the Us versus Them divide is at the core of the Black Pete discussion between proponents and opponents, this topic has been included in this research.

- New racism and discrimination topic
The new racism and discrimination topic is present within a news article when the proposition that Black Pete is a discriminatory character is denied (e.g.: ‘Black Pete can not be / is not racist’). Since racial issues are often denied in the Netherlands, because of for example the Dutch self-image, this topic may also be found in the news coverage on the discussion.

Coding sources
After the different issue-specific main frames and topics have been coded for, there has been coded for the different sources that can be found in articles that are included in the sample. When looking at the sources that are used in the news coverage on the Black Pete discussion, there are six types of sources that have been coded for. Within these six types of sources, a distinction is made between sources that are opposing Black Pete, and the ones that advocate for him. But also here a neutral category has been included.
These different sources can be coded for:

- Ordinary citizens
  - Opposing Black Pete
  - Advocate of Black Pete
  - Neutral

- Official sources: sources such as politicians, the police, judges and spokesmen or officers that are affiliated to these kinds of sources.
  - Opposing Black Pete
  - Advocate of Black Pete
  - Neutral

- Experts: scholars from universities, academic experts, or researchers from research institutions
  - Opposing Black Pete
  - Advocate of Black Pete
  - Neutral

- Representatives of organizations in favour of Black Pete (this are often people from the traditional white Dutch population)

- Representatives of organizations against Black Pete (this are often people from racial and ethnic minority groups)

People that are representatives of organizations that are either in favour, or against, Black Pete, are not coded for as experts. Experts are in the first place people that are scholars from universities, academic experts or researchers from research institutions. When for example a university scholar is also a representative of an organization against Black Pete, he or she will be coded for twice (one time as an expert, one time as a representative of an organization against Black Pete).

- Other sources: sources that do not fit in any of the above mentioned categories.
Limitations
There are some methodological limitations that come along with a content analysis as the selected research method. First of all, it should be noted that a content analysis does not offer an absolute and totally objective view on the coverage of an issue or event. For example, the frames that are looked at in the analysis can be considered partly subjective, since the researcher decides on which frames the focus lies in the research. Furthermore, the fact that there is only one coder in this research project is a methodological limitation. An important part of the objectiveness of a quantitative content analysis comes from the inter-coder reliability. This means that a content analysis is “a measuring procedure that yields the same results on repeated trials” (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 11-12). When there are multiple coders, the coding process will be as objective and reliable as possible. However, since there is only one coder, this research lacks this inter-coder reliability. Therefore, only more or less objective frames have been selected that can easily be found when using the codebook. More subjective notions such as attitude or tone of an article are for the sake of objectivity and reliability not included in this research.
Chapter 5: Research Results

In this chapter the research results of the quantitative content analysis are displayed. The first part focuses on the results on framing, i.e. the main frames and the topics that are present in the newspaper articles that are part of the sample. Here, firstly, all main frames and topics that have been found are summed up to see how the Black Pete discussion in total has been covered in the Dutch newspapers within the timeframe. Afterwards a distinction is made between every year and for each newspaper, which makes it possible to compare these results over time and across different newspapers. This can provide for insights on how the coverage on Black Pete discussion differs across the different newspapers and how this coverage has changed over the years. Secondly, the same thing is done for the results on the sources that appeared in the coverage on the Black Pete debate. All these results are analyzed in the next chapter, where also the sub-questions are answered and the hypotheses are tested. Therefore, this chapter is a rather descriptive one, where only the results of the actual content analysis are displayed.

Total amount of main frames and topics for all years

Of the 609 main frames that were found when conducting the quantitative content analysis, 230 ‘proponent of Black Pete’ frames, 180 ‘opponent of Black Pete’ frames, and 199 neutral frames, were found. The results in percentages are showed in table 2 below. In all tables the highest (or the three highest) outcome(s) in percentages is/are highlighted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Main Frames</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011 – 2014</td>
<td>- Proponent of Black Pete Frame</td>
<td>37.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Opponent of Black Pete Frame</td>
<td>29.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Neutral Frame</td>
<td>32.7 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 3 the total amount of topics that are present in all newspapers for all years are added up. This table shows that overall the topics that are mostly present in the newspapers articles on the Black Pete discussion are the reform-oriented, the us versus them and the new racism topic.
TABLE 3: TOTAL AMOUNT OF TOPICS FOR ALL YEARS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>2011 – 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>6.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protest or Rally</td>
<td>7.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial</td>
<td>5.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Interest</td>
<td>7.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>10.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>4.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>10.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform-oriented</td>
<td>2.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Us versus Them</td>
<td>18.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New racism and discrimination</td>
<td>16.3 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main frames
Now the results on the main frames that were present in the different newspapers and for each year are separated in Table 4. In the next part, the most striking outcomes for each newspaper are addressed shortly. Again, these results are analyzed in the next chapter.

*De Telegraaf*
In *de Telegraaf*, for all years, the dominant main frame was the proponent of Black Pete frame. However, it should be noted that the dominancy of this frame became less over the years. Also the opponent of Black Pete frame became less present, whereas the amount of articles that had a neutral main frame increased significantly over the years.

*Algemeen Dagblad*
Also the news articles that appeared in *Algemeen Dagblad* have predominantly been framed with the proponent of Black Pete frame. However, it is noteworthy that the opponent of Black Pete frame has gained considerable ground over the years: from 16.6% in 2012 to 36.7% in 2014.
**TABLE 4: MAIN FRAMES FOR EACH NEWSPAPER PER YEAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Telegraaf</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Frames</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proponent of Black Pete Frame</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>62,5%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>47,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opponent of Black Pete Frame</td>
<td>16,7%</td>
<td>18,75%</td>
<td>7,4%</td>
<td>10,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Frame</td>
<td>8,3%</td>
<td>18,75%</td>
<td>36,6%</td>
<td>42,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Algemeen Dagblad</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Frames</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proponent of Black Pete Frame</td>
<td>30,0%</td>
<td>41,7%</td>
<td>45,2%</td>
<td>46,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opponent of Black Pete Frame</td>
<td>30,0%</td>
<td>16,6%</td>
<td>21,0%</td>
<td>36,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Frame</td>
<td>40,0%</td>
<td>41,7%</td>
<td>33,8%</td>
<td>16,9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>De Volkskrant</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Frames</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proponent of Black Pete Frame</td>
<td>57,1%</td>
<td>40,0%</td>
<td>22,4%</td>
<td>18,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opponent of Black Pete Frame</td>
<td>28,6%</td>
<td>10,0%</td>
<td>38,8%</td>
<td>51,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Frame</td>
<td>14,3%</td>
<td>0,0%</td>
<td>28,8%</td>
<td>29,9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NRC Handelsblad</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Frames</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proponent of Black Pete Frame</td>
<td>0,0%</td>
<td>14,3%</td>
<td>12,8%</td>
<td>13,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opponent of Black Pete Frame</td>
<td>50,0%</td>
<td>28,6%</td>
<td>46,2%</td>
<td>47,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Frame</td>
<td>50,0%</td>
<td>77,1%</td>
<td>41,0%</td>
<td>39,4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**De Volkskrant**

Especially for *de Volkskrant* there has been a major change over time in the dominant main frames. Like the two newspapers mentioned above, also *de Volkskrant* initially covered the Black Pete debate from the proponent perspective. However, from 2012 onwards, the opponent of Black Pete frame has been the one that was used most often.

**NRC Handelsblad**

The *NRC Handelsblad* differs from all the other newspapers mentioned above, because it is the only one where the proponent of Black Pete frame was never the dominant one. Just like ultimately happened in *de Volkskrant*, also the *NRC Handelsblad* covered the Black Pete discussion predominantly from the opponent perspective by framing it with the opponent of Black Pete frame. It is also noteworthy to mention that the neutral frame was very much present in *NRC Handelsblad’s* coverage on the debate.
Topics
Exactly the same that has been done with the main frames in the previous part can be done with the topics. To recap, the coding rule for topics is that multiple topics can be found in the same article. In Table 5 (next page), the results on the topics that are present in each newspaper are shown, for each year separately. For every year, per newspaper, the three highest outcomes are highlighted in the table. Below, for each newspaper follows a short description of the most noteworthy outcomes.

De Telegraaf
In *De Telegraaf*, the new racism topic has been a dominant topic over all years. In 2011 and 2012, the human-interest topic was also very often present. But in 2013 and 2014, the us versus them topic gained prominence (see Table 5).

Algemeen Dagblad
In the *Algemeen Dagblad*, one of the most dominant topics that dealt with in the coverage of the Black Pete discussion was the tradition topic. In this newspaper, in 2011 and 2012, the protest and rally was the most prominent one. But the dominant topics changed over time. The us versus them topic and the new racism topic appeared to gain prominence over the years (see Table 5).

De Volkskrant
Also in *De Volkskrant*, the us versus them topic and the news racism topic were very dominant topics that appeared in the news articles on the Black Pete debate. However, in this newspaper there was also a large amount of topics on reforms that have been, or should be, made to the appearance of Black Pete (see Table 5).

NRC Handelsblad
Topics that appeared in the *NRC Handelsblad* were in general quite similar to the ones that appeared in *De Volkskrant*. However, the main difference is that, in 2011 and 2012, the NRC covered the debate often from an historical perspective, which results in a high degree of historical topics being present (see Table 5). Another topic that was more present, especially in 2012, was the judicial topic (see Table 5).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>7.3 %</td>
<td>5.9 %</td>
<td>5.9 %</td>
<td>5.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protest or Rally</td>
<td>14.5 %</td>
<td>8.8 %</td>
<td>9.0 %</td>
<td>4.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial</td>
<td>5.5 %</td>
<td>2.9 %</td>
<td>3.6 %</td>
<td>10.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Interest</td>
<td>16.4 %</td>
<td>14.7 %</td>
<td>10.9 %</td>
<td>5.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>1.8 %</td>
<td>1.7 %</td>
<td>11.3 %</td>
<td>11.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>1.8 %</td>
<td>5.9 %</td>
<td>5.0 %</td>
<td>4.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>18.1 %</td>
<td>11.8 %</td>
<td>8.1 %</td>
<td>11.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform-oriented</td>
<td>0.0 %</td>
<td>11.8 %</td>
<td>6.3 %</td>
<td>12.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Us versus Them</td>
<td>5.5 %</td>
<td>8.8 %</td>
<td>19.5 %</td>
<td>18.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New racism</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>6.5 %</td>
<td>5.0 %</td>
<td>4.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protest or Rally</td>
<td>23.3 %</td>
<td>16.1 %</td>
<td>9.9 %</td>
<td>5.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial</td>
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<td>5.0 %</td>
<td>5.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Interest</td>
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<td>13.0 %</td>
<td>5.0 %</td>
<td>7.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>3.3 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media</td>
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<td>3.2 %</td>
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<td>0.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>16.5 %</td>
<td>16.1 %</td>
<td>12.8 %</td>
<td>13.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.3 %</td>
<td>3.2 %</td>
<td>12.8 %</td>
<td>12.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Us versus Them</td>
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<td>16.1 %</td>
<td>18.4 %</td>
<td>20.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New racism</td>
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<td>16.4 %</td>
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<td>6.1 %</td>
<td>3.4 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protest or Rally</td>
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<td>0.0 %</td>
<td>5.2 %</td>
<td>4.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.0 %</td>
<td>4.3 %</td>
<td>4.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Interest</td>
<td>17.8 %</td>
<td>0.0 %</td>
<td>3.5 %</td>
<td>3.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
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<td>0.0 %</td>
<td>12.2 %</td>
<td>18.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
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<td>12.2 %</td>
<td>11.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>1.9 %</td>
<td>16.7 %</td>
<td>3.5 %</td>
<td>5.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform-oriented</td>
<td>25.0 %</td>
<td>8.3 %</td>
<td>21.2 %</td>
<td>10.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Us versus Them</td>
<td>7.1 %</td>
<td>16.7 %</td>
<td>20.0 %</td>
<td>19.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New racism</td>
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<td>15.0 %</td>
<td>11.3 %</td>
<td>31.0 %</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>NRC Handelsblad</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>17.6 %</td>
<td>11.2 %</td>
<td>12.5 %</td>
<td>8.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protest or Rally</td>
<td>17.6 %</td>
<td>6.3 %</td>
<td>8.6 %</td>
<td>5.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial</td>
<td>17.6 %</td>
<td>0.0 %</td>
<td>3.9 %</td>
<td>4.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Interest</td>
<td>11.8 %</td>
<td>0.0 %</td>
<td>4.6 %</td>
<td>7.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>0.0 %</td>
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<td>7.9 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>8.9 %</td>
<td>16.3 %</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
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<td>12.5 %</td>
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<tr>
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<td>14.5 %</td>
<td>10.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Us versus Them</td>
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<td>6.3 %</td>
<td>24.9 %</td>
<td>36.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New racism</td>
<td>0.0 %</td>
<td>6.3 %</td>
<td>13.8 %</td>
<td>18.9 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sources for all years

When adding up all the results on sourcing practices, this leads to the results displayed in Table 6. The highest outcome is highlighted green. The highest outcomes on whether these sources were pro, contra or neutral on the matter of Black Pete, are highlighted blue.

TABLE 6: TOTAL AMOUNT OF SOURCES FOR ALL YEARS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>2011 – 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary citizens</td>
<td>30,1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Opposing Black Pete</td>
<td>34,4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advocate of Black Pete</td>
<td>52,5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Neutral</td>
<td>13,1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official sources</td>
<td>31,2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Opposing Black Pete</td>
<td>16,0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advocate of Black Pete</td>
<td>19,0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Neutral</td>
<td>65,0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts</td>
<td>9,0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Opposing Black Pete</td>
<td>80,2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advocate of Black Pete</td>
<td>5,0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Neutral</td>
<td>14,8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives of organizations in favor of Black Pete</td>
<td>12,8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives of organizations against Black Pete</td>
<td>13,3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3,6 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total amount of sources that was present in all the articles was 1.120 sources. A big proportion of these sources turn out to be official sources (31,2%) and also ordinary citizens (30,1%) have been sourced often. The majority of the official sources that have been used in the news coverage on the Black Pete discussion were neutral on this issue. Within the category of ordinary citizens, a majority was an advocate of the traditional character and appearance of Black Pete. It is also noteworthy that this differs hugely from the experts that have been sourced, since a large majority of the experts cited, have been opposing Black Pete.
As can be seen in Table 7, the different years and newspapers have been separated so similarities and differences among different newspapers and across multiple years can be discovered. Below, each newspaper is described very shortly with reference to their source usage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 7: SOURCES FOR EACH NEWSPAPER PER YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Telegraaf</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Opposing Black Pete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advocate of Black Pete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Opposing Black Pete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advocate of Black Pete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Opposing Black Pete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advocate of Black Pete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives of organizations in favor of Black Pete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives of organizations against Black Pete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Algemeen Dagblad**                      |
| 2011                                       |
| Ordinary citizens                         | 11.4 % | 26.7 % | 25.3 % | 26.4 % |
| - Opposing Black Pete                     | 28.6 % | 75.0 % | 25.0 % | 24.7 % |
| - Advocate of Black Pete                  | 42.8 % | 25.0 % | 58.3 % | 65.0 % |
| - Neutral                                 | 28.6 % | 0.0 %  | 16.7 % | 10.3 % |
| Official sources                          | 29.4 % | 33.3 % | 27.4 % | 32.3 % |
| - Opposing Black Pete                     | 40.0 % | 0.0 %  | 19.2 % | 0.0 %  |
| - Advocate of Black Pete                  | 0.0 %  | 0.0 %  | 38.5 % | 3.7 %  |
| - Neutral                                 | 60.0 % | 100.0 % | 42.3 % | 96.3 % |
| Experts                                   | 0.0 %  | 0.0 %  | 10.5 % | 7.3 %  |
| - Opposing Black Pete                     | 0.0 %  | 0.0 %  | 80.0 % | 100.0 % |
| - Advocate of Black Pete                  | 0.0 %  | 0.0 %  | 0.0 %  | 0.0 %  |
| - Neutral                                 | 0.0 %  | 0.0 %  | 20.0 % | 0.0 %  |
| Representatives of organizations in favor of Black Pete | 0.0 %  | 56.7 % | 8.4 %  | 21.7 % |
| Representatives of organizations against Black Pete | 39.4 % | 13.3 % | 16.8 % | 17.2 % |
| Other                                     | 0.0 %  | 0.0 %  | 11.6 % | 0.4 %  |

| **De Volkskrant**                         |
| 2011                                       |
| Ordinary citizens                         | 13.8 % | 10.0 % | 27.5 % | 36.1 % |
| - Opposing Black Pete                     | 14.3 % | 75.0 % | 57.9 % | 45.7 % |
| - Advocate of Black Pete                  | 37.4 % | 25.0 % | 42.1 % | 34.8 % |
| - Neutral                                 | 28.6 % | 0.0 %  | 0.0 %  | 19.5 % |
| Official sources                          | 15.4 % | 20.0 % | 24.6 % | 35.5 % |
| - Opposing Black Pete                     | 0.0 %  | 25.0 % | 29.4 % | 15.4 % |
In *de Telegraaf* most of the time, ordinary citizens that advocated for Black Pete and official sources that were neutral on the issue, were present as sources. Furthermore, during 2011 and 2012, there were a lot more sources of representatives of organizations that are in favor of Black Pete than representatives of organizations that oppose him (40% in favor vs. 15% against – see Table 7). This changed over time, and was not so much present in 2013 and 2014.

**Algemeen Dagblad**

Coverage in terms of sources that are used in the *Algemeen Dagblad* is quite similar to the sourcing practices in *de Telegraaf*. Ordinary citizens that advocated for Black Pete and neutral officials were dominant. Furthermore, in *Algemeen Dagblad*, the experts that were sourced were most of the time opposing Black Pete as he is right now.
**De Volkskrant**

Also in *de Volkskrant* officials and ordinary citizens were dominant sources. However, from 2012 onwards in *de Volkskrant* there are more citizens opposing Black Pete than that there are citizens that are a proponent. Despite the fact that officials were dominant, they were sourced less often than in *de Telegraaf* and *Algemeen Dagblad*. From 2013 onwards, the representatives of organizations that are against Black Pete were sourced more often.

**NRC Handelsblad**

Sources in *NRC Handelsblad* are quite similar to the sourcing practices in *de Volkskrant*. Also here there is more space for ordinary citizens that oppose Black Pete. Experts, like in all the other newspapers, are also more often opposing Black Pete.

Now the research results have been displayed, these results are analyzed in the next chapter. The outcomes are used to answer the sub-questions of this research project. The different hypotheses that have been set are tested.
Chapter 6: Analysis

In this part the research results from the previous chapter are analyzed. First of all, the remarkable outcomes (mentioned in the previous chapter) on main frames, topics and sources are discussed. This discussion makes it possible to provide an answer to the question how the Black Pete discussion has been framed in Dutch newspapers, how this way of framing has changed over time and what role sourcing practices of journalists played in this. This provides for answers to the different sub-questions and makes it possible to test the hypotheses.

Main Frames

Overall, the dominant main frame that was found in the newspapers that are included in this research project was the proponent of Black Pete frame. This can be explained because as already mentioned in the theoretical framework, Strömback, Negrine et al. (2013, p. 34) argue that, “media themselves prefer frames that are culturally congruent en that may be successful in capturing audiences’ attention”. Therefore, journalists build frames that correspond with the views and opinions of the largest possible audience, which is, in the case of Black Pete, the opponent camp (almost 83 % of the Dutch population is a proponent of Black Pete (Research by SCP (social-cultural research statistics institute in the Netherland), cited in de Telegraaf on 6-10-2014). This has severe consequences for the representation of minorities in the Dutch media, because it leads to underrepresentation of these groups. However, it is important to note that there are differences among the different newspapers. For example for de Telegraaf and Algemeen Dagblad the dominant main frame was the proponent of Black Pete frame. An example of this frame can for example be found in the article “Ik ben een Bounty! Surinaamse Edwin schminkt zich graag tot blanke Hulp Sint” (“I am a bounty! Surinamese Edwin likes to paint himself as a white Saint Nicholas, Telegraaf, 16-11-2011, translated from Dutch to English), which states: “Lately some people have been whining regularly because they associate Black Pete with discrimination. But not the Surinamese Edwin. On the contrary, he mentions that, “Black Pete is a just part of the tradition”.” This example shows that people that oppose Black Pete are ‘whining’ and are overreacting and that Black Pete is not a discriminatory character, and therefore frames the Black Pete discussion in such as way that people should be a proponent of Black Pete. But over time, in both newspapers the dominancy of this frame became less over the years and the amount of neutral and opponent of Black Pete frames increased. In de Volkskrant there has even been a major shift, since this paper initially started framing the discussion from a proponent of Black Pete...
perspective, but over time this changed to an opponent of Black Pete frame. An example of this opponent of Black Pete frame in the Volkskrant is for example: “There is no escape, according to art historian Elmer Kolfin: ‘the appearance of Black Pete should definitely change’. As an expert on this issue he does not doubt that the figure refers back to childslaves.” (de Volkskrant, 23-10-2013, in: “Negerpage uit de 17de eeuw werd Piet”). This example shows that in this article an experts is sourced who focuses on reforming the appearance of Black Pete, framing the debate in such a way that people should oppose the current appearance of Black Pete. Matthes (2010, p. 30) explains this major shift in the coverage of de Volkskrant, but also the increased shifting focus of de Telegraaf and Algemeen Dagblad, by arguing that when covering an issue or event over a longer time period, the way of framing changes. This is the case because when journalists cover one issue over a longer time period, they start looking for new angles to their news accounts. When there is initially a focus on one side of a debate, Matthes mentions, that side always will be counterbalanced with the ‘other side of the story’. It appears that this is also the case when covering the Black Pete discussion, where initially the coverage is framed from the proponents’ perspective, but as time goes by, this coverage starts to shift to the opponents’ perspective. However, this does not mean that the audience that receives these articles immediately start thinking about the issue of Black Pete differently. People often tend to accept the frame that matches their personal views and existing ideas they already have on a particular subject (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 112-113). This is important for understanding how people view the Black Pete discussion, because it increases the likelihood that people only ‘accept’ the views that are presented in the media that match their existing ideas and views on this topic. When someone has the personal view that matches the proponents’ perspective of Black Pete, it is not likely that his or her perspective suddenly changes to the opponents’ perspective, despite the change in framing of the media coverage.

NRC Handelsblad is the big exception in their coverage on the Black Pete discussion, because it is the only one where the proponent of Black Pete frame was never the dominant one. NRC Handelsblad covered the Black Pete discussion predominantly from the opponent perspective by framing it with the opponent of Black Pete frame and the neutral frame. An example of such a neutral main frame is: “According to Prime Minister Rutte, Black Pete is not a government issue. But now the United Nations started to interfere in the debate, it is one more than ever.” (NRC Handelsblad, 23-20-2013, in: “Piet en Politiek”). This an example of an article that deals with the Black Pete discussion, but does not deliver a strong pro or contra
Black Pete frame to the reader, but rather covers the issue of the debate itself, instead of focusing on the arguments of proponents and opponents.

**Topics**

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the dominant topics that, in all newspapers combined, were present in the coverage on the Black Pete debate were the reform-oriented topic, the us versus them topic, and the new racism and discrimination topic. Also the tradition topic and the political topic consistently received a lot of attention in the newspaper articles. This was the case for all four newspapers. In this subheading, first the dominant topics for all newspapers combined are discussed. Afterwards, differences and similarities among the different newspapers follow.

The high amount of reform-oriented topics shows that as the discussion continued, the articles on the Black Pete discussion more and more started to focus on changes that are, or should be, made in the appearance of Black Pete, such as for example Black Petes with other colours (red, yellow, blue, etc.) instead of the traditional black and brown.

Because of the high degree of the us versus them topics and the new racism topics when covering the Black Pete discussion, it can be stated that the articles that contain such topics, have an impact on how racial issues, such as the Black Pete discussion are discussed and covered in the Dutch media. With regard to the Black Pete discussion, people tend to have strong feelings towards the tradition of Saint Nicholas and Black Pete because they see it as “their innocent, old tradition and part of their culture” (Van der Pijl and Goulordava, 2014, p. 267). This leads, according to Van der Pijl and Goulordava, to a situation where “there is a strong tendency to ignore and/or reject the race issues that surround the discussion on Black Pete” (Van der Pijl and Goulordava, 2014, p. 270). This affects racist thinking and behavior, especially by denying the fact that Black Pete is a racist phenomenon. This denial can be explained because of the Dutch self-image that “stresses the Netherlands as a tolerant, small and just ethical nation” (Wekker, 2014, p. 174). This self-image plays an important role in the coverage on racial issues such as the Black Pete discussion, and has an impact on the framing of these issues. Essed and Hoving refer to this as the “smug ignorance that is aggressively rejecting the possibility to know” (Essed & Hoving, 2014b, p.11). The denial of Black Pete as a racist phenomenon is reflected in the high amount of new racism and discrimination topics that was present in the sample articles. The high amount of us versus them topics can simply be explained because the Black Pete discussion is a very tense and polarized debate, which makes it likely that the issue is covered within the us versus them paradigm.
However, also with reference to the topics there are differences among the different newspapers.

In *de Telegraaf*, the new racism topic has been a dominant topic over all years. In 2011 and 2012, the human-interest topic was also very often present. An example of such a human-interest topic is: “The Surinamese-Dutch actor has been playing this role for 34 years. “Every time I love to do it!” (*de Telegraaf*, 16-11-2011, in: “Ik ben een Bounty! Surinaamse Edwin schminkt zich graag tot blanke Hulp Sint”). This example shows that emotional, human-interest angle towards the entire discussion because the central question in this article is: How does the actor feel about the tradition of celebrating Saint Nicholas’ birthday with Black Petes?

In 2013 and 2014, the us versus them topic gained prominence. This was for example the case in the article “*Integratiedebat is Trieste karikatuur*” where the following sentence was written: “Suddenly the indigenous must adapt. But to whom? To people who hijack the discussion with a hidden agenda, that want to cash in on the history of slavery, or died noses with an inferiority complex?” (*de Telegraaf*, 3-12-2013). Here it is stressed that the phenomenon of Black Pete, and his appearance, was part of the Dutch identity and a national tradition. If you do not agree with this, (‘them’) you do not belong to the ‘indigenous’ (‘us).

In the *Algemeen Dagblad*, one of the most dominant topics that was dealt with in the coverage of the Black Pete discussion, was the tradition topic. For example, “Schools don’t want to make changes to the appearance of Black Pete because it is part of the tradition (25%)” (*Algemeen Dagblad*, 8-11-2014, in: “Zwarte Piet op school nog fier overeind”). Here in 2011 and 2012, the protest and rally was the most prominent one. As for example in the article “*Curacao noemt politie tijdens Sint intocht racistisch*” that states: “They were arrested during the protests because they wore T-shirts with the text ‘Black Pete is racism’” (*Algemeen Dagblad*, 15-11-2011). But also in this newspaper the dominant topics changed over time. The us versus them topic and the new racism topic gained prominence over the years, which led to the result that these two topics became the most dominant ones over time. An example of the new racism topic in the *Algemeen Dagblad* is: “Rumes stresses – just like the proponents of Pete in the Netherlands – that Pete ‘never has been a racist phenomenon. Pete does not have anything to do with the colonial history’” (*Algemeen Dagblad*, 2-9-2014, in: Piet in Belgie is zwart en blijft zwart, klaar uit!).

Also in *de Volkskrant*, the us versus them topic and the new racism topic were very dominant topics that appeared in the news articles on the Black Pete debate. However, in this newspaper
there was also a large amount of topics on reforms that have been, or should be, made to the appearance of Black Pete. Henceforth, the dominance of reform-oriented topics, like for example: “With the abolishing of the earring, the committee wants to meet the wishes of people who think Back Pete is a racist character” (de Volkskrant, 7-11-2013, in: “Zwarte Piet Amsterdam mist dit jaar zijn oorring”),

Topics that appeared in the NRC Handelsblad were in general quite similar to the ones that appeared in de Volkskrant. However, the main difference is that, in 2011 and 2012, the NRC Handelsblad covered the debate often from an historical perspective, which results in a high degree of historical topics being present. An example of such a historical topic is: “Jan Schenkman introduced the name Black Pete for the first time in 1850. The first suggestion is that it refers to the devilish character of this helper of Saint Nicholas” (NRC Handelsblad, 17-11-2012, in: Herkomst zwarte helper; alledaagse wetenschap”). Another topic that was more present, especially in 2012, was the judicial topic, which was for example present in the article “Zwarte Piet; in Nederland”, which stated: “We have to become a group that people take into account. Therefore we have filed this complaint against the State” (NRC Handelsblad, 1-3-2012)

Sources

When looking at the research results, it can be stated that journalists heavily relied on ordinary citizens and officials as sources for their stories on the Black Pete discussion. With regard to whether these sources were a proponent or a opponent of Black Pete, the results show that the ordinary citizens were most of the time a proponent of Black Pete, and that most officials were neutral on the issue. That officials have often been selected as sources is not a surprise, as officials are considered to be ‘elites’. According to Hall et al. (1978, p. 58), elite sources in general, and specifically government official, are seen as the most credible sources, which explains why these type of sources are very much present in the coverage on the Black Pete discussion. Ordinary citizens that are a proponent of the current tradition character and appearance of Black Pete were also heavily used as a source. This is because as Strömback, Negrine et al. (2013, p. 34) argue that, “media themselves prefer frames that are culturally congruent and that may be successful in capturing audiences’ attention”. Since a large majority of the Dutch population, almost 83 %, is a proponent of Black Pete (CBS research mentioned in de Telegraaf, 6-10-2014), it appears that the issue of the Black Pete discussion has been sourced, at least in terms of ordinary citizens, from the perspective of the proponents of Black Pete.
Also in terms of source usage there is a difference between quality and popular newspapers. In the quality newspapers, the research results show that in general the people that has been used as a source are most of the times opposing Black Pete. In the popular newspapers this is completely different, since the sources that have been used are predominantly proposing the appearance and characteristics of Black Pete. Especially in the category of ordinary citizens, opponents of Black Pete are most of the time part of a (ethnic) minority group. Since they are less often sourced, this can lead to an “infrequent presence of minority news sources” (Campell, 1995, p. 57). According to Entman (1992, p. 15) ethnic minority groups receive “much less opportunity to convey their perspectives in their own voice”. Using more sources that are a proponent of Black Pete than opponents, sourcing practices have influenced the way in which the Black Pete discussion has been framed, in a sense that it leads to the underrepresentation of the opponents of Black Pete and the overrepresentation of the proponents of Black Pete in the Dutch newspapers. In the Netherlands this is especially the case in the coverage on Black Pete and the Black Pete discussion that has appeared in the popular newspapers (e.g. de Telegraaf and Algemeen Dagblad). It can be stated that the dominance of the proponent of Black Pete mainframe is caused by the large amount of ordinary citizens that propose the current Black Pete, and that this affected the way in which the debate has been framed in the media. These proponent, ordinary citizens often mentioned that Black Pete is not racist and talked about the issue from the “us” versus “them” perspective, which explains the high amount of us versus them and new racism and discrimination topics.

However, in de Volkskrant and NRC Handelsblad, there has been more space for ordinary citizens that oppose Black Pete. This contributed to the high(er) amount of opponent main frames that was present in these newspapers.

**Sub-questions and hypotheses - Framing and sourcing the Black Pete discussion in Dutch newspapers**

**Sub-question 1:**
What is the dominant way of framing by journalists when covering the Black Pete discussion? Is this done more from the opponents’, or proponents’, of Black Pete perspective?

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2 The corresponding hypotheses of each sub-questions can be found at the end of the theoretical framework.
Overall, the dominant main frame that was found in these newspapers was the proponent of Black Pete frame. However, there is a difference between the popular and the quality newspapers. The Telegraaf and Algemeen Dagblad framed the discussion mostly with the proponent of Black Pete frame, whereas in de Volkskrant and NRC Handelsblad the opponent of Black Pete mainframe was dominant. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is only partly true. Yes, the proponents of Black Pete are dominant in the coverage on the Black Pete discussion, but there are differences among different kinds of newspapers.

Sub-question 2:
Is there a difference in the way the Black Pete discussion has been framed in popular and quality newspapers, and if so, what is this difference?

Yes. As already mentioned above, there is a difference in the way popular and quality newspapers covered the issue surrounding Black Pete. Overall, in terms of main frames, popular newspapers covered the issue more from the proponents’ perspective, and quality newspapers more from the opponents’ perspective. With regard to the topics found in the articles, in the popular newspapers de Telegraaf and Algemeen Dagblad, the “us” versus “them” and new racism topics are more dominant than in the quality newspapers de Volkskrant and NRC Handelsblad. In de Volkskrant and NRC Handelsblad there is more space for reform-oriented topics. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is true. Nonetheless, also in these newspapers, there is a considerable amount of discrimination and new racism topics present in the coverage. Especially this is alarming, because as Hall explains, both overt and inferential racism can consistently be found in popular newspapers and tabloids. This causes racism to become “acceptable, and thus, not too long after, true” (Hall, 1990, p. 13). Allan offers an explanation why the us versus them and new racism topics were also very much present in the quality newspapers. He argues that inferential racism (i.e. new racism) is widespread in all the media segments. This is the case because new racism may be regarded as being “in many ways more insidious because it is large invisible even to those who formulate the world in its terms” (Allan, 2010, p. 173-174).

Sub-question 3:
Has there been a change over time in the way the different newspapers framed the Black Pete discussion? If so, how has the framing changed?
The hypothesis that corresponds with this sub-question is true since there has been a change over time in the way the different newspapers framed the Black Pete discussion. With regard to the main frames that were found, in *de Telegraaf* and *Algemeen Dagblad*, the dominancy of the proponent of Black Pete frame became less over the years and the amount of neutral and opponent of Black Pete frames increased. In *de Volkskrant* there has even been a major shift, since this paper initially started framing the discussion from a proponent of Black Pete perspective, but over time this changed to an opponent of Black Pete discussion. Also in terms of dominant topics there is a change present over time. Overall, the us versus them topic and the new racism topic gained prominence over the years, which led to the result that these two topics became the most dominant ones over time.

Sub-question 4:
What were the main sources that were used when covering the Black Pete discussion in *de Telegraaf, Algemeen Dagblad, de Volkskrant*, and *NRC Handelsblad*?

The dominant sources in the coverage on the Black Pete discussion are, overall, ordinary citizens and official sources. Proponents of Black Pete are used more often as sources in articles that cover the Black Pete discussion. Therefore, when covering the Black Pete discussion, the opponents of Black Pete have fewer opportunities to voice their opinion than advocates of Black Pete. The proponents of Black Pete are used more often as sources in the new coverage on this debate than the opponents of Black Pete. By using more sources that are a proponent of Black Pete than opponents, sourcing practices have influenced the way the Black Pete discussion has been framed, in a sense that it leads to the underrepresentation of the opponents of Black Pete and an overrepresentation of the proponents of Black Pete in the Dutch newspapers. This makes hypothesis 4 true.

The next, and last part of this thesis, the conclusion, summarizes the main findings of this research project and provides for a general answer to the central research question.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

The research project wanted to investigate how a racial issue as the Black Pete discussion has been framed in Dutch newspapers. This brings us back to the central research question of this thesis: How has the Black Pete discussion been framed in the Dutch newspapers *de Telegraaf*, *Algemeen Dagblad*, *de Volkskrant*, and *NRC Handelsblad* from 2011 to 2014? This conclusion provides for an answer to this question and summarizes the main findings of this research project.

The Black Pete discussion was extensively covered in Dutch newspapers in the timeframe 2011 – 2014. The dominant main frame in which the Black Pete discussion has been framed in the Netherlands is the proponent of Black Pete frame. However, there are differences among the different newspapers, and especially between popular newspapers (*de Telegraaf* and *Algemeen Dagblad*) and quality newspapers (*de Volkskrant* and *NRC Handelsblad*), that can be found. In *de Telegraaf* and *Algemeen Dagblad*, the proponent of Black Pete mainframe dominated, whereas this was the opponent of Black Pete mainframe in *NRC Handelsblad*. In *de Volkskrant* there was a significant change over time, since this newspaper initially framed the issue of Black Pete with the proponent frame. However, this changed in 2012 and from then onwards the opponent frame prevailed.

These main frames are constructed by paying attention to particular topics. The topics that were most present in the news coverage on the Black Pete debate are: the reform-oriented topic, the Us versus Them topic, and the new racism and discrimination topic.

This leads to the conclusion that framing of the Black Pete discussion, was primarily done within the Us versus Them paradigm. Since a lot of the coverage on Black Pete focused on us versus them topics, the consequence is that the media are increasingly playing a role in the creation of a strong division of in- and outsiders in the Dutch society, based on common values and national identity. The presence of a high amount of new racism and discrimination topics shows that the statement that Black Pete is a racist phenomenon often is denied. Ultimately, this has resulted in a situation in the Netherlands where “there is a strong tendency to ignore and/or reject the race issues that surround the discussion on Black Pete” (Van der Pijl and Goulordava, 2014, p. 270). This is especially shown in the way sourcing practices have been used by journalists when covering the issue of Black Pete. With a tendency to source proponents of Black Pete, there is a structural underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in Dutch newspapers when covering racial issues, such as the Black Pete
discussion. This shows that the Dutch media have an influence on how racial issues are discussed and covered in the Netherlands. Since in all newspapers the amount of new racism and discrimination topics was largely present, new racism, or inferential racism, is something that can be found in these newspapers. This framing process and the framing power media have “can influence attitudes about virtually any issue of event, including discrimination” (Haider-Markel et al., 2007, p. 588-589), which arises easily when ethnic minority groups are framed as ‘them’, and the majority (and indigenous white people) of the Dutch population as ‘us’.

The coverage on the Black Pete discussion has contributed to the creation of an us versus them dichotomy (at least on this subject) and fueled the presence of inferential or new racism in the Dutch media, that could lead to more discrimination. In August 2015, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCRD) published its periodic report on the status quo of racial discrimination in the Netherlands. The committee established that the presence of racism and discrimination is being depreciated in the Netherlands, and states that the appearance of Black Pete is one of the racist phenomena that lead to more discrimination of black and colored minorities in the Dutch society (UNCRD, 2015, p. 4). On the matter of Black Pete, the UN committee mentioned that “even a deeply-rooted cultural tradition does not justify discriminatory practices and stereotypes, and the character of Black Pete leads to stigmatization of members of ethnic groups” (UNCRD, 2015, p. 4). Since the Black Pete discussion is still going on, also in 2015, journalists should realize the role they play in this, and should be aware of the power they have on how people come to perceive and think about ethnic minority groups, such as the people that are currently opposing Black Pete.
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