Framing the Black Pages of Dutch History

Depictions of the Indonesian Decolonization War and its Afterlife in Dutch Opinion Journals and Dutch Social Memory

Micha Knoester

Year: Fall 2018
Points: 45 ECTS
Supervisor: Tomislav Dulić
Word Count: 29,948
# Table of Contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... 4

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................ 5

Introduction .................................................................................................................... 6

Research Problem and Aims .......................................................................................... 8

Disposition ..................................................................................................................... 9

Theory ............................................................................................................................ 10

Research Overview ....................................................................................................... 10

Theoretical Framework ................................................................................................. 16

The Media, Public Opinion and Social Memory ............................................................. 19

Research Questions ...................................................................................................... 22

Methodology ................................................................................................................ 23

Definitions and Spelling ............................................................................................... 23

The Material .................................................................................................................. 24

The Periodization .......................................................................................................... 26

The Data Collection ...................................................................................................... 27

Research Methods ........................................................................................................ 28

Evaluation of Methods and Material ........................................................................... 30

Empirical Analysis ....................................................................................................... 32

Contextualization: the War of Decolonization Between the Netherlands and Indonesia ..... 32

The Dutch Public Debate on the War of Decolonization .............................................. 34

Results, Analysis, and Interpretation .......................................................................... 39

The Debate in the Opinion Journals – 1994 ................................................................. 39

The Debate in the Opinion Journals – 1995 ................................................................. 41

The Debate in the Opinion Journals – 2005 ................................................................. 46

The Debate in the Opinion Journals – 2008 ................................................................. 48

The Debate in the Opinion Journals – 2012 ................................................................. 53
The Debate in the Opinion Journals – 2013 ................................................................. 57
The Debate in the Opinion Journals – 2016 ................................................................. 61
Discussion ....................................................................................................................... 64
The Development of the Debate .................................................................................... 69
The Opinion Journals’ Debate and the Academic Debate on the Decolonization War..... 70
Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 73
Appendix: Key Words .................................................................................................... 76
Bibliography .................................................................................................................. 78
Abstract

This thesis presents the ways in which four major Dutch opinion journals have depicted the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and Indonesia and its afterlife in the years 1994, 1995, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2016. More specifically, through a textual analysis of 99 articles, it investigates which frames were attributed to the war by the four journals and which arguments were used to support these evaluations. Combining theories of social memory and the media’s relationship with the public, the results are linked to the academic debate on the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization. The findings reveal that the examined opinion journals either frame the war positively or negatively, but rarely neutrally. In addition, great continuity and stability in the ways in which the journals framed the event was found, as the tone of the articles essentially did not change between 1994 and 2016. Due to the similar topics discussed and arguments given, it is also argued that the debate which took place in the Dutch opinion journals can be understood as very similar to the academic debate on the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization.
Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my supervisor Tomislav Dulić for his great comments, ideas and patience. I also owe my friends a great deal for the moral support and amazing pep talks they provided me with in the last couple of months. Special thanks go out to Amy, Lisa, Nicole, and Stephanie for providing me with exactly what I needed to get through this scholarly adventure. I would also like to thank my brothers and boyfriend for always being there for me. Finally, I need to thank my father for everything he has done for me and his unconditional love and support. This thesis is dedicated to him and my mother, I hope I made you proud.
Introduction

When a kampong\(^1\) is purified, typically everyone who runs away get shot. And our soldiers tend to deliver good shots! The military success of such an action, is always measured not according to the number of opponents that are wiped out – that means nothing – but to the number of weapons that are captured. Because then you are sure that you have had to deal with actual troops. In the number of deaths, a fairly large amount of innocent farmers is always included.

- An anonymous officer, *De Groene Amsterdammer* (1949)\(^2\)

After having been under Japanese occupation for three years, against the backdrop of the Second World War, Indonesia declared independence on the 17\(^{th}\) of August 1945. For the Dutch, who had ruled most of the country for over 350 years, this declaration of independence came as “a total surprise” (Scagliola 2007, 238). Due to the belief that losing their precious colony would be a disaster, the Dutch tried to restore their authority. Troops were immediately sent to Indonesia and two military campaigns\(^3\) – the *First and Second Police Action* (Politie Acties)\(^3\) – followed (Oostindie, Hoogenboom, and Verwey 2016, 18). Indonesia’s guerrilla warfare, however, remained strong and the Dutch gradually started losing territory as well as *hearts and minds*\(^4\) (Limpach 2016, 58). In December 1949, after four years of fighting, the Netherlands, under international pressure and to the dismay of its colonial authorities, was forced to concede independence to Indonesia (Scagliola 2007, 239; Oostindie, Hoogenboom, and Verwey 2018, 257).

Already during the war of decolonization, in which an estimated 5,000 Dutch soldiers and 100,000 Indonesians\(^5\) lost their lives, stories about the Dutch forces’ violent behaviour came to the attention of the general Dutch public (Luttikhuis and Harinck 2017, 64). These stories were mainly brought by left-wing and/or religious journals and claimed that the Dutch forces committed war crimes on a considerable scale (Scagliola 2002, 105). For instance, the Dutch opinion journal *De Groene Amsterdammer* (1949) published an article discussing the

---

\(^1\) The term *kampong* refers to the traditional villages in Indonesia.

\(^2\) All quotes are directly translated from Dutch into English.

\(^3\) When discussing concepts and events with typical Dutch names, the English translation will be mentioned first in italics, immediately followed by the original Dutch name placed between brackets. Afterwards, the English translation will continued to be used without any additions.

\(^4\) *Hearts and minds* refers to the (counter)insurgency strategy of gaining the loyalty and trust of the local civilian population (Fitzsimmons 2008).

\(^5\) Due to the lack of research done on this matter, it is not clear how many Indonesian causalities exactly resulted from the war of decolonization. The figure that has become canonical for this purpose, however, is an estimate of 100,000 Indonesian victims and therefore the present study will use this number (NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies 2013).
unsustainable nature of the war while comparing the Dutch colonial intelligence service with the Gestapo. These stories published during and shortly after the war however, were not met with great resonance (Oostindie, Hoogenboom, and Verwey 2016, 34–35). Moreover, the Dutch authorities worked hard to quietly cover up the cases, and subsequently this uncomfortable period of contemporary history was kept out of the public consciousness for many decades (Oostindie, Hoogenboom, and Verwey 2016, 34).

In recent years however, the possibility of the Dutch being “on the wrong side of history,” as stated by the former Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Ben Bot (2005b), and the decolonization war in general, have been increasingly receiving attention publicly, academically, and politically. Among other things, critical articles and books discussing the event have been published and well-received by the public, and on the 14th of September of 2011, the District Court of The Hague has found the Dutch state responsible for carrying out a massacre in the village of Rawagade (Lorenz 2015a). In addition, on the 2nd of December 2016, after denying (financial) support in previous years, the Dutch cabinet decided to support a large-scale research program on the nature, scale and causes of the violence in their former colony (ANP 2012, 2016; Limpach 2016, 17). Accordingly, the public image of the former Dutch colony appears to be slowly turning from “a beloved lost paradise into an uncomfortable, shameful memory” (Pattynama 2012, 181).

Despite the convincing arguments and the great amount of research supporting them, the notion of the decolonization in Indonesia as one in which the Dutch forces carried out mass violence is still not forthcoming (Scagliola 2007, 243; Limpach 2016, 20). Academic consensus on how the returning series of events in which revelations were made with high anticipation, has failed to produce the expected results has also not yet been reached. The vast amount of studies revealing the great influence media can have on the construction and mediation of social memory, leaves one wondering if studying Dutch media outlets can help us to understand the present, distorted Dutch social memory. How did the Dutch media frame the war of decolonization to the public? And which arguments were used to support the attribution of the frames? These are some of the issues that sparked the following research.
Research Problem and Aims

The goal of this thesis is to present a new approach to the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and Indonesia from 1945 to 1949. It will do so by examining how popular Dutch opinion journals depicted the event between 1994 and 2016, while particularly focusing on the frames and related arguments used. The articles will be collected from four major Dutch opinion journals – De Groene Amsterdammer, Elsevier, HP/De Tijd, and Vrij Nederland – from different years – 1994, 1995, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2016 – which can be understood as key-moments in the Dutch public debate. Using theories on social memory and the media’s relationship to public opinion and social memory, the debate in the journals will be related to the academic debate on the Dutch social memory of the Indonesian war of decolonization.

The present research is of great relevance to the field of Holocaust and Genocide Studies for two main reasons. To start with, it contributes to the field because it tackles the issue of social memory of a colonial past, which is important because in this field of studies, it is not only essential to understand where, how, and why mass violence happens, but also how societies deal with its aftermath. Moreover, unlike most research carried out on the memory of mass violence, predominantly discussing the Holocaust, this study focuses on a colonial experience. Examining the memory of the colonial experience of a Western country appears to be particularly interesting due to tendency of the West to present itself as ‘clean’. Although determining the violent nature of Dutch colonialism falls outside the scope of this paper, the current academic debate can benefit from the discussion outlined herein, as it sheds more light on the question of the nature of colonialism being inherently violent. And subsequently, also explores if the previously described tendency of the Western countries is appropriate.

Secondly, this study is academically relevant due to its particular focus on an until now neglected research area and its exploratory nature. Accordingly, despite their arguably great influence on the Dutch public debate, often being the first to bring issues related to the decolonization war to the Dutch public, no academic attention has yet been paid to Dutch opinion journals. In addition, the existing literature on the depictions of the war of decolonization in the Dutch media debate, has tended to focus on specific themes and time-periods rather than the general trends over the years. Consequently, a more general, comprehensive overview of the Dutch media debate on the decolonization war has not yet been provided. At the same time, it also contributes to the ongoing academic debate on the Dutch social memory of the event, as it touches upon the focal point of this discussion; did the Dutch
media pay (enough) attention to the Dutch colonial violence? (Bijl 2015, 25). Moreover, because the present study is written in English, unlike most academic work on the topic, it could make the research subject at issue more internationally accessible, resulting in it being more often considered in international research. All in all, the present research thus seeks to fill the existing academic lacuna, while simultaneously contributing to the current academic debate and a greater accessibility of the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and Indonesia.

Disposition
The present paper is structured into four parts – theory, methodology, empirical analysis, and conclusion – and organised as follows. The first chapter, theory, provides an overview of the academic debate on the Dutch social memory of the decolonization war. Subsequently, the theoretical framework will discuss the relevant theories and concepts around the topic, followed by the research questions. In the next chapter, methodology, after providing a note on terminology and spelling, the research’s main materials and research method, specifically data collection and data analysis, will be discussed. Finally, potential problems and limitations regarding the specific research methods will be considered. The empirical analysis chapter begins by providing a brief overview of the war and the related Dutch public debate, followed by the results of the analysis presented, explained, and related to the academic debate on the Dutch social memory of the decolonization war. The main conclusions of this study are drawn in the final chapter, consisting of a short summary of the preeminent findings of the conducted research and an answer to the research questions. In addition, shortcomings and suggestions for further research are outlined.
Theory

Research Overview

As argued by Houben (2000, 83) “before the 1970s, Indonesia disappeared from the academic curriculae and was hardly talked about in public.”. Scagliola (2002, 196) explains this lack of academic attention by the great influence of the Dutch political agenda on Dutch historiography, with the Dutch state seeking to cover-up the more controversial parts of the past, and the seemingly lack of public interest in the topic. Around the mid-eighties however, corresponding with the general trend in Europe, this slowly started to change as increasingly more scholars, both Dutch and foreign, became committed to finding out what ‘really’ happened during the war in the former Dutch colony. The majority of these studies, however, focused on describing the military context of the war (Doorn and Hendrix 1985; Simatupang 1985), in particular the more violent episodes such as the Bersiap⁶ (Delden 1989) and the South-Sulawesi Campaign (IJzereef 1984), rather than analysing or criticizing it.

In the 1990s, another change in the academic debate occurred, with the focus shifting from examining the events that took place, to studying the mnemonics of it (Van Ooijen and Raaijmakers 2012, 465). Eventually, the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization became the subject of an emerging field of research, which remains to be active nowadays, especially in the Netherlands. The increase in academic interest in the Dutch social memory of the decolonization war, coincided with the general memory boom⁷ in historical research, which is typically identified as the consequence of the great academic attention for the memory of the Second World War (Winter 2001, 53). Accordingly, the great public and academic interest in Europe on how to commemorate and remember this war, led to scholars also developing great interest in the memory of other akin ‘traumatic’ historical events (Van Ooijen and Raaijmakers 2012, 465; Nets-Zehngut 2018, 275).

Reviews of the existing literature on the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and Indonesia, reveal that the academic debate has mainly been centred around one topic, that is the mnemonics of Dutch violence. In particular the notion of this part of the past as forgotten by the Dutch, “in the sense that is has been vanished without a trace.”, has received great academic attention (Bijl 2015, 12). Among others,

---

⁶ Bersiap – literally meaning ‘be prepared’ in Malaysian – refers to the very chaotic, violent first phase of the decolonization war which lasted from August 1945 to January 1946, in which an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 Dutch, Indonesian-European, and Ambonese were killed by Indonesian nationalists (Limpach 2016, 52).

⁷ Memory boom refers to the enormous increase in interest in the study of memory by scholars from different fields (Van Ooijen and Raaijmakers 2012, 465).
Dutch colonial history experts Bijl (2012, 2015), Raben (2012) and Oostindie (2011; 2016), and known Dutch historian Scagliola (2002, 2007, 2012) all discuss this issue. When reviewing these academic works, it becomes clear that two ‘sides’ can be distinguished with on one side the academics who agree with, and on the other one those who dispute the claim. The former, solely consisting of a few scholars, argues that the Dutch colonial past, specifically its more controversial parts, has been forgotten in the Netherlands. They typically illustrate this by pointing out the lack of public attention for the topic (Kok, Somers, and Zweers 2009; Vanvugt 2002). For instance, Vanvugt’s (2002) Black book of the Netherlands overseas which discusses violent episodes carried out by the Dutch from 1568 till the end of the decolonization war with Indonesia, while presenting this information as something that “all Dutch should know”, thus implicitly claiming that the Dutch have forgotten.

On the other hand, a much greater number of scholars claim that the colonial past, in particular Dutch violence, cannot be understood as forgotten. In order to support their claim, they typically point out that “every form of colonial public memory exists: monuments, historical monographs, tv documentaries, memoirs, and novels.” (Goss 2000, 11). More specifically, they propose that rather than having been forgotten, the decolonization war is merely not widely recognized by the Dutch public, thus disputing a binary understanding of the colonial past as either remembered or forgotten (Bijl 2012, 2015, Scaglioni 2002, 2007, 2012; Raben 2012; Oostindie 2011; Oostindie, Hoogenboom, and Verwey 2016; Goss 2000). Despite the lack of scholarly consensus on the matter, it appears that the Dutch colonial past should indeed be understood as excluded from the dominant frames of Dutch social memory rather than fully forgotten, and scholars have offered several explanations for this.

To begin with, the academics who explain the distorted Dutch social memory by pointing out the frames attributed to the war of decolonization in the academic and public discourse. Accordingly, ‘traces’ of colonialism, such as publications and photographs, have and continue to be present in Dutch society, but due to the way they are presented to the public they have not been integrated in the Dutch social memory (Goss 2000; Bijl 2012). More specifically, issues and aspects related to the colonial past are framed as to lie outside national history, as “single black pages in an otherwise white book.” (Bijl 2012, 452). Due to the attributed frames, the colonial past is not acknowledge by the Dutch as part of ‘their’ past, and therefore remain a marginal part of the Dutch social memory (ibid.). Likewise, Goss (2000, 34) states that despite the memory of colonial times having been a component of Dutch national history and identity, “colonial history has not, however, entered the main narrative of the nation as an integral epoch.
or watershed, but rather as something put in brackets.”. Concluding, due to the ways in which the Dutch colonial era is framed, the Dutch public typically regards this part of the past as distinct from national history, resulting in it being excluded from the dominant frames of Dutch social memory.

Secondly, scholars such as Houben (1997, 2000) and Scagliola (2002, 2007, 2012), suggest that the Dutch colonial era, in particular its more violent episodes, has not yet been widely recognized by the Dutch due to their strong identity, values, and self-image. To start with, the wide-held assumption of the Netherlands as a greatly tolerant country, which is heavily based on historical events, such as the Eighty Years War (Buruma 2006). Nevertheless, this notion is still greatly present and reinforced in contemporary Dutch society, due to the emphasis placed on current Dutch characteristics illustrating great tolerance, such as the Netherlands being the first country in the world to legalize gay marriage, the multicultural nature of Dutch society, and the country’s progressive (soft)drugs policy (Buruma 2006; McGann 2018; Houben 1997). The worldwide and national understanding of the Netherlands as non-violent and leading in (international) human rights affairs, reinforced by the Dutch as founder of the International Court of Justice in The Hague as well as their great involvement in international peace missions, likewise makes for a very strong self-image (Bijl 2012, 449–50). Accordingly, due to the dominant Dutch self-image as tolerant and peaceful, documents and stories which contradict this understanding are met by the Dutch public with difficulty and uncomfortable responses, and eventually not included in the dominant frames of Dutch social memory (Houben 1997; Scagliola 2002; Bijl 2012).

A similar argument is made in regard to the Dutch colonial period, in the Netherlands, in general. In contrast to colonial violence, the colonial period as a whole, especially the Dutch East Indies, is widely represented and viewed positively in Dutch society. Bijl (2012, 445) illustrates this claim by pointing out the so-called Tempoe Doeloe culture, that is “the Dutch variant of colonial nostalgia”, which continues to be very prevalent in Dutch society. Among other things, the Dutch call their colonial period in the 17th century The Golden Age (De Gouden Eeuw), whereby ‘golden’, among other things, refers to the flourishing state of Dutch trade, the Netherlands being one of the greatest European colonial powers, and the Dutch greatness in art and science (van den Herik 2012, 694–95). Despite the increasing attention for the less ‘golden’ aspects of this period, such as slave trade and the violent nature of colonialism, the colonial period is typically by the Dutch still understood as greatly positive. Moreover, the Dutch imperial empire is viewed as a modest, trading nation, which was not like other European
empires seeking territorial expansion or conquest, but rather safeguarding its own borders and bringing civilisation (Lammers 2003, 65). By many, the Dutch imperialists are likewise understood as the “the better imperialists” (Lorenz 2015a; Raben 2012). Due the romanticized memory of the Dutch colonial past and empire, issues in which the colonial era and its actors are portrayed negatively are difficult for the Dutch to recognize and therefore not included in the dominant frames of Dutch social memory (Bijl 2012; Locher-Scholten 1994).

Finally, as claimed by, among others, Scaglia (2002, 2007, 2012) the decolonization war is excluded from the dominant frames of Dutch social memory due to the many involved parties. As described previously, the Dutch forces consisted of conscript soldiers, KNIL soldiers, and war-volunteers (Romijn 2012, 320). Even though all these men were deployed to ‘bring back home’ Indonesia, they were all very different as they came from different backgrounds, had different military experience and, during the decolonization war, different tasks (Scaglia 2002, 38–57). Consequently, the different groups behaved differently, had different experiences, and thus constructed different memories. Moreover, while the Dutch Indies-veterans have claimed space in the public debate to address their experiences, the victims of Dutch violence have barely been able to do so, resulting in their perspective not being a part of the dominant discourse (Raben 2012). Concluding, the different memories of diverse groups and individuals, resulting out of their consciousness and unconsciousness to emphasize their experience, led to a fragmented, often contradicting, social memory (Oostindie 2011, 97). Due to the lack of one coherent narrative, the war of decolonization is not integrated into the dominant frames of Dutch social memory (Raben 2012; Oostindie, Hoogenboom, and Verwey 2016, 16; Scaglia 2002).

The Dutch social memory of the event can thus be understood as greatly fragmented, and reviews of the literature reveal that there is a sharp distinction within the related Dutch public debate. Respectively, by the older Dutch generation the colonial era is typically still considered as a ‘golden’ period associated with glory and fortune, and “and the subsequent split of the Indonesian archipelago from the ‘motherland’ is considered to be a painful tragedy that is best not talked over too much.” (Houben 2000, 78). The Dutch elderly also tend to stick to self-deception, by for instance stating that the Dutch state behaved correctly, in order to cope with the renewed interest in the past. The younger generation in the Netherlands, however, is increasingly focused and critical on the war of decolonization, as it wants to face past wrongdoings and change the national consciousness on the issue (Houben 2000, 82). The older and younger generation are by Houben (2000, 78) also termed as ‘revisionists’ and
‘humanitarians’. Whereas the former argues that Indonesia would have not become independent if certain policy mistakes had not been made, the latter group expresses remorse on how the Dutch behaved during the war of decolonization (Houben 2000, 78). Accordingly, Dutch colonial history, in particular the more violent episodes, appears to be either remembered with pride or shame but rarely neutral in the Dutch public debate (Oostindie 2011, 13).

As illustrated above, a vast amount of literature on the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and its former colony Indonesia exists. Moreover, many attempts have been made to describe and explain the current incomplete Dutch social memory of the event, and reviews of these studies reveal that authors have investigated various types of social arenas to do so. Scholars have examined Dutch commemorations (Van Ooijen and Raaijmakers 2012), art (Stevens 2015), literature (Pattynama 2014), and high school text books (Berkel 2017; Bron et al. 2015). The great majority of research conducted on Dutch social memory, however, focuses on Dutch media outlets while using the theoretical concept framing. To start with, Gross (2000) and Bijl (2015) examine how photographs taken during the war of decolonization are framed in various types of Dutch media such as magazines, newspapers, and in Dutch television shows. The other studies, however, focus on how the war of decolonization is framed in either audio-visual sources such as television (Hendriks 2012; C. Vos 1999) or written press, such as newspapers (Houben 1997; IJzereef 1982). A number of Dutch Master students also examine how the decolonization war between the Netherlands and Indonesia is portrayed in Dutch newspapers in their theses (van den Brand 2015; Jakobs 2017; van der Hoeven 2018). The Master thesis written by Polak, Molenkamp, and Jordaan (1977) is the only research conducted on the representation of the decolonization war in Dutch opinion journals, by the investigation of political caricatures in De Groene Amsterdammer and Elsevier.

Although presenting greatly interesting findings, the previously described studies also have some serious shortcomings. Due to the focus of the present research on a specific type of media, solely the weaknesses of the investigations into the frames surrounding the war of decolonization in the Dutch written press will be discussed. Firstly, a relatively great number of studies examining this matter, specifically the ones from Polak, Molenkamps, and Jordaan (1977), IJzereef (1982), and Houben (1997), have been published a rather long time ago, which raises the question if their findings are still relevant. Another key problem with the existing literature on the topic is the specific focus and narrow nature of the studies. Respectively, since Houben (1997) solely investigates materials from the year 1995, and Van den Brand (2015) as well as Van der Hoeven (2018) only from four specific years, it is questionable if these studies’
findings can be understood as representative for the general Dutch media debate on the topic. The literatures’ specific focus on an event (IJzereef 1982) or theme related to the decolonization war, such as apologies delivered by the Dutch government (van der Hoeven 2018; van den Brand 2015) and the governmental support for a research proposal about the war (Jakobs 2017), can be understood as another main limitation, due to the great possibility of other dominant themes in the Dutch media debate not being recognized.

The research that has been carried out has arguably failed to present a comprehensive understanding on the representation of the decolonization war in the Dutch written press. Moreover, with only a few studies analysing the matter, it is clear that very little is known about the framing of the event in the Dutch written press, in particular Dutch opinion journals, and thus more research is needed. Considering all the above, as well as their potentially great influence on the construction of the Dutch social memory of the event as I will later explain, the debate in Dutch opinion journals on the war of decolonization can be understood as a neglected research area. Because this field has not yet been sufficiently explored in this regard, the present study seeks to do so, by carrying out an exploratory research with a much wider timeframe.
Theoretical Framework

As illustrated above, previous research on the aftermath of the war of decolonization in the Netherlands, has typically been based on theories of collective memory. Despite of being studied for decades already, this theoretical concept has particularly started to receive great academic attention in recent years, specifically around the beginning of the 20th century. (Gensburger 2016; Winter 2001). Although reviews of this growing body of literature reveal some changes, such as a renewed focus on victim instead of soldier and an emphasis on individual memory as also pointed out by Winter (2006, 2001), it is clear that most contemporary definitions of the concept can still largely be traced back to the seminal work of French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs.

Respectively, Halbwachs, who published his landmark The Social Frameworks of Memory in 1925, proposed a new way of thinking about collective memory and assigned the concept theoretical foundation which was previously absent (Russell 2006). First of all, according to Halbwachs (1992, 25) “the past is a social construct mainly, if not wholly, shaped by the concerns of the present. . . . The beliefs, interests, and aspirations of the present shape the various views of the past as they are manifested respectively in every historical epoch.”. This notion of collective memory being a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present, is considered to be his most important contribution to the field of Memory Studies, as Halbwachs was the first to describe this dynamic (Gensburger 2016). Next, the scholar stresses that collective memory is constructed and mediated in the social context, in particular within social groups within society, by stating that “no memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their collections” (1992, 42).

In other words, Halbwachs (1992, 53) argues that collective memory can only be understood when observed within the thoughts of a particular societal group and that individual memories do not exist. The particular nature of these social groups, such as family and religious groups, is understood as greatly significant since it is the group’s specific characteristics and past experiences which create a certain collective memory. Therefore, every social group has its own collective memory, which differs from the memory of other groups (Halbwachs 1992, 52–53). At the same time, collective memory is suggested to have great influence on the group itself since “through them [memories], as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is

---

8 For the sake of clarity, terms used in this paper describing the same concept, such as social memory and collective memory, can be understood as synonymous.
perpetuated.” (Halbwachs 1992, 47). Accordingly, social memory and group identity thus should be understood as strongly linked.

Halbwachs (1992, 23–24) also distinguished two types of memory, that is historical and autobiographical memory. Accordingly, whereas the former type communicates with social actors through written and other forms of records, such as photographs and commemorations, the latter reaches social actors through communication. While historical memory is not personally experienced, autobiographical memory consists of memories that are communicated by those who personally experienced the past events (ibid.). Subsequently, the latter form of memory also tends to disappear over time, since the people who actually experienced the events will eventually be unable to further communicate their memories. Concluding, Halbwach’s (1992) understands collective memory as a variable, social construct.

French historian Pierre Nora is also widely acknowledged as having carried out groundbreaking work on the topic, as his thoughts on collective memory contributed in popularizing the concept within the field of historiography, as pointed out by Russel (2006, 799). Similarly to Halbwachs, Nora (1996, 3) understands collective memory as a changeable and social construct, underlining that it is “always embodied in living societies” and “a phenomenon of the present”. Likewise, he stresses the strong relationship between memory and group identity by claiming that “the passage from memory to history has required every social group to redefine its identity through the revitalization of its own history.” (Nora 1989, 15). The scholar also proposed the term lieu de mémoire, which refers to the places, sites, and causes wherein collective memory is mediated, constructed, and transmitted, for instance by one generation to another. These lieux can be understood as the result of the interaction between memory and history and, among other things, include memorials, cemeteries, museums, veterans’ organizations, and textbooks (Nora 1996, 14–20). However, Nora (1989, 18–19) emphasizes that objects, both concrete and abstract, can only be understood as a place, site or cause constructing collective memory when they contain material, symbolic, and functional aspects, and a will to remember. As explained by the author “An archive is a purely material site that becomes a lieu de mémoire only when it becomes part of a ritual.” (Nora 1996, 14).

Jan Assmann’s (1995) cutting edge article Collective Memory and Cultural Identity, is also recognized as of great importance to the field of memory studies. In line with Halbwacshian thought, the German Egyptologist understands collective memory as a socially mediated concept which is constructed through communication and relates to a group, in other words stating that “every individual memory constitutes itself in communication with others.”
(Assmann 1995, 127). Rather than collective memory however, the author (ibid.) refers to the concept as *communicative memory*, as it is exclusively based on everyday communication, while underling the limited nature of it:

Its most important characteristic is its limited temporal horizon. As all oral history studies suggest, this horizon does not extend more than eighty to (at the very most) one hundred years into the past, which equals three or four generations or the Latin saeculum. This horizon shifts in direct relation to the passing of time. The communicative memory offers no fixed point which would bind it to the ever expanding past in the passing of time. Such fixity can only be achieved through a cultural formation and therefore lies outside of informal everyday memory.

Whereas Halbwachs (1992, 80) stopped at this point, claiming that “if here is a long span of time during which we have not had any contacts with a specific set of once significant others, the memory of them tends to fade.”, Assmann’s work continues. In particular, the author (1995, 128–29) puts forward another form of memory for when communicative memory is no longer possible:

Just as the communicative memory is characterized by its proximity to the everyday, cultural memory is characterized by its distance the everyday. Distance from the everyday (transcendence) marks poral horizon. Cultural memory has its fixed point; its horizon change with the passing of time. These fixed points are fateful the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, observance).

In other words, *cultural memory* relates memory, culture, and the group, as it describes the way(s) in which the past is viewed through various texts such as books or newspapers, as well as through rites, buildings, and monuments. Assmann (1995, 129–32) also denotes the following specific characteristics this type of memory: *the concretion of identity, its capacity to reconstruct, formation, organization, obligation, and reflexivity*, with particularly the first two being relevant for this study. Accordingly, whereas the first refers to how “cultural memory preserves the story of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity”, the second describes how this memory always relates itself to the present by determining its meaning in relation to the contemporary context (ibid.). Concluding, cultural memory comes into play when communicative memory no longer possible, heavily relates to the group since its manifestations are defined in an either positive or negative manner, and the contemporary context in which it is given specific relevance.
In conclusion, social memory is typically understood as to be constructed and mediated in the social arena, through social interaction within a social group, thus comprising a social construct. Due to the very strong relation with a particular social group, social memory also greatly influences group identities and vice versa. More specifically, a social group becomes consciousness of its identity through awareness of the past, while at the same constructing its social memory in relation to its specific identity by evaluation its manifestations positively or negatively. The contemporary context has also shown to have great influence on social memory as the historical experience is understood from contemporary perspective.

Considering all of the above and applied to this study, the Dutch opinion journals selected for this research can be understood as the lieux de mémoire and the social area in which Dutch social memory was constructed, mediated, and transmitted. The depictions of the decolonization war in the journals as manifestations of Dutch social memory. In addition, the current Dutch social memory can be considered as being in transition from communicative to cultural memory, since nowadays only a small number of people in Dutch society have personally experienced the events. Accordingly, although Dutch memories of the event have not yet been completely removed from this the social arena, the possibility of constructing them through everyday communication is becoming increasingly smaller due to the passing of time.

**The Media, Public Opinion and Social Memory**

As discussed earlier, social memory is thus constructed and mediated through social interaction in a social context. However, this social context and interaction can be conceptualized in many different ways resulting in scholars examining memory through a variety of different phenomena. Per illustration, researchers have investigated the ways in which social memory is enacted through studying rituals, museums, language, art, school teachings, architecture, and governmental documents (Blom, Lundemo, and Røssaak 2017; de Saint-Laurent 2018). The great majority of research conducted on the issue however, especially in recent years, investigated the phenomenon using media outlets (Neiger, Meyers, and Zandberg 2011; Kligler-Vilenchik, Tsfati, and Meyers 2014; Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy 2011). Although there are few studies revealing a direct effect, research has suggested that the media can be understood as of potentially greatly influential on the construction and mediation of social memory. More specifically, scholars increasingly stress the significance of the media on the construction of public opinion and subsequently social memory (Kligler-Vilenchik, Tsfati, and Meyers 2014, 484; Kansteiner 2002, 195).
There have been various theories developed and proposed to explain the strong relationship between media and public opinion, however one appears to dominate the academic debate. Specifically, the notion of agenda-setting has been widely recognized as one of the most influential theoretical frameworks to understand the media’s influence on public opinion (Neiger, Meyers, and Zandberg 2011). As explained by Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2011, 214), using agenda-setting theory the influence of the media on the public opinion can be understood as follows: “by emphasizing certain issues and certain attributes to these issues, the news media plays an important role in determining the topics that are the centre of public attention and action and that are perceived as important by the public and policy makers.”. In other words, due to the ways in which the media can act as “attention-focuser” and its very great influence on the public agenda and eventually the political agenda, media outlets can be understood as to have a great ‘agenda-setting ability’ (Neiger, Meyers, and Zandberg 2011, 214–15).

The force of agenda-setting theory can further be explained by the notion of framing, which can be understood as the main mechanism behind it. As explained by Entman (1993, 52); “Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.”. Accordingly, the media uses frames not only to determine which information the public will consume, but also how they understand and remember this information as well as how they should acted upon it. Although some people can retrieve their own knowledge and facts, research has revealed that “on most matters of social or political interest, people are not generally so well-informed and cognitively active, and that framing therefore heavily influences their responses to communications.” (Entman 1993, 56). The ways in which the media actively decides to or not to present information to their public, can thus has great influence on the public opinion, and subsequently social memory (Scheufele 1999, 105).

Scholars have also proposed other but rather similar explanations for the strong link between media, public opinion, and social memory. To start with, due to the its great influence on the public opinion and thus the public debate, the media also has a great ability of ‘memory-setting’, as it chose to discuss, emphasize, and evaluate historical events (Kligler-Vilenchik 2011, 227). Second, the media’s great dominance and presence in everyday life, especially in

---

9 Author’s emphasis.
modern societies. Respectively, the media typically functions as the primary source of information and often even being understood as the authoritative social storyteller of the past, resulting in the information its spreads being very likely to influence the social memory (Neiger, Meyers, and Zandberg 2011, 3–6; Laplante and Phenicie 2009, 252). Thirdly, scholars point out the significance of the media on social memory due to the ways in which it is used by so-called ‘memory-makers’. Specifically, the media can be used by people to construct their own version of the past as well as to spread them to wider audiences afterwards (Neiger, Meyers, and Zandberg 2011, 6–7). Likewise, with journalists often using the social memories of historical events to make sense of contemporary issues, media outlets might ignite and/or change the memory of historical events (Maltby 2016, 145; Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2011, 214).

As this study aims to understand how the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and Indonesia has been constructed and mediated throughout 1994 to 2016, a study considering the Dutch media in this regards seems to be an appropriate objective. As research has revealed that particularly the frames used by media are of great influence on the public understanding of information, I argue that specifically research focused on the frames attributed by the Dutch media regarding the decolonization would contribute to an increasingly comprehensive understanding of the present Dutch social memory of the event.
Research Questions

Thesis will examine the coverage of the Dutch media on the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and Indonesia from 1945 to 1949, in relation to the Dutch social memory of the event. More specifically, this study will examine how popular Dutch opinion journals depicted the event between 1994 and 2016, by analysing articles from four major Dutch opinion journals from eight different time periods. Accordingly, the main research question that will be answered is: How did the four major Dutch opinion journals frame the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and Indonesia, between 1994 and 2016, and how does this relate to the academic debate on the Dutch social memory of the event?

In order to answer this question, the following five sub-questions have been formulated:

2) Which arguments were used by the different journals in different years to support these specific frames?
3) Which main frames and arguments did De Groene Amsterdammer, Elsevier, HP/De Tijd, and Vrij Nederland attribute to the war of decolonization?
4) How did the debate that took place in the journals develop between 1994 and 2016?
5) How does the debate which took place in the opinion journals relate to the academic debate on the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization?
Methodology

Definitions and Spelling

For the sake of clarity and due to the many different ways the key concepts and names used in this paper can be understood and defined, a short overview discussing these matters will now be provided. First of all, as argued by many scholars such as Olick (2009) and Winter (2006, 1–13), the concept of social memory can be defined in a large variety of ways with many different names. Nevertheless, the concept is generally understood to refer to shared representations of the past, and therefore the present paper will follow this example by adopting the following definition: representations of the past, assembled in narratives, that are collectively adopted. The term social memory has been chosen rather than similar terms such as ‘collective memory’, due to its greater focus on the fact that attitudes towards certain historical events or periods are created in a social context, as also described by French (1995, 9). In addition, the term emphasizes that these, often conflicting, attitudes are created through communication of interaction between various groups and individuals (French 1995, 9; Olick and Robbins 1998, 111). Accordingly, the present paper understands social memory as a social construct, meaning that it is a variable concept created in a social context.

Second, it should be noted that the Indonesian spelling of names and places has changed several times since the Dutch colonial era (Luttikhuis and Moses 2012, 272). In regards to spelling, modern Indonesian uses ‘u’ instead of the colonial ‘oe’ and ‘c’ instead of ‘tj’. The present paper, however, will use a combination of both the ‘old’ as well as the ‘new’ spelling, as it will follow the example of English-language scholarly literature on the subject. For illustration, the Indonesian’s first president will be called ‘Sukarno’ rather than ‘Soekarno’. Regarding geographical renaming, the example of the Dutch academic and public debate will also be followed. Accordingly, when referring to nowadays ‘BalongSari’, ‘Rawagede’ will be used, and when discussing ‘Batavia’ and ‘South-Celebes’, the modern names ‘Jakarta’ and ‘South-Sulawesi’ will be used. Likewise, when referring to the former Dutch colony, the modern name Indonesia has been adopted herein, since the many colonial names for the country can easily cause confusion. The colonial-era name the Dutch East Indies (Nederlands-Oost-Indië), will only be used when referring to the country of Indonesia before its declaration of independence in August 1945. Lastly, throughout the paper, when discussing concepts and/or events with a typical Indonesian name, such as Trojka or Bersiap, the Indonesian name will be used.
Furthermore, when discussing the Dutch people in Indonesia who participated in the war of decolonization on behalf of the Dutch government, Dutch forces will be used. The term ‘forces’ rather than army or soldiers, has been selected because not only soldiers from the colonial army (het Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger, KNIL) and conscripts but also so-called ‘war-volunteers’ (Oologsvrijwilligers) were deployed (Scagliola 2002, 38–57; Romijn 2012, 320). When referring to the struggle between the Netherlands and Indonesia from August 1945 to December 1949, the term ‘war of decolonization’ or ‘decolonization war’ will be used as this term is the most prevalent in the scholarly literature on the topic. When referring to the two great military campaigns carried out by the Dutch forces Police Actions will be used. This decision has been made despite the scholarly consensus of the term as problematic – as an euphemistic term coined by the Dutch government to emphasis the supposedly humanitarian nature of the mission, while denying what was ‘actually’ happening that is full-fledged military operations – since it is the most commonly used in the national and international, academic and public debate on the event (Vanvugt 2002, 305; Lorenz 2015a, 219).

The Material
The main material this master’s thesis will analyse are articles from Dutch opinion journals, for which has been chosen for various reasons. For a start, whereas other types of printed media such as newspapers typically publish fairly short and simplified articles, opinion journals are known for providing the public with much more in-depth and nuanced articles (Leurdijk and Leenderste 2015, 312). Next, because opinion journals, in particular the ones chosen for this study, are generally published independently they are free of the influence of the other parties such as the government and subsequently also more free to write critical articles regarding these other parties (Harbers 2015, 128). Lastly, opinion journals typically aim to reflect the public opinion – hence the name – by discussing issues of great public interest, as for instance stated by De Groene Amsterdammer on their website (n.d.). At the same time due to their well-explained critical publications, the journals also have great influence on the construction of the public opinion and subsequently the social memory. Given these points, combined with the proven great influence the Dutch political establishment had on the media coverage and the complex nature of the decolonization war, I believe that Dutch opinion journals are the preeminent appropriate materials to examine the media coverage of the event.
In particular, the media coverage of the following opinion journals will be analysed: De Groene Amsterdammer, HP/De Tijd, Vrij Nederland, and Elsevier. These journals have been selected for a number of reasons, as now will be explained. Firstly, the existing scientific lacuna. Accordingly, as described by Scagliola (2002, 105) Dutch opinion journals had a great influence on the Dutch public debate, since they were both during and after the war often the first ones to publish critical articles on the event. Nevertheless, despite their arguably great influence, the journals have received little academic attention in general, and no in this regard. Secondly, the four journals have been chosen because they are by far the most popular ones, as illustrated by NOM’s (2018) national media research. Due to their relatively large audiences these journals thus have the greatest influence on Dutch public opinion and subsequently social memory, and are therefore most relevant for this study. Third, I made my choice based on practical considerations since the articles of the selected journals could not only be find through the online databank NexisLexis but also offer their own online database on their website to search articles. Finally, the specific journals have been selected because together they form a diverse collection and can thus be understood as a good representation of the Dutch media landscape, as I will now further explain.

To start with De Groene Amsterdammer, being published for the first time in 1877, which makes it the oldest opinion journal in the Netherlands (De Groene Amsterdammer n.d.). The journal which is typically understood as to represent the intellectual, left-wing part of Dutch society, and known for providing the public for critical articles on national and foreign politics and its investigative journalism, only stopped to exist during the Second World War (Plasse 2005, 206). Secondly, Vrij Nederland, which was, in contrast to De Groene Amsterdammer, founded during the Second World War as an illegal magazine and became the only illegal magazine that continued to exist after the war was ended (Plasse 2005, 207). The journal is generally regarded as left-wing oriented and mainly discusses contemporary issues relating to politics and culture (Bakker and Scholten 2014, 39).

Around the same time, the opinion journal Elsevier was founded. Although not explicitly identifying as such, the Netherlands’ most popular journal can be understood as to be right-wing oriented (Plasse 2005, 207). Elsevier is known for closely following and reporting on important, contemporary issues, while expressing their unvarnished opinion. The journal has also proven to be not scared of discussing controversial issues. Per illustration, during the Indonesian decolonization war it explicitly stated it was against the Republic of Indonesia
Over Elsevier Weekblad’ 2016). Lastly, HP/De Tijd which was ‘only’ founded in 1990s as the result of a fusion between the social liberal weekly journal De Haagsche Post and the catholic journal De Tijd (Plasse 2005, 208). Nevertheless, the right-wing oriented journal became greatly successful immediately after its foundation and continued to be so, due to its international orientation and its critical assessment of current developments worldwide.

The Periodization
Articles from the four opinion journals from the following years will be analysed: 1994, 1995, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2016. I have arrived at these dates by reviewing the academic and public discussion on the Dutch social memory of the decolonization war in which they were identified as key moments. The year 1994 can be understood as a key moment because this is the year in which the Dutch Indies-veteran and deserter Poncke Princen was issued a visa to visit to the Netherlands, which created great public upheaval. In 1995, the publication of Poncke Princen’s biography as well as his visit to the Netherlands and Dutch Queen Beatrix’ state visit to Indonesia became issues of great public interest. The year 2005 has been selected because this was the year in which the Dutch Foreign Minister Ben Bot attended Indonesia’s Independence Day celebrations, where he delivered a speech on the decolonization war, voicing criticism on the role of the Dutch.

The years 2008, 2011, 2012 and 2013 have been chosen because they mark the Rawagede period. Respectively, after Indonesian village representatives on behalf of (survivor-)widows filed a lawsuit against the Netherlands in 2008, the Dutch state was found guilty for the Rawagede massacre which occurred during the decolonization war in 2011. In 2012, the popular daily Dutch newspaper De Volkskrant published two pictures of mass executions of Indonesian civilians by Dutch forces, and a Dutch public formal apology for the excesses followed in 2013. The year 2016 can be understood as the final key moment as this was the year the Dutch government decided to support a four-year long large-scale research program on the decolonization war. It was also the year in which Limpach (2016) published his critically acclaimed dissertation discussing the behaviour of the Dutch forces.
The Data Collection

The articles used in the present study have mainly been gathered through LexisNexis Academic, which is a large database containing full text versions of thousands of newspapers and newswires worldwide (LexisNexis n.d.). If no articles from a specific journal or year could be found, the digital databank of the opinion journal at issue was used to collect articles. HP/De Tijd was for instance not included in the NexisLexis Academic database and therefore articles from this journal were collected via the journal’s website. For the years 1994 and 1995, only digital articles from De Groene Amsterdammer were found and thus the data collection for the other journals for these years continued in a non-digital space. More specifically, the articles from these years were collected in the Royal Library in The Hague using microfilm and microfiche. In the case of digital collection, the articles were collected through the use of key words, with per time period specific keywords related to that year being added. The used keywords were partly based on sensitizing concepts that arose from the theoretical framework such as names of places and people, but also included other more general key words due the explorative, inductive nature of this study. The articles that were found through the use of microfiche and microfilm were not found through the use of key words, but through manually scanning each journal.

In determining the relevance of the articles, some decisions were made. Firstly, articles that mentioned (some) key words, but not did not explicitly deal with the war of decolonization and/or the Dutch social memory of it were removed. Secondly, articles which discussed the specific research topic, but only very little and/or superficial were not selected. Articles that discussed the war of decolonization but did so in very factual manner without attributing frames to information, were also excluded from this research. Per illustration, in 2015, HP/De Tijd only published very factual articles on the event written by the Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau (ANP) and subsequently these articles were deemed irrelevant, as the information would not represent the journal’s actual attitude or opinion. Lastly, reviews of books, movies, documentaries, and television shows on the war of decolonization and/or Dutch social memory of it, without any added editorial comments, were also not selected for this study. Per illustration, Vrij Nederland’s (1995) advanced copy of Ponke Princen’s biography which was published without any additional editorial comments, was not selected for the analysis. All other collected articles were deemed relevant, resulting in a total of 99 articles.

---

10 For a full list of all the used key words see Appendix: Key Words.
11 ANP is the largest news agency in the Netherlands.
Table 1: The distribution of the articles per journal and per year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion journal</th>
<th>De Groene Amsterdammer</th>
<th>Elsevier</th>
<th>Vrij Nederland</th>
<th>HP/De Tijd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Methods

The aim of the present research is to identify and understand the way(s) in which the war of decolonization was presented in Dutch opinion journals. Consequently, *framing analysis* has been selected as the main theoretical approach. Specifically, in order to identify and evaluate the frames attributed to the event, a textual analysis of the articles published in the journals has been conducted. It was decided to carry out the analysis in a qualitative manner, on the account of the specific research aims, that is to provide insight in how Dutch opinion journals framed the war of decolonization, and the research’ exploratory nature, as it positions itself in an unexplored research area (Boeije, ’t Hart, and Hox 2009, 254–55; Walliman 2006, 129). However, in order to create a better understanding of the data and to place it within context, some quantitative data will be provided, for instance how many articles deal with a specific topic.

After collecting the material and distributing it per year and per journal, the selected 99 articles were added to ATLAS.ti 8 as documents. As described by Friese (2014) in *Qualitative data analysis with ATLAS.ti* this is a software program which aids researchers to conduct research by providing certain tools to locate, code, and evaluate primary sources, while analysing and visualising the relations between them. Specifically, the program assisted me with conducting the textual analysis, as it helped me identify frames by translating them into ‘codes’ and subsequently linking them specific parts of the texts, ‘quotations’, while also revealing ‘hidden’ codes and concepts discussed. The textual analysis was thus conducted in an inductive fashion, meaning that the frames were established during the analysis itself, as it progressed, rather than being established before-hand (Boeije, ’t Hart, and Hox 2009, 268). There has been chosen to carry out the analysis in an inductive rather than a deductive fashion,
as this allowed me to explore and consider all the frames used instead of only the ones previously identified and selected.

With the use of ATLAS.ti 8, the journals’ articles authors frames attributed to the various topics and events were thus identified and translated into codes. More specifically, in the first round of analysis, solely the main themes of the articles were identified. In order to create a general overview of the themes discussed, the different articles as a whole were coded according to the main theme(s) discussed, for instance as ‘apologies’ and ‘lawsuits’. Next, the articles were coded more specifically, by identifying the specific event and/or topic discussed related to this theme, if present. Respectively, codes such as ‘apology Bot’ and ‘lawsuit Rawagede’ were established and attributed to the articles. In the third round of the textual analysis, the way(s) in which the earlier identified topic was evaluated, was explored and coded accordingly. In particular, the evaluation ‘positive’, ‘neutral’, or ‘negative’ was contributed to topic of discussion, resulting in codes such as ‘state visit positive’ and ‘apology negative’. In the next round of analysis, arguments and/or motivations given for the specific evaluation, such as “no need to dwell on the past”, were identified and subsequently coded.

After coding all 99 articles accordingly, first per time year and afterwards per journal, a number of ‘code groups’, in which related codes were brought together were created. By way of example, ‘lawsuit Rawagede’, ‘lawsuit South-Sulawesi’ and ‘Liesbeth Zegveld’ were all added to the code group ‘lawsuit’, and ‘State visit Beatrix’, ‘visit Bot’ and ‘Visit Dutch ambassador’ were all added to ‘NL visit Indonesia’. These code groups allowed me to identify possible relations between codes as well as general trends between frames and arguments. Additionally, throughout the textual analysis, mainly in the second and third rounds, selections of the articles texts in relation to the codes and evaluations were also marked as ‘quotations’. Subsequently, these quotations were identified as to support, contradict, or explain, certain codes, thus illustrating the relation between them. Additionally, ‘memos’, containing my thoughts on specific quotations, were created during the different rounds of analysis. These were especially used to identify ‘unexpected’, for instance seemingly contradicting or peculiar, frames and related arguments used in the articles, considering the journal’s previously given frames and related arguments or focus on certain topics. Per illustration, a memo was created on the positive frame attributed to a specific event by an author in Elsevier as it appeared to contradict the previously used frames which were greatly negative.
After conducting the textual analysis of the Dutch opinion journals’ articles as described previously, the main themes discussed per year and journal could be identified. Likewise, the empirical analysis illustrated how these themes typically framed by specific journals in specific years, as well as the arguments used to support, contradict, or explain these frames. Subsequently, through comparative analysis, the differences between the four opinion journal and different years and the changes in and development of the debate in the journals over time could be identified. Finally, the debate that took place in the journals from 1994 to 2016, was related to the academic debate on the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and Indonesia.

**Evaluation of Methods and Material**

As every research, the present study had some limitations. Firstly, due to practical and time limitations, not all four opinion journals were included in the analysis every year. For instance, no articles from Vrij Nederland published in the year 2005 were found. Similarly, in some years the journals published only very few articles such as one or two. Although inclusion or more articles from all journals of all years could have resulted in different results, I believe this difference would not be significant, considering the exclusion of articles only appeared in a few cases and the great amount of articles still collected and analysed.

Secondly, opinion journals typically have a narrow focus and a particular bias. Although I believe the journals selected for this investigation together assemble a diverse collection and a good representation of the Dutch media landscape, it is possible that due to the journals’ specific characteristics, the articles do not actually reflect the Dutch public discussion and social memory on the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and Indonesia. In addition, articles published in opinion journals are generally more in-depth and of a higher standard and subsequently less accessible to the general public especially when compared to other types of printed media. Accordingly, it is possible that the articles published in the journals did not target the whole of Dutch society, but only certain societal groups such as the higher educated. Therefore it may also be possible that the journals did not have such a great impact on the Dutch public debate and the shaping of Dutch social memory as assumed. At the same time, due to this potential limited relation with the Dutch public, one could argue that the articles therefore also not reflect the public debate and social memory of the event. However, due to the great popularity of the journals in the Netherlands, also among different societal groups, the relationship between the journals and the public debate is still regarded as very strong.
Thirdly, the way in which the articles from the opinion journals were collected had some specific limitations. To start with, it may be that the key word searches used to collected the material, did not result in finding all articles relevant for this research. Likewise, with the data collection through the use of microfiche and microfilm it is possible that not all relevant articles were found, as I only skimmed through the journals and their articles. Nevertheless, due to the great accuracy in which the data collection was carried out, for instance the use of various keywords and databases, I expect that no significant mistakes were made.
Empirical Analysis

Contextualization: the War of Decolonization Between the Netherlands and Indonesia

The first Dutch fleet left for Indonesia in 1595 and at the beginning of the colonial era the great majority of Indonesia was essentially governed by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) (Van den Herik, 2012). Subsequently, in the 17th century, the archipelago became part of the Dutch Kingdom as the Dutch East Indies, and stayed under colonial rule for more than three centuries (ibid). Due to this century-long relationship, Indonesia was by the Dutch understood as inextricably bound up with the Netherlands. Therefore, when the Indonesian national movement declared independence, two days after the Japanese capitulation which marked the end of the Second World War, on the 17th of August 1945, the Dutch were greatly surprised (Scagliola 2007, 238; Limpach 2016, 49). In particular, the Dutch were surprised because they had become deeply isolated from the political developments in their former colony. Accordingly, due to the great focus of the Dutch political establishment on national problems, such as the ‘Hunger Winter’ (Hongerwinter)\(^{12}\) and the German occupation, in the years prior to the declaration of independence, they did not notice that the three-year long occupation by the Japanese had fostered nationalistic- and anti-Western feelings (Galen Last and Wolfswinkel 1996; Lagrou 1997, 205–10; Scagliola 2007, 237).

Despite colonization becoming increasingly difficult to justify within the general trend towards decolonization in post-war Europe and the recognition of the right to self-determination, as described by Young (2012), the Dutch state did not want to ’give-up’ Indonesia. Due to the belief that losing their precious colony would be a disaster, both economically and socially, and the sincere belief that the exotic, ‘simple-minded’ Indonesians needed and wanted the great ‘civilisation’ the Dutch brought with them, the Dutch state decided to do everything within their power to ’keep’ Indonesia (Oostindie, Hoogenboom, and Verwey 2016, 18; Koro-Ljungberg et al. 2009, 503). The Dutch government immediately started to recruit large numbers of war-volunteers, and later on also conscripted soldiers. 160,000 men were sent to Indonesia and in total almost 220,000 men – and a few hundred women – would serve in the combined Dutch army that was supposed to bring Indonesia ‘back home’ (Oostindie, Hoogenboom, and Verwey 2018, 256).

\(^{12}\) The Hunger Winter, also known as the Dutch Famine, refers to the winter and early spring in 1944-1945 in the Netherlands, wherein food shortages were extremely great (Zee 1989).
In the weeks immediate after the declaration of independence, the whole of Indonesia found itself in chaos, with especially Indonesian militias fighting for power (Scagliola 2002, 22–37). With the first Allied landings in Jakarta in late 1945, the violence carried out by the Indonesian paramilitaries increased, and thousands of people were killed by extreme, deadly violence in various places around Java (Raben 2012, 491). Specifically, ethnic groups associated with colonial rule – Europeans, Eurasians, and Chinese – were targeted, while violence was also executed between various Indonesian groups (Oostindie, Hoogenboom, and Verwey 2018, 256). This greatly chaotic and violent period, better known as the Bersiap, turned out to be very decisive for the conflict. Because whereas firstly the two parties were seeking to solve it in a political, peaceful way, with negotiations, the Bersiap ‘showed’ the Dutch that it was only solvable with military means (Scagliola 2002, 22–37).

Consequently, the first Dutch military campaign, the First Police Action, from July to August 1947, followed (Oostindie, Hoogenboom, and Verwey 2018, 257). The campaign was carried out rapidly and rather successfully for the Dutch, as it enabled them to attain control over various cities as well as the economically most important areas (Scagliola 2002, 22–37). Due to this big success, Dutch morale was high and the belief that Indonesia would be brought ‘back home’ became even stronger. In the following months, however, Indonesia’s guerrilla warfare intensified and, at the end of 1947, the Dutch’ initial euphoria changed into despair (ibid.). The Dutch forces proved to be inadequate for the intensified guerrilla, which among other things resulted in vandalism, a great increase of losses on Dutch side, and Indonesian citizens being kidnapped and murdered (Limpach 2016, 52–58).

From December 1948 to January 1949, the Dutch carried out a second military campaign, the Second Police Action (Oostindie, Hoogenboom, and Verwey 2018, 257). This campaign, however, was a lot less successful than the first. Specifically, although the Dutch did manage to attain control of strategic areas, such as the Java and big parts of Sumatra, Indonesian guerrilla proved to be extremely strong, being much better prepared than during the first campaign (Scagliola 2002, 22–37). A unprecedented guerrilla war, with great losses on both sides, followed. In the subsequent months, Indonesia’s insurgency became even stronger and the Dutch gradually started to lose territory as well as hearts and minds (Scagliola 2002, 22–37). The losses on the Dutch side increased, with approximately 2,200 attacks on military posts and 1,600 attacks on vehicles and convoys being carried out, and more than ever, the Dutch forces found themselves fighting for a lost cause.
Finally, on the 27th of December 1949, the Netherlands, under great international pressure and to the dismay of its colonial authorities, was forced to concede independence to Indonesia (Scagliola 2007, 239). During the four years of fighting, an estimated 5,000 Dutch soldiers and 100,000 – estimates go up to 150,000 – Indonesians lost their lives (Limpach 2016, 57; Oostindie, Hoogenboom, and Verwey 2018, 257).

The Dutch Public Debate on the War of Decolonization

Already during the decolonization war, stories, mainly brought by left-wing and/or religious organizations, about the Dutch forces’ violence came to the attention of the general public (Oostindie, Hoogenboom, and Verwey 2016, 34–35, 2018, 257). Although receiving marginal attention in wider society, Dutch parliament members started asking the government questions (Kamervragen) and eventually requested a research into the supposed mass violence carried out by the Dutch forces (Scagliola 2002, 105). The questions and the related request, however, were not met with great enthusiasm; the questions remained unanswered and the request was denied. Moreover, the Dutch Government, together with the Trojka13 made a deliberate attempt to minimize reports on the matter during the war and continued to do so after (Hendriks 2012, 403). Consequently the possibility of the Dutch forces behaving extremely violent during the decolonization war, remained in the doofpot (covered-up) and eventually disappeared from the Dutch public debate (Scagliola 2002, 105).

All of this changed however in 1969, when psychologist and Dutch Indies-veteran Joop Hueting gave an interview on television in the program Achter Het Nieuws14 (C. Vos 1995, 114). According to Hueting, based on the behaviour of himself and his unit as well as on the observations of other men, the Dutch forces structurally engaged in mass violence and thus were guilty of many war crimes (Scagliola 2007, 248; Limpach 2016, 21). Hueting’s confession made an immense impact on the Dutch public and was followed by the VARA15 receiving 885 letters, the majority written by Dutch East Indies veterans, full of own experiences during the war of decolonization (C. Vos 1995, 115). The interview also led to a huge, national debate, with the media paying great attention to the topic by publishing mainly anonymous stories of other Dutch Indies-veterans and interviews with experts (Limpach 2016, 27). These stories

---

13 *Trojka* refers to the Dutch local authorities in Indonesia.
14 *Achter Het Nieuws* – literally meaning ‘Behind The News’- was a left-wing current affairs programme aired on Dutch television.
15 The VARA is the Dutch network that broadcasted the interview with Hueting.
typically resulted in even more commotion due to their greatly critical tone. For instance, Dutch novelist Graa Boomsma, compared the Dutch forces in Indonesia during the war of decolonization with SS-men (Schaafsma 1992).

Above all, Hueting’s painfully explicit revelations and the subsequent national debate led to the Dutch government being forced to investigate the question of extreme military violence in Indonesia (Scagliola 2002, 109; Limpach 2016, 29). However, this research, commonly referred to as the *Excessennota*, is typically understood to be conducted in a pseudo-scientific manner and therefore to present inaccurate findings. Among other limitations, the investigation was conducted in only three months, the data only consisted of Dutch government records, and, in order to neutralise the issue, the violence was referred to as *excesses* rather than war crimes (Limpach 2016, 29–30). Nevertheless, based on its findings, the Dutch government concluded that mass violence only occurred occasionally and that the Dutch forces as a whole generally acted appropriately (Limpach 2016, 30; Scagliola 2002, 109–10). With this conclusion, the Dutch political establishment decided to end the investigation and the political debate on the colonial war, resulting in the national discussion on the decolonization war being brought to an end too (Scagliola 2002, 109–10).

The public debate was agitated again at the end of the 1980s, when a draft text of Lou de Jong’s new work was leaked to the Dutch press (Scagliola 2002, 43). Accordingly, De Jong, who was a well-known Dutch historian and the first director of the NIOD, compared the Dutch forces’ behaviour during the war of decolonization in Indonesia to the German occupiers of the Netherlands during the Second World War while using the term ‘war crimes’ when referring to the violence (Scagliola 2012, 428). A great amount of criticism voiced throughout Dutch society, from mainly the Dutch Indies-veterans, followed, and eventually De Jong revised his text, replacing ‘war crimes’ with ‘excesses’.

In the mid-1990s the matter was once again brought to the centre of attention, this time in the figure of Johannes Cornelis Princen, better known Poncke Princen. Poncke, who was born in the Netherlands, sought to evade conscription for the war in Indonesia as he did not want to fight against freedom, but was arrested and send overseas in 1946 (Fenema 1995, 45–55). Upon arrival however, Poncke’s conviction that the Dutch were ‘on the wrong side’ of the war steadily increased, and in 1948 he deserted to the Indonesian side, eventually becoming known as the *White Guerilla* due to the many Dutch soldiers he supposedly killed (Fenema 1995, 99–109). After the war, he became an Indonesian citizen and only visited the Netherlands occasionally, but due to his image as a deserter and killer, every visit was surrounded with
commotion. And as stated by Bals and Gerritsen (1993, 121), Poncke “became the symbol of the Dutch unresolved past.”. Therefore, in 1994, when the Dutch political establishment decided to issue Poncke a visa to visit, after declining the year before, the matter created great public uproar, with Dutch Indies-veterans even publicly threatening to kill him (Houben 2000, 80).

In 1995, the Dutch deserter was again responsible for flaring up the Dutch public debate. Accordingly, not only the publication of the biography A matter of choice (Een kwestie van kiezen), but especially his visit to the Netherlands received an enormous amount of public attention and led to many protests, in particular from the Dutch Indies-veterans (Fenema 1995, 197–205). However, the Dutch Queen Beatrix’ state visit to Indonesia can be understood as the main even of 1995, as it received even more public attention. Three aspects of the visit were particularly peculiar, with first of all the dates of the visit. Initially, Queen Beatrix was supposed to arrive on the 17th of August, in order to attend Indonesia’s Independence Day celebrating 50 years of independence. However, since her presence could may have been interpreted as official Dutch recognition of this day as the day on which Indonesia gained its independence, and order to avoid offending the Dutch Indies-veterans which could lead to another public, the Dutch government changed the arrival date to the 21st of August (Scagliola 2002, 112–14). The change of schedule greatly offended the Indonesians, and was followed by a very cold welcome of Queen Beatrix by the Indonesian government, resulting in the Queen, among other things, having to wait on President Suharto and his wife attendance on various occasions and a number of meetings being cancelled last-minute (Moll 1995).

The other aspect of the state visit to Indonesia which received great public attention, was the speech Queen Beatrix delivered to President Suharto during a dinner on the first day of the state visit. Accordingly, the Queen wanted to apologize for the human rights violations that were carried out by the Dutch forces during the war of decolonization, in particular the Police Actions, but she was forbidden to do so by Prime Minister Kok, in order to avoid commotion, specifically among the Dutch Indies-veterans (van Baalen and de Jong 2005, 37). Subsequently, the Queen did not explicitly express her apologies for what happened during her speech, but regret and sadness instead (ibid., 37–38);

The Netherlands was initially not prepared to accept the Indonesian efforts for full and immediate independence. And as a result, the separation between our countries became a lengthy process, that resulted in a lot of pain and bitter struggle. When we look back on this time, which is now almost fifty years behind us, it particularly makes us sad that so many have died in this battle or lived their lives with scars because of it.
Thirdly, the state visit dominated the public debate in the Netherlands due to the political message it would send to Indonesia. Accordingly Beatrix’ visit to Indonesia would implicitly show Dutch support for Indonesian president Suharto’s regime, and this notion was widely regarded as problematic due to the many human rights abuses carried out under this regime. Accordingly, the state visit would implicitly show support for the regime in which, as described by Pohlman (2008, 47) “an estimated half a million people were murdered and a further one and a half million imprisoned for their alleged involvement.”, as well as Indonesia’s 24-year long occupation of East Timor, in which structural violence resulted in the deaths of more than 200,000 East Timorese (Thaler 2012, 214).

In 2005, the main focus of the public debate was on the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Ben Bot, in particular his visit to Indonesia. Respectively, unlike Queen Beatrix ten years earlier and as the first Dutch government ever, Bot attended the Independence Day celebrations. Moreover, on the occasion of Indonesia’s 60th anniversary, one day before the celebrations would take place, Bot delivered a speech on the war of decolonization, in particular the role of the Dutch (B. R. Bot 2016, 346–49). While discussing his own experiences in the country as a child, the minister stated that his attendance of that year’s independence celebrations could be understood as “a political and moral acceptance” from the Dutch political establishment and its people, of the 17th of August 1945 as the official day on which the Republic of Indonesia gained its independence (B. Bot 2005b), while explicitly acknowledging the harm that was done during the war:

> In retrospect, it is clear that its-large scale deployment of military forces in 1947 put the Netherlands on the wrong side of history. The fact that military action was taken and that many people on both sides lost their lives or were wounded is a harsh and bitter reality especially for you, the people of the Republic of Indonesia. A large number of your people are estimated to have died as a result of the action taken by the Netherlands. On behalf of the Dutch government, I wish to express my profound regret for all that suffering.

In the years that followed, it was in particular the Rawagede lawsuit that brought the decolonization war back to the centre of public attention. To start with 2008, in which the ’Committee Dutch Debts of Honor’ (Comité Nederlandse Ereschulden) on behalf of one survivor and nine survivor widows, filed a lawsuit against the Dutch state in order to address the mass executions carried out by the Dutch forces on the 9th of December 1947 in the Indonesian village Rawagede (van den Herik 2012). Three years later, in 2011, the previously invoked statute of limitations was partly found groundless and the District Court in The Hague
ruled that the Dutch State had acted wrongfully and was therefore liable for the damages the surviving relatives suffered (Lorenz 2015b; 2012). As this was the first time the Dutch government has been held responsible by a court for a committed massacre, the case was followed with great public interest (van den Herik 2012). On the 9th of December that year, 64 years after the mass executions took place, the Dutch ambassador also visited Rawagede and subsequently delivered apologies for what happened in the village on behalf of the Dutch state.

Just a few months later, in 2012, Rawagede became frontpage news again when the Dutch newspaper *De Volkskrant* published two pictures of mass executions of Indonesian civilians carried out by Dutch forces. Although the pictures did not depict executions carried out during the massacre in Rawagede specifically, they were met with great public attention and shock because it reminded the public of the court case (Lorenz 2015b). As a result of the enormous public attention and discussion that followed, three great Dutch research institutes – the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, the Netherlands Institute of Military History, and the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide studies – called for a comprehensive research into the war crimes the Dutch forces committed in Indonesia between 1945 and 1950. The cabinet in power at that time however rejected the proposal/ The official apology for what happened in Rawagede delivered in the same year by the Dutch government, also received great public attention (Limpach 2016, 27–29). Due to the success of the Rawagede lawsuit, another case against to the Dutch state was brought to court, this time on of the widows of victims of the massacre on South-Sulawesi. Before the case could go to court however, in 2013, the Dutch state already decided to offer the plaintiffs the same compensation as given to the victims of Rawagede (Luttikhuis 2014). Additionally, in August of that year, the Dutch government delivered an official apology to the victims of both South-Sulawei and Rawagede (ibid.).

In 2016, the public debate in Dutch society related to the war of decolonization, was focused on Limpach’s (2016) dissertation *The burning kampongs of General Spoor*. Although previous studies already revealed that Dutch mass violence against the Indonesians occurred, Limpach was the first to argue that this type of violence was carried out structurally. The research was understood as ground breaking and discussed heavily amongst the Dutch public and Dutch media, for instance by the Dutch main news channel NOS. The publication also led to a great political debate, resulting in the Dutch government deciding to (financially) support the large-scale research on the war of decolonization carried out by three Dutch great research institutes, as proposed and declined four years earlier (ANP 2012, 2016; van Vreek 2017).
Results, Analysis, and Interpretation

The Debate in the Opinion Journals – 1994

In order to describe the way in which the four Dutch opinion journals depict the war of decolonization in the year 1994, a total of seven articles have been analysed. Specifically, one from De Groene Amsterdammer, two from Elsevier, one from Vrij Nederland, and two from HP/De Tijd, with only two articles dealing with the figure of Poncke Princen.

Presence of Frames and Arguments

Firstly, Ramdas’s (1994) article in De Groene Amsterdammer, which discusses the social memory of the of the war of decolonization, and uses the controversy around Poncke Princen to illustrate the great Dutch interest in the event; “I wonder why the Netherlands is still so focused on Indonesia. Whether Poncke Princen may or may not come here, whether the Queen may or may not visit, all these books about the good old days.”. Subsequently, the article offers an explanation for the Dutch continuing public attention by underlining the sizes of the two countries, while expressing praise for the Dutch that such a small country, was able to colonize such a big one (ibid.). Likewise, in HP/De Tijd Van Doorn (1994b, 62, 1994a) discusses the commotion surrounding Princen merely to illustrate the Dutch social memory of the event, which is by the journal understood as an unresolved trauma. The author also frames the Dutch political establishments in The Hague and Indonesia as immoral, by claiming that the most people working there knew that the war was doomed to fail but chose not to act upon this knowledge (van Doorn 1994b, 64). In another article, the Dutch political establishment is depicted similarly for fighting against a country’s independence despite knowing how terrible it is to be occupied, due to its own recent experience during the Second World War (van Doorn 1994c). The journal also frames the Dutch forces’ behaviour as extremely violent, but does not provides the reader with any arguments for this statement (van Doorn 1994a, 1994b).

Elsevier also focuses on the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization, as illustrated in the article It keeps coming back like its news. As described by Meijer (1994a), the Dutch continue to react shocked when information which somehow criticizes the role of the Dutch during the event is being brought to public attention. The tendency of the Dutch public to response this way is framed as peculiar and explained as follows; “the Indies were the Dutch biggest adventure. But the historical consciousness is short. The sensitivity remains.” (ibid., 38). In another article in the same journal, Meijer (1994b) discusses the publicly often expressed
notion in the Netherlands of the war being covered-up by politicians as well as historians, but disputes this idea by pointing out the great amount of academic works published on the event. In addition, the author argues that this specific part of colonial past should be understood as an unresolved trauma, which the Dutch should leave in abeyance, as that is what the Indonesians do, thus framing the public interest in the event negatively.

The one article Vrij Nederland published on the war of decolonization, also voices criticism. After describing how KNIL General Spoor spied on his superiors, the Dutch politicians in the Hague, and how he used the found information to his advantage, Van Liempt (1994, 14) argues that “undoubtedly the most fantastic example of euphemistic terminology that the Dutch politicians have created, is the term ‘police actions’ for the last two colonial wars we had.”. The author also uses the term “colonial spasms” when referring to the last two colonial wars the Netherlands fought, framing them as desperate attempts of the Dutch to remain a colonial power (ibid.).

Discussion of the Frames and Arguments

As previously described, only two of the seven selected articles discuss Poncke Princen, and in both articles the Dutch deserter and the commotion surrounding him is framed rather neutrally. Specifically, the two articles from De Groene Amsterdammer and HP/De Tijd portray the deserter as the embodiment of the present great, public Dutch interest in the war of decolonization. In other articles, the latter journal also frames the war as pointless, unnecessary, and immoral, mainly referring to the existing knowledge of the Dutch political powers that the war was doomed to fail and their refusal to act upon this information. The Dutch forces’ behaviour is also framed negatively as extremely and unnecessarily violent, without providing arguments to support this evaluation.

Elsevier frames the war of decolonization as a traumatic experience for the Dutch, from which the memory has not yet been processed. In addition, the journal depicts the Dutch historical consciousness and Dutch social memory as short and incomplete, pointing out how information about the event continues to be received by the Dutch public as brand-new despite similar information being made known to them before already. The Dutch academic and public attention for the event, in particular the more controversial parts, is framed as useless and wrong, because if the Indonesians have no interest in it the Dutch should not either.

Vrij Nederland’s articles also heavily criticizes various aspects of the decolonization war and accordingly frames the event negatively. To start with, the journal implicitly frames
the Dutch forces as untrustworthy, by providing a lengthy and detailed article on how KNIL General Spoor spied on his superiors. Likewise, the Dutch government is depicted negatively as manipulative and desperate, because of how it behaved during and after the war.

**The Debate in the Opinion Journals – 1995**

In order to describe the dominant discourse in Dutch opinion journals in the year 1995 on the war of decolonization, 30 articles have been examined. More specifically, nine articles from De Groene Amsterdammer, five from Elsevier, six from Vrij Nederland, and ten from HP/De Tijd were analysed. After reviewing these articles, two main themes could be distinguished; Poncke Princen, in particular his visit to the Netherlands, and Dutch Queen Beatrix’ state visit to Indonesia. The other articles dealt with the war of decolonization in a more general sense.

**Presence of Frames and Arguments**

The Dutch Indies deserter appears to have been of greater public interest than in 1994, with seven more article on him having been published in 1995. Only two articles however deal with Princen separately, the other ones do so in relation with Queen Beatrix’ state visit to Indonesia. The two articles discussing Princen independently, both from HP/De Tijd, discuss him while focusing on the relation with the Dutch Indies-veterans. Accordingly, Van Doorn’s (1995b) article touches upon the topic of Princen by arguing that the great majority of Dutch Indies-veterans supported Indonesia’s independence and realized that their position during the war was debatable. However, the writer emphasizes that it is not the place for outsiders to openly judge their actions, by concluding that “it were not the Indonesians, but their fellow citizens who made it difficult for the Indies-veterans.” (van Doorn 1995b, 23). The other article from the journal, also written by Van Doorn (1995a), describes Princen’s visit to the Netherlands in January neutrally, and relates it to the Dutch Indies-veterans, specifically the protests of the veteran organisations against it, while expressing support for the Dutch-Indies veterans:

> The war in the Indies had an even more traumatic outcome [than just being a lost battle]. Not only did she end badly for the Dutch, she was also characterized afterwards as an unnecessary conflict, as a political mistake. Even more, she was called a ‘colonial war’, and the participants started to feel that they were on the ‘wrong side’. Veterans cannot handle that. They did not have any influence on the politicians who sent them overseas. They do not wish to be accountable for that policy. They are willing to fully acknowledge that Indonesia rightly wanted to become independent and independent, but they
reject the reproach that this outcome should besmirch their own efforts. They have done their duty.

As stated above, the other articles discussing Princen do so in relation with Queen Beatrix’ state visit to the former colony. Vrij Nederland’s first article of the year on the topic, describes the small reading Princen provided to the public on the 6th of January during his visit to the Netherlands in a very factual fashion, without any additional editorial comments (van Tijn 1995). However, the articles does contain quotes from Princen stating that Queen Beatrix’ attendance on Indonesian Independence Day would be the first step towards a ‘cleaner’ Dutch past (ibid., 12). Another article from the same journal, also contains a quote from Princen, this time stating that he understand why Dutch people, in particular the Dutch Indies-veterans, dislike him, while expressing hope to enter a conversation with them in order to discuss their different views (Brader 1995). His wish to do so during Queen Beatrix’ state visit to Indonesia, however, was not granted as the Dutch political establishment put a lot of effort into avoiding a meeting between him and the Dutch Queen, as described by Boom and Rubsaam (1995) in De Groene Amsterdammer.

In HP/De Tijd, Van Doorn (1995c) discusses the possibility of Queen Beatrix apologizing for what happened during the war of decolonization and concludes with stating that a government’s apology is seldom useful, and thus that Beatrix should not apologize. The article, however, also emphasizes that an apology would not affect the integrity of the Dutch Indies-veterans or deserters, and refers to Prince to illustrate this. Vrij Nederland’s article *Multatuli, Poncke and others* also refers to Poncke Princen as a way to illustrate a certain belief, in this case that the Dutch public debate on the war of decolonization is still ongoing and of great public interest (Vanvugt 1995a). De Groene Amsterdammer’s article *The secrets of our Indies* similarly uses the figure of Princen to illustrate the great controversy on the war present in Dutch society, while claiming that Dutch conscience rather than the Dutch deserter himself should be understood as the reason for all this commotion (van Kampen 1995).

With fourteen out of the 30 articles dealing with the decolonization war explicitly discussing Queen Beatrix’ state visit to Indonesia, this topic can be understood as to have dominated the debate in the journals in 1995. In particular, the change of schedule received great attention in the journals’ debates. To start with, Giebels’ (1995) article in De Groene Amsterdammer argues that a state visit to the former colony on the day of independence would implicitly mean that the Netherlands recognize the 17th of August as such, framing this as very controversial as the Dutch still hold on to the day of the transfer of sovereignty, four years later.
Vanvugt’s (1995a, 8) article in Vrij Nederland also underlines this notion and uses it to explain the change of schedule:

On the 17th of August Queen Beatrix will not attend the celebration of the proclamation of the Republik Indonesia. That is for sure. It is an official cabinet16 decision. A phone call to H. van der Voet', the head of the Government Information Service confirms that: 'The Indonesians regard the seventeenth as a national holiday. No other head of state is invited. If a country celebrates its independence, we have nothing to do with that in itself. The official reason for not being present is: the Indonesians do not want it. The real reason is: it is too sensitive in the Netherlands. A royal visit to Jakarta would in fact mean an acknowledgment of the seventeenth of August 1945 as the independence date. The Netherlands has so far held on 27 December 1949. Because otherwise the police actions would have been for nothing. Recognizing independence earlier would be an insult to the veterans.

In HP/De Tijd, Duynstee’s (1995, 19) claims that the change of schedule was a Dutch decision, stressing that Queen Beatrix was very welcome in Indonesia during the celebrations, using quotes from interviews with several locals on the state visit, such as “‘Auntie Bea does not have to apology. Why would she? We are friends right?’”. The article also demonstrates great Indonesian understanding on the change of schedule, by describing the interviewees attitudes towards Beatrix as greatly positive, with them calling her “sensible and sympathetic that she takes the feelings of the veterans so much into account.” (ibid.).

Elsevier’s (1995, 36) article is also critical on the timing of the state visit and frames the change of schedule as a missed opportunity for the Dutch to face the past. Additionally, Meijer (1995) portrays the Queen’s speech as rather negative, by criticising that she did not commented on contemporary Indonesian issues in her speech, such as the human rights abuses under Soeharto’s regime, despite the state visit’s supposed focus on modern Indonesia. The Elsevier article *The corrupt Indonesia* (1995, 21) argues somethings similar, by portraying the state visit as problematic as it will implicitly show Dutch support for Soekarno’s regime:

The Queen is going to visit this very special country for us, with a firm lock on her mouth. Everything she says will be done in secret language. It is sure that the Indonesian elite will frame it as an extremely successful state visit. Our press will follow docile. But the will not be successful until we can say what we think of each other. That will definitely not happen and Indonesia will follow its own course. If I view it correctly, bloodshed will occur there in the future.

---

16 The cabinet of the Netherlands is the main executive body of the Netherlands.
In a like manner, De Groene Amsterdammer criticises Beatrix’ state visit by referring to it as a “political failure”, without providing clear arguments why (Brouwer 1995). Additionally, the visit, in particular the speech the Dutch Queen delivered, is framed as hypocritical due to the way in which it contradicted the Dutch self-proclaimed attitude as “On the 5th of May did Beatrix give such a convincing speech about how she is so against fascism, and now she wants to visit the Pol Pot of Indonesia, a butcher from the first order.” (1995b, 23). In another article, Zwaap (1995a) also underlines the problematic nature of the visit by openly questioning “how on earth can Beatrix start protesting against the Indonesian issues, if her own government does not even recognize the official day of Indonesian sovereignty fifty years later?”. The remaining articles published in 1995 in the four journals discussing the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and Indonesia, do so in a variety of ways. Nevertheless, there appear to be two themes that receive relatively great attention; the Dutch colonization of Indonesia and the Dutch colonial past, in particular the decolonization war. Accordingly, the decolonization is framed as good or bad, whereas the colonial past, particularly Dutch wrongful conduct, is framed as acknowledged or as denied, also referred to as ‘covered-up’ or silenced. Concerning the first theme, Vrij Nederland’s article written by Vanvugt (1995b) frames the Dutch colonisation as bad, while heavily criticizes the Dutch self-identification as the ‘better’ imperialist and the Dutch understanding of Indonesia as ‘mission civilisatrice’, by discussing Dutch colonial practices in Indonesia which show otherwise. On the other hand, Elsevier’s article From Coen to Suharto: Colonial times reviewed frames the Dutch colonisation of Indonesia as positive by emphasizing that “this unfortunate end of a colonial relationship [the decolonization war, in particular the violence was carried out] cannot make us forget that this relationship [between the Netherlands and Indonesia] delivered a mutual advantage in many areas.” (Fasseur 1995, 27).

The second theme which is touched upon in the two HP/De Tijd articles is discussed in very different ways despite of having the same author. Accordingly, the article Time does not heals all wounds frames the Dutch colonial past as silenced by stating that “The events in the post-war Dutch East Indies were protected in a different way: they were silenced. And when in 1969 a corner of the veil was lifted [Joop Hueting’s confessions on national television] people let it go in order to defend the 'good name' of 'the' Dutch soldiers. This part of the past has still not been processed.” (van Doorn 1995d). Contrarily, the article published in the same journal seven months later, frames the Dutch colonial past as widely acknowledged, referring to the
often discussed ‘typical’ Dutch mentality of covering-up as non-existent by stressing the great number of public and academic debates held on the topic (van Doorn 1995e).

Discussion of Frames and Arguments

Despite the supposedly great public attention and interest for Poncke Princen’s biography, no articles discussed the publication in 1995. The two HP/De Tijd articles which independently discuss the Dutch deserter, do so in a neutral way while relating the commotion surrounding him to the Dutch Indies-veterans. In particular, the journal frames the Dutch forces at that time as irresponsible for the (violent) escalation of the war, by emphasizing that they only followed up orders. Subsequently, the Dutch political establishment is portrayed as the sole responsible for the course of the war, which again is framed a great failure.

The articles discussing both Princen and Queen Beatrix’ state visit, while all having a slightly different focus, did so in very factual manner by merely describing the events without any editorial comments. In these articles frames were thus attributed to neither the Dutch deserter nor the state visit. Nevertheless, the fact that Vrij Nederland published two articles containing quotes from Princen without any editorial comments, could potentially illustrate that the journal frames the deserter positively, that is as trustworthy.

In the case of Queen Beatrix’ state visit, the frames used in the fourteen articles were much clearer. Firstly, all journals frame Beatrix’ attendance of the Indonesian Day of Independence Day as rather problematic, as it would demonstrate Dutch support for the 17th of August 1945 as the day on which Indonesia gained their independence, rather than the 27th of December 1949, the day which the Dutch government still holds on to. More specifically, HP/De Tijd frames Beatrix’ attendance on the 17th of August negatively, by arguing that official Dutch recognition of this day as Indonesia’s Independence Day would portray the decolonization war as pointless and immoral, which would be an insult to the Dutch Indies-veterans. Vrij Nederland and De Groene Amsterdammer, on the other hand, understand the implicit recognition of the 17th of August 1945 as the day on which Indonesia gained independence positively, as it would allow the Dutch state to criticizes Indonesia’s behaviour, in particular its human rights abuses, without being hypocritical. The opinion journal Elsevier is also concerned with the former colony’s human rights abuses, and accordingly frames the Dutch state visit negatively, by arguing that it would implicitly show Dutch support for them, which again would go against Dutch values.
The Debate in the Opinion Journals – 2005

In order to describe the way in which Dutch opinion journals framed the war of decolonization in 2005 nine articles from two journals have been examined. Specifically, six from Elsevier and three from HP/De Tijd. Unfortunately, no articles from Vrij Nederland or De Groene Amsterdammer published in the year 2005 were deemed relevant and thus selected for this study. Concerning the dominant themes, with six out of ten articles discussing the matter, this year’s debate predominantly revolved around the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Bot’s visit to Indonesia.

Presence of Frames and Arguments

Reviews of the articles dealing with Bot’s visit to Indonesia, show that the main focus is on the speech the Minister delivered. First of all, HP/De Tijd’s articles discussing the visit to Indonesia have revealed to all be greatly critical, in particular in regards to Bot’s speech. More specifically, the journal heavily disagrees with the content of Bot’s speech, in particular the notion of the Netherlands having been ‘on the wrong side of history’, as it portrays the Dutch colonial powers as much worse than they actually were (van Doorn 2005a; van Baar 2005). According to Doorn (2005a, 46), while emphasizing that the Dutch colonial administration was far from perfect, Indonesia was much better of under Dutch rule, pointing out Indonesia’s military-dominated government at power in the subsequent decades. Dutch recognition of the 17th of August 1945 as the day on which Indonesia gained its independence, as stated by Bot, is also framed negatively as it would ignore the historical context of that time and all the events that occurred between 1945 and 1949 (van Baar 2005). In addition, this recognition portrays the Dutch government in power 60 years ago as “lunatics who wanted to hold on to ‘our Indonesia’ with all that it costs”, resulting in making other decolonization issues incomprehensible while contributing to a ‘disturbed’ national memory (van Baar 2005, 14).

In a like manner, Elsevier’s article Colonial pain frames the Dutch recognition of the 17th of August as Indonesia’s day of independence as wrong, because it implies that the Dutch state fought against independent people for four years (van der List 2005). In another article of the same journal, Vrijsen (2005a, 11) also underlines the problematic implications this decision could have; “By recognizing 17 the of August, the government is in fact saying that the deployment of military personnel for the ‘police actions’ against Indonesian nationalists was reprehensible and contrary to international law. Because if Indonesia was already independent in 1945, the Dutch troops should not have been there.”. In addition, the author emphasizes that
the Dutch were not necessarily fighting against Indonesian independence but rather for a proper transfer of sovereignty, and that if the Dutch had it their way the Indonesian people would have probably suffered less under doctoral rule (ibid.). Nevertheless, Elsevier’s articles frame the official Dutch recognition of the 17th of August as Indonesia’s day of independence as good, referring to it as an appropriate and realistic gesture (Tromp 2005; Vrijsen 2005b). However, the previously described great amount of criticism expressed and the journal’s statement “if the whole world thinks that Indonesia exists since that day, the Netherlands cannot try to hang on to 27 December 1949 as the day of birth.”, leaves one wondering if the journal really understands the decision as appropriate.

The remaining three articles published in the year all have a slightly different focus. HP/De Tijd’s article *Iraq and the Indies* discusses the wars in both countries, while comparing the Iraqi guerrilla with the Indonesian. The author appears to sympathise with the Dutch rather than the Indonesian forces, due to the emotional ways in which events that hurt the Dutch forces are described (van Doorn 2005b). The two articles published in Elsevier, both provide a detailed description of the course of the war of decolonization, in a very neutral fashion as no editorial comments are included (Stiphout 2005; Elsevier 2005).

**Discussion of Frames and Arguments**

The textual analysis of the articles published in 2005 show that the speech Bot delivered in Indonesia was the main topic of that year’s media debate. The analysis also showed that the two journals investigated this year, HP/De Tijd and Elsevier, do not agree with the content of the speech. Particularly, both the notion of the Netherlands as having been ‘on the wrong side of history’, and the recognition of the 17th of August 1945 as the official day on which Indonesia gained its independence, were framed as problematic and incorrect.

Concerning the first, the main argument used to support this evaluation was that Dutch colonial rule was superior compared to the Indonesian government that followed, referring to Sukarno’s and especially Suharto’s dictatorial military regimes under which many human rights abuses occurred. At the same time, the Dutch forces were portrayed as good, since they were fighting for the sake of a proper transfer of sovereignty instead of against Indonesian independence. Both HP/De Tijd and Elsevier thus frame the Dutch colonial rule, the Dutch forces, and the Dutch government’s decision to carry out the war positively, while portraying the Indonesians negatively, stressing the many human rights abuses that took place in the country.
Concerning the second notion, that is the official Dutch recognition of the 17th of August as Indonesia’s independence day as bad, the arguments used were based on the belief that the recognition is historical incorrect. More specifically, as argued by the journals, it ignores the historical context of the war, while implying that the Dutch efforts to fight Indonesia were unjust and portraying the Dutch government of that time as crazy. Accordingly, HP/De Tijd and Elsevier thus understand and frame the decolonization war and the Dutch government in power at that time as good, while framing the official recognition of the 17th of August negatively, since this contradicts the earlier described frames. Nevertheless, in two articles, Elsevier frames Bot’s recognition of the 17th of August as the day on which Indonesia gained its independence as correct. Considering the criticism expressed in the other articles however, I doubt if the journal truly regards it this way or if it states so due to other reasons, such as political correctness. HP/De Tijd on the other hand, undoubtedly understands and frames the decision as wrong and incorrect.

The Debate in the Opinion Journals – 2008

In order to describe the debate that took place in Dutch opinion journals on the war of decolonization in the year 2008, eight articles from two journals have been analysed. In particular, five from De Groene Amsterdammer and three from Vrij Nederland. No articles published in HP/De Tijd or Elsevier in this year were deemed relevant, and therefore no articles of these two journals will be analysed. Reviews of the selected articles show that that this year’s Dutch media debate on the war of decolonization was predominantly focused on the mass executions carried out by the Dutch forces in the Indonesian village Rawagede.

Presence of Frames and Arguments

All the articles that discussed the Rawagede, were published in De Groene Amsterdammer, with four out of five published in December 2008. Arguably, most articles were written as a consequence of the start of the Rawagede lawsuit, with two published on account of the annual commemoration of the massacre in Indonesia on the 9th of December. First, Lepeltak’s (2008) article which discusses the attendance of the Dutch ambassador at the commemoration in a neutral way, while pointing out that especially the Indonesians apricated his gesture. The article written by Boom (2008c) also discusses the commemoration, but is predominantly focused on the massacre itself and heavily criticizes the way in which the Dutch have handled the event, by pointing out that nobody has been prosecuted yet. The article frames this lack of judicial
attention as particularly wrong due to way in which the Dutch state strongly presents itself as a promotor and supporter of human rights (ibid.). In order to support this frame, the author describes an event hosted in the Netherlands on the same day as Rawagede’s commemoration which celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In a like manner, the article states the Netherlands should thoroughly research the case of Rawagede, as this “would show that human rights are fragile goods, even in the country of the Human Rights Tulip17. And it would make the Netherlands as guardian of human rights more credible.” (ibid.).

Kleijn’s (2008) article, which also emphasizes the importance of more research on Rawagede discusses another ‘typical’ characteristic of the Dutch state. Accordingly, due the Dutch inability to deal with the ‘darker’ aspects of the (colonial) past, the author claims “there is still a long way to go for the Netherlands” (ibid.). Another article from Boom (2008a) similarly states that new research on Rawagede has to be done, this time referring to the Excessennota to support its claim. Specifically, the fact that the report’s findings are still used by the Dutch government and in court is framed as problematic and wrong, since “extreme violence occurred much more in the period 1945-1949 than the Excessennota from 1969 suggest.”(ibid). In order to support his statement, the author, just as Lepeltak (2008), refers to an article published in the journal two months earlier titled Archival folder 1304; New evidence of mass executions in Indonesia.  

As the title suggests, this article discusses new evidence supporting the previously expressed claim that extreme violence occurred (much) more than the 1969 government investigation suggests, by describing the research a journalist from De Groene Amsterdammer conducted. Specifically, it describes how Boom’s (2008b) investigation led to the discovery of a document belonging to the army unit that ‘cleansed’ the village of Rawagede, which included a detailed description the operation and an exact number of how many executions took place, that is 120. The document also reveals that the Dutch government knew of this number already for decades, as the information in the archival folder at issue has already been investigated by governmental institutions two times before (ibid.). Nevertheless, the Dutch state kept holding on to the number of 20 executions, as proposed in the Excessennota, while at the same time attempting to conceal this information by making the army unit’s document extremely hard to access. The investigation thus shows that the Dutch government deliberately tried to cover-up

17 The Human Rights Tulip refers to the annual prize awarded by the Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs to a human rights defender or organisation who promotes and supports human rights in innovative ways (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken 2015).
this information and accordingly the journal frames the Dutch government as untrustworthy, and their actions as deceivable and immoral.

The three remaining articles, all published in Vrij Nederland, discuss a variety of topics related to the decolonization war but appear to all be based on a similar notion. To start with, Botje’s (2008) article which discusses corruption among the Dutch forces in Indonesia, by describing how some soldiers sold weapons and food to the Indonesian independence fighters. Colijn (2008) compares the Dutch military operation Uruzgan in Afghanistan with the Police Actions as both being a mission for ‘hearts and minds’ (Colijn 2008), while criticizing both operations for being framed as peace missions, while actually being full-fledged military operations. In The man was entirely right (2008) is shortly mentioned how Vrij Nederland objected against the First Police Action the moment the Netherlands decided to carry them out in 1947.

Discussion of Frames and Arguments
The nine articles analysed this year can all be understood as greatly critical on the Dutch role in the Indonesian war of decolonization, but in different ways. To start with, in the articles published in De Groene Amsterdammer, the expressed criticism is predominantly directed towards the Dutch government, particularly on the way in which they handled the mass executions carried out by the Dutch forces in the village of Rawagede. The journal’s articles frame the Dutch government as a whole as deceivable and immoral, referring to their ‘cover-up mentality’, and use the differences between the Excessennota and their own investigative piece to illustrate this. The Dutch state is also framed as hypocrite, for presenting itself as a promoter and supporter of human rights, while paying little to no attention to their own human rights abuses.

Vrij Nederland’s articles express criticism on the war of decolonization in a more general sense. Firstly, by discussing corruption among the forces deployed in Indonesia during the war, the journal implicitly frames the Dutch forces as unreliable. Next, it frames the Dutch government as unreliable, by explicitly criticizing the way in which the First and the Second Police Action were framed, by calling them full-fledged military operations. The journal’s article describing that it already objected against the Police Actions in 1947, lacks arguments but confirms that the Vrij Nederland never has, and probably never will, support the way in which the Dutch dealt with Indonesia’s fight for independence.
In order to understand how Dutch opinion journals framed the war of decolonization in 2011, five articles published in the four journals have been analysed. Specifically, one from de Groene Amsterdammer, one from Elsevier, one from HP/De Tijd, and, lastly, two from Vrij Nederland. With all articles discussing the topic, this year’s debate predominantly revolved around the mass executions carried out by the Dutch forces in Rawagede, in particular the ongoing lawsuit concerning this event.

**Presence of Frames and Arguments**

To start with, Elsevier’s article which discusses the ongoing lawsuit concerning the Rawagede only shortly without any additional, editorial comments (Vrijsen 2011). The author, however, does refer to the event as “blood bad” implicitly stating that more executions than the 20 the Dutch hold on to were carried out. In a like manner, Vrij Nederland’s article Apologies after quoting one of the Rawagede windows describing the event, discusses the lawsuit in only a few sentences. Nevertheless, due to the emphasis on the fact how long it took the Dutch state to apologize, that is 46 years, and that it only did so due to orders of the Judge, it is clear that the journal is highly critical on the way it handled the lawsuit (Groet 2011). The notion of Vrij Nederland as a proponent of the decolonization war, is also reinforced in the article National shame; history in which the author passingly mentions that the then editor-in-chief was one of the few proponents of Indonesian independence during that time (Botje 2011). Van Deijl’s (2011) article in HP/De Tijd’s likewise expresses criticism;

> I find it incredible and baffling that we have ever even thought of the idea of at any time arrived at the idea of ‘statue of limitations’ and now thus with the possibility of appeal. That we have tried and possibly will try again to frame the shame of Rawagede as something from a very distant past, which we should no longer speak about . . . The state is still considering the appeal, reports the newspaper, but, dear lawyers, stop that, speak to your conscience and pay those poor people from Rawagede. Leave making apologies to the politicians, if that is not too much to asked too.

Boom’s (2011) article in De Groene Amsterdammer expresses a similar type of criticism, by stating that we “cannot expect the truth from the Dutch government”, referring to his article Archival folder 1304; New evidence of mass executions in Indonesia published in the year before. Moreover, because it has not properly been done before, the article frames investigating what ‘really’ happened in Rawagede is seen as extremely important (ibid.). Due to the Dutch
government’s untrustworthiness, however, the research should be carried out by an independent, international research team. Moreover, as stated by Boom (2011);

The (actual) numbers say something about the spiral of violence in which the warring parties kept each other and the population captive. And thus about the nature of the war, which is still concealingly referred to as ‘the police actions’ here [the Netherlands]. The Netherlands could learn from it. Such a moral derailment occurs during every guerrilla, and that in Afghanistan (which is not referred to as a war either) will certainly not be our last.

Discussion of Frames and Arguments
As the analysis has shown, the five articles analysed this year all express criticism on the way in which the Dutch political establishment dealt with the executions that were carried out in Rawagede, and the lawsuit in particular. First of all, the articles published in Elsevier and Vrij Nederland discuss the ongoing lawsuit against the Dutch state on the executions carried out in Rawagede in a fairly neutral way. Although the authors of these articles do not explicitly express criticism, the ways in which they describe the event illustrates how the journals understand the event. Elsevier for instance, frames Rawagede as a “blood bath”, while Vrij Nederland frames the apologies delivered by the Dutch state on the executions that took place, as insincere and too late. Whereas in the case of the Elsevier it is fairly hard to know how the journal understand the event, due to the little content and the lack of arguments given, in the case of Vrij Nederland it is very clear that the journal understands the war of decolonization and the Dutch attitude towards the Rawagede lawsuit as wrong.

The articles published in 2011 in HP/De Tijd en De Groene Amsterdammer also express explicit criticism on the role of the Dutch political establishment. More specifically, HP/De Tijd’s article focuses on the lawsuit against the Dutch state by heavily criticizing the way in which the lawsuit proceeds, in particular the statute of limitations. In a like manner, it disputes the way in which the Dutch state frames the event as “something from a very distant past” by framing Rawagede as a recent event which should be openly discussed. De Groene Amsterdammer also disputes the frame given by the Dutch state, in this case the Police Actions, by framing them as full-fledge military operations and that term itself as an euphemism. In addition, it depicts the Dutch government as untrustworthy, using the ways in which they covered-up the real number of executions carried out by the Dutch forces in Rawagede to illustrate this.
The Debate in the Opinion Journals – 2012

In order to understand how Dutch opinion journals framed the decolonization war in the year 2012, a total of nineteen articles from four journals have been analysed. In particular, eight from De Groene Amsterdammer, two from Elsevier, five from Vrij Nederland, and, finally, four from HP/De Tijd. The nineteen articles discuss a variety of topics related to the war of decolonization, but the pictures published in the national newspaper De Volkskrant on the 10th of July portraying the Dutch forces carrying out mass executions of Indonesian civilians, evidently dominated this year’s media debate.

Presence of Frames and Arguments

On the same day on which De Volkskrant published the two pictures of Dutch forces carrying out mass executions in Indonesia during the war of decolonization, as well as two days later, HP/De Tijd published an article discussing the newspaper article. According to Traa’s (2012), the pictures are the first visual support for what many Dutch people already knew, namely that the Dutch forces did not behave correctly during the war; “Let us leave out the euphemisms; they [the Dutch forces] acted in a gruesome way. Not all of them, not everywhere, not all the time. But the idyllic image of a type of peacekeeping force that which helped the Indonesian population, has now been properly adjusted. Who really comes in name of peace and justice does not execute a group of people on the edge of a ditch.”.

Another article published in the same journal two days later, heavily criticizes a comment of a known Dutch journalist, who stated that the pictures were ‘old news’ for him, by arguing that if he would have shared this knowledge earlier it could have shed much needed new light on the role of the Dutch forces during the war much earlier (van Deijl 2012). To the contrary, the articles published in De Groene Amsterdammer’s frame the pictures as “an illustration to a history which has already been described, but is repressed over and over again.” (Dommering 2012). As claimed by the articles, the wrongful behaviour of the Dutch forces has already been brought to the Dutch public debate many times in many different ways by many different people, such as Dutch Indies-veterans and historians, but just does not appear to endure in the Dutch social memory (Dommering 2012; Hofland 2012). According to Hofland (2012) the political elite of that time and right-winged press, such as the Elsevier, are to blame for this, due to the propaganda supporting the war they created. The journal itself, on the other hand, in contrast to the dominant spirit of times, has always been against the war of decolonization (van der Kooi 2012). Lastly, the article in Elsevier which merely discusses the published pictures
shortly, by stating that they not only in the Netherlands, but also in Indonesia “struck a chord” (Lepeltak 2012).

As a result of the pictures published in De Volkskrant, and the subsequent great public attention and discussion, three Dutch research institutes proposed to carry out a large-scale research into the war crimes the Dutch forces committed in Indonesia (Botje and Cohen 2012). However, the proposal was rejected by the Dutch cabinet, to the apparent dismay of HP/De Tijd, Vrij Nederland, and De Groene Amsterdammer. In HP/De Tijd, a son of a Dutch Indies-veteran states that his father never spoke about what happened during the war, and that he badly wants to know, and therefore greatly supports the research proposal (Poorthuis 2012). Vrij Nederland’s Our dirty war; Research on the Police Actions is also in favour of the proposed research and seeks to explain why such a research has not been carried out earlier by outlining the Dutch public debate on the event (Botje and Hoek 2012). The article pays special attention to the journal’s editor in chief at the time of the war, Henk van Randwijk, whom, unlike the dominant spirit of age, was a great proponent of an independent Indonesia, and published articles on the war accordingly by calling the war “a moral evil and a political folly” (Botje and Hoek 2012).

De Groene Amsterdammer also frames the research proposal positively, but at the same time expresses some doubts. In particular, the author questions if the proposed research will actually results in new insights, as such a great amount of research done on the topic has already showed that the Dutch forces did not behave correctly (van der Heijden 2012b, 2012a). East-Indies covered-up; Dutch-Indies remain a public secret published in the same journal, discusses the research proposal after it was rejected by the Dutch cabinet and expresses disappointment on this decision (Brouwer 2012). More specifically, the articles claims that where in previous years it were the Indies veterans whom wanted to cover-up the Dutch actions during the war, it is now the Dutch political establishment who seeks to do so. According to the author, the Dutch state does not want to provide financial support to the research, because it is afraid of another “Srebrenica-type of report” in which the Dutch are found responsible of another violation of human rights, as this could potentially results in (even more) financial claims from Indonesian victims (ibid.). Moreover, when the research is conducted without (financial) government support, the cabinet is not obliged to follow-up with the report in a political way, such as criminal prosecution (ibid.).
The article published in Elsevier on the matter, also underlines that the Dutch government’s decision to deny financial support to the research should be understood as a financial one, and clearly sympathises with the decision by calling it “fair” (Stiphout 2012). Accordingly, due to the abundance of academic knowledge already existing on the event, the proposed research will probably not result in any new information or insights. Additionally, Stiphout (2012) argues that, in contrast to what many people seem to think, new research will not mean the end of the decades long ongoing public debate on the event; “Anyone who thinks that 'we' would be done with the Indies after such an investigation will be disappointed. History is not an exact science. Even if all facts are on the table, historians can endlessly discuss their interpretation. This is the case with, say, the French Revolution and the Second World War, and will be no different with the war of decolonization.”

A few articles published in 2012 on the decolonization war, focus on the ongoing lawsuits against the Dutch state in relation to the war of decolonization. To start with, HP/De Tijd’s article *The Dutch on South-Celebes; an orgy of violence* which discusses the lawsuit brought to the court by family members of victims of the massacre that was carried out in South Sulawesi, by describing a recently discovered confidential, governmental report (Paternotte 2012). Although the fact that Dutch forces carried out war crimes was already known by the general public, the report is by Paternotte (2012) understood as of great importance because it precisely shows how the massacre was carried out and includes the names of the involved officers. By including quotes of involved officers such as “shoot them all!” and the death toll of 364 Indonesians, the author supports his comment that the report reads as “an anthology of violence” (ibid.).

De Groene Amsterdammer’s article discusses the lawsuit brought to court by the widows of Rawagede, and provides great criticism (Ramaer 2012). Accordingly, the apologies the Dutch government delivered for the “blood bath” in Rawagede were too “late and narrow”, as the crimes should have been recognized and compensated much earlier, that is 64 years ago (ibid.). Additionally, the journal argues that the Dutch should stop calling the decolonization war Police Actions as it was a full-fledge war (Boom 2012). Vrij Nederland provides two in-depth interviews with Liesbeth Zegveld, the lawyer who represented the survivor and eight widows from Rawagede, and therefore appears to be very sympathetic to her case (Husken and Veeneman 2012; Riemersma and Kools 2012). The journal also published an article on three Dutch marines who refused to engage in the extreme violence during the First Police Action, in
particular to set a kampong with people on fire, and argues for their names to be fully cleared and honoured (Hoek 2012).

*Discussion of Frames and Arguments*

As the previous analysis of the nineteen articles showed, the war of decolonization received a fair amount of attention from the Dutch opinion journals in 2012, with three main themes that can be distinguished. To start with, the article published in De Volkskrant which included two pictures portraying mass executions carried out by the Dutch forces during the war of decolonization in Indonesia, which three journals discussed. HP/De Tijd frames the article as greatly relevant, as it is the first visual evidence that the Dutch forces did not behave correctly during the war. Elsevier also appears to think that the article has a high newsworthiness as it states that the pictures not only received great attention in the Netherlands, but also in Indonesia. De Groene Amsterdammer, on the other hand, frames the article as rather irrelevant, since much previous research has already illustrated the same type of wrongful behaviour. At the same time, the journal frames the commotion surrounding De Volkskrant article as ‘typical’ for the Dutch, by describing how the Dutch public continues to react on this type of information like its news while it has been brought to the public so many times before already. Subsequently, the Dutch social memory of the event is portrayed as exclusive, with the wrongful behaviour of the Dutch forces not being a part of it. Elsevier solely refers to the published pictures very shortly without any editorial comments, and thus does not attribute any frames to the article.

The proposal of a large-scale research on the war of decolonization was the second topic the journals paid a great deal of attention to. Whereas HP/De Tijd and Vrij Nederland both frame the research as to be of great significance, Elsevier portrays it as unnecessary, by underlining its little academic relevance by pointing out the great amount of existing academic works on the topic. In addition, the journal frames the public debate on the event, in particular the role of the Dutch forces, as something that will ‘never end’ as the results of historical research can be interpreted in many different ways. De Groene Amsterdammer sympathises with the research proposal, but also expresses criticism as there is a chance it will not result in any new insights and information. Simultaneously, the journal frames the Dutch cabinet as immoral, by stating that their decision was based on financial reasons and fear of more lawsuits against them rather than ethical considerations.

The massacres which were carried out by the Dutch forces in the Indonesian places South Sulawesi and Rawagede were framed as instances in which the Dutch were ‘on the wrong
side’ by both HP/De Tijd and De Groene Amsterdammer. That both clearly sympathise with the Indonesian side is revealed in the journals’ depictions of the event which, among other things, include dreadful quotes from Dutch officers and references to the massacres as ‘blood baths’. Likewise, the lawsuits against the Dutch state regarding the massacres were framed as rightful by HP/De Tijd, De Groene Amsterdammer and Vrij Nederland, as for instance illustrated by the two in-depth interviews with the lawyer who represented the victims of Rawagede in Vrij Nederland. Moreover, the way in which the Dutch state has dealt with the lawsuits is framed as wrong, as shown by De Groene Amsterdammer’s criticism on the Dutch apology for Rawagede and Vrij Nederland’s article arguing for rehabilitation for the men who refused to take part in extreme violence.

**The Debate in the Opinion Journals – 2013**

In order to describe the way in which Dutch opinion journals framed the war of decolonization in 2013, ten articles published in all four journals have been examined. Specifically, five from De Groene Amsterdammer, two from Elsevier, three from Vrij Nederland, and, finally, one from HP/De Tijd were analysed. The ten articles discuss a variety of topics related to the decolonization war, which made it rather hard to distinguish the dominant themes of this year’s Dutch media debate. However, with four articles focusing on ‘typical’ characteristics and self-understanding of the Dutch state in regards to war of decolonization, this topic can be understood as the most discussed theme. Other articles discuss the case of South-Sulawesi, the Dutch forces, and, unlike previous years, the Indonesian perspective on the war.

**Presence of Frames and Arguments**

From the four articles discussing the Dutch self-understanding, HP/De Tijd’s article *Why the Dutch cover-up state has to stop with judging others* is by far the most critical. By pointing out a number of events supporting the claim, such as the Dutch state’s attempts to cover-up controversial information and the current discussion around the figure Black Pete18, the article

---

18 The *Sinterklaas* tradition, which takes place annually in the beginning of December, can be understood as the biggest festivity in the Netherlands and one of the oldest Dutch traditions. This popular tradition is centred around the legendary figures of *Sinterklaas* and *Zwarte Piet* (Black Pete), in which the former is helped by the latter to distribute presents to Dutch families throughout the country. Despite its great popularity, however, Sinterklaas has been the subject of Dutch public debate for a few decades now, with the bone of contention the alleged racist character of Black Pete. This claim is in particularly based on Black Pete’s specific appearance, that is black-faced with an afro and big red lips, as well as his ‘slave-like’ role as Sinterklaas’ helper (Rodenberg and Wagenaar 2016).
argues that the Dutch state should be understood as one with a questionable morale. Accordingly, as the state often sought, and still seeks, to cover-up ‘difficult issues’ rather than to face them (Olsthoorn 2013). Although the tendency of a state to cover-up difficult issues is not understood as a problem by Olsthoorn (2013), it is considered problematic in the case of the Netherlands, as its state typically presents and views itself as morally superior compared to other countries.

Likewise, the article published in De Groene Amsterdammer, after discussing the Dutch public debate on the decolonization war and the related Dutch social memory, states that the fact that the event is still not a part of Dutch social memory cannot be explained by the lack of public and academic attention for the topic, but rather by the typical Dutch attitude (van der Heijden 2013a). According to van der Heijden (2013a), the Dutch did not want to know; “we did not want to know because that information was not in our interest. Silence was. Also denial. Covering-up too. . . . Only pleasant and useful truths are welcome, even if they are lies.” The other article published in the journal likewise argues that “in the enthusiasm for the national past, the Netherlands appears to be very selective” (Thomas 2013). This selective interest for the past, illustrated by the government’s decline of the research proposal in 2012, is in the article framed as wrong, as the author believes that countries that do not face their more controversial parts of the past cannot be taken seriously (Thomas 2013). In a like manner, Elsevier’s article argues that the Dutch state still portrays a ‘colonial’ attitude, as it “always wants to make moral judgements and tells Indonesia what to do” (Vrijsen 2013). Moreover, the author states that the country has very Calvinistic attitudes, referring to the many apologies the Dutch politicians have delivered for the role of the Dutch during the war of decolonisation in recent years out of feelings of guilt (Vrijsen 2013).

Vrijsen’s article in Elsevier’s also discusses the apologies the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Frans Timmermans is planning to offer to the widows of the men who were executed in South-Sulawesi. More specifically, Vrijsen (2013) describes the planned apologies as unnecessary, since the Indonesian people do not want them, as they prefer to focus on the future than the past. De Groene Amsterdammer’s article Sulawesi wants the same apology as Rawagede also discusses the planned apologies of Timmermans, while stating that for the Indonesians it is not about money, but about recognition and sincere apologies for what happened (Hupkens 2013). Accordingly, the author, as well as the Indonesian victims,
understands the planned apology, which would have been delivered through the post in a letter, as insufficient.

The previously described attitude of the victims of the widows of the victims of the massacre of South-Sulawesi, matches with the general ‘typical’ Indonesian attitude towards the decolonization war described in the of Vrij Nederland and De Groene Amsterdammer. Accordingly, the article published in the former journal illustrates the positive attitude the Indonesians appear to have towards the colonial period, by describing how aspects which portray the colonial period, for instance the Dutch colonial houses and the weekly event in which Indonesians dress up as Dutch colonists, are greatly appreciated by the Indonesians (Steketee and van Bruggen 2013). The article also emphasizes the typical Indonesian tendency to focus on the future instead of on the past, which is also described in the article of De Groene Amsterdammer, using the case of Rawagede as example (Steketee and van Bruggen 2013; Schouten 2013). As argued by Schouten (2013) “it is a question that many Dutch ask: don’t the Indonesians feel any resentment against us? After the police actions, after years of colonization? But Indonesia has not been focused on the Netherlands for a long time.” Accordingly, the article frames the public discussion on the role of the Dutch during the decolonization war as a ‘Dutch issue’ as it was a ‘non-issue’ in Indonesia, while arguing that this is because of the tragedies that within post-colonial Indonesia, such as Suharto’s military regime (ibid.).

The three remaining articles are dedicated to the behaviour of the Dutch forces during the war of decolonization. To start with, Blood baths on Bali published in Vrij Nederland. This article describes a research the journal itself carried out, from which the findings showed that the Dutch forces carried out war crimes on the Indonesian island of Bali during the war of decolonization (Hoek 2013). By the use of quotes from interviews with Dutch Indies-veterans situated on the island, the behaviour of the Dutch forces is portrayed as extreme violent; “Hundreds of insurgents were shot, thousands were taken prisoner. Those who resisted were stabbed, decapitated or set on fire along with their house. . . . The Dutch set fire to the kampongs and shot the fleeing population.”.

Another article published in the same journal also portrays the behaviour of the Dutch forces as atrocious, by describing an event in which Dutch forces killed many Indonesians by setting them and the kampongs on fire (Botje and Hoek 2013). In particular, Botje and Hoek (2013), argue for the names of the three marines who refused to engage in this type of behaviour, whom were persecuted and received sentences up to three years for this, to be fully cleared and honoured. In a same manner, the article published in De Groene Amsterdammer argues for
public recognition and acknowledgement of Indies conscientious objectors being ‘right’ (van der Heijden 2013b).

Discussion of Frames and Arguments
As the empirical analysis showed, most articles published in the year 2013 on the war of decolonization, focus on the ‘typical’ Dutch attitude towards this specific part of national history, and heavily criticise it. In particular, HP/De Tijd frames the Dutch state as immoral, as it unjustly presents and views itself as morally superior while it has a history of covering-up the more controversial parts of their past. Likewise, De Groene Amsterdammer frames the Netherlands as wilfully ignorant, describing how it only wants to recognize amiable information about itself, while ignoring or covering-up information showing otherwise. The apologies the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs planned to deliver to the widows of the men executed in South-Sulawesi, are by the journal also understood as insufficient, as it should be about sincere regret rather than money. Elsevier frames in the Dutch political establishment in a similar way, by pointing out its ‘colonial attitude’, referring to the moral superiority and knowledge the Dutch portray towards Indonesia. Additionally, the journal frames the apologies and feelings of regret the Dutch government has expressed in previous years, as insincere, stating that it only does so due to its Calvinistic attitude. This notion is underlined by Elsevier’s statement that Indonesia does not want apologies, as the Indonesians are not concerned with what happened during the war of decolonization, and that the Dutch should just stop with delivering them.

This notion of Indonesia not being concerned with what happened during the decolonization war with its former colonial power, is supported by the articles from Vrij Nederland and De Groene Amsterdammer. Accordingly, Indonesia is framed as to have a focus on the future, rather than the past, resulting in little Indonesian attention for issues which received great public attention in the Netherlands, such as war crimes committed by the Dutch forces. Subsequently, the war of decolonization between the two countries, specifically the question of wrongful behaviour of the Dutch forces, is framed as a Dutch issue, as the Indonesians have no interest in it. The two journals also frame the behaviour of the Dutch forces as extremely violent, and thus wrong, by referring to Vrij Nederland’s research on the war crimes committed in Bali. Accordingly, the conscientious objectors who refused to fight against Indonesia’s independence, are framed as good, which is illustrated by the journal’s striving for their public rehabilitation.
The Debate in the Opinion Journals – 2016

For the year 2016, eleven articles from three journals have been investigated, in order to understand the debate which took place in Dutch opinion journals. Specifically, four from De Groene Amsterdammer, four from Elsevier, and three from Vrij Nederland. Unfortunately no relevant articles published in HP/De Tijd in this year were found. The articles discuss a variety of topics, but most articles appear to focus on the Dutch social memory of the event. The Dutch cabinet’s decision to (financially) support the proposed large-scale research, after declining support in 2012, and Limpach’s book which concludes that the Dutch forces carried out structural violence during the war also receive a fair amount of attention.

Presence of Frames and Arguments

Eight articles discuss the Dutch attitude towards the war of decolonization, but all do so in a different context. To start with, Vrij Nederlands article *The message is; I am white, thus I am superior* which discusses racism in modern Dutch society relates this to the social memory of the Dutch colonial past (Riemersma and Oosterwijk 2016). More specifically, Riemersma and Oosterwijk (2016) argue that the Dutch colonial ‘greatness’ resulted in the now present Dutch attitude characterized by “superiority thinking, narcissism and megalomania”, which again resulted in the Dutch not being able to recognize information which shows otherwise, and subsequent denial of certain parts of history. Nevertheless, the journal argues that in recent years there has been increasingly more attention for the controversial Dutch colonial past, such as the war of decolonization, by alluding the many Dutch rappers from various Dutch colonial backgrounds who discuss these parts of history in their texts, and frames this as a positive development (Botje and Kools 2016). Elsevier’s article written by Wiersma (2016) also discusses the increasing interest in the controversial parts of national histories, specifically the interest of the (European) politics, but disputes this trend. Using the example of the German Parliament recognizing the Armenian Genocide, the article states that “historiography is academic, not democratic” and that countries should ‘decide’ on their history themselves, rather than other governments and international courts doing it (ibid.).

De Groene Amsterdammer dedicated three articles to the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization. First of all, *The black page really is black* which states that the Dutch people suffer from cultural aphasia, that is “one’s inability to recognize a ‘painful’ past due to the lack of context”, referring to the knowledge that the Dutch forces behaved wrongly during the decolonization war has that been around for decades already, which people seem unable to
recognize (Stolwijk 2016). Stolwijk (2016) also argues, while emphasizing that the whole debate is a ‘Dutch’ issue rather than an Indonesian one, that this inability to face past wrongdoings can only be solved by a great change in thinking, in which the Dutch understand the colonial past as truly important, rather than as a “footnote in our history”. The other two articles of the journal discuss the Dutch social memory of the event in a similar fashion (Breman 2016; van Leeuwen 2016). Van Leeuwen’s article (2016), however, also offers an explanation for how all the public revelations illustrating the excessive violence the Dutch carried out, such as the many books published, which were met with great public interest, shock, and disapproval have not resulted in the event being part of the Dutch social memory yet. Respectively, the greatly positive Dutch colonial and contemporary self-image as a tolerant, modest nation, combined with the image of the Dutch forces as “peaceful, cultural aware, and aid-giving” makes it hard for the Dutch to recognize and understand information which illustrate them differently. Additionally, due to the way in which the war crimes the Dutch forces committed are typically framed, for instance as a ‘single black page’ or an ‘excess’, the part of history appears to lie ‘outside’ the Dutch national history, make its acceptance even harder (ibid.).

The other two Elsevier articles also discuss the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization, but predominantly focus on the memory of the Bersiap. First, van der Plicht’s (2016, 26) article, which describes the this violent first phase of the decolonization war by quoting from a number of Dutch diaries written during that time to illustrate the excessive violence the Indonesians the carried out against the Europeans, specifically the Dutch, Japanese, and Indonesian collaborators;

It is said that Sukarno has announced that he will attack us with wild animals and poisonous snakes. Day and night we hear shooting, the people who have been outside meet Indonesians with bamboo spears and knives, small boys of eleven years old have guns; people are murdered in their own homes, on the street bicycle taxis transporting Europeans are being stopped, and the European is taken out. Most of the times, he does not survive.

The article also discusses how the event is still the subject of public and academic debate, with scholars arguing about the death rate and the nature of the violence being impulsive or planned (ibid.). However, as stated in Non Solus19 Bersiap, compared the police actions, the Bersiap has received very little attention, despite its much longer duration and high death toll, around

19 Non Solus – literally meaning ‘not alone’ in Latin – refers to Elsevier’s founding motto, which is to play an integral role in the progression of knowledge by assisting scholars and publishers (‘About Elsevier: History’ n.d.).
35,000, and this is framed in the article as ‘unjust’ (Joustra 2016). At the same time, Joustra (2016) frames the police actions as ‘just’; “he two police actions were mainly intended to allow the independence to be organized somewhat fairly (for non-Javanese). Considering the atrocities which occurred during the Bersiap an understandable attitude.”

As described by Elsevier’s article (Nieuwenhuijse 2016), as a result of Limpach’s dissertation, the Dutch cabinet decided to support a large-scale research on the war of decolonization, after rejecting the proposal four years earlier. That the work made such a big impression on the Dutch government is by De Groene Amsterdamer seen as understandable, referring to the dissertation as a ‘milestone’ while emphasizing its uniqueness due to its large extent and sources investigated (Stolwijk 2016). The cabinet’s decision, on the other hand, is framed as somewhat questionable, because with Limpach’s findings being so obvious would another research have any additional value? (E. de Vos 2016). Nevertheless, it is clear that De Groene Amsterdamer is greatly impressed by the research, especially its findings (Stolwijk 2016);

The Dutch forces carried out mass violence structurally, and certain divisions even did so according to a certain system. . . . There was a broad coalition of perpetrators, across all ranks, who stand together, reacted to each other with great understanding and were animated by a similar type of motives and interest to commit and tolerate mass violence. The Dutch violence was not only known at the highest levels, but was in many cases even actively encouraged.

Discussion of Frames and Arguments
As the empirical analysis has shown, the main theme of the debate of the opinion journals in 2016 is the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization. Moreover, all three journals express great criticism towards the present social memory, while providing different explanations. More specifically, Vrij Nederland frames the existing social memory as incomplete, because the ‘darker’ parts of the Dutch colonial history, such as the violence committed against the Indonesian people by the Dutch forces during the war of decolonization, are not included. The journal explains this exclusion as the result of the typical Dutch attitude defined by feelings of superiority, exaggerated self-importance, and narcissism, and thus frames the Dutch state and its people negatively.

Likewise, De Groene Amsterdamer frames the Dutch social memory of the event as incomplete, as the wrongdoings of the Dutch forces are not a part of it, and the Dutch people as ignorant because they do not want to face their past wrongdoings. At the same time, the articles published in the journal argue against the typical frames attributed to the Dutch state, as tolerant
and modest, and its soldiers, as peaceful and helpful by stating that these frames were invented by the Dutch government and describing events in which the Dutch state and its forces acted otherwise. These typically frames attributed to the Dutch are also negatively framed as the problem to why the Dutch people cannot seem to accept and recognize its past wrongdoings during the decolonization war.

Elsevier’s articles also express criticism on the existing Dutch social memory, but, unlike the other journals, appears to sympathise with the Dutch forces instead of the Indonesians. Accordingly, Elsevier’s call of attention for Dutch suffering during the war, in particular during the Bersiap period, can be understood as the journal framing the Dutch forces as good, and the Indonesians as bad. The journal’s framing of the police actions as understandable, and the increasing political attention for countries’ national histories, in particular from other countries, as unjust, supports this notion. Contrarily, De Groene Amsterdammer frames the increase in attention for the war of decolonization. Specifically, Limpach’s findings are described as exceptional because they clearly present and illustrate what the journal knew all along; the Dutch were ‘on the wrong side of history’.

Discussion

Main Frames Attributed by the Dutch Opinion Journals

With 33 articles published on the war of decolonization in the selected time period, De Groene Amsterdammer undoubtedly paid the most attention to the event from all journals selected for this study. The journal can also be understood as one the most critical ones, as it barely published any articles wherein the event or aspects of it was described in a neutral manner without the attribution of frames. Accordingly, it appears that the journal aimed to bring the war of decolonization, especially the more controversial parts, to the attention of the Dutch public. In the articles it published, a great variety of topics related to and aspects of the war were discussed. Nevertheless, some general frames the journal attributed to the decolonization war between the Netherlands and Indonesia can be identified.

First of all, the analysis of the articles reveal that that De Groene Amsterdammer can be understood as a great opponent of the war of decolonization, as it claims to have been an adversary of the Dutch mission already before it took place. During the war the journal also continued to express criticism, making De Groene Amsterdammer one of the first Dutch media outlets to report on the mass violence carried out in Indonesia. That one of their critical statements resulted in the loss of 900 subscribers, did not stop the journal in portraying the
decolonization war, in particular the role of the Dutch, as extremely negatively in the following years. Accordingly, the journal continued, and still continues, to frame the event as a battle on which the Dutch found themselves on the ‘wrong side of history’.

Specifically, De Groene Amsterdammer criticized the Dutch forces for acting extremely and unnecessarily violent, while pointing out several events such as the mass executions in South-Sulawesi and Rawagede to illustrate this notion. On the other hand, the Dutch soldiers whom did not participate in the war, such as the conscientious objectors and the Dutch deserter Poncke Princen, were framed positively or neutrally. The Dutch social memory and the Dutch people were typically framed negatively as incomplete and ignorant for not recognizing the fact that the Dutch forces’ behaviour was wrong. Although many involved parties thus received criticism from the journal, the Dutch political establishment in Indonesia and, specifically, in The Hague received the most criticism over the years. Accordingly, in many different articles, the Dutch government in power during the war was negatively framed as wrong and immoral for fighting against Indonesian independence.

Likewise, the Dutch government in power the following years, thus the Dutch government as a whole in general, was framed as deceitful, untrustworthy, and wilfully ignorant. Most of these frames were based on the notion of the ‘typical’ Dutch cover-up mentality, referring to the many instances in which they sought to conceal scandalous information on the decolonization war. Per illustration, articles in the journal underlined how the Dutch government coined the euphemistic term Police Actions in order to deny the true nature of the war, that is a full-fledged military operation. Due to the notion of the government as deceitful, the journal started to conduct research on the decolonization war itself, for instance on the mass executions Rawagede, of which the results were typically used to reinforce this notion. De Groene Amsterdammer also framed the Dutch political establishment as hypocritical for fighting against a country’s independence while presenting itself as a protector and promotor of human rights.

All in all, considering the empirical analysis results, it is clear that De Groene Amsterdammer understands the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and Indonesia as greatly negative. The journal condemns the Dutch government for carrying out the war, and the Dutch forces for how the war was carried out, and clearly sympathises with the Indonesian cause and people. Accordingly, De Groene Amsterdammer can understood as left-winged, sympathising with disadvantaged people, the Indonesians, while striving for social justice and providing rather intellectual articles.
Similarly to De Groene Amsterdammer, the 23 articles published in Vrij Nederland over the years reveal that journal was, and continues to be, a great opponent of the war of decolonization. The journal’s chief editor at the time was initially opposed to the war and continued to be so during. Among other things, he compared the Dutch actions in Indonesia with actions of Nazi’s during the Second World War and called attention to the incorrect behaviour of the Dutch forces by publishing an investigative report on the ‘purification actions’ in South-Sulawesi. The notion of Vrij Nederland as a great opponent of the war, is also reinforced by the journal’s reference to it was a ‘dirty war’. The empirical analysis also showed that the journal often, much more than the other ones, discussed the war or aspects of it in relation to contemporary issues. Accordingly, except in the year 2005 for which no relevant articles were found, Vrij Nederland paid attention to the ‘main event(s)’s of the specific public debate every year. Moreover, it often discussed (aspects of) the decolonization war in comparison to contemporary issues, such as the great public discussion on Black Pete in the Netherlands and the Dutch mission in Uruzgan.

The results of the analysis also reveal that the journal expressed great criticism on a variety of aspects related to the war. The main focus of the journal’s criticism however, is undoubtedly the behaviour of the Dutch forces. Respectively, the Dutch forces are framed as unreliable and its behaviour during the war as wrong and extremely violent, which is illustrated by the publication of an extensive article on the war crimes that were carried out by the them on the Indonesian island Bali. On the other hand, the Indonesian cause and forces are framed positively, which can be demonstrated by the great support the journal expresses towards the lawsuits filed by family members of Indonesian victims against the Dutch state. The journal also portrays the Dutch state as unreliable and manipulative, referring to the euphemistic language they came up with to cover-up the true nature of the war; an aggressive, desperate attempt to fight Indonesian independence. The Dutch government’s actions, such as the apologies delivered to the family of the victims of the war, are framed in a similar negative manner, by referring to them insincere and too late.

Vrij Nederland also accuses the Dutch state of having a ‘typical’ attitude, in general as well as in regard to the war of decolonization and other parts of the past, which again is framed unfavourably. This attitude is claimed to be defined by feelings of superiority, exaggerated self-importance and narcissism, and framed as unjust since the Dutch are not as ‘good’ as they present and view themselves. The journal illustrates the notion of the dominant, wrongful Dutch self-understanding by underlining its understanding of the present Dutch social memory.
Specifically, due to the greatly positive Dutch self-image the Dutch are unable to recognize and accept past wrongdoings, which resulted in the decolonization war, especially its violent episodes, not being part of the present Dutch social memory. Concluding, Vrij Nederland understands the decolonization war between the Dutch and Indonesians greatly negative, and hence frames the war accordingly. The journal also clearly sympathises with the Indonesian both its fight for independence and its forces The debate which took place over the years in the journal, can be understood as typical left-winged, due to expressed sympathise towards the underprivileged, the Indonesians, and its intellectual, progressive attitude.

With 21 articles published on the topic, Elsevier relatively paid the least attention to the war of decolonization throughout the selected periods of time. Nevertheless, the journal clearly takes an stance on the war of decolonization, which is considerably more positive than the two previously described journals. Accordingly, the event is framed as a traumatic experience, but for the Dutch people, in particular due to the many Dutch whom were killed during the Bersiap, rather than the Indonesians. The journal also disputes the notion of the Dutch being on the ‘wrong side of history’ during the war, by arguing that the Dutch forces and government were not fighting against Indonesian independence but for a good cause, that is a proper transfer or sovereignty. The Dutch government and its forces, as well as the military operations carried out, are thus framed positively. In addition, Elsevier implicitly portrays Indonesia as responsible for the war, by framing the Dutch government’s decision to carry out the Police Actions as understandable, as it was a response to violent Indonesian behaviour. Although the journal criticizes the Dutch typical attitude as being too colonial, pointing out how the country presents itself as superior in regards to knowledge and morals, Elsevier appears to agree with this notion due to the way in which it frames the Indonesian people as well as its government as bad and inferior, referring to the human rights abuses that took place under Suharto’s regime.

The present Dutch social memory of the event is framed as incomplete and the Dutch historical consciousness as too sort. Respectively, the Dutch continue to receive information about the war as ‘new’, in spite of similar information being brought to the Dutch public and academic debate many times before. In addition, Elsevier frames the decades-long discussion on the war, in particular the behaviour of the Dutch forces, as a Dutch issue, emphasizing the little attention for the topic in Indonesian society and academics. Altogether, the journal thus frames the increasing national and international academic and public attention for the decolonization war as wrong, in particular useless. For the same reason, the Dutch efforts to face past wrongdoings, such as delivering apologies and the recognition of the 17th of August
1945 as Indonesia’s day of independence, are framed negatively as wrong and insincere.

In conclusion, it appears that Elsevier typically understands the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and Indonesia as rather good, in particular as appropriate due to the context. Likewise, the Dutch parties involved, the government and the forces, are portrayed positively, while the Indonesian parties are framed as the opposite. The journal also clearly regards the ongoing Dutch public and academic debate as an idle, national issue. Considering all these frames, the journal which took place in Elsevier can be understood as typical right-wing, expressing nationalism and sympathy towards hierarchy, such as the Dutch colonial power.

Throughout the selected time period of this study, HP/De Tijd published 22 articles related to the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and its former colony Indonesia. Despite the variety of topics discussed, the journal appears to be particularly focused on the role of the Dutch government during the war and frames this role very negatively. Accordingly, Elsevier frames them as to be the sole responsible for the war, in particular the escalation of violence, and as immoral since they continued with the war despite knowing it was doomed to fail. The lawsuits filed by the families of the Indonesian victims of the war against the Dutch state, are subsequently framed as good, while the ways in which the Netherlands dealt with them war are portrayed as wrong. Likewise, the journal frames the Dutch government as hypocritical, referring particularly to how it presents itself as superior towards other countries while having a history of covering-up itself. Based on this notion, the journal also argues that more research on the topic should be conducted, since the government investigations cannot be trusted.

The Dutch forces on the other hand are framed rather positively as they are understood to just have followed-up orders. That HP/De Tijd sympathises with the Dutch forces is also illustrated by the great amount of attention paid to the Dutch Indies-Veterans. Among other things, the journal argues for the rehabilitation for the Dutch soldiers who declined to engage in the violence, and negatively frames the Dutch official recognition of the 17th of August 1945 as Indonesia’s day of Independence and Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Bot’s speech as wrong as it would insult the veterans. Due to the great sympathise towards the Dutch forces the journal also frames Indonesia, both its government and its soldiers, as inferior. Towards the Indonesian, civilian victims, however, sympathy is expressed.

Altogether, HP/De Tijd appears to understand the war of decolonization as a failure, with solely the Dutch government to blame. The Dutch forces on the other hand, are framed
very positive, in particular as not responsible for the misconduct which occurred during the war, and therefore should be treated with respect. Respectively, the debate which took place in the articles published in the journal can be understood fairly right-winged, due to the great sympathy and respect for the Dutch forces and Dutch Indies-veterans, and its criticism on the Dutch government, which can be understood as typical right-winged as it seeks less governmental involvement.

The Development of the Debate
The empirical analysis of the 99 articles on the war of decolonization published in the Dutch opinion journals revealed that not all events received an equal amount of attention. Specifically, the event received the most attention in 1995 and 2012 with 30 and 19 articles being published in the journals. In other years significant less articles were published, with approximately a total of ten per year. At the same time, the results of the analysis demonstrate that not every journal paid the same amount of attention to the topic each year. Per illustration, HP/De Tijd published ten articles on the issue in 1995, but only one in 2011 and 2013. These differences in attention for to the event per year and journal can be explained as follows.

First, the great attention paid to the war of decolonization, in particular Dutch Queen Beatrix’ state visit to Indonesia in 1995, for which research has suggestions two explanations. Accordingly, the Dutch royal family, including the former Queen who resigned her crown to her son in 2013, are typically held in high esteem by the Dutch public and press (Semetko 1998). The Dutch media reports on them and their behaviour, such as the events they attended, on a daily basis and therefore also greatly on Queen Beatrix’ visit to Indonesia. In addition, 1995 can be understood as a year of commemorations, which led to an increased interest in the past from both the Dutch public and the press. These two aspects combined, can arguably explain the opinion journals’ relatively great interest in the war.

Second, the year 2012 in which the war of decolonization also received a relatively great amount of attention, specifically the pictures published in De Volkskrant illustrating the Dutch forces carrying out mass executions in Indonesia. This great interest can be explained by the so-called ‘continuity effect’ as described by Boydstun, Hardy, and Walgrave (2014). Accordingly, “once an event has ‘made it’ the news channel will be more readily open for the follow-up events, at a lower threshold value.” (ibid., 512–13). In other words, after having published on a certain ‘key-event’, the media is more likely to continue to report on that specific and similar events, in order to answer the public demand for more information. The great media
attention for the decolonization war in 2012, specifically for De Volkskrant’s pictures, can thus be explained by the media attention the matter received in prior years, such as articles discussing the Rawagede lawsuit. Moreover, in 2012 various events related to the war of decolonization – the pictures in De Volkskrant, the Rawagede lawsuit, the South Sulawesi lawsuit, and the proposal of a large-scale research on the war – took place, resulting in much higher number of events to report on in the first place compared to other years.

Concerning the ways in which the war of decolonization between the Netherlands and Indonesia, and related events and issues, were framed by the journals, the empirical analysis of the 99 articles has shown great continuity and stability. To start with, the tone of the articles which essentially did not change over the years. Accordingly, the journals who framed the decolonization war, or related issues, a certain way in 1994 continued to do so throughout the years. Per illustration, De Groene Amsterdammer was already a proponent of the war during the event itself, and continued to frame it very negatively by expressing great criticism, while using the same types of arguments. Likewise, HP/De Tijd framed the Dutch government’s actions in relation to the war of decolonization negatively in 1994 and continued to do so over the years, by repeatedly pointing out their wrongdoings. Oostindie’s (2011, 13) claim that Dutch colonial history is either remembered with pride or shame but rarely neutral, is also applicable to the debate which took place in the Dutch opinion journals.

I argue that this evident continuity of frames and arguments used, can be explained by the typical characteristics of the journals. Although reporting on the essentially ‘neutral’ news, the journals due so from a typical attitude that is right or left-winged as this is what their consumers expect. Likewise, the journal’s typical specific characteristics can also explain why the journals paid different amounts of attention to the war of decolonization in general. To illustrate, considering the journal being clearly right-winged, heavily based on a nationalistic ideology, it is not surprising that Elsevier published paid relatively little attention to events portraying the Netherlands negatively. Concluding, the empirical analysis thus illustrated that the journals’ typical characteristics greatly influenced the way in which and if they reported on the war of decolonization and related issues.

The Opinion Journals’ Debate and the Academic Debate on the Decolonization War

Considering the variety of topics discussed and accordingly attributed frames in the articles analysed in this study, one can conclude that the Dutch opinion journals’ debate on the war of decolonization is greatly similar to the academic debate on the topic. More specifically, both
debates discuss similar topics and appear to distinguish the same issues as important. First of all, the Excessennota. This governmental investigation received a great deal of attention from both, while also being framed similarly as unreliable. Second, the behaviour of the Dutch forces during the war, in particular the notion of the them carrying out mass violence, was a main topic in both the academic and the debate in the opinion journals. Both the journal’s and the scholarly debate also clearly had opponents and proponents of this notion. Thirdly, the Dutch colonial past in general which is extensively discussed in research on the war of decolonization, was also often discussed in the articles published in the Dutch opinion journals. Finally, the four opinion journals also paid a considerably amount of attention to the issue which can be understood as the focal point of the scholarly discussion, that is the Dutch social memory of the event.

The ways in which De Groene Amsterdammer, Elsevier, Vrij Nederland, and HP/De Tijd framed the war of decolonization and related issues also greatly corresponds with the academic debate. To start with, the frames the journals attributed to certain issues illustrates the different attitudes towards the war as expressed in different scholarly works on the event. Respectively, despite the present academic consensus that the Dutch forces carried out mass violence against the Indonesians structurally, there are scholars who argue that mass violence only occurred occasionally. Likewise, whereas Vrij Nederland frames the Dutch forces as to have carried out mass violence, Elsevier frames the Dutch forces rather positively by stating that their behaviour was appropriate due to the previously carried out violence by the Indonesians. In addition, there appears to be scholarly consensus that the present Dutch social memory can be understood as inaccurate, as the war of decolonization is not part of its dominant frames. Similarly, De Groene Amsterdammer, Elsevier, and Vrij Nederland frame the Dutch social memory as incomplete and distorted, pointing out the lack of attention for the decolonization war in it.

The empirical analysis has also shown that the Dutch opinion journals use the same arguments to support their specific understanding of the war of decolonization and associated issues, as the scholars whom conducted research on it. Respectively, the present distorted Dutch social memory in regard to the war of decolonization, is explained by academics and the opinion journals in the same way. More specifically, Houben (1997) and Scagliola’s (2002, 2007, 2012) notion of the typical Dutch self-image as the reason for the inaccurate social memory, due to the way it views itself as greatly tolerant, is also used by Vrij Nederland. Bijl’s (2012) explanation for the distorted Dutch social memory, focusing on the way in which the war is
framed as to “lie outside national history”, is also repeated by De Groene Amsterdammer (van Leeuwen 2016). Likewise, the problematic nature of the term Police Actions as widely discussed in academics by among others VanVugt (2002) and Lorenz (2015a), is also pointed out by De Groene Amsterdammer (Boom 2008b, 2011; De Groene Amsterdammer 2012), Elsevier (van der List 2005), Vrij Nederland (van Liempt 1994), and HP/De Tijd (Traa 2012).

The fact that a number of articles also discuss scholarly works on the topic (van der Heijden 2012b, 2012a) combined with the investigations the journals carried out independently (Boom 2008b; Hoek 2013; van Liempt 1994), also reinforces the notion of the journals’ debate being closely linked to the academic debate. Finally, Vrij Nederland (Botje and Hoek 2012; Botje and Cohen 2012) and De Groene Amsterdammer (Boom 2008c; Brouwer 2012) both underline that the group of people who actually experienced the war of decolonization is increasingly getting smaller due to the passing of time. In particular, the journals frame this development negatively as problematic since those memories will soon fade while suggesting conducting research in order to maintain them. The suggestion for more research and the acknowledgement of the limited temporal horizon of memory, suggest that the journals’ also understand the present Dutch social memory of the event as to be in transition from communicative to cultural memory. The frames which the journals attributed to the memory of the event are greatly in line with the works of Halbwachs (1992) and Assmann (1995), hence illustrate again the strong relation between both debates.

However, the debate which took place in the opinion journals also differs from the academic one, due to its focus on more contemporary issues and discussion of issues with high news values. Due to the much higher frequency the journals are published when compared to academic publications, this difference was expected. Considering the type of topics and events discussed and when compared to the other journals, the conclusion can also be drawn that Elsevier’s debate was in particular distinct from the academic debate. Nevertheless, although much less than the other three, since the journal still touches upon a number of issues which also attracted great academic attention, I argue that the Elsevier’s debate was still rather similar to the scholarly discussion. Considering all the above, the conclusion can be drawn that the debate which took place in the four Dutch opinion journals can be understood as greatly similar to the academic debate on the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization.
Conclusion

The present thesis sought to examine how Dutch opinion journals framed the war of decolonization, and how this relates to the academic debate on the Dutch social memory of the event. Through an inductive, qualitative textual analysis 99 articles published in the Dutch opinion journals De Groene Amsterdammer, Elsevier, Vrij Nederland, and HP/De Tijd in the years 1994, 1995, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2016, frames attributed to the war of decolonization were identified, and the following conclusions can be drawn.

First of all, the analysis revealed that the opinion journals typically framed the war of decolonization rather explicitly in a positive or negative manner, but rarely neutrally. More specifically, the two left-winged journals, De Groene Amsterdammer and Vrij Nederland framed the war of decolonization negatively, illustrated by the great criticism expressed towards it in their articles. In particular, both journals, which already were against it while the war was happening, framed the role of the Dutch, the forces and the government, negatively as ‘being on the wrong side of history’, claiming that the Dutch should have handled things differently. The journals also clearly sympathise with the Indonesian side, while heavily criticising the Dutch government for their ‘cover-up’ mentality. The two right-winged journals Elsevier and HP/De Tijd on the other hand, framed the war of decolonization throughout the years much more positively. Although criticizing certain aspects of it, such as the Dutch social memory of it and the Dutch government’s behaviour, the journals appear to agree with the Dutch state’s decision to fight Indonesia’s independence. Likewise, the Indonesians, the government as well as the forces, were framed negatively.

The second conclusion which can be drawn is that opinion journals’ attitude towards the war of decolonization did not change over time. De Groene Amsterdammer and Vrij Nederland which already expressed criticism against the war in 1945-1949 continued to do so in the following years by framing the decolonization and other related aspects negatively. Likewise, Elsevier and HP/De Tijd’s which initially supported the war continue to frame the war and the Dutch decision to fight Indonesia’s independence positively as appropriate.

Third, the research conducted has revealed that the debate which took place in the Dutch opinion journals over the years, can be understood as greatly similar to the academic discussion on the Dutch social memory. Accordingly, similar topics were discussed, similar frames attributed, and similar arguments for certain evaluations were given. Specifically, both debates paid great attention to the governmental investigation the Excessennota, the possibility of mass violence carried out by the Dutch forces during the war, the Dutch colonial past in
general, and the Dutch social memory of the event. The debate which took place in Elsevier over the years however, was focused on slightly different topics and can therefore be understood as to be the least similar to the general scholarly discussion. Additionally, due to the much higher number of articles published, the articles in the journals discussed much more contemporary issues of high news value than the academic publications. Nevertheless, I conclude that the debate which took place in the Dutch opinion journals from 1994 to 2016 can be understood as very similar to past and present academic debate on the Dutch social memory of the war of decolonization.

However, this research has some limitations that should be taken into account. First of all, it must be kept in mind that this is a study of only four opinion journals. Although I argue that this selection of journals can be understood as representative for the Dutch media landscape, it does not necessarily illustrates how the Dutch media as a whole has framed and understood the war of decolonization from 1994 to 2016. Therefore, in order to provide a more complete understanding of the Dutch media and their attitude towards the decolonization war between the Netherland and Indonesia, more research needs to be done. It would be particularly interesting to relate this research’ findings to other types of Dutch or Indonesian media in order to identify potential differences and similarities between different media outlets. At the same time, due to the focus on the decolonization war, the results of this study cannot necessarily be understood as to be representative for the opinion journals in general. Since it is possible that the journals framed other similar issues very differently and that their general attitude can thus be understood as very distinct from what it portrayed in this study. Accordingly, conducting more research on Dutch opinion journals and the frames they typically attribute to topics would be of great academic relevance, as it would result in a more comprehensive understanding of the journals.

Second, only eight years within the period 1994-2016 were analysed. Arguably, a research which included all years in this time period or a different time period would have revealed other results. In particular, an investigation of the journals and the ways in which they framed the war of decolonization between the Dutch state and its former colony in the immediate post-war years would be interesting, since the event probably received even more media attention. Additionally, due to time restrictions and limited availability, not all journals were studied every year. Although I do not believe that including these journals in the analysis would have made a great difference, due to the large number and variety of articles still
analysed, it is possible that the inclusion of these journals in these years would have resulted in different findings.

Third, there were certain matters revealed in the empirical analysis, which were not included in this research due to its particular focus on the war of decolonization and the Dutch social memory of it. Per illustration, a number of articles related the war of decolonization or aspects of it to other issues such as other missions in which the Dutch military was involved, and contemporary issues in Dutch society such as the discussion on Black Pete. Although shortly pointed out in some cases, this research did not investigated these elements any further, and therefore it may be interesting to conduct further research in these issues that arose.

To conclude, it is important to note that the academic debate on the Dutch social memory on the war of decolonization is not over yet. The research carried out by the three great Dutch research institutes, as proposed in 2012 and eventually given government support in 2016, is still ongoing. Hence, a final conclusion of how the Dutch dealt with the war, if even possible, has not yet been provided to the Dutch public. Additionally, the media continues to report and voice criticism on the war of decolonization. Per illustration, last September two Dutch historians wrote an article in which they discussed French President Macron’s apologies to Algeria for the tortures carried out by French soldiers, concluding with that Dutch Prime Minister Rutte should do the same with the Indonesian victims (Hoek, n.d.). Accordingly, the Dutch social memory of the event is still heavily being constructed, mediated, and transmitted and it will be very interesting to see how it develops in the future.
Appendix: Key Words

The following key words have been used to search within every period:
- Bersiap
- Indië (Indies)
- Indonesië (Indonesia)
- Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog (Indonesian War of Independence)
- Indonesische dekolonisatieoorlog (Indonesian War of Decolonization)
- Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger/KNIL (Dutch Colonial army)
- Nederlands-Indië (Dutch Indies)
- Nederlands-Indonesisch conflict (Dutch-Indonesian conflict)
- Politionele Acties (Police Actions)

The following key words were added to search for articles from 1994:
- Cornelis Princen
- Deserteur (Deserter)
- Poncke Princen
- Princen

The following key words were added to search for articles from 1995:
- Beatrix
- Cornelis Princen
- Deserteur (Deserter)
- Poncke Princen
- Princen
- Koningin Beatrix (Queen Beatrix)
- Staatsbezoek (State visit)
- Staatsbezoek Indonesie (State visit Indonesia)

The following key words were added to search for articles from 2005:
- Ben Bot
- Excuses Bot (Apology Bot)
- Minister Bot
- Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken (Minister of Foreign Affairs)

The following key words were added to search for articles from 2008:
- Bloedbad Rawagede (bloodbath Rawagede)
- Comité Nederlandse Ereschulden (Committee Dutch Debts of Honor)
- Rawagede
- Rawagedeh
- Rawagede rechtszaak (Rawagede lawsuit)

The following key words were added to search for articles from 2011:
- Bloedbad Rawagede (Bloodbath Rawagede)
- Excuses (Apologies)
- Liesbeth Zegveld
- Nederlandse ambassadeur (Dutch ambassador)
- Rawagede
- Rawagedeh
- Rawagede rechtszaak (Rawagede lawsuit)
- Zegveld
The following key words were added to search for articles from 2012:
- De Volkskrant
- Excuses
- Foto’s executies Photographs executions)
- Liesbeth Zegveld
- Onderzoeksvoorstel (Research proposal)
- Onderzoeksvoorstel Indonesie (Research proposal Indonesia)
- Rawagede
- Rawagedeh
- Rawagede rechtszaak (Rawagede lawsuit)
- Zegveld

The following key words were added to search for articles from 2013:
- Excuses
- Liesbeth Zegveld
- Rawagede
- Rawagedeh
- Rawagede rechtszaak (Rawagede lawsuit)
- Liesbeth Zegveld
- Zegveld
- Zuid-Sulawesi (South-Sulawesi)
- Zuid-Sulawesi rechtszaak (South-Sulawesi lawsuit)
- Excuses Rawagede (Apologies Rawagede)

The following key words were added to search for articles from 2016:
- Brandende Kamponds van Generaal Spoor (The Burning Kamponds of General Spoor)
- Limpach
- Onderzoeksvoorstel (Research proposal)
- Onderzoeksvoorstel Indonesie (Research proposal Indonesia)
- Remy Limpach
Bibliography

https://www.elsevier.com/about/history.


Boeije, Hennie, Harm ’t Hart, and Joop Hox, eds. 2009. Onderzoeksmethoden. 8thed. Amsterdam: Boom.


Kligler-Vilenchik, Neta. 2011. ‘Memory-Setting: Applying Agenda-Setting Theory to the Study of Collective Memory’. In On Media Memory: Collective Memory in a New


ADDIN ZOTERO_BIBL {"custom":[]} CSL_BIBLIOGRAPHY