



LINGUISTIC FRAMING OF POLITICAL TERROR

DISTANT AND CLOSE READINGS OF THE DISCOURSE ON TERRORISM IN THE SWEDISH PARLIAMENT 1993–2018

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Framing Terrorism in the Riksdag

1. Research questions
2. Theoretical and methodological remarks
3. *Terrorism* and its contexts in the data
4. The case of *statsterrorism* and party affiliations
5. Final remarks

1. Research questions

- 1) What framing elements understood as discursive key meanings are connected to the words *terrorism* (and *terrorist*) when used in parliamentary speeches in the debate as simplexes, and
- 2) as part of compounds along the lines of controversies and party affiliations (close reading of the compound *statsterrorism*)?

2. Theoretical and methodological remarks

Terrorism as "violence or its threat intended as a symbolically communicative act in which the direct victims of the action is instrumentalized as a means to creating a psychological effect of intimidation and fear in a target audience for a political objective" (Jackson 2011: 123)

Discourse as "a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action" (Reisigl/Wodak 2009: 89)

Framing (Fillmore, Goffman, Entman, Busse, Wehling)

Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. (Entman 1993: 52)

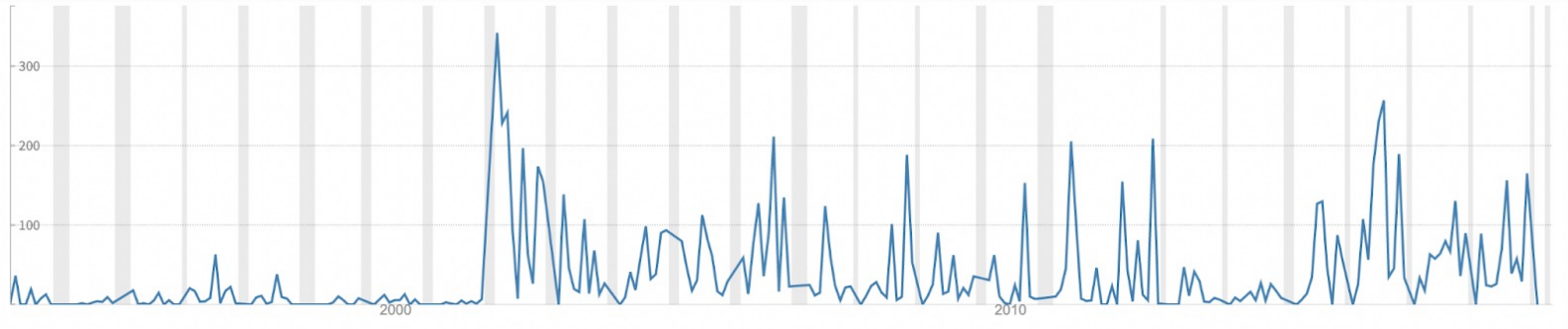
2. Theoretical and methodological remarks

A basic frame for *terrorism*:

- (1) Event (act of terrorism)
- (2) Agent
- (3) Target
- (4) Place
- (5) Motive (symbolic meaning)

Methodical / analytical tools: search runs in *Korp* with applying word pictures and co-occurrences in the corpus search system

3. *Terrorism* and its contexts in the data



Hits of simplex *terrorism* (n 4399) in the Korp corpus 'Anföranden' 1993-2018 (screenshot from <https://spraakbanken.gu.se/korp/>)
(n 4755 simplexes and compounds generated by *terrorism*)

3. *Terrorism* and its contexts in the data

terrorism..nn.1 (substantiv)

Preposition	Attribut	terrorism	Efterställt Attribut	Terrorism	verb	Verb	terrorism
1. mot	994	1. internationell	211	1. av daish	4	1. bekämpa	312
2. av	331	2. islamistisk	24	2. med medel	5	2. vara	48
3. i form	7	3. storskalig	7	3. i form ²	5	3. utgöra	28
4. åt	13	4. global	11	4. i statsstrukturer	2	4. hota	22
5. om	121	5. jihadistisk	2	5. i passbetänkandet	2	5. förebygga	11
6. inklusive	5	6. jihadistiska	2	6. i Afghanistan	5	6. drabba	18
7. i händelse av	2	7. inhemsk	4	7. i värld	7	7. fördöma	15
8. i fråga om	4	8. helvetisk	1	8. vara	20	8. upphöra	9
9. i fråga	3	9. hemsk	2	9. med metod	3	9. finnas	8
10. inte utan	1	10. iransk	2	10. i Sverige	13	10. stoppa	12

Word picture with top 10 co-occurrences for *terrorism* from Korp corpus ‘Anföranden’ in the Swedish Parliament 1993-2018 (screenshot from <https://spraakbanken.gu.se/korp/>)

3. *Terrorism* and its contexts in the data

Den islamistiska terrorismen bör vi européer möta gemensamt.

[The Islamist terrorism is something we Europeans ought to encounter together.]

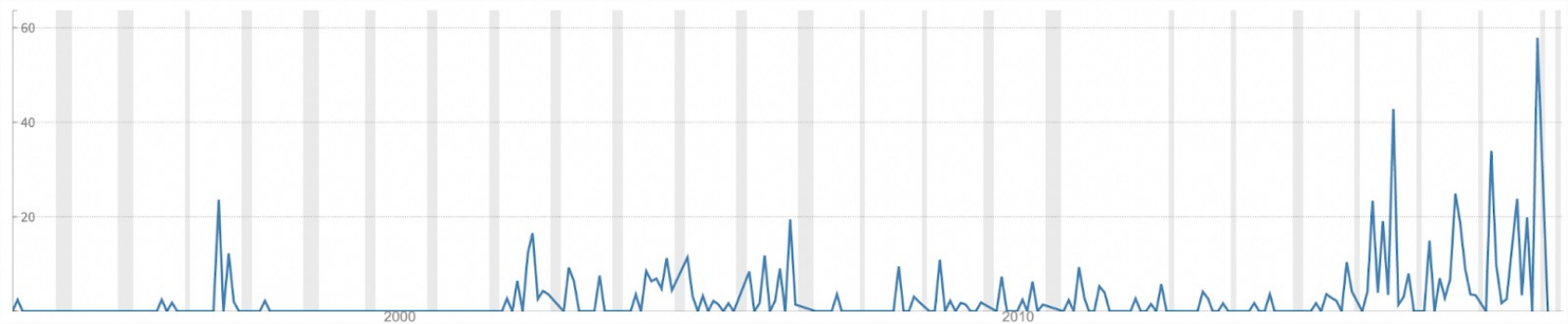
(Mikael Jansson, SD, 2016-05-19)

När det gäller det som vi debatterar i dag, nämligen terrorism i allmänhet, kan man bara konstatera att Kent Ekeröth försöker få allt till att handla om islamistisk terrorism.

[When it comes to what we debate today, i.e. terrorism in general, one can only conclude that Kent Ekeröth tries to make everything to be about Islamist terrorism.]

(Maria Ferm, MP, 2012-05-02)

3. *Terrorism* and its contexts in the data



Compounds with *terrorism* (n 356) from Korp corpus 'Anföranden' in the Swedish Parliament 1993-2018
(<https://spraakbanken.gu.se/korp/>)

4. The case of *statsterrorism* and party affiliations

1. Israel (16)
2. Iran (15)
3. Turkey (11)
4. Russia (9)
5. Afghanistan, Colombia, Peru, Al-Qaeda (one instance each)
+ a few unspecified

4. The case of *statsterrorism* and party affiliations

Number of hits	Party affiliation	Agent behind state terrorism
23	Green Party (MP)	Turkey (9) Israel (8) Russia (3) Turkey/Russia (1) Unspecified (2)
13	Left Party (V)	Israel (7) Iran (2) Turkey (1) Peru (1) Colombia (1) Unspecified (1)
9	Social Democratic Party (S)	Iran (8) Israel (1)
8	Moderates (M)	Russia (5) Afghanistan (1) Al-Qaida (1) Unspecified (1)
5	Christian Democrats (KD)	Iran (5)
2	Liberals (L)	Unspecified (2)
3	Centre Party (C)	Unspecified (3)

Use of *statsterrorism* along the lines of party affiliation

4. The case of *statsterrorism* and party affiliations

Efter det att statsterrorism från iransk sida konstaterats av en domstol i Tyskland måste vi nu gå igenom formerna för våra kontakter med Iran över huvud taget.

[After state terrorism on the part of Iran has been concluded by a court in Germany, we must now review the forms of our contacts with Iran in general.]

(Lena Hjelm-Wallén, S, 1997-04-17)

5. Final remarks

- Agent slot: often occupied by Islamists and/or international agents (terrorism as a foreign phenomenon)
- To some extent: states as agents (cf. *statsterrorism*)
- Motive slot: often empty, but symbolic meaning often implied by identifying agents
- Target slot: often empty
- Place slot: underspecified, but sometimes possible to locate outside of Sweden; from 2015 probably framed also as a Swedish phenomenon (has yet to be examined)

Thank you for your attention!

Selected references:

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- Reisigl, Martin / Wodak Ruth (2009): "The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). In: Wodak Ruth, Meyer Michael (eds.): *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. 2nd revised edition. London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi, 87-121.