

SANDA DIA : A SYMBOL OF SOCIAL GRIEVANCES

A CASESTUDY ON THE PHENOMENA OF MEDIATED MARTYRS
WITHIN THE COVERAGE OF THE PUBLIC BROADCASTER “VRT “

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Abstract

This article examines the case of Sanda Dia, whose death following a brutal hazing in 2018 sparked a national outcry and highlighted issues such as class injustice and racism. Utilizing multimodal content and thematic analysis, this research explores how media hypes and mediatization can transform individuals into symbols or martyrs for broader social grievances. This study delves into the concept of martyrs and the role of visual and textual attributions in communicating these martyr narratives. The case study of Sanda Dia illustrates how VRT sustains and cocreates a martyr frame by making use of iconic pictures, including public opinions and attaching institutional issues. Additionally, it underscores the power of visual frames within media hypes. The research contributes to the understanding of the dynamic relationship between media and public perception. Through a comprehensive analysis of visual and textual content, this article provides insight into the construction of martyrdom in contemporary media. The study's implications offer a nuanced perspective on how media frames such as a martyr can be created and sustained by a careful interplay of news media and public opinion.

Keywords: digitally mediated martyr-social grievances-media hypes-moral panic-iconic pictures- public broadcasting

Nederlandse samenvatting

Dit artikel onderzoekt de zaak van Sanda Dia, wier dood na een brute ontgroening in 2018 tot nationale verontwaardiging leidde en kwesties als klassenonrechtvaardigheid en racisme aan het licht bracht. Door gebruik te maken van multimodale inhoud en thematische analyse, onderzoekt dit onderzoek hoe mediahypes en mediatisering individuen kunnen transformeren in symbolen of martelaren voor bredere sociale problematiek. Deze studie gaat in op het concept van martelaren en de rol van visuele en tekstuele toeschrijvingen bij het communiceren van deze martelaarsverhalen. De casestudy van Sanda Dia illustreert hoe de VRT een martelaarsframe in stand houdt en co-creëert door gebruik te maken van iconische foto's, inclusief publieke opinies en daaraan verbonden institutionele kwesties. Bovendien onderstreept het de kracht van visuele frames tijdens mediahypes. Het onderzoek draagt bij aan het begrijpen van de dynamische relatie tussen media en publieke perceptie. Door middel van een uitgebreide analyse van visuele en tekstuele inhoud geeft dit artikel inzicht in de constructie van het martelaarschap in de hedendaagse media. De implicaties van de studie bieden een genuanceerd perspectief op hoe mediaframes zoals een martelaar kunnen worden gecreëerd en ondersteund door een zorgvuldig samenspel van nieuwsmedia en de publieke opinie.

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Introduction

The death of Sanda Dia in 2018 triggered a nationwide outcry in Belgium. The student endured a two-day hazing ritual that went fatally wrong. The hazing included many degrading and humiliating tasks such as drinking huge amounts of alcohol and fish oil, standing in pits filled with frozen water and other acts of physical abuse. Sanda succumbed to multiple organ failures a few days later (Van den Berghe, 2020a). The case ignited a media storm, with heavy implications of class injustice and racism. In the time frame of 4 years, Sanda Dia became a symbol of grievances, a true martyr. The extensive media coverage, combined with the characteristics of grievances and suffering is at the roots of such an expression.

When individuals become symbols, they enable spectators to relate to the cause (Am & Weimann, 2020). Sanda Dia is not the first person to become the personification of societal issues, nor will he be the last. Figures such as George Floyd, Mahsa Amini, Stephen Lawrence, and Mohammed Bouazizi have similarly become martyrs in their respective socio-historical contexts. What they surely have in common is the power of the connected world. The symbol of the martyr can easily be distributed and adapted to the context especially now that the role of the traditional gatekeepers has been diminished. Although traditional media still has agenda-setting power, it cannot be ignored that digital platforms play a role in shaping and spreading these symbols. The use of iconic pictures and hashtags can in the mere time of just minutes reach the whole world (Lewis, 2018)

Martyrs are often part of a larger media hype that uses the symbol to condense and simplify the issues presented. They do this by attaching the message to the martyr and creating visual symbols and frames, such as iconic pictures (Vasterman, 2005). This process reflects a larger need for media to use visual stimuli to communicate certain issues (Keib et al., 2016). The power of the martyr lies in its ability to distil a message into a compelling, easily understood symbol that can evoke feelings of grievance. A media hype is influenced and maintained by such reactions of the public. Consequently, emotional attributions are crucial in a martyr frame, as they influence the reach and attention that the case receives on both sides (Burger & Koetsenruijter, 2004; Vasterman, 2005). This makes the image of a martyr a powerful tool not only in storytelling but also in mobilization efforts. Within a hyper-connected world, such messages can travel fast. It can eventually lead to widespread protests or even revolution. A remarkable example of this power is the martyr Mahsa Amini, who in 2022 became the symbol of the internet revolution in Iran (Waegemans, 2022).

Despite the martyr's powerful position in mobilisation and as a storytelling tool, it remains an understudied concept. It is this gap in literature that this article aims to fill, it aims to explore how this phenomenon is created and maintained within the bounds of the media and their socio-political context. It adds to the theorization of martyrs and their attribution to translate larger grievances, but also to the theorization of how media sustain or create this phenomenon. Therefore, the research question of this article is "How does VRT's media coverage of Sanda Dia's case construct and sustain a mediated martyr frame?"

Theoretical Explanation of a Martyr

The etymology of a martyr derives from the Greek Latin term for "to witness", reflecting its adaptable nature across various political and social contexts (Buckner & Khatib, 2014). Historically, the concept of martyrdom has been deeply rooted in religious, cultural and social practices (Lewis, 2020). In Christianity, a martyr dies or kills himself for religious preservation. In Islam, this is ascribed to someone who dies during Jihad¹ (Ezzati, 1986). Beyond these theological definitions, the notion of martyrdom has expanded to social and political contexts. Gözl (2019) describes a martyr as a creation of a narrative in which actors bestow meaning on the death of an actor. The narratives surrounding the martyrs, highlight their suffering, allowing individuals to find meaning in their suffering and sacrifice.

A crucial element in the creation of a martyr is establishing a clear dichotomy between good and evil. According to Gözl (2019), the martyr needs to be perceived in terms of integrity, innocence, decency and honesty which contrasts negative portrayals of opposing groups. This dichotomy closely relates to the social identity theory, as it skilfully highlights its framing power. People need to define who they are and what they stand for and on the other hand decide what they are not. In deciding what they are not, members of the outgroup receive static one-dimension stereotyped descriptions such as elite, immigrant or right-winged (Oktar, 2001; Perdue et al., n.d.). Am & Weimann (2020) underline that martyrs serve as potent symbols for ideology or movements, as they capsule the values of the ingroup:

"The martyr serves as a symbol for a movement of ideology, as a source of encouragement for action and unity due to the sacrifice of the individual, as well as serving as a figure to be idealized by encapsulating the ideals of the ideology or movement and "humanizing" them." (pg. 134)

Throughout history, the role of the martyr has been continuously used for ideologies and movements. However, the emergence of digital formats has altered the characteristics of a martyr in a significant way.

¹ Jihad is roughly translated to the fight against the enemies of Islam.

Digitally mediated martyrdom and the rituals that are connected to it have changed the way that death is mediatized. So as Lewis (2018) concludes, the rise of digital platforms has introduced a new form of martyrdom:

“I argue that a new form of martyrdom has emerged post the 2010-11 Egyptian uprisings: one that is digitally mediated by individuals through the affordances of visual social media and digital technologies; has given rise to new performative rituals of witnessing and commemoration, offers new possibilities for popular political participation and expression; and challenges the dominant ways of doing politics online” (pg. 2).

As Lewis (2020) observed, the contemporary form of martyrdom exceeds the religious connotations by evoking universal values and representing the popular and international struggle for social justice. It is a politicized, visually oriented, and communicative practice that is constructed by people. It is essentially the creation of martyrs by the continuous sharing, disseminating, and construction of digital images.

Buckner & Khatib (2014) made a similar assertion that the emergence of digitally mediated martyrdom or martyrdom in general has evolved as a result of the events during the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring and its origin, progress and ends were famously influenced using online tactics such as the use of martyrs. The death of Mohamed Bouazizi and his digitally mediatized position as a martyr was a significant symbol of widespread protest (Cummings, 2015). Furthermore, Buckner & Khatib (2014) argues that the new version of Arab martyrdom is mostly characterized by three distinct characteristics. For a start, it moves the production of the martyrs from the state to the citizens. Furthermore, it portrays martyrs through their personal stories. Lastly, the martyr stories emphasize empowerment and agency over mere victimization. Whilst this framework is focussed on an Arab context, it can serve as a starting point to compare with other non-Arabic case studies.

To summarize, a martyr is a figure whose death is constructed with significant meaning by a community, often seen as a symbol of struggle and sacrifice (Am & Weimann, 2020). Whether in religious, political or social contexts, the concept of martyrdom has evolved, especially with the rise of digital media (Buckner & Khatib, 2014; Lewis, 2020) Now, the creation of martyr narratives can influence and mobilize large audiences in a mere matter of minutes. In the digital sphere, the construction of a martyr depends on the way that the symbol is disseminated. To be disseminated, it must be empowered by framing (Lewis, 2018).

Visual framing

We are all quite aware that images are powerful storytelling tools, they are easier to digest than textual messages or content. In modern media, images and text are rarely seen in isolation, instead forming symbiotic relationships where they complement and enhance each other. This complicated relationship between images and text is crucial in storytelling, as the images significantly influence the interpretation of the accompanying text (Brantner et al., 2011). Media uses visual cues not only to convey a message but also to add stylistic elements that attract and engage the audience. Images are more accessible to the public as they do not require knowledge of representational rules like grammar, therefore they can attract and grasp anyone's attention (Amores et al., 2019).

To illustrate the symbiotic relationship between the two, research by Hayes & O'Neill (2021) shows that the visual representation of Greta Thunberg not only conveyed that she was a climate activist but also translated a larger awareness of the issues surrounding climate change and activism. Visual cues help people to understand the world surrounding them, which is why news media make use of visual frames in their day-to-day function as they are undeniably important in storytelling and work together with textual attributions to convey larger themes.

Visual framing, defined as *“the selection of some aspects of the perceived reality and the accentuation in such a way as to promote a particular problem, definition, causal interpretation; moral evaluation and treatment recommendation by visual stimuli”* (Brantner et al., 2011, pg.4), plays a significant role in shaping how audiences perceive reality. Audiences are more inclined to accept the visual frames without question than textual ones (Amores et al., 2019; Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011). Because of the natural attributions that visual cues have, people are often not aware that they can also carry meaning. Considering this, visual cues are far from insignificant and warrant careful examination.

To analyse visual frames effectively, the framework developed by Rodriguez and Dimitrova (2011) offers a useful approach. They propose four levels or tiers of analysis. The first two levels focus on the denotation of the visual and visuals as a stylistic-semiotic system that focuses on the more stylistic matters such as composition, colours etc. The last two levels, which are more relevant to this discussion, involve seeing visuals as a connotative system that focuses more on delving deeper into the connotative meaning of visuals and considering visuals as ideological representations. These levels of analysis focus primarily on the deeper meaning that visuals can transfer, viewing frames as objects with a certain ideological power.

News coverage serves as an important source of information, providing people with the knowledge to make sense of the world. But media isn't void of the context surrounding it. Although there has been extensive research on textual framing, less attention has been given to visual frames used by news media, despite its significant impact on how news is represented and consumed. For instance, research by Parrott et al. (2019) showed that the frame that the media uses impacts the way that individuals look at issues, depending on whether they use a human-interest frame or a conflict frame. Respondents reacted more positively to human-interest frames, while conflict frames elicited less favourable responses. This reaction to frames is important since it also influences the kind of pictures a redaction would choose. This phenomenon is called "the photo news factor", which is part of the broader "news value theory". It is the consideration of whether a photo is newsworthy enough to publish. Criteria of this decision could be adjectives such as surprising, emotional, attractive newsworthy, controversial etc. (Geise, Heck, et al., 2021; Rössler et al., 2011). Implying that the public's reaction and the emotion that they convey is a key indicator for what the visual frames to use.

Emotions and media hype

To better understand the emergence of martyrs through visual framing, it is essential to explore the concept of "media hypes". A media hype refers to a rapidly escalating news event, often triggered by one event and subsequently becoming a self-perpetuating process within newsrooms (Burger & Koetsenruijter, 2004). These events can range from a disaster to a crime to a story based on an individual, such as a celebrity for example. Most of the time, the event has something novel to it to trigger the process. The process of this phenomenon is clarified by Vasterman (2005) as

"An unusual event triggers increased media attention, the media set their focus on this specific topic or event, they enlarge it, and by so doing evoke all kinds of social response, which will, in turn, become news as well, further stimulating the news wave" (pg.511)

This process results in a competitive rush among news outlets to cover the subject, leading to content saturation that further enlarges the media hype surrounding the subject. A media hype significantly influences how much and what we see about a subject. Even when the news may not be of significant relevance, it can become of relevance through the threshold of newsworthiness that is being lowered to add to the media hype. (Ruigrok et al., 2009)

A media hype needs feedback to continue the wave of news. Often, the subjects of media hypes are those capable of inciting moral panic. Moral panic was first coined by Stanley Cohen and is explained as such

“Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person, or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests” (Garland, 2008, p.10). These media hypes thrive on this panic since the public feedback and panic in turn evoke more themes. Media are sometimes active in moral-making, but it is often just the vehicle of others’ claims (Cricher, 2008). It is a continuous loop of action and reaction. The consequence of such a moral panic, according to Cricher (2008) could translate into a change of laws or organizations. Underlining its power to rally up emotions.

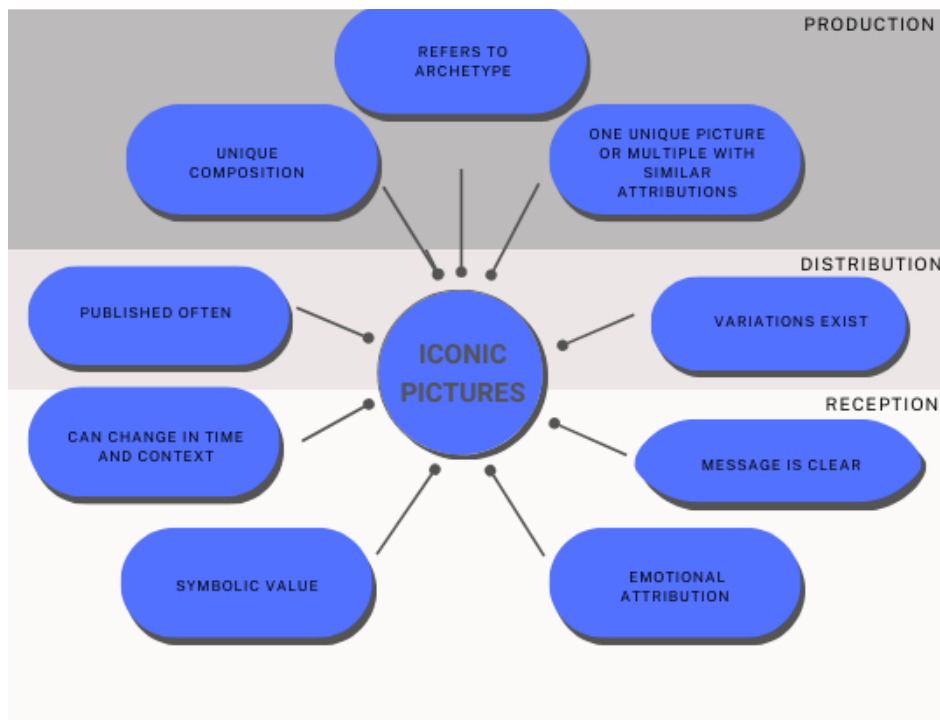
The emotional attributions that visual framing contains, are crucial in the process of media hype. Since it is a continued process of reception and input, the visual frames that are being used have an impact on how people shape and construct the media hype in their minds. For example, in research done by Cricher (2008) it was outlined how negative headlines for articles about the health of the economy impacted people’s feelings about financial wellbeing. but also, the statistical indicators of the economy. It became a self-fulfilling prophecy, in which the readers internalized the messages that they received. Negative stimuli tend to capture attention more than positive stimuli (Casas & Williams, 2019; Geise, Panke, et al., 2021). The consequence of this negative framing impacts the way that people experience their emotions towards a case, consequently “mean world views” are more common when exposed to news.

Symbols matter

Symbols play a crucial role in visual impressions and the emotions attached to them. Symbols are important in everyday life; they convey messages more swiftly than textual stimuli. As Schudson (1989) explains, symbols represent the unspoken foundation of thought, actions, and messages. These symbols serve as a reminder of what is being fought for and as a representation of the community. In today’s media-saturated world, they are disseminated widely through various media platforms, often without any direct human interaction (Awad & Wagoner, 2020; Buckner & Khatib, 2014).

Visual attributions in media, such as pictures, can serve as a symbol that could encapsulate the essence of the issue. These iconic images, as described by Kleppe & Vries (2013) summarise significant events or processes, capture the underlying meaning and convey a meaning far beyond the literal content of the image. However, the creation of an iconic picture depends on several conditions. To understand a symbolic image, one must grasp the context surrounding it, as this context often provides the connotative meaning of an image. Kleppe & Vries (2013) identify three key categories that contribute to a picture becoming iconic: perception, distribution and reception. Under this key category, different characteristics of these themes are defined.

Table 1. characteristic as described by Kleppe & Vries (2013, p.25)



To circle back to the theorization of media hypes, it is essential to understand how iconic pictures can serve a media hype. Continuous reporting in combination with recurring visual stimuli about an issue can condense a subject into one striking image, an iconic picture that serves as a symbol (Vasterman, 2005). These iconic pictures as explained by Kleppe & Vries (2013) are highly dependent on how the public reacts to the issue. An iconic picture needs to be attached to the reaction that it receives. Media hypes thrive on public feedback and interaction since it further feeds the momentum. With the rise of social media, iconic pictures and the symbols attached to them can transcend borders and become widespread. For example, during the 2022 Iranian protest for example, social media users used the iconic picture and the hashtag #mahsaamini to raise awareness about what was happening to the world as well as using Mahsa Amini to correlate to the case of their grievances (Waegemans, 2022).

In the case of martyrdom, Lewis (2018) highlighted that it needs some characteristics for shareability and that it thrives on symbols that are widely disseminated. The pictures that accompany the martyr are empty signifiers that can be filled by the experiences of human experience to create an anchor for political ideas. Pictures have symbolic attributions that can translate things that a print cannot transmit, such as emotional attributions (Hariman & Lucaites, 2002). However, this doesn't mean that the textual meaning is not

significant in this story. Iconic pictures and the symbolism behind them can only be understood if there is some sort of background attached to the symbols (Kleppe & Vries, 2013).

Role of Public Broadcasting in Belgium

Public service media (PSM) is a concept often associated with public broadcasting entities, which in countries like Belgium, play a crucial role in the media landscape. According to Picone & Donders (2020) public service media is defined as “*the provision of media services, across devices and platforms, that contributes to the democratic cultural and social wellbeing of society*” (pg. 348) This definition underscores the broad and multifaceted responsibilities of public service media, which extend beyond mere information dissemination to include the promotion of democratic values, cultural enrichment and social cohesion.

The role of public broadcasting in Belgium is diverse and serves multiple purposes. A few of these purposes are the obligation to provide impartial neutral information to its citizens, to support democratic values through the encouragement of public debate that respects the human rights of all groups in society, to offer a wide range of different programs and to promote social cohesion of national cultures (Donders et al., 2019). In Belgium, the role of public broadcasting is complex, because of the country's federalist structure. Public broadcasting is divided into distinct channels that serve different linguistic communities. These broadcasting channels are defined to cater for the needs and values of each linguistic group. These interests are decided on by the regional governments of Flanders and Wallonia (Coppens, 2003).

Public broadcasting in Flanders is mostly funded by the Flemish government. To receive such dotation, the Vlaamse radio en omroeporganisatie² (VRT) needs to agree every 5 years on a management agreement that serves to streamline the goal, expectations and realisations of the broadcasting service (Tosics, 2008). Whilst the aim is to provide neutral and objective news, it also aims to promote Flemish values and objectives. This duality reflects that a public broadcaster does not exist in a vacuum and that it is something that exists in its social, economic and political context (Donders et al., 2019). It is an important tool in disseminating a symbol of the state. This is an assertion that needs to be considered whilst discussing the visual framing of public broadcasts.

Public broadcasts are useful for the state since mass media bridges the gap between the public and the private sphere, it makes it easier to convey symbols of state-building. Public broadcasting to conclude is

² Flemish radio and broadcasting organization

not a neutral given, it has a certain attribution to convey and spread certain ideological values needed for nation-building (Jauert & Ferrell Lowe, 2005).

Methodology

1. Case study: Sanda Dia

1.1. Context³

Sanda Dia was a 20-year-old student who wanted to join Reuzegom, a student club that mostly connected students from the region of Antwerp. The club was known to have an elitist character with members who have parents in upper-class circles. Sanda wanted to pursue these connections and signed up for the club. To become a member of the club, Sanda needed to participate in a hazing. The club was known to have these extreme hazing practices, nonetheless, Sanda signed up. On December the 4th, the first day of the hazing began with an assignment. The pledges had to sell a certain number of roses or face punishment. Sanda didn't manage to fulfil this assignment and was ordered to drink a whole bottle of gin before participating in a cantus. Sanda struggled with the bottle but eventually finished it (Huyberegts, 2020) . Severely intoxicated, Sanda was taken back to his student housing by a few members of Reuzegom. While these members were in his dorm, they taped the tap shut to prevent him from drinking water and ransacked his room (Van den Berghe, 2020a).

The next morning the club was to go to Vosselaere. By then, Sanda couldn't walk on his own anymore due to a severe hangover and possible severe alcohol intoxication. As they made their way to the parking where they would depart to their next location, a professor in medicine noticed Sanda's condition and asked a nearby member to which student club they belonged to. One of them answered "Medica", which is the student club for medicine students. When the woman inquired whether they had heard of alcohol intoxication and urged them to keep an eye on Sanda, one of the members assured the woman that the hazing was almost over, and she allowed them to proceed (Van den Berghe, 2020a; Van den Berghe et al., 2022).

Upon arriving in Vosselaere, the next phase of the hazing commenced. The participants were forced to shovel a big hole, which was then filled with ice-cold water. Sanda was not able to join, so he was sat on the side. The participants were forced to stand in the pit for an extensive amount of time, whilst the over-

³ This case study is constructed through the documentation by newspapers about the case. For more context, I suggest the book by Pieter Huyberegts "Sanda Dia, de doop die leidde to dood." (Only for Dutch readers)

viewers sporadically urinated in the pit. As assignments, they needed to consume a few different things. They were forced to eat blended mice and to eat a goldfish that they were required to vomit right up. Fish oil was used to induce the puking. Sanda was not able to regurgitate the fish, so he ended up consuming a large amount of fish oil (Huyberechts, 2020).

By 8 pm, Sanda Dia was unresponsive and only made gurgling sounds. With the help of the other pledges, he was pulled out of the pit. The over-seers dressed him in spare clothes and put him in front of the fireplace to make him responsive. They quickly saw that there was something extremely wrong, however, not all members agreed to take him to the hospital. At 8.57 pm, one of the members, a medicine student urged the group to bring him to the hospital. On the way to the hospital, they called 112⁴. In this call, they refrained from telling them what happened and only told them that somebody fainted during the hazing. Once arrived Sanda had a body temperature of 28,7 degrees and was immediately taken to emergency care. Since Sanda had consumed fish oil equivalent to 4 litres of salt water, the brain soon suffered a cerebral oedema. Cerebral oedema is the swelling of the brain, which in this case caused Sanda to be declared brain dead. Sanda Dia died two days later from multiple organ failure (Decré, 2021; van den Buijs, 2018).

During Sanda's hospitalisation, Reuzegom had some hope that he would survive. They realised that it was serious and started to erase any evidence. The remaining members left on the terrain started to clean up the site and later Sanda's dorm room. All the group chats were deleted, and the members were urged to delete any evidence left. They immediately teamed up with lawyers (Van den Berghe et al., 2022).

1.2. Aftermath

Since the student organisation Reuzegom was tied to the Catholic University of Leuven, the Reuzegom members received a punishment that included an essay on the history of hazing and community service (Paelinck, 2020a). Critique ensued that it was too low of a punishment and protests commenced to urge them to take stronger action. Later in 2021, the university reopened the disciplinary proceedings and expelled some permanently, and others for multiple years (Heymans, 2021). This change in approach can be ascribed to new information that was released by the press. Once again, the university received criticism, since many of its members already graduated by the time that more severe punishments were given.

The juridical investigation ended in 2020 and the members of Reuzegom were called to stand trial for involuntary manslaughter, degrading treatment, deliberate administration of harmful substances and neglect

⁴ The emergency number in Belgium, like 911

(Baert, 2020c; De graaf, 2020). After a few delays, 18 members of Reuzegom stood trial in 2022, after multiple postponing attempts by multiple actors. They all received community service ranging from 200 to 400 hours, in addition to a hefty fine. The punishment that they received would not show on their criminal record, meaning that future employers would not see that they had been convicted. They were found guilty of involuntary manslaughter, degrading treatment and violation of animal laws⁵ They were found innocent of deliberate administration of harmful substances and neglect (H. Decré, 2023a). Neither the family nor Reuzegom members appealed to the higher court. Protests erupted once again to protest the outcome of this trial, which they believed to be too light (De Hert, 2023). In the case of Sanda Dia, the feeling that the Reuzegom members suffered a lack of consequences due to them being higher class than Sanda, who was a son of a Senegalese immigrant and the circumstances and difference in class between victim and perpetrator caused the case to be labelled as classism and racism. It is here where a lot of people identified with Sanda and ascribed meaning to his death (Dube, 2023; Nellis, 2023).

2. Research design

As a research design, a multimodal content analysis and a thematic analysis were chosen. A multimodal content analysis is an adaption of a content analysis. This approach aims to expand the focus of qualitative content analysis to consider how multiple modes, such as illustrations, photography, design, etc. add or expand the potential of texts beyond what a singular mode can offer (Serafini & Reid, 2023). Serafini & Reid (2023) emphasize the need to consider interwoven and complex relationships amongst several different modes, as well as the affordances of singular mode can offer. To completely understand what is meant by a mode, one must understand the difference between a mode and a medium. A medium is a channel through which communication occurs, whilst a mode refers to specific means with a medium, such as design and illustrations within a text, for example (Abdulfattah, 2005).

The news articles provided by VRT on the subject combine multiple modes such as photography, video, design and social media posts to create a collection of modes that work in a configuration that offers unique affordances in combination. These configurations provide different affordances dependent on context and the different modes included (Yepez-Reyes et al., 2023) As a multimodal content analysis provides deeper insight into how messages are received and focuses on the importance of context and culture on communication, it was deemed appropriate to conduct a multimodal content analysis.

⁵ Reuzegom was additionally trialled for the mistreatment of animals such as mice and fish. Gaia, an animal defender organisation was a public defender in the trial.

Since a multimodal content analysis is deemed an extension of content analysis, it can be conducted both qualitative and quantitative. However, since the focus in this article is the understanding how different modes convey a message, the focus lies on a qualitative analysis. For this reason, a thematic analysis was added. According to Braun & Clarke (2012), a thematic analysis is

“A method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set. Through focusing on meaning across a data set, TA allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences”. (pg.57)

The addition of a thematic analysis serves the purpose of identifying and enriching the analysis of how several modes can work together to construct a theme.

2.1. Sample

For the analysis, a sample was constructed including every article, which often contains several different modes such as photography, video, radio and written content on the subject, between the start of events on the 8th of December till the conviction of the 18 tried Reuzegom members on 26th of May 2023. This sample includes 62 articles and 87 video fragments. This selection was made as it aims to investigate the creation of a martyr, every other event relating to the case of Sanda Dia that happened after the creation of a martyr and deals with the fall-out of the martyr-making process was excluded from the sample⁶. Radio fragments were also not included in the sample. This was in careful consideration since the focus of this article is mostly on visual attributions. To not overextend the research, radio fragments were excluded.

2.2. Data analysis

Multimodal content analysis is conducted through several different stages. Since multimodal content analysis is a newer type of analysis, the methodological framework attached to the method is also novel. For this article, it follows the framework made by Serafini & Reid (2023). Once an initial scan has been conducted wherein the objectives for analysis are defined, Serafini & Reid's (2023) the next step in their multimodal content analysis model is the creation of an analytical template. In the case of this article, the mode of analysis is written text, pictures and video fragments, for which the analytical template is designed, as illustrated below⁷. After the scanning of the data corpus with the analytical framework, some preliminary themes could be identified through close qualitative grounded theory, wherein analysis alternates between coding and analysing to discover themes.

⁶ These include events relating to the trial of Acid and the student protests following the trial.

⁷ See Table 1.

Table 1. Analytical framework

Category	features	Analytical notes
Lay-out	Title	Demand for extra investigation into Sanda Dia's death postpones trial: Lawyer Mary, why only after 20 months? ⁸
	Length	233
	Highlighted quotes	"The satisfaction to bring young people to the scaffold, do you really think that this is the will of Papa Dia? It certainly isn't."
	Article build-up	Video on top of the article, followed by title and text. In the middle another video. Below the video a highlighted quote, the end of the article is a radio interview with Sven Mary.
Content	Actors	Sven Mary Papa Dia Reuzegom
	Themes	Finding the truth about that happened Additional questions to the court Possible extension of the trial
Pictures used	Actors	Sanda Dia
	description	Sanda Dia is looking straight into the camera. He is positioned a bit more on the right side and looks you straight in the eyes. 
	Colors	Sanda is sitting on grey steps; he is wearing a purple and grey shirt.
	Position	In the middle of the text, it is a cover picture for another article.
Video's used	Title	Protesters demand justice Watch the commentary of Caroline Van den Berghe in "het journal"
	Length	1.50 minutes 2.10 minutes
	Segmentation	Introduction of the theme; protesters who demand justice and the case Sanda, followed by video fragments of the protests, interviews with protesters/ interview with parket limburg/interview with Pieter Helsen (lawyer Reuzegom)
		First question geared to journalist, both journalists in image. Then shot is geared towards Caroline again.
	Themes	Juridical proceeding/protests

⁸ Originally in Dutch: "Vraag naar extra onderzoek over dood Sanda Dia schuift proces op: advocaat Mary: "Waarom pas na 20 maanden?"

	Juridical proceedings/ social media commotion/ protests
Actors	Protesters/ Parket limburg/ Pieter helsen
	Caroline Van Den Berghe
Pictures used	 Blurred faces, the shield in the middle.  Black &white picture. Sanda looks at the camera with a big smile. He is petting a dog.
	None

To further analyze the data corpus and what larger themes the different modes try to convey, a thematic analysis was also completed. Thematic analysis is reflexive and derives primarily from open coding. So, the data corpus existing out of articles and video fragmentation was repeatedly read to derive themes and subthemes through open, axial and selective coding. When this process was finished, the themes derived from the thematic analysis were compared with the results and codes from the multimodal content analysis to create a codebook for analysis to apply to the data corpus⁹. This codebook was crucial to mitigate possible researcher bias as all the data was manually coded.

⁹ See appendix

Results

Through careful multimodal content and thematic analysis, a few themes were discovered to answer the research question presented. Firstly, the extensive use of iconic pictures in the news coverage. Secondly, the theme of institutional issues in relation to the creation of the martyr. Lastly, the role of public feedback in the martyr-making process.

Iconic pictures

At the onset of reporting, the news articles were short, each around 300 words and maintained a formal, neutral tone. The number of actors that were mentioned was also very limited. The themes in this initial phase were focussed on the dangers of hazing and the need to reform the practice. No real pictures of Sanda Dia were used and the pictures that were used were pictures of the cabin where the hazing was held and blurred pictures of Reuzegom members. The pictures were sober, the hazing cabin was shot or filmed either in the rain or at night. Sanda Dia became an identifiable victim as time passed when more info was leaked into the media. Whilst initially, the press refrained from even using his name, over time however, articles began to feature iconic pictures. They used multiple iconic pictures that they interchangeably used to put on the cover, in the background of debate shows or news fragments¹⁰. This continuous use of these pictures with each article published made it a recognizable symbol. By the definition of Vasterman (2005), the use of these pictures condenses the issue that is presented, has a clear message and becomes a symbol. The use of multiple iconic pictures is also in line with Vasterman's (2005) definition of an iconic picture.

In opposition, when the Reuzegommers were mentioned, a different visual frame was used. The VRT showed only 2 pictures that both depict a faceless group with blurred faces and a shield in the middle¹¹. This dichotomy is interesting to note, as it influences the perception of who Sanda was and who the Reuzegommers were. Whilst Sanda received multiple articles and video fragments depicting him as a perfect friend, kind son and a good student, information about the Reuzegommers remained rather vague and anonymised. Whilst the group encompassed 18 members on trial, they were often spoken of as an entirety and received little to no personal interest as individual members. The faceless pictures became iconic pictures, however, the context that was placed behind theirs and Sanda's differed. The symbolic attribution that they received reflected the reality that many perceived to be true, a group of rich boys who were all the same, privileged and equally guilty.

¹⁰ See figure 2

¹¹ See figure 3

The last picture of Sanda that was shared during the trial is another good example of the use of iconic pictures.¹² The shock value of this picture contributes to a feeling of moral panic and further underlines the opposition between Sanda as a pure symbol and the accused as a sadistic group that has done this injustice towards the martyr. The picture contributes to a martyr's status in a different way than the other two pictures do, it plays into emotional attributions. In essence, it is an iconic picture that perfectly feeds the media cycle, it enforces the us.vs them dichotomy with strong emotional attributions. It is a tangible symbol of the suffering that the martyr experienced and a reminder of who has done it.



Figure 1. Sanda Dia's last picture (Huyghebaert, 2023)



Figure 3. Most common picture of Reuzegom members (Heymans,2021)



Figure 2. A few of Interchangeable pictures of Sanda Dia used on covers, fragments etc. (Goedgebeur et al.,2020; Van den Berghe, 2020a)

¹² See figure 1.

Not only is the difference important to note, but the position in the article is also relevant. Sanda Dia's picture was most of the time on the top of the article. The Reuzegom picture was positioned more below in the article in a video fragment for example or not even included at all. By positioning Sanda Dia's picture on the top, the articles immediately engage the readers with a headshot of the victim in the story. Establishing Sanda as more crucial, more important and most of all as elevated above the Reuzegom members, visually depicting him as morally superior. People see pictures of individuals and often know and perceive the values that are attached to the person in the picture. As Sanda Dia is placed on top to summarize the case at hand, he becomes a symbol that inherits the emotional as well as the factual attributions. This trend is in line with research done by Hayes & O'Neill (2021) on Greta Thunberg. The stylistic decision to place Sanda on top is additionally an attempt to internalize the issues attached to the case into the picture.

Further stylistic decisions that enforce the visual frames are the decision to keep the perpetrators anonymous by only using nicknames that they had given to themselves. This decision has a deeper meaning than just the need to name each perpetrator, reflecting the actors as only members of Reuzegom. It is a poignant reminder of the participation in the group and is a good example of how text enforces the visual attributions of a picture. This stark opposition to the use of Sanda Dia's name. As said, for an iconic picture to emerge, you need to have a background to which people can fill in the experiences of everyday life (Kleppe & Vries, 2013). Within the content of the articles and video fragments, the themes that each actor got differed significantly. For content that matches the focus on Sanda Dia, the frames were mostly about character building and the lack of justice. Often this frame included actors, such as family, friends or lawyers who spoke for the family. Justice and the perceived injustice become a powerful symbolic statement that anchors itself to the case and the iconic picture. The Reuzegom and their frames were more focused on themes like elitism, racism and juridical failings.

As Gözl's (2019) work on martyrs states, it is crucial to create a distinction between the martyr and perpetrators. To focus more on family, friends and justice, when discussing Sanda gives the character a moral superiority in opposition to the Reuzegommers, who received little to no individual character building. The content and layout of the articles and video fragments in combination with the pictures that were used work together to uphold the martyr frame. But, as noted by Kleppe & Vries (2013) to understand an iconic picture, you need some understanding of the case and its details. Whilst the iconic picture condenses the issue at hand, you first need the input to interpret the picture. The way that the case is described and what details are being put out is equally important to create an iconic picture of a martyr. People will first interpret visual stimuli and fill in the context afterwards. In conclusion, both modes of

interpretation are important to create a martyr. Context is given by highlighting different themes, such as description of the crime, us vs. them differences, injustice and elitism, etc. These themes are then being supported by the modes used in the article such as iconic pictures and stylistic decisions.

Institutional change

A martyr encompasses an ideological stance, it becomes a symbol of grievances. Whether they are economic, political, social etc in nature. A martyr according to Am & Weimann (2020) can evoke a call of unity and action due to his sacrifice. In the case of Sanda Dia as a martyr, a long process of institutional frustration was projected onto him as a symbol of the need for change. The themes of the articles often used Sanda Dia as a springboard to discuss other institutional issues. The initial frustration was the practice of hazing and the rules surrounding them, but quickly turned to larger debates expanding to the university and later the juridical system. Most of these kinds of articles commenced with a summary of the case of Sanda Dia and what happened to further instil the association with the case. In the case of Sanda Dia, this article identifies 4 types of Institutional issues that were projected onto the case.

The first issue, frustration with the university, garnered a significant amount from the outset. The policies, sanctions and the rector received significant media attention. Media coverage initially focused on hazing practices, but later the focus moved to the case of Sanda Dia and the suffering that he endured. The dominant theme that ruled this category was the public opinion that the university failed in its responsibility to save Sanda. This was conveyed by several different modes. One significant example of how such a mode translated this sentiment well is the inclusion of the open letter by the staff of the university to condemn the weak punishments by the rector and the reaction of the rector to the open letter. These opposing views were played out by videos, letters and social media messages (Baert, 2020b; Paelinck, 2020a)

The layout plays a crucial role in shaping this narrative. For example, in the article about the rector's response, a video was shown wherein the friends of Sanda Dia underlined their morally superior character in opposition to the KUL before the rector's response was shown. The placement of this video before the inclusion of the open letter and the interview significantly influenced the framing of the issue (Baert, 2020b). This dichotomy between the victim and the university mirrored the dichotomy between Reuzegom and the Sanda Dia. The framing of Sanda as a martyr who was wronged by an institution reinforces his suffering as a catalyst for demanding change (Crtcher, 2008).

Secondly, the frustrations with justice were a theme that emerged as a prominent theme when the trials began and more details about the case were known. The need for justice and the symbol #justiceforsanda

was consistently highlighted and translated almost every time family, friends or protesters appeared in a video or text. An important symbol to illustrate this need for justice is the powerful hashtag #justiceforSanda. This was not only an urgent call for justice but also served as a recognizable and organizing symbol, often accompanied by images of Sanda Dia. Hashtags are crucial in present-day activism. Hashtags in general carry, like iconic pictures, summarizing, organising and informing attributions (Waegemans, 2022). This can quite literally be observed through the adaptation of the hashtag on the mouth masks that friends sold to support Sanda Dia's father Ousmane Dia¹³ and the use of the



Figure 4. Fragment "case Sanda Dia in 1 minute" (Mares & Mutton, 2021)



Figure 5. Mouth masks with the hashtag on the side (Verstraete, 2021)

hashtag to describe the groups who protest for justice, who carry the same name (Verstraete, 2021). When the VRT included pictures of the protest in both their articles and video fragmentation, you can observe the influence of this hashtag in the protests. One example of this trend is a 1-minute recap video that is found in multiple articles¹⁴ (Mares & Mutton, 2021). When the video mentions the charges of the accused, pictures of the protest are shown where people are holding plaques that say justice for Sanda. This combination underlines the need for justice in the light of the crimes committed. Justice for Sanda becomes a phrase that attaches itself to the martyr. What this justice would have entailed remains somewhat ambiguous. Different stakeholders expressed varying expectations. While some members of the public sought punitive measurement, others, including friends and family, prioritized uncovering the truth and holding them accountable for their actions

The extended duration of the legal process, which spanned over four years, became a focal point in the media coverage. The trial was marked by multiple delays, from both the defence and prosecution. Articles and videos covering the case frequently, offering detailed videos and articles, involving many actors such

¹³ See figure 5.

¹⁴ See figure 4

as lawyers, journalists and other stakeholders. The extensive media coverage painted a picture of a long road to justice and a lack of trust in the institutions. It allowed the martyr of Sanda to be correlated to the lack of justice. This emphasis on justice is according to Lewis (2020) part of present-day martyr formation, it exceeds the religious connotation and becomes attachable to larger calls for justice, whether social, political or economic.

Although the perpetrators were not being persecuted for racism, the implication that it may have been racially motivated was also an institutional problem tied to Sanda Dia. Early on, the VRT shed light on one racist incident that happened before the hazing of Sanda, wherein the Reuzegom called Sanda some racist slurs. Sanda Dia had a Senegalese background and wanted to join the club to climb the ladder and garner connections that would serve him professionally (Cardoen, 2020). This background in combination with the racist events that occurred gave the impression that racist undertones might have influenced the events.

Especially foreign media such as the New York Times, enlarged the theme of racism in their framing. The New York Times wrote an article tying the death of Sanda Dia with the rising right-wing movements in Belgium (Apuzzo & Erlanger, 2020). That the case was picked up by foreign media is not that relevant per se, but what is truly fascinating is that Sanda Dia was used by foreign media as a symbol to convey racism. It serves as an excellent example of martyr-making. The VRT wrote an article about the article and included several different actors such as the father of Sanda Dia and an immigrant student to further emphasize that racism may have been at play in the case. In the quote by Ousmane Dia, “He’s just some black guy, we are powerful, and nothing can happen to us” (Cardoen, 2020), he emphasizes the distinction between Sanda and the members, clearly referencing the racist and elitist undertones of the group. The picture that was included in the article was sober with dark black text¹⁵, this gives the impression of seriousness and gives a sober feeling. It is placed in the middle of the article and is except the headline picture of Sanda, the only other picture included (Cardoen, 2020). By placing this image prominently, the article aimed to convey a deep sense of the issues surrounding the case, and to illustrate the extent that this institutional issue reached. It reached the headline of the New York Times.

¹⁵ See figure 6.



Figure 6. New York headline included in the VRT article on the article (Cardoen, 2020)

Lastly, Elitism and class injustice were closely tied to the perception of racism. Often the members of Reuzegom were called the elite of tomorrow. The doctors, lawyers and engineers that form the upper crust of society. This use of wording is not just a passing observation, but a reminder of the context in which Sanda wanted to get a head start. The aspiration of Sanda Dia to join Reuzegom was framed as a reflection of his desire to break through the barriers of class and race. This framing becomes recognizable by many and becomes a symbol of class injustice and elitism. The theme of elitism is intricately tied to institutional frustrations. The legal system, the university and other institutions are deemed to be infected by this perception of elitism. This perception was reinforced by establishing the Reuzegom as an example of what these institutions breed, elitist individuals. As well as the victims that it creates, Sanda Dia. This was constructed through a careful interplay of iconic pictures and textual framing.

To summarize, the institutional frustrations attach themselves to the martyr. These institutional issues become condensed and summarized into victims and perpetrators. Sanda Dia is the embodiment of the martyr who suffers from these institutional failures and institutions become the perpetrators. The themes of elitism, intertwined with class injustice and racism are central to the martyr-frame of Sanda Dia. It not only provides a lens through which to observe the events but also as a catalysator of broader discussions. Media hypes, such as the case of Sanda Dia, need this kind of catalysator to feed the hype (Vasterman, 2005), and the consequence of the moral panic that they evoke, enables the possibility of institutional change (Cricher, 2008). That's why public feedback additionally feeds the martyr frame.

Public feedback

Whilst the articles initially focused on the description of the events, the case soon received more attention. Although news channels spread this information, the effect of public opinion cannot be ignored in this case. The influence of social media was often mentioned as a catalyst of protest, both online and offline. The attention to the case was so severe, that the theme "trial by media" received significant attention. Trial by

media is a term that gained popularity in recent decades to describe the impact of television and media coverage on a case by an attempt made by the media to hold the accused responsible, even before a trial began (Sneha, 2023). The VRT tried to counter this frame by publishing multiple attempts at trying to explain their workings and their practices. For example, by including a Telefacts fragment about trial by media that explains the practice (Heymans, 2020). Nonetheless, many actors such as lawyers, the university and other stakeholders complained about the effect of such a media trial on the working of justice.

However, not only traditional media shapes the martyr-framing. Social media plays an equally important role in the feedback installed in media hype. This social media inclusion is important in martyr-making. Lewis (2018) notes that in the digital age, martyrs are no longer just products of traditional media, but are increasingly shared and spread through digital platforms. This shift has transformed how martyrdom is constructed, with social media amplifying and constructing these figures in ways that were previously unattainable. The VRT and its coverage of Sanda are also influenced by what the digital world produces. This can manifest itself in various ways, such as the integration of social media posts, the focus on hashtags like #justiceforSanda, viral content and general statements about what people think on social media.

One of the most remarkable forms of this integration of public feedback in the martyr creation was the live Q&A¹⁶ that the VRT did with the lawyer of Ousmane Dia, Sven Mary (Schoofs, 2023). A live audience could pose questions to the lawyer about the case, and he would answer them live on air. This was done through both direct comments in the comment sector, as well as screenshots of Instagram direct messages. It is the public broadcaster's role to inform its citizens about the case and the juridical proceedings, however, the public broadcasters are not void of social and political context (Donders et al., 2019). The event of a Q&A is thus not only to inform but also goes further by allowing public opinion to become a mode. The Q&A is a perfect example of the inclusion of public opinion and how it feeds the cycle of media. Social media and the VRT influence each other in the martyr-making process. This impacts the martyr-making process in the way that it allows the public opinion and the emotions attached to it, to influence the themes that are being covered by the public broadcasting.

Media hypes need this feedback to keep on producing new content and new angles to continue the hype. It is not a one-way street but needs dialogue (Vasterman, 2005). This can also be observed by the analytical observation of the articles during the time frame of 4 years. The articles initially were around 300 words with a single photo, as time was processed it doubled in word count. The layout of the articles also differed

¹⁶ A Q&A is the abbreviation of a question and answer.

as time was processed. When initially the articles were published with a single photo, but after a while the articles expanded to include multiple videos with interviews, documentaries, social media posts, Instagram reels etc. As the trials commenced, the news cycle became even more rapid with live update articles that would get updated the minute that it happened. Not only did the rapidness of the updates intensify, but the number of themes that it covered were diverse to feed the news cycle, from racism to character-building, all the themes that were covered in the timeframe of 4 years were, albeit shorter and less extensive, played out in the rapid news cycle.

Social media and its attributions of sharing and disseminating images, hashtags and other information impact the (visual) frames. We can observe that this interaction between social media and traditional media outlets makes way for unique interplays and affordances. The opinion of the people becomes a mode that finds its way into the layout of the articles and video fragmentation. It takes its place in the article as a reminder of what the public thinks, at the same time influencing what they should think about. Further instigating the moral panic that feeds the media hype cycle. This in return amplifies the attention geared towards the martyr and breeds the good circumstances for the creation of the martyr.

Conclusion

This article has tried to investigate the processes of martyr-making and how media impacts this frame by using visual and textual attributions. The news media VRT has a profound impact on martyr-making, this is signaled through their use of several different modes such as layout, the use of iconic pictures, public opinion etc. These affordances work together to enforce and uphold the martyr frame. Martyr-making processes are complicated, and the creation of a martyr is dependent on a configuration of different attributions (Am & Weimann, 2020; Gözl, 2019; Lewis, 2018, 2020) . However, this article discovered three themes, through multimodal and thematic analysis, that it deems crucial to understand how news coverage contributes to a martyr frame. The themes that were discovered were the use of iconic pictures, the need for institutional change and the effect of public opinion in the process.

Sanda Dia initially started as a nameless victim, but soon he transformed into a powerful symbol of the urgent need for change. The use of iconic pictures as well as the attachment of institutional issues such as elitism, racism and bureaucracy to Sanda Dia, made him become a symbol of grievances and injustice. Although the visual modes, such as pictures and layout play a significant role in the tangibility of who the martyr is, the context surrounding Sanda Dia plays an equally important part as it provides context to the symbol. A symbol cannot be understood if there are no issues attached to the symbol (Kleppe & Vries, 2013). Since this case garnered a lot of attention, the public feedback gave the story the food it needed. Especially, with the rise of

social media public feedback found its way within the frame and established itself as a mode. This public feedback is needed to uphold the media hype and to further construct the meaning of the symbol (Vasterman, 2007). It is a continuous cycle.

Whilst Sanda Dia became an identifiable victim with multiple pictures, character-building stories and social initiatives, the accused were framed as an elitist racist collective. This was translated in a visual frame as a collective that is uniform and without individuality. The layout, visual framing and stylistic decisions work together to make these frames happen. The frames impact the way that people think and perceive the case. This implies that the VRT, as argued in this article influences how a case is perceived and internalized since they make use of the frames needed to construct a martyr.

This article sheds light on the impact of media on the creation of a martyr. It adds to the understanding of a martyr as a framing device to translate social grievances and how such a martyr is created. It also recognizes the power of public opinion that provides feedback to the media hype that amplifies the attention drawn to the case. It lastly adds to the theoretical framework of visual framing and media hypes. To understand how martyr work is crucial in the increasingly digitalized world where iconic pictures are instrumentalized to convey grievances. They have a powerful story-telling attribution that impacts the way that stories are told and through which modes they are told. When implemented right, they have the power to rile up a crowd and create widespread chaos. Understanding them and how they work are important, they can change history.

Limitations and future research

This article also has some limitations that should be noted. Firstly, this article is a qualitative content analysis. The interpretation of the research is thus highly dependent on the researcher. Due to this, the interpretation might have biases related to the researcher. Secondly, since it is a multimodal analysis that analyses several different modes, it is complicated and additionally prone to bias. Due to the complexity and novelty of multimodal analysis, it might be methodologically difficult to replicate. Thirdly, it is highly dependent on the context surrounding the case and is thus limited to the scope of Belgium. Lastly, since the article has a limited scope, it might have not included all the content that could have been relevant.

Future research could be conducted to further investigate the phenomena of a martyr. A comparison between multiple case studies could be completed to discover more defining characteristics of martyr-building by digital media and whether the frames discovered in this article can be found in other contexts. Secondly, more attention could be targeted on the influence of social media narratives and how they find their way into

news cycles, especially how they impact the coverage of highly mediatized cases. Thirdly, the emotional impact of a martyr figure could be further investigated and how this could impact the process of martyr-making. Lastly, since multimodal content analysis is rather novel, it could be expanded on to make better methodological frameworks.

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Appendix

A. Code book

Code	Subcode	Definition	example
Public opinion	Trial by media	Trial by media is the assumption that people are guilty online before the trial commences	“Such a trial by the media may well be detrimental to the right to a fair trial.”
	Protest	The mention of protest about the case	Ex 1. 300 young people come together and ask for "justice" for Sanda Dia Ex 2. Pictures of the protests with protesting holding plaques.
	Social media engagement	The mention of the effect of social media	Ex 1. The insertion of a Q & A where comments were used as a point to discuss the case Ex 2. “Social media is garbage”
	Speaking for the people	To state what is in the interest in people or society at large	“He represents Sanda Dia's father and wants the identity of the defendants to be revealed. First name, last name, photo, occupation. According to him, this is in the interest of society.”
Martyr formation	Character-building by family and friends	The inclusion of friends/ family who speak on the character of the martyr	I studied together with Sanda. We used to talk about the proclamation and the fact that we were going to achieve it together," says Serrien. "Now I'm going to stand there without Sanda, but with him in my heart.
	Us vs. Them dichotomy	The distinction between the martyr and the perpetrator.	“He’s just some black guy, we are powerful, and nothing can happen to us”
	Iconic pictures	The use of recurring pictures that condense the case at hand.	EX 1. Pictures that are attached to the case.

				
	Justice	The mention of some type of justice that the martyr deserves or a symbol that translates that.	Ex 1. #justiceforSanda EX 2. The inclusion of pictures with a sign: “Justice for Sanda”	
Institutional issues	Elitism	The perception that elitism is at play	“Reuzegom was the breeding ground for the elite”	
	Racism	The perception that racism is at play	“New York times puts fatal death of Sanda Dia on frontpage and sees a rise in racism in Flanders (Title article)	
	University frustrations	The mention of frustrations for the university	Ex 1. "How is it possible that a group with that kind of philosophy, which goes against the values of the university, still finds a place there?" Ex 2. Inclusion of open letters within the lay-out	
	Justice frustrations	The mention of frustration with the juridical process	“This is yet another diversionary maneuver.’	
	Critism on media	Critique on the role of media in trials	“VRT NWS, like other news editors, has chosen not to publish the names of the Reuzegommers. Not even after their conviction. There has been some criticism of that decision”	