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Moral, but not principled?

*Political Framing on the Attribution of Responsibility
regarding the Norwegian Female ISIL Affiliates*

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Abstract

Since 2018, and as ISIL have gradually lost its territory in Syria, several Norwegian female ISIL affiliates have requested the Norwegian authorities for assisted repatriations back to Norway. As research has helped unravel their motivations to join ISIL and their role in the civil war, what was once considered passive victims are increasingly perceived as active, determined and politically oriented individuals accountable for their membership in a terrorist organisation. This thesis looks into the political debate that has accompanied this change of perception in Norway, by assessing opinion pieces, parliamentary debates and TV and Radio debate. The aim has been to ask: *How do images of 'Self' and 'Other' attribute responsibility for the fate of Norwegian female ISIL affiliates, thus enabling appropriate course(s) of action?*

The analysis is firmly grounded in Lene Hansen's (2006, pp. 5-6) assumption that foreign policy is formed by a depiction of the identity of the 'self' versus 'the other'. This is supplemented by rhetorical political analysis, which enables a theoretically informed analysis of how actors can strategically re-direct characterisations and thereby affect the direction of the debate and the practices it generates. With the assumption that argumentation 'can resituate prevailing circumstances' (Martin 2015, pp. 39-40), rhetorical political analysis allows ideational structures, or discourses, space alongside rhetorical devices in seeking to explain how arguments and decisions made.

By mapping how the issue is debated over time, the thesis unravels basic disagreement over the how the issue of repatriation should be seen. More specifically, a key bone of contention concerns how moral, humanitarian and arguments concerning the rule of law should be applied to foreign policy. This might reflect an ongoing questioning of Norwegian identity – both who we are as a nation and who should be included in the national self.

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This Spring has been strange. Really strange.

Words like quarantine, the basic reproduction number, lock-down, isolation, social distancing, pandemic and Zoom have become all too familiar during the covid-19 outbreak. With my mantra; ‘the world may end, but this thesis will be finished in time’! I am so content with how I got here.

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Any errors or omissions in this thesis lie solely with the author.

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Acronyms

FrP	The Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet)
H	The Conservative Party (Høyre)
ICRC	The International Convention of the Rights of the Child
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
KrF	The Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig Folkeparti)
MP	Member of Parliament
NRK	The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (Norges Rikskringkasting)
PM	Prime Minister
RPA	Rhetorical Political Analysis (Finlayson 2007, Martin 2015)
V	The Liberal Party (Venstre)

1 – Introduction:

The political response to the covid-19 situation in Norway during the spring of 2020 has illustrated how significant rhetorical interventions can be if they are effectively anchored in the population's image of 'self'. By grounding the most restrictive policies since World War II in the notion of solidarity for the vulnerable, and the Norwegian notion of 'dugnad'¹, the covid-19 policies that were introduced by the government, have resonated with what Norwegians think of themselves as a nation and state (Flaarønning 2020). These aspects are by large in line with Norway's tradition as a humanitarian power, and as a mediator in larger peace processes. If someone has cared for the vulnerable, it is 'us' (Tvedt 2017, p. 15). In this instance, the strategy was introduced to protect Norwegian citizens from an outside disease, and being put to life in tandem with closed borders, made the rhetoric of national unity successful.

Before the arrival of the pandemic, the situation of the Norwegian female ISIL affiliates detained in a Kurdistan refugee camp in Eastern Syria dominated the political debate in Norway. The repatriation of a 29-year old and her presumably critically ill son shocked the political landscape, and as a response, the Progress Party left the coalition government. Since Norway is not legally obliged to assist the ISIL affiliates (see 3.3), the debate was characterised by competing *frames*² of the situation, the ISIL affiliates, and Norway. Moral, political and ethical considerations competed, as actors have attempted to define what is *the* right thing to do in this particular situation and how far Norway's responsibility should be defined.

The pandemic was easily categorised as an outside threat, which resulted in national unity and closed borders as a response. In contrast, the issue regarding the ISIL affiliates was about the inclusion of persons who had *left* Norway deliberately, and who were additionally regarded as possible national security threats. The situation invoked a polarised debate and split the national unity. Both cases concerned itself with the protection of the vulnerable, but in the issue of the ISIL affiliates; it was not entirely clear who vulnerable were.

¹ A custom of communal/voluntary work in Norway

² van Hulst and Yanow 2016 – '

A Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) report argued in 2007 that for foreign policy to be credible at home, it needs to reflect the image the population have of themselves (Leira et al. 2007, p. 8). The policy response regarding the ISIL affiliates and their children has not only drawn upon the identity of the affiliates; it has also reflected the images of the national 'self'. Analysing the debate through this lens might indicate how policymakers form the Norwegian identity through competing notions of fairness, humanitarianism and security. In this sense, policy formulation both mirrors and reinforces notions of the Self in what Hansen (2006) characterises as a cycle: Discursive constructions of who we are as a nation enable policies which serve to confirm and reinforce those very same discourses. That cycle, and the often circumspect forms of 'meaning-making' it draws upon, is the focus of this thesis. As we shall see, rhetorical interventions and framing yield insights into precisely how and why a particular course is pursued – that is, why certain policies rather than other are seen as legitimate in light of who we are.

Different actors mobilise various aspects of the Self, and they may apply fundamentally different frames to make sense of the policy challenge at hand. As the NUPI report argued, we need a more extensive questioning and debate upon these discursive and rhetorical process of foreign policy formulation. This thesis is an attempt to fill this gap in the specific context of repatriating Norwegian female ISIS affiliates.

1.1 Problem Statement

In order to assess the questions above, concerning identity formation and foreign policy, we need a comprehensive analysis of how the political actors have framed the ISIL affiliates in the Norwegian political debate. This thesis will, therefore, analyse the debate on the Norwegian female ISIL affiliates over one and a half years; from the moment, the first Norwegian female affiliate filed a request to be returned in May 2018, to the repatriation of a 29-year old affiliate with her two children in January 2020. By investigating what frames that have dominated the discourse over time, and what catalysed changes, this thesis will ask:

How do images of 'Self' and 'Other' attribute responsibility for the fate of Norwegian female ISIL affiliates, thus enabling appropriate course(s) of action?

Essentially, this question will drive an analysis of how policies regarding the states' framing of responsibility for its citizens are justified, and how different aspects of values, national identity, moral and legal principles, and depictions of the political subjects are weighted against each other. The analysis will be conducted in two parts. First, by investigating the debate over time, and examining how the debate evolved, and what frames seem to dominate the debate at different points in time. Secondly, the analysis will present the main ways the policymakers framed the identity of Norway and the affiliates, and how these implicated the solutions proposed (see chapter 4 and 5).

1.2 Analytical Approach

This thesis has chosen a broad methodological approach by synthesising the three different theoretical frameworks; post-structuralist discourse analysis (Hansen 2006), rhetorical political analysis (RPA) (Finlayson 2007 and Martin 2015) and framing (van Hulst and Yanow 2016). By bringing together three frameworks that are all based upon the same assumptions, the thesis will contribute to the broader theoretical literature by demonstrating how structuralist language theory and rhetorical analysis are linked and complement each other.

Nevertheless, the foundation for the forthcoming analysis is Hansen's conceptualisation of foreign policy as defined through language: 'Policies are dependent upon representations of the threat, country, security problem, or crisis they seek to address. Foreign policies need to ascribe meaning to the situation and to construct the objects within it, and in doing so they articulate and draw upon specific identities of other states, regions, peoples and institutions as well as on the identity of a national, regional, or institutional Self' (Hansen 2006, pp. 5-6). Foreign policy thereby aims to tell the story of how it is both a natural and coherent response to the situation the 'self' is facing. The post-structuralist logic of linking and differentiation will be used as a foundation for understanding how language is formed in the construction of signs in relation to each other – how some are privileged, and others devalued (Hansen 2006, pp. 19-21).

It should be clarified that the thesis will, at times refer to the process of 'securitisation', as set forth by the Copenhagen School and in Hansen (2006, p. 35). It is argued that securitisation occurs when 'a security threat elevates it above all others. In this elevation the identification

of an existential threat, that is, a threat to the survival of a community, justifies a suspension of the normal rules of politics, allowing elites to take extraordinary measures' (Fierke 2013, p. 200). In this thesis securitisation will only be mentioned as a mechanism; it is beyond the scope to assess it more thoroughly.

Framing, as laid out by van Hulst and Yanow (2016), will be used to read and analyse the data material, but also the three devices *selection*, *naming*, and categorising incorporates Hansen's logic of linking and differentiation (2006, p. 19). The theoretical framework embodies how argumentation is largely composed by an emphasis of some aspects over others (*selection*); how these elements are *named* rhetorically; and how they may be *categorised* as different or similar to other aspects. Overall, *framing* provides a more straightforward lens to analyse a more substantial amount of text units (van Hulst and Yanow 2016, pp. 99-100)

1.3 A Clarification of terms

Not only is the issue of the ISIL affiliates contested, but there is also a lack of consensus on the terms employed throughout the thesis. Firstly, there is a discussion both in the academic literature and amongst practitioners on whether to use 'ISIS', 'ISIL' or the 'IS' to describe the group in question. For the forthcoming analysis, ISIL (The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) will be used, which is the official acronym the United Nations applies for the group in question. That specific term is also widely used in the Norwegian academic community (Lia 2019). In addition, it has been argued that ISIL also is the most accurate acronym as it reflects the larger area the group targets; Cyprus, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and Turkey (Hogeback 2020).

It should also be noted that prominent scholars in the field propose avoiding the term 'IS'/'Islamic State', as it might grant them some legitimacy as a state. To describe the territory they have occupied, terms such as 'ISIL-controlled territory' and 'ISIL-held region' will be used, rather than ISIS-caliphate or –territory, as these would perhaps grant the group legitimacy (Hoyle et al. 2015, p. 9).

Although there is not yet a consensus in the literature on what terminology one should use about the individuals that emigrated to join ISIS, it seems that a large proportion uses

different terms for men and women. For instance, Lia recently reviewed the existing literature about the foreign women taking part in ISIS, and concluded that it is inexpedient to term these as ‘foreign fighters’. The women’s contribution was primarily as mothers and housewives, not at the frontline, and should therefore preferably be regarded as ‘female affiliated’, emigrants, ‘muhajirat’ or recruits (2019, pp. 101-2). Similarly, Hoyle et al. argue that ‘foreign fighter’ is misleading for women, as they were forbidden to participate in combat. Therefore, they would instead use the expression female migrants to ISIS-held territory, or the Arabic term muhajirah (singular) or muhajirat (plural) (2015, p. 9).

On the other hand, this thesis will further on demonstrate that these boundaries are not as clear cut as Hoyle et al. (2015) and Lia (2019) puts forth (see c. 3). It is widely argued that ISIS changed its view on women in violent roles when they were on the defensive. Also, some women were from early on participators in brigades that trained them in weaponry and surveillance (Almohammad and Speckhard 2017). Therefore, Lia and Hoyle’s definitions might be criticised for upholding the gender stereotypes and the understanding that men and women are different, and does not take into account that we do not yet know the entirety of women’s roles in ISIL.

Therefore, Cook and Vale’s term ‘affiliates’ will be applied for both men and women, ranging from combative to domestic roles, whether the act was willingly or coercively. This term is used to make the analytic concepts more intelligible (2018, p. 139), but it is also gender-neutral; not reproducing gendered understandings of how men and women participate in conflicts. By mirroring the precedence in Norway of the restricted roles women pursued in ISIL, the concept also accounts for an active participation in the criminal code (Døvik and Olsson 2019).

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

First of all, in chapter II, I will present the theoretical and methodological framework to be used when conducting the analysis; namely a synthesis of three theoretical directions (van Hulst and Yanow 2016, Hansen 2006, Finlayson 2007, and Martin 2015). The aim overall is to illustrate how these three directions complement each other. However, particular attention will be paid to how Hansen’s framework can be operationalised through van Hulst and Yanow’s framing devices (2016).

Chapter III will give a review of the research on the female ISIL-affiliates, primarily to get to the core of what we know about their motivations to travel to the region and their roles within ISIL. At the end of this chapter, the legal framework will be presented. As will be illustrated, the legal framework is not clear cut and opens for the possibility of choosing which legal aspect to emphasise when formulating and presenting policies.

Chapter IV will analyse the debate in four phases, and investigate which framings were taking the lead at different stages in the debate, and why. By assessing the events on the ground and the political debate in relation to each other; the aim is to see how the debate is neither set nor clear cut. As will be shown, the debate is profoundly shaped by the competing frames and events, stories and interviews with the affiliates.

Chapter V will present the results of the exploratory analysis of the primary frames of the female Norwegian affiliates as *mother*, *terrorists* and *traitors*, and of Norway ‘the self’. Overall, these categories emphasise how the Norwegian affiliates now are described as active, self-determined and politically oriented women, highly reflecting the recent research on their motivations to go to Syria.

Finally, chapter VI will provide a discussion of how both of these analyses, have attributed responsibility for the fate of the Norwegian female ISIS affiliates before a conclusion is provided in chapter VII.

2. Theory and Methodology

The female Norwegian ISIL affiliates have been subject to a variety of characterisations in the political debate. An essential element concerns delimitation; whether or not the women, who are Norwegian citizens, fall within Norway's responsibility. As the thesis will illustrate in section 3.3, the legal basis is neither clear-cut, nor restrictive, and it gives policymakers a possibility to freely frame the issue to make their solutions seem like a natural response. What is essentially a legal issue, has in effect become highly politicised, as politicians select their frame and emphasis amongst moral, ethical, legal and political considerations.

To account for how the responsibility for the affiliates is attributed, we need a theoretical and methodological framework. The aim is to look into the *frames* that have dominated the argumentation in the Norwegian political debate on the female ISIL affiliates, by taking the post-structuralist assumptions of language as the entry point to the analysis (Campbell 2013). The concept of *frames* is applied in line with van Hulst and Yanow's reference to 'implicit theories of a situation: they model prior thought and ensuing action, rendering that action sensible in terms of pre-existing thinking' (2016, p. 98). Arguably, their view on meaning-making is highly compatible with Hansen's post-structuralist theories of language (2006) but corroborates the framework by providing more straightforward categories to analyse a more substantial amount of statements. Also, some insights from rhetorical political analysis can be used to theorise upon how agency and rhetoric implicate the language (Finlayson 2007, Martin 2015).

The forthcoming section will aim to give a theoretical and methodological basis for the upcoming analysis. First, the previous studies that are particularly relevant for the usage of method will be presented, which will situate the thesis theoretically and justify the analytical focus (2.1). Secondly, in sections 2.2. and 2.3, I will account for central tenets of post-structuralism and Hansen's conceptualisation of foreign policy. Further, some insights from rhetorical political analysis will be presented (2.4), to deepen the theoretical framework. Finally, it will illuminate the process of *framing* (van Hulst and Yanow 2016), which is aimed to operationalise Hansen's framework (2006).

2.1 Previous Literature on the Presentation of the Female ISIL Affiliates

To prepare the ground for the theoretical elaboration, it is necessary to place the topic in context: How are women in war presented, and where is the present study situated concerning these? Although it can seem that we are moving on to gender equality in so many facets of our culture, some studies still reveal how female participants in violence are still regarded differently than male. This aspect is illustrated both in studies of characterisations of female perpetrators in general, pursued by Sjoberg and Gentry (2007) for instance and on the other side, in studies specifically regarding the female ISIS affiliates (Kollárová 2016, Martini 2018, Owe 2017, Strømmen, E. 2018). The forthcoming analysis will seek to contribute to both of these frontiers. However, by keeping a distinct analytical focus on political debate, it brings in some new elements into the discussion.

Feminist strands of International Relations theory have set forth various narratives on the presentation of women in conflict. For instance, the ‘just warrior’ versus the ‘beautiful soul’ (Elshtain 1982) has had a significant impact on the criticism of how we talk about war and conflict. What IR Feminists have in common is the idea that we still weigh people’s actions through what we expect of their gender, and that the notions of man and women carry with it expected traits (Tickner and Sjoberg 2013, p. 206). Women deviating from the expected are further differentiated from the idealised gender stereotypes, by what Sjoberg and Gentry refer to as a ‘double transgression’. Women have transgressed both a crime but also their gender; they have willingly ignored expectations’ (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007, pp. 6-7, 15).

Alternatively, as argued by Summers (in Sjoberg and Gentry 2007, p. 2): ‘Women’s violence falls outside of these ideal-typical understandings of what it means to be a woman’.

Sjoberg and Gentry (2007) made the argument by assessing media coverage and cultural expressions amongst other texts, intending to illustrate the most prominent narratives that have circulated on the women that participate in proscribed violence. Three typical narratives were observed, all in which have proven to be relevant in how the female ISIL affiliates have been framed (Owe 2017, Strømmen, E. 2018). Firstly, Sjoberg and Gentry’s (2007, p. 31) *mothers* imply that some women are portrayed primarily as that their ‘intense and desperate link to motherhood’ explains their violence. Violent women also deviate and are dehumanised sexually, through the image of a whore, which goes back to biblical times to a story of the

woman Jezebel in Kings. Arguably, women's entrance into violence has threatened the centrality of patriarchy, but when the women are sexualised, they are simultaneously dehumanised to keep the gender order. Finally, the narrative of a female monster was observed, which deviates from typical femininity because there has to be something wrong with their womanhood. They are more violent than their male counterparts, and are, in some cases, also demonised to the extent that they are dehumanised (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007, pp. 31, 41, 45 and 36-7).

The significance of these representations lies not only in how they illustrate the typical construction of violent women but their effects on how women have come to be regarded. In line with other directions within feminism, the women are presented with less rational thought and accountability, traits that have traditionally been more regarded with masculinity (Tickner and Sjoberg 2013, p.206). Thereby, the choice is seen as less active and less political, as argued by Sjoberg and Gentry (2007, p. 51).

‘Their choices are rarely seen as choices, and, when they are, they are characterised as apolitical. Their tales are sensationalised and fetishised in the gendered narratives that replace or substitute for their actual accounts. Stories of women's violence through their own eyes necessarily interrogate the ideal-typical understandings of what women are, which threatens the gendered order at all levels of politics. Those with a political interest in the gender order cannot hear or tell those stories; instead, stories are produced and reproduced where women's agency in their violence is denied’.

Not only the women's choices are reduced, but also their political and ideological motivations. The personal and private sphere of their roles, emotions and personality, are often more prominent, rendering it more natural for women to be recognised as caregivers. At the same time, men are constructed as the natural ‘breadwinners’ (Tickner and Sjoberg 2013, p. 206).

The female ISIL affiliates were, as it will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapter, mostly mothers breeding the new generation of fighters, and wives supporting the male foreign fighters (see 3.1 and 3.2). However, research still indicates that they made active, independent choices to leave for Syria, not only with a political motivation, but they also grounded their restricted role as highly political by contributing to the state-building of ISIL (Lia 2019). The

dual role complicates how the issue should be framed, but it is still essential to regard these women with agency and a political and ideological mind-set.

Some analysts have investigated how media and other outlets, such as court procedures and documents, still present the female ISIL affiliates within a traditional, gender-reductive frame diminishing their self-determination. Kollárová (2016) and Martini (2018) examined applying an orientalist frame, while Owe (2017) and Strømme (E., 2018) applied Sjoberg and Gentry's framework (2007).

Both sides investigated the affiliates through the notion of gender, but the former assessed whether their framing might be partly due to how the east is viewed differently. Kollárová (2016) analysed coverage of the female Kurdish fighters and the ISIL affiliates and argued that the former have been represented in a more positive light: as independent, more western-like active fighters against oppression. On the other hand, the ISIL affiliates have been more demonised; 'reduced to ghostly creatures with no agency'. Often, the religious veiling has been represented as a sign of oppression rather than a religious right. The dichotomy presented between the Kurdish and the ISIL affiliates conveys more about 'us' than about 'them' Kollárová concluded with: 'Through such processes of binary divisions, the presence and activities of the Islamic State have been even more demonised and its political strategies are hidden behind the stories of female victims or monstrous women enjoying violence – further justifying Western strategies and measures within the Middle East' (Kollárová 2016, pp. 153-4). In this way, Kollárová linked the presentations of the identity of political subjects to the foreign policy of states.

Owe (2017), on the other hand, pursued a narrower focus, primarily upon the gendering of the ISIL affiliates in media. She assessed Scandinavian and British outlets between 2013-2016 (2017), and confirmed that Sjoberg and Gentry's framework (2007) is still highly relevant (Owe 2017, p. 57). The trends in Owe's study (2017); infantilising, sexualisation, and presenting them as naïve, mirrors the narratives *mothers, monsters and whores* by Sjoberg and Gentry (2007). She concluded that women's motivations were presented as marriage and having babies and that their agency was limited to the active choice of marriage. Also, the religious motivations were emphasised in the coverage as twofold; either they were presented as actively joined the organisation of religious reasons, or the religious propaganda tricked them (Owe 2017, p. 61).

Of the ones assessed, Owe's (2017, p. 47) study is the only one that includes 'the political woman' as a narrative, and by this diverges from Sjoberg and Gentry's framework (2007). There were some articles in her material that presented the female ISIL affiliates as 'political' and conveyed a critique of the dominant narratives. These articles presented the women as more rational and reasoning than what they are often assumed to be. On the other hand, this only applied to 21 of 30 articles, out of which only six were from Norwegian newspapers. The British newspaper *The Guardian* was the dominant source of these types of reports (Owe 2017, p. 47)

There is a significant contrast in how the female ISIL affiliates are presented today, than what was found in Owe's study (2017), except for the articles concerning 'the political woman'. The affiliates' individual active choice has been more emphasised to the degree that they have even been seen as threats – both physical and ideological (see c. 4 and 5). She described this change herself in a blog post in 2019:

'In response to the girls leaving to join ISIS in 2015, a police commissioner of the Scotland yard police force said to *The Telegraph* that there was a "difference between the person running around northern Iraq with a Kalishnikov' and three schoolgirls who had been duped into travelling to Syria." He further stated that the three Bethnal Green schoolgirls would not face terrorism charges if they were to return to Britain. Now there seems to have been a complete reversal. Four years later, British officials state they will lose their citizenship and further reminds them that actions have consequences. The rhetoric has changed dramatically' (Owe 2019).

This shift was primarily political, and Owe asked whether this might have been due to the change like the issue; as being a potential issue that might occur in the far future, to now being imminent and pressing governments to act (2019).

Now that two different types of literature have been presented, this thesis will aim to situate itself both in the debate on how gender is represented in the discourse on conflict in general, and in the research specifically about the female ISIL affiliates. There is a need to assess the process in which these affiliates have reached the political agenda and investigate how they

are represented. Has the gendered lens been toned down in the face of rhetoric that emphasises the active choice these women made when turning away from Norway?

On the other hand, this thesis distances itself from Owe (2017), not only by assessing the political debate rather than media coverage but also by taking a broader theoretical lens. Similar to Kollárová's analysis (2016), this thesis will take into account Gentry's (2009, p. 247) assumption that the presentations of subjects might reveal more about the storyteller who manufactures these, rather than the subjects themselves. Therefore, by employing Hansen's conceptualisation of foreign policy as a starting point to assess how the identity of the 'self' and the 'other', this thesis will take a step further, but will also revise their assumptions of how the affiliates' agency is understood.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

What the subsequent analysis aims to do is to assess various political debates; to tease out how meaning is constructed through arguments and enables policy choice. Socially constructed norms and assumptions, arguably shape how we address and respond to the world (Fierke 2013, p. 189). The primary theoretical foundation is the social constructivist view that reality cannot be objectively observed – it is only available through our perceptions.

Therefore, our 'knowledge' about the world is created, reproduced and affected by social processes (Jørgensen and Philips 2013, pp. 13-14). However, the objects of discussion may in themselves be material. For example, constructivism would not demand that one disputes the atrocities of the civil war or the presence of female ISIS affiliates of Norwegian origin there. Instead, the focus would be directed towards the way in which events are processed and responded to through a form of collective sense-making where conclusions are not given.

Accordingly, there is no objective 'truth' about female ISIS affiliates. It is not given how we, a small country far from the conflict make sense of their actions and respond. The purpose of examining that process of sense-making is to emphasise its contingency and to trace its outcome. How did these specific representations come to be and what granted them a privileged position in the policy formulation?

When investigating how responsibility is defined politically and to map out how the opposing politicians *frame* differing solutions, written and spoken language will be considered the unit

of analysis. Therefore, a theoretical framework must be presented. By analysing how a state's responsibility is defined, one can deduce where the limits of the community are drawn and how certain actors and actions are excluded from it. This way of reading responsibility is indebted to Hansen's framework, in which characterisations of subjects, in this case, the ISIL affiliates, are either linked or differentiated to the national 'self' (Hansen 2006, p. 1). The contested issue in the Norwegian debate has been: are the ISIL affiliates part of our 'national self'?

2.3 Foreign policy in Post-structuralism

The debate on the Norwegian female ISIL affiliates has been highly concerned with who the affiliates are (see c. 5). They have mainly been depicted as something so different from us that they might even pose a physical and ideological threat upon return. This exact point of otherness and threat makes the issue fit well with a post-structuralist reading.

Post-structuralism is regarded as a critical attitude, rather than a theory, as it poses meta-theoretical questions on philosophy, knowledge-production and what is seen as legitimate knowledge (Campbell 2013, p. 225). According to Campbell (2013, p. 225), three aspects take on particular importance: 'representation, the relationship of power and knowledge, and the politics of identity in understanding global affairs'. In this lies a strong heritage from structuralists such as de Saussure and Barthes. They aimed to investigate the social and cultural construction of language structures we encounter on a day to day basis (Campbell 2013, p. 231).

Hansen takes this further, by investigating how policy and identity are interlinked, and how the distinction between inside and outside that conventional IR theories emphasise produce identity and subjectivity. 'Policies are dependent upon representations of the threat, country, security problem, or crisis they seek to address. The foreign policy needs to ascribe meaning to the situation and to construct the objects within it. In doing so, they articulate and draw upon specific identities of other states, regions, peoples, and institutions as well as on the identity of a national, regional, or institutional Self' (Hansen 2006, pp. 5-6).

By legitimising foreign policy, one draws upon who we are as a state, versus who the others are in the international environment (Hansen 2006, p. 7). It can be understood as a process of differentiation; one *links* depictions together in a pattern to describe one identity, and then simultaneously devalues these in opposition to another more privileged identity (Hansen 2006, p. 19). The discursive structures are, therefore, anything but stable, and the framework presupposes that structures are malleable: ‘the link between some ‘positive signs’ might become unstable; or a negatively valued term of one discourse might be constructed as positive within another discourse, making the clear attribution of inferior or superior value to signs seem more complicated’ (Hansen 2006, p. 21).

Thus, identity is relational, or as Hansen (2006, p. 6) argued; ‘identity is always given through reference to something it is not’. The othering, or juxtaposition, between different identities, can take various forms, as spatially, temporally or ethically defined. Firstly, spatial identity implies the construction of boundary and space, but still politically imbued. It can be used to create regional othering, or by creating politically subjects such as ‘terrorists, barbarians, tribes, women, civilisation’ (Hansen 2006, p. 47). Identities that aims to define progress and intransience is termed temporal identities. This means the construction of identity can create religious, civilisational, and political juxtapositions between, for instance, a developed self against a less developed other (Hansen 2006, p. 48). To exemplify, Said’s *Orientalism* (1979) investigates the long-standing framing of the developed west versus the more primitive east. Finally, ethical identity implies the construction of ‘ethics, morality and responsibility’ (Hansen 2006, p. 50).

Assessing identity along these lines is extensive, and apply primarily to how arguments are constructed individually. However, forming arguments is a process that occurs in a dynamic arena, in which individual actors position themselves in. I will therefore give a theorisation of how arguments are formed in a contested arena – necessary for the study of the hotly debated issue of the ISIL affiliates.

2.4 Agency and the Importance of Rhetoric

Political language is filled with rhetorical devices, and they are angled and framed in a way to counter arguments from political opponents. Specifically concerning the debate on the

affiliates is the securitised tone by some actors, which others attempt to reframe. These aspects can be well accounted for by rhetorical political analysis (RPA), as put forth by Finlayson (2007) and Martin (2015), aiming to bridge the gap between rhetorical analysis and various interpretive and ideational analytical directions.

Particularly important for this thesis is how rhetorical political analysis takes the political environment as the starting point for analysis: ‘If we begin with a clear and distinct concept of politics as the ‘arena’ within which we see expressed the irreducible and contested plurality of public life, the ineradicable contestation of differing worldviews, then it is clear that what is distinct in politics is not the presence of beliefs, but the presence of beliefs in contradiction with each other, not decisions about courses of action, but a dispute over decisions and courses of action’ (Finlayson 2007, p. 552). The policymakers find themselves in a complex arena filled with contested beliefs. Consequently, it makes less sense to observe actors’ worldviews and statements individually, but rather to study the formation and consequences of arguments as they are shaped in and by the political arena (Finlayson 2007, p. 552).

The process of agreeing with an argument entails a process of situating oneself within the debate by forming an opinion about the reasons that are laid out (Martin 2015, p. 27, Finlayson 2007, p. 551). In this way, RPA holds a more dynamic view of ideas; not only as discursive structures to be studied as they are but that by holding ideas one is already engaging within a hidden dispute (Martin 2015, p. 28).

The discursive structures and the actors’ leeway are seen as existing in a mutually constitutive relationship, in which some term ‘dialectical approach’: ‘Structures provide opportunities for agents, which they may or may not take, but also constrain them to act under established scripts and routines; and agents inherit rules and customs, but seek opportunities to impose their will and alter their constraints’ (Martin 2015, p. 32). The structures are used by the actor, to present her framing of the policy problem – ‘the truth’ – and to circumscribe the choices and points of conflict, to make its solution seem the most natural and appropriate (Martin 2015, p. 33).

RPA’s dialectical approach is highly in congruence with Hansen’s (2007, pp. 19-21) assessment of the instability of structures, in which actors can take advantage of by linking a sign differently than the countering actors. Moreover, rhetoric can create ‘feedback loops’, in

which previous rhetoric becomes unquestionable premises of newer rhetoric. ‘What was once rhetoric, later comes to be ‘common-sense’ premises to routine decisions; what began as an audacious intervention, becomes a coherent discursive frame’ (Martin, 2015 p. 33).

Unchallenged rhetorical characterisations may be so entrenched in language that they are accepted as established truths. As will be illustrated in chapter 5, the Progress Party in particular, have made attempts to challenge some of these truths by circumscribing others’ arguments.

The direction of rhetorical political analysis opens up for the speaker’s potential to reorient and persuade her audience by drawing upon existing discursive resources of relevance to the issue under debate. Martin contends that thoughtful arguments can be ‘forceful projectiles’ that can not only persuade the audience, but reorient them (Martin 2015, pp. 27-28, and p. 39). This element is particularly forceful in indeterminate political situations, in which political arguments can contribute to making sense of the situation, make one narrative seem more coherent, or even unsettle and transform the others (Martin 2015, p. 28). A successful speaker, therefore, understands her environment well; and find openings to redefine linkages.

Both Martin (2015) and Finlayson (2007) set forth ways to pursue the actual analysis, but neither is sufficient on their own. While Martin’s (2015, p. 34) approach is too narrow, Finlayson’s (2007, pp. 557-9) includes too many elements to be taken into account, particularly in more extensive studies. Therefore, these insights from rhetorical political analysis are only used as an addition; we need a more concrete analytical process when analysing such a large quantity of statements.

2. 5 Framing as a Methodology

To operationalise and make Hansen’s conceptualisation of foreign policy (2006, p. 1) more comprehensible across a more extensive amount of text units, van Hulst and Yanow’s (2016) *naming, categorising, and selection* will be applied. So far, the theoretical foundation has been presented, but this part will form the more practical methodology of the thesis.

van Hulst and Yanow’s (2016, pp. 97-8) framework is built upon the definition of ‘frame’ as an implicit theory of a situation; ‘it models prior thought and ensuing action, rendering the actions sensible in terms of pre-existing thinking. Frames reduce the stimuli an actor faces but also guides her forward to act in a specific way. ‘Policy actors draw disparate elements

together in a pattern, selecting some things as relevant or essential and discarding, backgrounding or ignoring others, occluding other ways of seeing (and acting), and thereby silencing them in policy discourse and ensuing action ‘(van Hulst and Yanow 2016, p. 99).

Initially, the policymaker needs to *select* what part of the issue that should be emphasised and what to background or ignore altogether. It is a practical necessity to reduce the information inherent, but also a contingent and political act; the policymakers need to frame the situation in the way that is most beneficial for the solution to be presented. A different emphasis might have brought about a different policymaker and resources, and it might have appealed to a different social group (van Hulst and Yanow 2016, p. 99). Thereby, the same situation can be framed in different ways, depending on the aim of the speaker.

For purposes of communication, the aspects *selected* needs to be *named*, sometimes by using metaphors, or by using concepts that have previously been used in other situations, to make this new situation bring about a particular response (van Hulst and Yanow 2016, p. 99). This aspect seems to be somewhat under-theorised in van Hulst and Yanow’s (2016) article, as they do not develop what types of *names* are commonly used in argumentation, and how they function. Their focus is too narrow by only emphasising metaphors as a naming device. Therefore, this thesis uses a broader definition of *names* by also including names that are constructed to describe the female ISIL affiliates but also *naming* the type of issue or situation. Metaphors are only one device, one needs a broader view on how rhetoric aims to define and redescribe terms, phenomena and social actions, affecting how they are understood (Finlayson 2007, p. 558).

However, the final framing device this analysis will use is a specific form of naming – categorising. Primarily, it describes aspects as ‘a this, but not a that’, and therefore establish difference and sometimes dichotomy. Although some ‘objects, events, acts and actors’ are already categorised in our collective understanding, this refers to situational categorising (van Hulst and Yanow 2016, pp. 99-100). Categorising as a framing device, incorporates Hansen’s *linking and differentiation* (Hansen 2006, p. 19), and is, therefore, functioning well as an operationalisation of that specific theoretical framework. One might argue that by *naming* the ISIL affiliates as traitors, characterising them as being fundamentally different from Norwegian identity, this naming also functions as a categorising. Still, van Hulst and Yanow

argue that categorising does this more explicitly (2016, pp. 99-100). Therefore, these two devices will be somewhat interlinked in the following section.

The three devices help the policymaker to shape the world, understand it and act upon situations as either a matter of normal politics, ‘problematic’ or ‘worrisome’ (van Hulst and Yanow 2016, p. 100), or even as security issues and therefore a matter of securitisation (Hansen 2006, p. 35). *Selection, categorising* and naming are all linked together in the final framing device, *storytelling*, which binds the previously mentioned framing devices together and make specific responses possible. ‘Stories frame their subjects as they narrate them, explicitly naming their features, selecting and perhaps categorising them as well, explaining to an audience what *has been* going on, what *is* going on, and, often, what needs to be done—past, present, and future corresponding to the plotline of a policy story’ (van Hulst and Yanow 2016, p. 100).

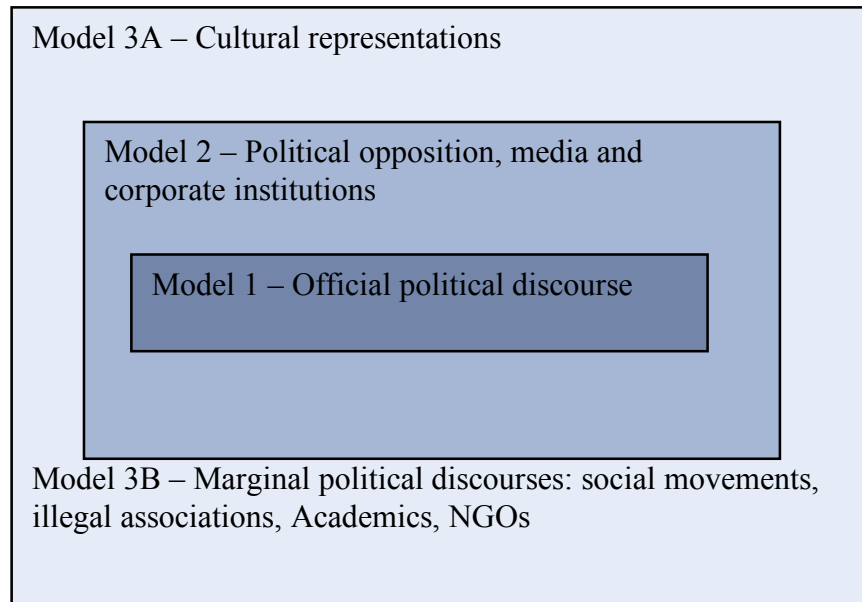
The utilisation of *selection, naming, and categorising* is a different, yet more practical way to utilise Hansen’s conceptualisation of foreign policy (2006) across a wide range of material by a more significant number of actors. However, this chapter so far might also have shown how three different theoretical directions share some of the main theoretical premises, while they still complement and contribute to each other.

2.6 Selection of Data Material

This section will present how the analysis is conducted, what texts are selected and how these are read and analysed. The analytical approach has been outlined in the previous presentation of theoretical foundation but will be made more explicit and concrete in this section.

Hansen’s intertextual model has been used to guide the selection of data material, though adapted to be more compatible with the Norwegian political system. Three models, or layers, are set up to describe the actors typically taking part in the political debate, depending on how close they are to the official discourse or the legislative policymaking. Model 1 consists of the official political discourse understood as heads of state, governments, senior civil servants, high ranked military officials, heads of international institutions and official statements from these institutions. Model 2 refers to the wider debate, understood as the political opposition, the media and corporate institutions. Finally, model 3A consists of non-fictional cultural representations, and 3B of the more marginal political actors such as social movements,

illegal associations, academics and NGO's (Hansen 2006, p. 64). All three models can be illustrated as such:



There are indeed some drawbacks with this way of approaching public debate in the Norwegian case. First, it can be questioned how illegal associations, academics, and NGOs are all in the same category. Second, in Norway, Government usually consists of a multi-party coalition, which may not present a concerted view on all issues. As a result, there is a gap between model 1 and 2, between official political discourse and oppositional parties. Besides, what Hansen conceptualises as official political discourse is usually ministers, while communication by Members of Parliament is left out of this model. However, responding to both of these aspects, the model intends to map out and illustrate the actors closest to the decision-making process and to analyse the inter-textual links to other texts in the broader political discourse. The decisions on the ISIL affiliates have been a Governmental decision in Norway by the multi-coalition Cabinet. As a result, I have chosen to analyse all four coalition parties, which indicates an intermediate level between model 1 and 2 (Hansen 2006, p.64).

The political debate was mostly conducted in the media and behind closed doors in Cabinet. The issue was briefly debated in Parliament (S.tid (2019-2020), pp. 41-44), and there were asked a few written questions during the written Question Time in Parliament (Dok. 15:238 (2019-2020), (Dok. 15:1815 (2018-2019))). However, the majority of the public debate was

directed by and in the media outlets. Since the issue has been highly contested, also within the Cabinet, I have chosen interfaces where the debate and contested views surface (see 2.3, and Finlayson 2007, p. 551-2).

The primary selection criteria have been debates on the topic of the Norwegian female ISIL affiliates by representatives from the four coalition parties: The Progress Party, the Conservative Party, The Christian Democratic Party and the Liberal Party. It is presumed that this is highly in line with Hansen's intentions, of analysing the actors closest to the decision-making process (2006). In the chosen material, all the speakers representing these parties, but also present in political office has been included. The time frame selected for analysis is May 2018, when Shezadi first presented her request to be assisted from Syria to Norway in May 2018, to 20th of January 2020 the final debate concerning the repatriated adult affiliate. From then on, the debate was primarily on the effects of the change in the coalition structure after the Progress Party left. The timeline will be further illustrated in chapter 4.

First, I gathered material from Parliament, more specifically, everything that concerned the female ISIL affiliates on the Parliament's website (stortinget.no). Secondly, I included the press conferences after the return of the five orphans in June 2019, and the 29- year old and her two children in January 2020 with Prime Minister Erna Solberg and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ine E. Søreide (NRK 2019h, VG 2019a). These two are set up and directed by the political institutions themselves, and is, therefore, an essential part of Hansen's model 1—official political discourse (2006, p. 64).

Thirdly, the majority of the units analysed are from TV and Radio debates by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK). The three most significant debate programmes have been selected (Politisk kvarter and Dagsnytt 18 (TV/Radio), and Debatten (TV)). I included all the shows in which there were representatives from one or more of the four coalition parties was included in the analysis. There have also occurred debates at the TV channel TV2 as well, but this channel does not make archives of these available, as the NRK does. Nevertheless, a manual search was pursued on NRK's website to include all the programmes in which the Norwegian female ISIL affiliates were discussed. Due to the small amount of material from the Parliament, the debates from NRK have been essential to capture the whole political debate. NRK has rapidly arranged debates as key events have occurred. Therefore, the

analysis is largely based upon the material that has been directed by the media and journalists, which imply that what the policymakers have stated is by large a response to questions.

Finally, I included speeches held by party leaders in the context of the bi-annual Party Conferences as well as meetings in the National Executive Committee of the party on the possible return of the female ISIL affiliates and their children. Also, the party resolutions by The Christian Democratic Party and Progress Party published after these meetings, in addition to opinion pieces by key actors. The latter has been more difficult to attain, but the results of news searches on google and retriever's atekst were included. There is a likelihood that not all of them have been traced. Both to select a manageable amount of data within the scope of a master thesis, but also theoretically reasoned to include the arenas of debate (see 2.4), media interviews were not included.

The oral material was transcribed by the author in Norwegian Bokmål; spoken regional dialects are not reflected in the material. Arguably, this makes it easier for readers to understand and make the content stand out more. I discussed with my supervisors whether the material should be translated into English, but it has been kept in the original language to ensure the precise meaning of the citations. However, a simple translation of the quotes has been provided as footnotes. Also, I have indirectly paraphrased some statements to make the analysis to create more flow; but have kept the most significant quotations in their original language.

2.7 The Reading and Coding of the Material

The *names*, *categorisation* and *selections* (van Hulst and Yanow 2016) that are used to characterise the 'self' and the female ISIL affiliates as others (Hansen 2006), or their environment, will be drawn out and discussed in chapter four. Three frames that define the female ISIL affiliates as outside of Norwegian responsibility have been chosen, and it is also demonstrated how these are counteracted by similar framings that define them as Norway's responsibility. The study was pursued as an exploratory analysis, and the frames presented were chosen during the reading of the texts.

I imported the material, I in chronological order, including the transcriptions, into the programme nvivo. The list of the whole material is provided in appendix 4. I also used this

programme for coding the material in a simple manner by coding the categories below separately.

In the preliminary reading, I only investigated what type of framing and characterisations the actors utilised in their argumentation. Then, I developed a coding scheme – which reflects how the self was depicted in relation to the three primary frames on the ISIL affiliates.

	The ‘self’	Traitors	Terrorists	Mothers/parents
Selection				
Names				
Categories				

Arguably, the scientific criteria of validity and reliability should be perceived more broadly in qualitative textual analysis than what is implied in positivist-inspired methodology (Bratberg 2018, p. 63). Rather than assessing the validity analysis as strictly as in quantitative research, this thesis has instead assessed it according to what makes inferences valid (Bratberg 2018, p. 63). To pursue the goal of valid conclusions, I have given a description of the theoretical directions that formed the coding scheme, and throughout the analysis, quotes and context have been provided to substantiate the claims made.

Transparency is considered essential in all social science – to make the work visible and replicable for other scholars. However, it is not agreed upon how replicability should be applied in qualitative analyses based upon interpretation. This thesis has primarily sought to provide enclosed examples of how the coding is pursued, as well as an explanation of the coding and selection process. A significant challenge to not only reliability but also the validity is that the quotes and the excerpts provided are taken out of context – they occur as a response in wider debates.

Some have called for detailed transcripts of the research-process (Bryman 2016, p. 384) and full contexts for all the citations provided in a transparency appendix (Moravcsik 2014, p. 50). This thesis has provided a list of all the data material, links or citation to the source and can enclose further context upon requests. When the data material is as extensive as it is in this thesis, a full transparency appendix as Moravcsik outlines (2014, p. 50) might be too

extensive. Moreover, there is the issue with contextual knowledge – which also impacts the inferences made, which will be difficult for another researcher to replicate. However, this knowledge enhanced the critical assessment of the interpretations and made, and thereby, furthers the validity.

This thesis has enclosed some appendices; Appendix 2 illustrates the distribution of the codes; the amount of the coding each category, while appendix 3 shows an example of how the Progress Party's characterisation of 'self' was coded. More records of the coding process will be stored and can be enclosed upon request. More contextual material to the quotes and excerpts would be too extensive to enclose; but arguably, would as Moravcsik (2014) argues make the process more transparent.

3 – The Female ISIL Affiliates – motivations, role, legal rights

Just as there have been disagreements about what labels to use for female ISIL affiliates, more specific debates have concerned what role they have played within the organisation, and what motivated them to leave for Syria. Uncertainty concerning these questions is also highly reflected in the political debate. As the subsequent analysis will show, when differing solutions are presented, they are often based upon assumptions of how active the women were in ISIL, and what possible threat they may pose to the Norwegian society upon a possible return. Previous studies have argued that media often has framed these in a highly gendered fashion. In practice, this has subordinated them to men and reduced their political agency and determination (Owe 2017, Strømme, E. 2018). This thesis will, however, contend that in the debate since 2018, it has been the opposite, their agency, the risk they pose, and their political outlook have dominated the framing.

Therefore, more contextual knowledge about the female ISIL affiliates is needed to pre-empt the empirical analysis. This section seeks to nuance, challenge and substantiate claims made in the debate by presenting what we do know about their motivations to travel to Syria, their part in ISIL and the legal framework for a possible return and prosecution. The aim is to illustrate how these women's motivations and roles in Syria were complex – they were politically active individuals, who saw their contribution to ISIL as ideologically rooted and as an important task within the organisation. While Lia's literature review (2019) concluded that most women were housewives and mothers, some reports have also indicated that some women took more active roles with policing and surveillance (Almohammad and Speckhard 2017). In order for this thesis to fully demonstrate the effect of the framing on these women, this section will lay the groundwork for what we do know about the situation and therefore be better equipped to evaluate the recurring frames.

3.1 The female affiliates' motivation and role within ISIL

So, what we know about the foreign women's motivations to travel to ISIL-held territories have been studied by analysing their social media accounts (Loken and Zelenz 2017, Saltman and Smith 2015) and the propaganda material dispersed by ISIL (Europol 2019, Lahoud 2018). Moreover, Lia (2019, p. 104) has thoroughly reviewed the secondary literature and

argued that it demonstrates how the women were politically motivated to travel to Syria – they had a ‘determination, ideological conviction, sense of duty towards, and a wish to contribute to the newly established caliphate’. In contrast, their role within ISIL was more restrictive; it was primarily as mothers and wives, but some also contributed to healthcare, teaching and police service (Lia 2019, p. 109). By drawing upon both propaganda and social media studies, there are indications that their role was highly political and religious. This section will further elaborate upon this argument by referring to secondary literature on these questions.

Studies of social media and those of the official propaganda have come to similar conclusions on the ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors explaining women’s participation in ISIL, which were primarily of a political and religious nature. ‘Push’ factors are understood by Saltman and Smith as what ‘prime certain women to be more vulnerable to extremist propaganda’, while pull factors are what indoctrinates them to ISIL’s ideology and finally make them leave their homes (2015, p. 8).

Europol’s report (2019, pp. 7-9) on ISIL’s propaganda targeted towards women, suggests that ISIL aimed to draw upon the women’s perceived isolation in the west, and the attack and suppression of the ‘umma’ – the worldwide Muslim community. These ideas can be understood as a way to provoke anger against their home countries and led to an ‘us-versus-them’ mind-set. It was argued that those living in the west was in sub-ordination to ‘non-Muslims’ - and therefore, living in dishonour. The religious travel ‘hijra’ to ISIL-controlled territories was seen as an obligation, and a necessity for purification, to purge dishonour, and to wipe ‘away all past sins’. Therefore, binary thinking gave the affiliates a choice to either travel to Syria or not being a good Muslim. Building upon these feelings of living in the west, ISIL’s ‘caliphate’ as presented as a safe haven, in which one would be able to embrace Islam - freely and safely.

These findings resonate with Saltman and Smiths (2015, p. 9, 12-13) push factors: the young Muslim women feeling isolated in the west, questioning their identity, and the perception that the Muslim community being persecuted in the west. Besides, we have the pull factor of idealistic goals of a deep religious duty in participation in what they were told and believed was a real Muslim state. Saltman and Smith (2015, pp. 12-13) added a pull factor, the perception that the international community did not stop the humanitarian crisis in Syria and that the women had to travel there to help.

The argument of helping a just, if not humanitarian cause, was particularly emphasised in social media; a narrative was presented in which the enemy was the Assad Government, and various pictures conveyed pictures the claimed humanitarian wrongs (2015, pp. 12-13). The women who left at the beginning of the Syrian civil war claimed that they went to help out with the humanitarian situation. However, it has now become apparent that they were members of ISIL (Johnsen et al. 2019c).

The propaganda material presented the travel from the west to join ISIL as 'hijra', which is according to Europol (2019, p. 9) a 'potent and emotive term that resonates in Muslims' imagination', In Islamic tradition, this term refers to the Prophet's migration in the year 622 from Mecca, where Muslims were facing persecution, to Medina. As a consequence, 'hijra' has come to signify a sacred migration from '*dar al-harb*' (also known as 'dar al-kufr', an 'abode of war' where Muslims cannot freely practise their religion) to 'dar al-Islam' (areas under Islamic rule). Migration was set out to be equal for men and women, and it is explicitly stated that women's goals should be religious and not for marriage. Women would be expected to marry several times, they could expect becoming widows and to remarry soon after (Europol 2019, p. 10).

Even though both social media and the official propaganda aimed to motivate women for travel, both also emphasised some negative aspects, and neither underemphasised the restrictive role of the women.

For instance, Saltman and Smith's study of social media found quotes such as; 'don't expect to come here and not be tested', 'those days when everything is difficult', or 'this place teaches you sabr (patience/endurance) like no other' (2015, p. 49), undermining ISIL's official channels (Saltman and Smith 2015, p. 50). In a similar vein, Loken and Zelenz argued that social media depicted a life of 'discomfort, violence and separation from family and friends', but that all this was a worthy sacrifice for 'hijra' (2017, p. 59).

The propaganda outlets did emphasise that women's lives in the 'caliphate' was highly restricted. It was presented as a virtue to stay at home; their husband should rightfully restrict their lifestyle, and obeying him was also a way of getting closer to God (Europol 2019, pp. 14-15). In addition to being housewives, they would have an essential task in giving birth to new generations, and raise young fighters to take part in jihad (Europol 2019, p. 20). The

material described as ‘glass vessels’; fragile, and deficient in reasoning and religion, grounded in a divine reference or that they have been given a superior role by God. These ideas formed the basis for the justification of women in domestic roles (Europol 2019, pp.11-12 and 17).

A report by UN Women attempts to answer a question that many commentators, newspapers and politicians have asked throughout the debate: ‘how could a group that explicitly espouses a worldview that promotes women’s subjugation and sex slavery, appeals to and seemingly offer tools of empowerment to women?’ (Lahoud 2018 p. 23). The report argued that the group did not offer women any empowerment, but it ‘projected agency’ through a female authoring of propaganda texts. Also, they encouraged women to leave their home countries and join the group independently and surrender to the organisation and its subjugation of women (Lahoud 2018, p. 3). However, ISIL’s strict limitation of movement for women is not compatible with the freedom to travel independently to Syria. The journey has, as a result, been premised on women’s responsibility to protect their religion, and the freedom to obey God rather than laws (Lahoud 2018, p. 6).

The basis for this rigid social conservatism was political and religious. It meant strict segregation of the sexes, a female subordination to men, and severe limitations on women and female enslavement (Lahoud 2018, p. 10). Therefore, we can argue that the women left with a political and religious motivation to Syria. Moreover, this section thus demonstrates how female affiliates should be understood as politically active agents. Though marriage was a part of it, Loken and Zelenz have argued that they were not motivated by this, but that the marriage was rooted in a ‘gendered religious and political ideology’ (2017, p.58).

3.2 A potential shift in ISIL’s view of female combatants

While it was previously illustrated that women could be understood as politically motivated beings, there is an ongoing discussion regarding how active their participation within the caliphate was. As will be explored in chapter 4, the prosecution of the affiliates has been one of the main points of controversy in the political debate over their return to Norway. The forthcoming section will critically assess the literature on this question, to illustrate both the uncertainty about and the possible complexities of their role. By all probability, they were not involved with active combat, but a few may have been taught in surveillance operations, weaponry and a moral police force towards other women (Lia 2019).

ISIL propaganda magazines have put forth as the foundation that women should not engage in combat, as their jihad is in the home. A combative role can only be permitted in defensive jihad; ‘when the enemy enters her home’. According to these sources, women were not as competent men to fight, both physically and mentally (Lahoud 2018, p. 19, Europol 2019, p. 23).

The Europol report (2019, p. 25) argued that the tone in ISIL’ propaganda magazines might have changed at the end of 2019, as three issues of the magazine al-Naba discussed and accepted women in combat roles. Cook and Vale (2018, p. 53) argued that this shift might have happened even earlier, already in 2015, there were indications of a change. In late 2017 the group announced a ‘jihad against enemies’ as obligatory for both men and women in the newsletter ‘An-Naba’. Besides, in 2018, ISIL even published a video of a woman fighting on the battlefield alongside men (Europol 2019, p. 25, Cook and Vale 2018, p. 54).

The counter-terrorism experts Almohammad and Speckhard (2017) interviewed and received information from allegedly trusted sources within ISIL’ strongholds as well as some former members, to map out the women’s roles apart from the domestic one. It was argued that some women did take an active, violent part within the organisation, as well as received training within weaponry and arms. However, there was at that point, no evidence of women participating in combat.

Five different battalions with female involvement were presented in the report (Almohammad and Speckhard 2017); three of them mostly consisting of Syrian and Iraqi members, while the brigades al-Khansa and al-Zarqawi were primarily made up of foreigners. The former consisted mainly of European women, and it is claimed that they were given military and intelligence training, armed with Kalashnikov rifles and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), and trained in making and assembling gun-noise suppressors from necessary materials. Almohammad and Speckhard (2017) could also present information from their trusted sources that the surveillance operations have also resulted in the killing of journalists and activists.

Lia (2019, p. 107) adds that the female police forces were established in response to the challenges of the segregation of sexes; men could not stop and body search women, which was taken advantage of by using women as suicide bombers. Miranova (2019), a fellow at Harvard University and previously embedded with Iraqi Special Operations Forces, further

accounts for how the refusal by men to touch women made them more dangerous in *The New York Times*. She learnt from officers that women indeed had been responsible for many of the suicide bombings that took place almost daily at Iraqi Army positions during the Mosul operation in June 2014.

Almohammad and Speckhard (2017) also draw our attention to the ‘hisbah’ – the morality police. When ISIL emerged, around 2013, women and men were set to recruit others and make them participate in indoctrination courses. If they found people straying from the moral code, for instance, in regard to veiling, they used ‘fining, detaining, and punishing’ to enforce the group’s strict rules. The sub-group later evolved into the ‘Aumahat al-Moaminin Battalion’, mainly consisting of Syrian and Iraqi locals, and were primarily tasked with enforcing penalties on women who did not conform to the moral code.

Referring to these reports, Lia (2019, p. 108) argues that there is not yet sufficient evidence to make these inferences about the female units of ISIL or to say that women engaged at the frontline. It is likely that the few pictures of this circulating were part of a more extensive propaganda campaign. However, there have been some indications that women took a more substantial role when ISIL was on the defensive in 2017-2018, but primarily as suicide bombers. The reports published are, according to Lia (2019, p. 108), not sufficiently documented; the sources are few and too uncertain to be verified.

While Almohammad and Speckhard (2017) warn about the female ISIL affiliates potential impact upon return, the Norwegian terrorism-researcher Thomas Hegghammer has argued the opposite about the Norwegian case. He explained that while it is not risk-free, he sees no security issue by returning the children along with their mothers. First, there are norms in ISIL against female participation in operations, the mothers have commitments to their children and are therefore in a different situation than those that have nothing to lose, and finally, Norway is sufficiently resourced to handle and reduce the potential security risk through a capable security apparatus (Hegghammer 2019). Likewise, the UN Women report argued that it is unlikely the women joined combat, as it is incompatible with the segregation of sexes, and would require a move to recognising women as equal to men. Therefore, if ISIL were to pursue that, it would cease to be the jihadi group that we know (Lahoud 2018, pp. 23-24).

This section has shown that there is still a high degree of uncertainty tied to the role that women have played in ISIL, which directly implicates how the various actors have framed the issue and affiliates in the debate. These findings will be used, in chapter four, to question the frames that automatically tied the affiliates to the violence and atrocities performed by ISIL. As there is still a great deal of uncertainty on what the women have done in ISIL-held territory, and how they will be held accountable for this. Political rhetoric that automatically connects these to acts of terrorism, war crimes, or other forms of abuse, needs to be questioned.

3.3 Legal rights and sentence

Not only is there a question to what degree the female affiliates participated in ISIL, but several legal matters have also remained unclarified. The international and national laws concerning both the female affiliates' rights and possible prosecution will be presented, to illustrate how this grey area opens up for a heavier reliance on political narratives.

Female affiliates can be prosecuted for marrying foreign fighters and habituating within ISIL's territories, confirmed by the verdict against a 31-year-old Norwegian woman who was arrested on her way to ISIL-controlled areas. It stated: 'the court is not in doubt that travelling to ISIL-controlled area and marry an ISIL-foreign fighter, is considered active and qualified participation in the maintenance of a terrorist organisation that is covered by the concept of participation within paragraph 136a' (Døvik and Olsson 2019 – my translation).

What the Norwegian Penal Code sets out as 'participation' is thereby interpreted widely. 'A penalty of imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years shall be applied to any person who forms, participates in, recruit members into or provides financial or other material support for a terrorist organisation, when the organisation has taken steps to achieve the purpose by unlawful means. Contribution is not penalised' (The Penal Code 2005, § 136a). The Norwegian Supreme Court has previously emphasised that participation is indeed a vast concept that is meant to entail a wide range of activities. However, it needs to pass a certain threshold. Neither passive affiliation nor peripheral contributions are sufficient for sentencing (HR-2018-1650-A).

Norway has also criminalised military activity abroad that is not pursued on behalf of a state, according to the Norwegian Penal Code § 145 (2005). In most states, this is subsumed to the terrorist legislation, while in Norway, the organisation one participates on behalf of, does not need be internationally regarded as a terrorist organisation (Andersson et al. 2018, p. 28). This paragraph then goes further than what the UN has required through Security Council Resolution 2178, in which one is encouraged to forbid what they label ‘foreign terrorist fighters’ (Andersson et al. 2018, p. 28).

The legal framework concerning return is less clear cut. However, it is uncontested that the female affiliates do not have a legal right to be returned, the question of the children complicates it. This point will now be illustrated.

Firstly, the Norwegian Foreign Ministry’s justifies their official policy of not actively assist the ISIL affiliates with the view that travelling to Syria is primarily a personal responsibility (Regjeringen 2017). The ISIL affiliates have severely breached the official travel advice, which means that the Norwegian Government has little chance to be able to provide consular assistance within Syria and Iraq. On the other hand, if they can travel to a Norwegian consulate, they will be assisted as any other Norwegian citizen (Regjeringen 2017). They cannot be refused entry to Norway if they reach the border, according to article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights (United Nations 1948), and the Norwegian constitution § 106 (Grunnloven 1814). However, the Norwegian Foreign Ministry has stated that they will be offered some consular assistance if they show up at a consulate or embassy (Sørgjerd et al. 2019).

The female affiliates that are only Norwegian residents, both permanent and temporary, have lost their residency due to their affiliation, and will therefore not be able to return to Norway (Johnsen et al. 2019b). As will be demonstrated in the analysis, the notion of ‘citizenship’ has to some extent been watered out in the political debate, and many commentators have asked what it means in these circumstances. What is clear, is that the children of Norwegian citizens are recognised as Norwegian by birth, according to Statsborgerloven §4 (2005). Acquiring a citizenship does not require the possession of official documentation, being born by a Norwegian citizen is sufficient, according to the lawyer Adele Mestad (NRK Radio 2019). The affiliates do not have any formal rights to be assisted, but article 3 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child have often been applied as a moral argument. It stipulates that ‘in all

actions...the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration (OHCHR 1989). It entails ensuring that children should be protected and cared for as necessary for its well-being, and states should take all necessary measures to assure this (OHCHR 1989).

How the Convention of the Rights of the Child has been applied to the issue of the children of the ISIL affiliates will be elaborated upon in the forthcoming analysis. Some have even attempted to justify the separation of mother and child. However, legal experts have stated that consent in such conditions would neither be voluntary nor valid; in addition to that, there is no legal framework allowing this (Svendsen 2019).

Apart from criminalising membership in a terrorist group (The Penal Code 2005, §136a), the legal framework is not clear cut and does not provide any more guidelines for the Norwegian Government's commitments. This opening gives policymakers room for manoeuvre in how to weight both moral and legal principles, essentially making the issue political. With this in mind, it is possible to critically assess and validate actors' argument and depictions of the ISIL affiliates.

4 – The Political Debate on the Norwegian Female ISIL affiliates

After having examined some of the political and legal aspects of the debate surrounding the female ISIL affiliates, the thesis will now turn to a presentation of a timeline of the Norwegian political discussion. This chapter will assess the key events on the ground and the most distinct frames and how these coincided.

The selected actors chosen for this particular analysis, have all presented different solutions on what should happen to the Norwegian female ISIL affiliates in the camps in Syria. How they have framed the issue and what they have *selected* as the most important aspects, are shaped by, and should be seen in tandem with party tradition and ideology. Moreover, there is a need to assess tactical political considerations toward their constituencies. Besides, the argumentation is formed by and in response to counter-arguments (2.4), the events on the ground, and the knowledge and stories concerning ISIL affiliates in the media.

Post-structuralist theory emphasises that facts or events do exist, but they are dependent on language and political agency to become politically salient (Hansen 2006, p. 32). The goal of the analysis is to investigate how these facts are formed and how they implicate the political debate (Hansen 2006, p. 32). Particular focus is paid to ‘key events’, defined by Hansen (2006, p. 32) as ‘those situations where ‘important facts’ manifest themselves on the political and/or the media agenda and influence the official policy identity constellation or force the official discourse to engage with political opposition or media criticism’. However, not only key events but also the rhetorical frames that have led to changes in discourse will be brought into the analysis. Martin (2015, p. 26) have embodied arguments with the potential to re-orient its audience, meaning that rhetorical interventions can change the course of the debate.

The issue surrounding the ISIL affiliates is highly contested, and there is a need to assess the debate widely. Rather than investigating the official discourse as a baseline, like Hansen (2006, p. 32) suggested, this thesis will investigate the competing frames, by asking which took the lead during the different stages and how these came to be regarded as the dominant frame. Highly inspired by the points brought into the analysis by Rhetorical Political Analysis, which have put forth that the highly contested political arena in which arguments are formed by competing with each other, should be the basis for the analysis (Finlayson 2007).

Not only is this chapter an analysis of its own, but it will also provide the foundation for the subsequent chapter on framings of the affiliates. The *naming* of the affiliates was highly personal and a response to the interviews and information available in the media. By looking into how the debate and the framing occurred in relation to other events, the findings in chapter 5 will be substantiated.

4.1 - Phase 1 – Summer 2018: The First Request for Repatriation

The chosen starting point of this analysis is May 2018, when Aisha Shezadi, one of the Norwegian female ISIL affiliates detained in the refugee camp Al-Hol, first made a formal request to the Norwegian authorities, to be repatriated to Norway (Shanmugaratnam and Torvik 2018). Being the very first instance in which a Norwegian citizen, formerly associated with ISIL, asked for a return, makes it a natural starting point for analysis. At this stage, it was already known that several Norwegian women had left for Syria. Earlier, their return had only been regarded as a potential issue, but now issue confronted the with the first real juncture on this issue.

Shezadi's letter was written and delivered with help from two Norwegian activists (Erling Folkvord and Johan Petter Andresen) from the organisation 'Solidaritet med Kurdistan', and partly published in the Norwegian newspaper *Klassekampen*. In the interview, Folkvord and Andresen stated that Shezadi gave them the impression that she did not regret her affiliation with ISIL, and to some extent, still supported them (Shanmugaratnam and Torvik 2018). However, Folkvord and Andresen argued strongly for that Norway should take responsibility also when Norwegian citizens breach the national law; the risk of leaving them in Syria would be more considerable than a controlled return (NRK 2018).

The issue of the female ISIL affiliates arose at this time as a result of these particular activists' work, whom were then given the opportunity to frame the situation. By emphasising her continued support for ISIL, it is unsure whether they contributed to their case, or created more resentment than support for repatriation.

The only piece in the data material from this particular period is a panel debate in "Dagsnytt 18" at NRK Radio and TV (NRK 2018), in which the possible return of Norwegian women from Al-Hol was a topic. Shezadi has been visible in Norwegian media since; interviewed

several times by both *Aftenposten* and *NRK* (Kvamme et al. 2018, Zondag 2018, Andreassen and Ismaeli 2019 and 2020) and written a few opinion pieces herself (Shezadi 2019, 2018). Besides, she was a known activist in the public eye before her departure to Syria and featured in Åsne Seierstad's book *Two Sisters* (Seierstad 2018).

The Progress Party's MP Per Willy Amundsen's argumentation in this particular debate (NRK 2018), is carried on by the other speakers from his party throughout the analysed period. He emphasised their primary objective; to safeguard their citizens, and active repatriation of former ISIL affiliates will, therefore, expose the society to an unacceptable, elevated security risk. He framed Shezadi as a security threat, and as someone who does not belong to Norway, even though she is, as Amundsen stated, legally a citizen (NRK 2018).

Legal experts agreed with Amundsen that Norway did not have any legal commitments to citizens outside their jurisdiction who have breached the official travelling advice. Adele Mestad at the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (NIM) argued that the Government had to assess her case according to the principle of equality before the law. She also argued that possessing a child in such conditions, complicated the situation further, but that the child is legally a Norwegian citizen (NRK 2018). The Progress Party's MP Amundsen did not mention Shezadi's child or speak of her as a mother (NRK 2018).

While this was the first time the authorities were given a real choice on this issue, the issue was not regarded as an actual nor an imminent issue for the authorities. Interviews with Shezadi illustrated that she did not present any regret, still proposed extreme Islamic beliefs, and defended ISIL's actions by conveying 'that is what war is like' (Kvamme et al. 2018). Apart from the formal request, she did not show any explicit wish to return to Norway, in fact, she stated that she would leave for a different Islamic country after the sentence: 'Grunnen til at jeg velger å returnere til Norge nå, er at det er bedre enn å returnere til Daesh eller bli her. Hadde jeg hatt et bedre sted å dra til, hadde jeg veldig gjerne dratt dit'³ (Kvamme et al. 2018). When questioned on whether she would cooperate with the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST) upon return, the answer was: 'Om jeg returnerer, så kommer

³ 'The reason that I choose to return to Norway now, is that it is a better option than returning to Daesh or stay here. If I had a better place to go, I would rather go there' (Kvamme et al 2018)

jeg nok til å ha et møte med PST om jeg vil det eller ikke. Så jeg får se på det tidspunktet hva de ønsker å vite, og hva jeg ønsker å fortelle'⁴ (Kvamme et al. 2018)

At least by this interview in NRK, she was presented as a calculated and political influenced being (Kvamme et al. 2018). Shezadi thereby became *the* example of the women in al-Hol and resulted in a public challenge of the previous depictions of these women as victims and more passive agents (Owe 2018). To illustrate, the journalist Øyvind Strømme (2018) wrote in an opinion piece: 'Det er vanskeleg å sjå på Aisha Shezadi som eit offer. Rett nok hadde ho ein vanskeleg oppvekst i ein valdeleg heim, noko som kanskje kan vera med å forklara kvifor ho var sårbar for radikalisering. Shezadi er snarare medskuldig. Ho har støtta og drive reklame for ei morderisk ekstremistørsle'⁵. In his view, the children were the victims. However, surprisingly, the children did not make it into the political argumentation pursued by the chosen actors for this analysis until further out in phase two.

The way Shezadi presented herself, contributed to and made it possible for the Progress Party to take the lead early on in the debate. Her statements could indeed quickly be mobilised alongside their ideological agenda. If she, hypothetically, had come forward as a regretting mother, praying for her children's welfare, the next debate might have been different.

As a result of the specific framing of Shezadi the situation was not perceived as necessitating an imminent involvement. Her agency and self-determination, and the absence of any explicit wish to return home made most parties take a wait-and-see approach. On the other hand, here, the difficulties of the case are demonstrated. Standard procedures of consular cases, like equality under the law, was made difficult with how the story was presented in the media. As MP Peter Frølich (H) (Torvik 2018) stated in *Klassekampen*: 'Jeg kan se for meg at det går politikk i dette – at man blander inn at hun sto og står for forkvaklede holdninger. Men selv

⁴ 'If I return, then I will most likely meet the PST if I want to or not. So, I will see at that time what they want to know, and what I wish to say' (Kvamme et al 2018)

⁵ 'It is difficult to regard Aisha Shezadi as a victim. She did have a difficult childhood in a violent home, something that could perhaps partly explain her vulnerability to radicalization. Shezadi is rather an accomplice. She has supported and advertised for a murderous extremist organisation' (Øyvind Strømme 2018)

slik folk har like rettigheter for loven. Det er det fine med rettsstaten'⁶. Nonetheless, linking the female affiliates to the crimes continued to be a recurring frame throughout the debate, as will be illustrated in the subsequent chapter.

The identity Shezadi assigned to herself in her opinion pieces and the interviews and then implicated the rhetoric, is an explicit example of how 'key events' formed the 'official policy identity constellation' (Hansen 2006, p. 32). Although of significance, Shezadi's request did not gain much traction; and the debate quickly faded out. However, it made the public and politicians familiar with the issue of the female ISIL affiliates, gave it a face and perhaps contributed to a large amount of attention when the issue reoccurred later on. When an issue is securitised, it is contingent on an explicit re-articulation of the issue to diminish the security aspects (Hansen 2006, p. 35). The significant *selection* of the children as victims that occurred, later on, was in this case, insufficient to change the discourse on the affiliates as possible threats.

4.2 - Phase 2 – Winter/Spring 2019 – Practical, Moral, and Legal Difficulties

ISIL gradually lost territory at the beginning of 2019, and as a result, women and children fled and were placed in overcrowded camps. Because it was previously known that there had been Norwegian women and children within ISIL-territories, the Norwegian media started a search for them within the camps. While the latter phase was only marked by one story, in this second phase, the Norwegian media started an active search for more affiliates, and more stories were aired on television and published in newspapers. Not only did an intensified political debate occur, in which a more considerable number of politicians engaged, but there was also, a more substantial engagement from non-political actors, particularly after the announcements of Swedish and Norwegian orphans residing in the camps (Johnsen et al. 2019a, Ismaeli et al. 2019a). The point of contention in this phase was how moral and legal

⁶ 'I can imagine that the issue is politicised – that one links her to her wrongful opinions. But even such people are equal before the law. That's the nice thing about the rule of law.' (Torvik 2018)

principles should be applied, and how far the International Convention of the Rights of the Child (ICRC) should be interpreted.

In February 2019 two Swedish women, and their children, were found in the camp Al-Hol; Samira and Lisa, both expressing a wish to return to Sweden (Veum and Alayoubi 2019). Shortly after, the Norwegian and Swedish foreign fighter Michael Skråmo's situation became an issue, as it was reported that he had been arrested in Syria (Johnsen et al. 2019a), which also meant that his seven children's situation was indeterminate. The story on Skråmo was later withdrawn after its validity was questioned, but on the 17th March 2019, authorities claimed that he was killed (Mokhtari and Klinghoffer 2019).

In late April, The Norwegian daily *Aftenposten* unveiled that they had found five Norwegian orphans in Al-Hol, whose father was killed and mother had disappeared (Ismaeli et al. 2019a). The return of Skråmo's seven children to Sweden at the beginning of May, made it clear that it was indeed practically possible to return people from Al-Hol (Darrud and Hirsti 2019, Johnsen and Sandblad 2019), and catalysed expectations for that the orphans would eventually be repatriated too. However, the main emphasis in this phase was the non-orphaned children.

Returning to February, and the commencement of the second phase with a debate on NRK Radio, in which was the first time the children were prominent political discourse. In February 2019, the Liberal Party's MP Abid Raja called for that Norway should return all the children from Al-Hol, upon consent from their mothers (NRK 2019a). However, this was countered by the Progress Party MP Jon Helgheim who securitised the children by claiming that they may have received training in weaponry. Also, a return of the children would automatically lead to a return of the mothers, the terrorists, and the more ethical and moral choice would thereby mean to prioritise the security in Norway (NRK 2019a).

The Progress Party thereby continued to take the lead and dominate the debate, by painting the picture of these women as threats to the state security and as traitors of national values (NRK 2019a and b, Jensen 2019b). The party anchored their policy towards the female ISIL affiliate in one of their core policies; safe communities, and argued that a return could raise the threat level. In this way, the Progress party presented a story their electorate welcomed and resonated with. 'Resten av Europa ser jo nå på muligheten for å kopiere dette regelverket,

og det viser, kjære landsstyre, at Fremskrittspartiet utgjør en forskjell i det som er samfunnets viktigste oppgave; nemlig å sikre trygghet for våre innbyggere'⁷ (Jensen 2019b).

Even the NRK's programme host, Fredrik Solvang, in the TV debate in the beginning of March joined in on the FrP's tone: 'Hva gjør vi med norske barn som sitter fast i en pøl av elendighet? Hva gjør vi med uskyldige barn av svikere av Norge? For hva ellers kan man kalle de 10-12 norske kvinnene fra steder som Bærum, Verdal og Oslo, som frivillig reiste for å bidra til IS-kalifatet? Svikere, ja vel, men etter det blir alt vanskeligere'⁸ (NRK 2019b). This depiction of the affiliates as traitors illustrates how dominant the Progress Party's framing became, when the opening of what should be a neutral TV debate at the national broadcaster reflected these aspects. Also, later in the debate, Solvang asked whether it was such a good idea to repatriate the indoctrinated children of a known terrorist (Skråmo) (NRK 2019b).

Even the introduction of a 29-year old with entirely different statements than Shezadi did not introduce any changes in the leading rhetoric by the Progress Party. 7th March 2019, TV2 published an interview in which she was presented as innocent and blaming her deceased husband for taking her to Syria. 'Han tok meg med uten min tillatelse. Jeg trodde jeg kunne reise hjem, men han lot meg ikke dra. Jeg fikk aldri lov til å gå ut døren eller snakke med noen. Jeg kunne ikke få hjelp, fordi jeg ikke kunne arabisk'⁹ (Clausen 2019). She claimed that she was taken to Syria against her will, and had attempted to flee as soon as 2013. Therefore, her self-presentation was more personal than political, as a victim with less agency. Thereby, she confirmed and fitting into the narrative trends introduced by Sjoberg and Gentry (2007), but also less likely according to newer research (Lia 2019). It might, on the other hand, seem

⁷ 'The rest of Europe are now considering the possibility of copying these rules, and this illustrates, dear National Executive Committee, that the Progress Party does make a difference in our society's most important task; namely to secure safety for our citizens' (Jensen 2019b)

⁸ 'What are we going to do with Norwegian children stuck in such misery? What are we going to do with the children of those who have betrayed Norway? For what else can you call the 10-12 Norwegian women from places like Bærum, Verdal and Oslo, who voluntarily travelled to contribute to ISIL's caliphate? Traitors, okey, but after that, everything gets more difficult' (NRK 2019b)

⁹ 'He brought me there without my permission. I thought that I could go home, but he didn't let me go. I was never allowed to walk out the door or to talk to anyone. I could not get any help, because I did not speak Arabic' (Clausen 2019)

that this story fuelled the Progress Party's rhetoric. Siv Jensen (2019b) declared on their assembly with the party's National Executive Committee that this woman must have known what she did and that she altogether refutes Norwegian values. Therefore, Norway should not take responsibility for this situation: 'Og jeg mener at vi ikke skal løfte en eneste finger for å få deg tilbake til Norge'¹⁰.

The Liberal Party and the Christian Conservative Party struggled in this phase to define the women as Norway's responsibility. To bypass a characterisation of the women, a *selection* of the responsibility for the children was emphasised. It was particularly salient in MP Raja's (V) (NRK 2019b) argumentation during the TV debate on 5th March; 'Nå diskuterer vi to forskjellige ting. De forholder seg til de voksne, vi forsøker å forholde oss til barna. De vil ikke gjøre noen ting, og vi sier: vet du hva det å ikke gjøre noen ting er ikke et alternativ verdig for Norge'¹¹. The Christian Democratic Party also directed the emphasis towards the children, but also conveyed that assisting the children should not mean a separation from their mothers. The statement from the bi-annual Party Assembly (KrF 2019b) stated: 'Foreldreløse barn må ha førsteprioritet, men alle barna må få hjelp til å komme hjem, og det kan ikke være en forutsetning at de må skilles fra foreldrene sine'¹². The party kept this stance throughout the whole period analysed (NRK 2019g, q).

Secondly, during this phase, legal and moral arguments were conflated with political considerations, and thereby illustrates, that a *selection* of legal principles has been necessary politically when the field is so vague. To exemplify, MP Abid Raja (V) (NRK 2019a) argued: 'Og er dette norske barn, så mener jeg vi både har et etisk, juridisk, moralsk og også en sikkerhetspolitisk plikt til å hjelpe disse barna, mens de er små, for da har vi fremdeles en

¹⁰ 'And I believe that we should not lift even a finger, to get you back to Norway' (Siv Jensen 2019b)

¹¹ 'Now we are discussing two different things. They have been focusing on the adults, we are attempting to focus on the children. They would rather not do anything, and we say that not doing anything is not a worthy option for Norway' (NRK 2019b).

¹² 'Orphans need to be prioritised first, but all the children need to get help to come home, and separating them from their parents cannot be a condition' (NRK 2019g, q)

mulighet til å reintegrere de i det norske samfunnet'¹³. According to him, Norwegian authorities were committed to returning the children, which could be pursued after consent from their mothers (NRK 2019b). During the NRK debate 5th March, the programme host challenged him on what he meant by judicial commitment. He then clarified that a return was only of a moral and ethical commitment and that the legal commitments were only actualised if the affiliates were able to get to a Norwegian consulate or the border on their own (NRK 2019b). In mid-April MP Raja (V) published an opinion piece, in which he underlined that it was an ethical and moral commitment to assist the children. Perhaps this piece was published to present his argument coherently, and to formally make clear that there was no legal commitment upon Norway after all (Raja 2019a).

The Progress Party took the stance early on that they could not separate mother and children, as this would be considered an abduction (NRK 2019b). Although they in this way concurred with the clinical psychologist present in this debate, they differed on whether they were morally obliged to assist the children; which, with this framework in mind, would mean an assist of both children and mothers (NRK 2019b). They instead emphasised the parent's responsibility for the situation, and that they should take the consequences for it: 'Og plutselig la det bli til en kampsak at disse uansvarlige foreldrene skal beholde barna sine, det er utrolig'¹⁴ (NRK 2019g). This intervention circumscribes the framing of the situation. Rather than framing the situation about the innocent children's legal rights, the irresponsible parents' rights were the main emphasis.

From the second phase and onwards, the Conservative Party argued that apart from the orphans, children would only be repatriated upon consent from their parents to let them go (NRK 2019e). Although some experts argued in the subsequent phase that this would be illegal, as consent would be involuntary and invalid (Svendsen 2019), the Conservative Party kept this policy throughout the entire period analysed.

¹³ 'If these are Norwegian children, then I believe that we have an ethical, legal, moral, but also a national security duty to help these children, while they are small, because then we still have an opportunity to integrate them into the Norwegian community' (NRK 2019a)

¹⁴ 'To all of a sudden rally for the cause, that these irresponsible parents should get to keep their children, that is unbelievable' (NRK 2019q)

Various speakers across the party primarily emphasised the practical difficulties at this stage. Prime Minister Erna Solberg (H) argued that they did not know who could pursue the DNA testing, and further that the security situation and problematic diplomacy with some states could make the process difficult (NRK 2019d, e). Nonetheless, the Prime Minister underlined that at this stage, they would give priority to the orphans, and consider the other children consecutively (NRK 2019e and g). A position that can be regarded as appeasement between the Progress Party and the smaller parties – The Christian Democratic Party and the Liberal Party. It was in public neither promised any more returns, but nor was it ruled out. This move was primarily due to the limitations of a Government on what they can state publicly without disturbing ongoing difficult diplomatic actions.

So, the debate was, at this stage, arguably characterised by a lack of clarity on the boundaries of what Norwegian authorities could do in this situation, and the following conflation of legal principles, moral, ethics and politics. Therefore, it was a process in which the actors seemed to try to make sense of the situation and how it would evolve, what van Hulst and Yanow would term a process of sense-making (2016). The parties arguing for the separation of children and their mother and bring the children to Norway struggled to present coherent and consistent arguments and thereby lost momentum to the Progress Party who claimed separation was impossible and that neither the children nor their mother could come.

In this environment, the Progress Party found a way to entrench the image of a threatening traitor in their belief that a state should prioritise its citizens, but within the boundaries of the nation-state. The image of regretting mother did not sway their argument, as it was already firmly grounded after Shezadi presented her story. The Progress Party, but particularly the MP Helgheim (FrP) attempted to re-define what was moral, in light of explaining how a particular choice would heighten insecurity (NRK 2019a and b). As was illustrated in 2.4, Martin (2015, p. 33) argued that strong rhetoric attempts to circumscribe what is perceived to be true, therefore also the solution to be a natural response.

4.3 - Phase 3 - Spring/Autumn 2019: Political Will Demonstrated

From trying to make sense of the legal and moral principles, in phase two, in this subsequent phase, the political will was demonstrated as the first repatriation from Al-Hol to Norway was executed. The Prime Minister announced in June that Norwegian authorities had returned the

five orphans to Norway (NRK 2019h). Not only illustrating that it was indeed possible to assist people out of the camps, but also, political will to pursue it was demonstrated, that there were individuals willing despite the security risk. Like the previous, the third phase was characterised by a discussion on all the practical difficulties and moral boundaries of repatriation. However, it stands out by the first assisted return to Norway, and that a fuller picture of the situation in Syria for the Norwegians was mapped out.

'Kjære alle sammen. Jeg er glad for at fem foreldreløse norske barn, som har vært i leiren Al-Hol i Syria, nå er trygt på vei til Norge'¹⁵, was Erna Solberg's (NRK 2019h) introduction to a press conference in June 2019, where she and Foreign Minister Søreide could announce that the five orphans were returned to Norway. Further, it was stated that this had been their primary priority, and that they would assess the other children subsequently: 'Men som vi har sagt, vi har gjort en prioritering av dette, og gjort en prioritering av de barna som er foreldreløse, og så vil vi alltid vurdere i fremtiden situasjonen til andre barn, men vi går ikke i detalj med dette, rett og slett for det har også med de barnas sikkerhet'¹⁶ (NRK 2019h).

Repatriating the orphans was not at all a surprising move, it was widely agreed upon that these children were the most vulnerable and imminent issue. Therefore, the development rendered previous arguments on how difficult it was to return people from Al-Hol invalid, but also that there were individuals willing to take the personal risks.

From here, it was perhaps to some a surprise that the Government decided to stay on their course, by continuing to argue that they would only repatriate children upon the consent of their mothers to be separated from them. Also, the insistence on that they would not return the 29-year old and her critically ill child was not a given in this situation. Some other states chose early on to repatriate their citizens. For instance, in phase 2, more precisely in late April, Kosovo repatriated over 70 children and 30 women, with the aim of re-integrating these

¹⁵ 'Dear everyone. I am happy that five Norwegian orphans, who have been in the Al-Hol camp in Syria, are now safely on their way to Norway' (NRK 2019h)

¹⁶ 'But as we have said, we have made a prioritisation in this matter, and have prioritised the children who are orphans, and then we will always assess in the future the situation of the other children, but we will not go into detail about this, simply because it also has to do with the children's safety' (NRK 2019h).

into society. The country's Minister of Justice justified this move by arguing that this act would send a message that the country did not surrender its citizens and that they did not support terrorism' (NTB 2019).

Nonetheless, the Norwegian Government kept their stance, and the question of whether a repatriation would preserve rule of law and due process, was not discussed in length. When questioned on what would happen with the other women and children in Al-Hol, the process was securitised, by arguing that security aspects set limits to what they could say publicly (NRK 2019j).

The same day as the authorities repatriated five orphans, *Aftenposten* unveiled that the two sisters from Bærum, from Åsne Seierstad's book *Two Sisters* (Ismaeli et al. 2019, Seierstad 2018), had been taking care of the five orphans. In an interview with *Aftenposten*, they informally expressed a wish to be returned to Norway (Ismaeli et al. 2019), however, they never filed a formal request. The interview confirmed what was already told in Seierstad's book (2018), that they claimed they left Norway in 2013 for humanitarian reasons (Ismaeli et al. 2019), and that all they did in Syria was to cook and do house chores. Both refused to comment on any questions concerning ISIL (Ismaeli et al. 2019).

Later, in August 2019, the 29-year old woman, that first presented her story in phase 2, asked for assistance. She claimed that her son was critically ill, and upon request, lawyers and experts started to work for a return of both the mother and her children (Svendsen, Olsen and Alayoubi 2019). Although her statements represented a different story; as in phase 2, these did not change the rhetoric, except for MP Raja (V). H depicted the women in a highly personalised manner and changed his argumentation depending on their story. He set forth that this affiliate should be treated differently than the others because of how she framed her story: 'Jeg har overhodet ingen sympati med de aller fleste av de mødrene, de som har tilsluttet seg ISIL med åpne øyne. Så må vi gjøre individuelle forskjeller mellom disse kvinnene, den historien vi leser i dag i VG som handler om denne moren til den syke fireåringen, har en annen historie enn de andre kvinnene'¹⁷ (NRK 2019m).

¹⁷ 'I have absolutely no sympathy for most of these mothers, of those who have joined ISIL with their eyes wide open. Then we need to differentiate individually between these women, the story that we have read today in VG about the mother of the ill four-year-old, does have a different story than the other women' (NRK 2019m)

In early October, the Norwegian Government decided, secretly, that they would assist the 29-year old along with her critically ill child and her other child, and the enlarged Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence was oriented (Vignæs et al. 2020). However, the Turkish invasion of Syria made the situation on the ground harder for Norwegian authorities (Jentoft et al. 2019), and the process took on longer than expected.

As the decision to return was not known officially, and neither known by all members of Parliament, the debate continued through the autumn of 2019. MP Une Bastholm from the Green Party proposed in the Parliament to return both the presumed critical ill child, as well as his mother and sister (S. tid (2019-2020), ss.41-4). It has later on been argued that this debate made the operation on the ground more dangerous (NRK 2019). Even though the parliamentary debate occurred after the Cabinet had made their decision to return them, the Governmental parties voted against to keep the operation underway secret, but also to emphasise their view that that consular cases should not be decided in Parliament (NRK 2019s).

In hindsight, there was perhaps given some signs that there might be something ongoing in late autumn of 2019 and January 2020. There was less activity from the woman's lawyer at the time, and a decrease in TV and radio debates on the issue. In the debate in 2019, at Dagsnytt 18 at NRK 20/9-2019, The Conservative MP Michael Tetzchner even suggested that there may be some processes underway that were not publically announced (NRK 2019m). The Police Security Services (PST) officially charged the 29-year old for being affiliated with two terror-organisations in early October 2019 (Svendsen 2019), perhaps indicating that something was underway.

The autumn was quiet from the Government side, and led the ones not knowing about the decision to become more salient. MP Raja (V) was frustrated with what he saw as a paralysed cabinet: 'Handlingslammelse, dette er handlingslammelse uten like og dette skjærer i oss alle som ser disse brutale bildene, hvor disse barna regelrett er utsatt for det jeg vil karakterisere som umenneskelig og nedverdiggende. Det påligger staten Norge, den beste staten av alle

stater i hele verden, en plikt til å reagere, en moralsk og etisk plikt.’¹⁸ (NRK 2019m). The debate continued onwards from October; almost like an artificial debate discussing something which would eventually happen in phase 4 of the study.

Bearing in mind that the Cabinet decided in early October that the 29-year old would be returned with her children, two actors made attempts to depoliticise the debate. Firstly, in an opinion piece then Minister of Justice Jøran Kallmyr (FrP) (2019) made the argument that some of the questions debated in public were the prosecutors’ responsibility. ‘Vi lever heldigvis i et fritt demokrati og en rettsstat, der spørsmål om straffeforfølgelse og straff besluttes av påtalemyndighetene og til sist domstolene – og ikke av politikere’¹⁹. Further, MP Tetzchner (H) focused in his argumentations of the boundaries of the bureaucratic establishment versus the politicians; as a way to uphold the vital principle of the equality before the law. He therefore warned that politicians should not process individuals’ consular cases: ‘Når vi da kommer inn på denne enkeltsaken, så må vi passe på å ikke bli saksbehandlere av den’²⁰(NRK 2019m). Since these arguments were given after the Government had decided, but not publicly announced, to return the critically ill child and his mothers, these instances may have been purely rhetorical, to re-direct attention away from the policymakers.

4.4 - Phase 4 - The First Repatriation of an Adult ISIL affiliate

Despite efforts to tone down the political aspects of the issue in the previous phase, the fourth and final phase demonstrated how political and personal the issue had become. On the 14th January 2020, Norwegian media revealed, and later confirmed by the Government, that the 29-year-old woman and her children have been assisted out of Syria and into Erbil in the Kurdish autonomic region in Northern-Iraq (Vignæs et al. 2020). This event marked the start of the fourth and final phase of this study, as it was the first, and so far, only assisted return of

¹⁸ ‘Paralysis of action, this is paralysis without parity, and this cuts into all of us who see these brutal images, where these children outright are exposed to what I would characterized as inhumane and degrading.’ (NRK 2019m)

¹⁹ ‘We are fortunately living in a free democracy and the rule of law, where the question of prosecutions and punishment are decided by the prosecutorial authority and finally the courts – and not by the politicians’ (Kallmyr 2019).

²⁰ ‘When we touch upon this individual case, we need to make sure that we are not becoming case managers of it’ (NRK 2019m)

an ISIL affiliate. While the previous phase was characterised by an intricate discussion on moral, legal and practical boundaries, this final phase was primarily a reaction to the return, and thereby was more evaluative. A victory for the smaller parties in the political centre; the Christian Democratic Party and the Liberal Party, therefore, marked this period.

Prime Minister Erna Solberg justified the return of an adult affiliate, which contravened their previous argumentation as a fundamentally moral and humanitarian act, all because of the critically ill child: 'Og så er situasjonen at noen ganger må du som regjering ta noen moralske og viktige valg, vi har gjort det, og så var det for flertallet av regjeringen av hensyn til det syke barnet det aller viktigste. Og dette er en humanitær handling, som når du sitter og styrer en regjering må ta stiling til. Og som vi synes altså var nødvendig å gjøre på denne måten'²¹(NRK 2019q). In the initial Press Conference, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ine E. Søreide further on attempted to land the debate, by stressing that the other Norwegian female ISIL affiliates by all probability did not wish to return to Norway. These had either not formally requested to be returned, or had retracted the request in national media (VG 2019a). Also, the extraordinary circumstances of the critically ill child would not initiate precedence, but that possible new requests would be determined individually (VG 2019a).

The repatriation shocked the political landscape, and catalysed first of all a political debate on the Government structure, and also led The Progress Party to leave the coalition. By warning that any returns of adult affiliates would elevate the security threat to Norwegian citizens, their argumentation before the return made it politically costly for them to stay in position. The party leader Siv Jensen, at the meeting in the National Executive Committee of the party, had even argued that on their watch; no one would be taken home (Jensen 2019b).

As a result, the humanitarian and moral framing took over the lead during this phase, which catalysed a harsher and more securitised tone from the Progress Party. The repatriated female affiliate was also personally blamed for raising the threat level in Norway, even though she would be prosecuted. However, these concerns were won over by emphasis upon control and

²¹ 'And then the situation is that sometimes as a government you have to make some moral and important choices, we've done that, and for the majority of the government the most important consideration was of the sick child. And this is a humanitarian act, which when you sit and lead a government must have a position on. And we think it was necessary to do it in this manner' (NRK 2019q).

prosecution made by the remaining Coalition parties (NRK 2019b, FRP 2019, and more). The debate was also concerned with what would be the best way to reduce the security risk, letting her stay in Al-Hol or bring her home for prosecution

Before the return, both Prime Minister Solberg (H) and Minister of Foreign Affairs Søreide, both from the Conservative Party, had given as little information on the process possible. They did not convey their principles concerning the Norwegian female ISIL affiliates, nor did they answer in its entirety what their plans were further on in the process. Concerns for security justified this, but it also gave them a room for manoeuvre and a possibility to keep a more pragmatic stance. This argumentation led the media, on the other hand, to claim that they made a U-turn by returning the 29-year old. PM Solberg and Minister Søreide responded by stating that they had previously made clear that they would assess the situation for the children left in the camps, but that the orphans were the primary priority at that time (VG 2019a).

As previously indicated, the third phase was publicly quieter from the Government side. However, the repatriation made it possible, but also more expedient, for the ministers to join the debate in the fourth phase. Minister Ine E. Søreide distinctly emphasised, perhaps as an appeasement to the Progress Party; that none had expressed a wish to return the mother: 'Det er ingen av regjeringspartiene som har hatt noe ønske om å bistå mor her, og voksne mennesker som slutter seg til IS²² (NRK 2019n)'. In contrast, the Christian Democratic Party's official policy has been to return all the children along with their mothers upon request, but in this particular quote, this was not mentioned.

Responses from the other coalition parties varied. MP Raja (V), on the one hand, proposed the day after the announcement of the repatriation that all the Norwegian children and their mothers should be returned (Gilbrant and Suvatne 2020). This argument both frustrated and precipitated a strong response from the Progress Party, which went further than earlier, and argued that the Norwegian authorities should have pressured the mother to send her child on its own to Norway (NRK 2019q).

²² 'There are none of the coalition parties who have had a wish to assist the mother here, and adults who have joined IS' (NRK 2019n)

On the other side, Kjell Ingolf Ropstad (KrF), Minister of Children and Families, was more visible in this phase. It will be elaborated upon in section 5.4 how he characterised the women more harshly than his colleagues had. Still, he argued it was a matter of conscience to return all the children, or else they would be judged harshly later on (NRK 2019n). At one point, he almost asked more mothers in the camps to request return, in order for the children to come to Norway: 'I utgangspunktet så ønsker jo jeg at de skal komme hjem, men det er foreldrene som har ansvar for dem. Norge har ikke lov, vi har ingen myndighet til å bare reise ned til Syria og hjelpe unge hjem, det er foreldrene som bestemmer. Og derfor så lenge foreldrene ikke ber om hjelp, og det er ingen av de som har bedt om hjelp, så har man ikke noe mulighet til å få de hjem..... Men da må foreldrene be om hjelp, og jeg håper virkelig at de velger å sende ungene sine til Norge...' (NRK 2019q).

Though harsher than earlier towards the woman, Minister Ropstad's message to the Progress Party was clear: 'Men dette handler om et dilemma som enhver regjering sitter i, du hadde valget; skulle du se på at disse ungene skulle bli igjen, eller skulle du hente de hjem? Hadde FrP fått viljen sin, så hadde de blitt der og kanskje de også hadde dødd'²⁴ (NRK 2019q). Thereby, the uncertainty about how critical the situation was for the supposed critically ill child worked in the proponents for repatriation's favour. However, as no further information was enclosed after the return, made NRK's Fredrik Solvang in Debatten to raise the question whether the situation was as imminent as claimed (NRK 2019s).

The TV debate on NRK 20th January 2020 (NRK 2019s) marked the endpoint of the analysis. During this debate, the topic shifted from the ISIL affiliate and her children, to the Government composition, being the primary focus for some time.

²³ 'As a point of departure, I do wish that they could come home, but it is the parents who are responsible for them. Norway is not allowed, we have no authority to just travel down to Syria and help the kids home, it is the parents who decide. And, therefore, as long as the parents do not ask for help, and there are none of them who have asked for help, then owe have no possibilities to get them home.... But then the parents have to ask for help, and I really hope that they choose to send their children to Norway...' (NRK 2019q).

²⁴ 'But this is about a dilemma that every government is sitting with, you had the choice; should you watch as these children are left behind, or should you get them home? If the Progress Party had gotten their way, then they would have stayed there and maybe they also would have died' (NRK 2019q)

The repatriation appeared as a victory for the smaller parties within the Coalition, and as a substantial downturn for the Progress Party. The party not only felt the need to leave the Coalition, but also that the issue may have demonstrated a lack of power in the political landscape. The decision to leave Government might have been made with a broader political goal in mind and thereby taking advantage of the resulting minority government to get other significant wins. Nonetheless, there had been signs from the other Norwegian female ISIL affiliates in Al-Hol that they would not request repatriation, which turned the debate into more or less an evaluative character.

Even though they disagreed profoundly in terms of national responsibility, overall, the parties characterised the female affiliates by way of differentiation from the Norwegian identity. The subsequent section will present the most prominent *names* deduced from the data collected, and elaborate on the device – that is, the type of framing employed by the most important actors in the debate.

5 – The Self v. Traitors, Terrorists, Mothers

The Norwegian ISIL affiliates are Norwegian citizens, but not necessarily Norway's legal responsibility. This chapter will assess how policymakers have framed the 'self' and the 'other', and how these images delineate political solutions, with a particular emphasis on responsibility. Foreign policy is, according to Hansen (2006, p. 1), dependent upon the framing of the identity of oneself and the others in the international arena. Unresolved issues that are not automatically framed in a certain way are reliant upon policy frames to define not only the solution but the nature of the issue itself. As a result, the links between identity and policy are unstable in contested issues; and the speakers are free to find openings to redirect the links in favour of their framing and solution (Hansen 2006, p. 21)

As the previous chapter suggested, the TV and newspaper interviews with the affiliates have established what the public knows about them. This coverage has also provided a reference point for political argumentation, which has become highly personal about these individuals. However, more generally, this thesis will illustrate how the three framings *mothers/parents*, *terrorists* and *traitors* have emerged throughout the whole analysed period. Some have used these categories to define the women as outside of Norwegian responsibility. In contrast, others have attempted to use the categories to counteract and break the discursive links, and to argue for different solutions.

As shown in chapter 2, the analytical work is a result of a post-structuralist reading of the selected data material; by investigating how the primary framings make use of linking and differentiation vis-à-vis the female affiliates. This methodological reading coincides well with van Hulst and Yanow's theory on 'framing' (2016). The analysis, therefore, applied the framing tools *naming*, *categorisation* and *selection* to identify and analyse the debate, and to make Hansen's framework (2006) more concrete. First, how do the speakers draw upon the Norwegian 'Self' in the argumentation?

5.1 The Norwegian 'Self'

The political debate on the ISIL affiliates has illustrated how the notion of 'the Norwegian self' is not only about citizenship; but defined by a set of values, goods, privileges attached to personal responsibility. Some actors have even gone as far as to explicitly argue that being

Norwegian is not something that you ‘are’, it is something you actively have to stand for. Also, a significant point of contestation in the Norwegian policy debate has been illuminated; namely, the struggle concerning how Norway’s identity and traditions as a humanitarian power should affect policy and practice.

The Christian Democratic Party have primarily defined the ‘self’ by a *selection* of the safe environment the affiliates’ children should be entitled. Norway’s identity is, in this case, defined spatially (Hansen 2006, p. 46); meaning that it is territorially bounded, linked to the characterisation of a safe and good place for the children to grow up. The Norwegian environment is thereby juxtaposed against the severe conditions the children are suffering under in Syria. Moreover, the Christian Democratic Party have emphasised that the children *are* Norwegian citizens (NRK 2019g), innocent and that the authorities should take the children home (NRK 2019g, KrF 2019b, NRK 2019q). In Norway, the children will be granted a better upbringing in more dignified conditions (NRK 2019g). It was undoubtedly difficult for the Christian Democratic Party to include adults linked to the bestiality of ISIL in their framing of the debate. The party solved the dilemma by selecting the innocent and vulnerable children, not the adults in their emphasis.

Similarly, The Liberal Party’s MP Raja (2019a) has *selected* depictions of ‘the catastrophe’ in Syria as an emphasis, and also juxtaposed this against who Norway is as a nation. The argument that this particular situation forces the country to act, because of its position in the world, as well as the ability to give the children new opportunities in life; draws heavily upon national sentiment. His resonance reflects Norway’s image of itself as a humanitarian peace-worker (Tvedt 2016) – a state not hesitating to help the vulnerable abroad. In phase 3 of the analysis, MP Raja (NRK 2019m) intensified his argument by elaborating upon Norway’s identity and imperative to act by using the expressions: ‘den beste staten i verden’²⁵ and ‘ledestjernen av stater’²⁶. In his view, the character of Norway gives them responsibility to act on behalf of the children that needs it: ‘Det påligger staten Norge, den beste staten av alle stater i hele verden, en plikt til å reagere, en moralsk og etisk plikt’²⁷.

²⁵ ‘the best state in the world’ (NRK 2019m)

²⁶ ‘the leading star of states’ (NRK 2019m)

²⁷ ‘it is the responsibility of the state of Norway, the best state of all the states in the whole world, a duty to react, a moral and ethical duty’ (NRK 2019m)

The framing of Norway as a ‘safe’ place for the children, is dependent on a characterisation of the subject as innocent and in need of what Norway can and should give. In contrast, The Progress Party have *selected* the responsibility to protect the Norwegian community against possible threats (Jensen 2019b, NRK 2019p) as their focal point. In this way, any considerations about the wellbeing of the children, are not weighing up against this primary concern of safety. Repatriating the adults would thus be a breach of what is fair and just; which means that we should not only prioritise the Norwegian community first but also make sure we treat all citizens in trouble abroad equally. ’Hvorfor skal vi plutselig endre regler eller gjøre unntak fra de strenge reglene som gjelder for alle andre, bare fordi vi her snakker om barn av terrorister?’²⁸ (Helgheim 2019a). This quote also links the children to ISIL and terrorism, which will be dealt with in the next section (5.2).

Therefore, the Progress Party have argued that there is no morality in an assisted repatriation, it would discriminate against other citizens abroad. In phase 1, it was observed that MP Amundsen (FrP) argued that a return to Norway, with all its complementary rights and belonging to the Norwegian community, would be a privilege the ISIL affiliates were not worthy of. Regarding Shezadi, Amundsen argued (NRK 2018): ’Det er en helt annen behandling hun vil få i Norge enn hun vil få de fleste andre plasser i verden, dersom hun blir straffeforfulgt der hun er nå. Det å belønne med et norsk fengsel, et tidlig frislipp, og bli en del av det norske samfunnet det er ikke jeg med på’²⁹. Later, in phase 4, reacting to the return of the first adult ISIL affiliate, MP Helgheim (FrP) (NRK 2019q) warned: ’et sted må vi si stopp, når vi ser ressursbruken, når vi ser rettferdigheten, når vi ser at andre i en situasjon som ikke har gjort noe galt, men heller ikke får norske myndigheters hjelp, nærmest fordi de ikke

²⁸ ‘Why should we suddenly change rules or make exceptions from the strict rules that apply to everyone else, just because we are talking about the children of terrorists’ (Helgheim 2019a)

²⁹ ‘She will receive an entirely different treatment in Norway than most other places in the world, if she is prosecuted where she is now. To reward someone with Norwegian prison, an early release, and to become a part of Norwegian society is not something that I support.’ (NRK 2018)

har et IS-medlem inn i saken, men det er mange som står og skulle gjerne hatt norske myndigheters hjelp, men har ikke fått den medieoppmerksomheten³⁰.

The Progress Party was throughout the whole debate firm in their judgment that they were the ones guarding security, morality and justice, premised on the idea that the ISIL affiliates did not deserve Norway's assistance. According to MP Helgheim (FrP) (NRK 2019g), they were the only ones to see the whole picture and the reality as it was, and therefore also alone in acting upon it in a just manner: 'Men nå er det jo fortsatt sånn at et flertall ser realitetene her, og klarer å beholde de verdiene og prinsippene som vi pleier å basere nasjonen på og ønsker ikke at disse kvinnene skal komme tilbake'³¹. Similarly, MP Tetzchner (NRK 2019h) from the Conservative Party criticised a bishop from the Norwegian Church for proposing a too simplistic solution, containing little realistic solutions on how all the intricate issues on the ground should be solved: 'Men denne generelle intervensjonen som anbefales fra biskopen her, helt uvisst på hvilket grunnlag, det er ikke veien å gå, og ingen av landene vi vanligvis samarbeider med i slike spørsmål, har inntatt enn sånn holdning'³².

The benefits and privileges in Norway were used by the Conservative Party to delineate and limit Norway's responsibility in this specific situation, similarly to the Progress Party. MP Tetzchner's applied the *naming* of the self as a 'welfare state' to reflect on regular procedures and principles that shift the responsibility of the situation upon Kurdistan (the Kurdish region that has declared autonomy in Syria), and other local non-governmental actors. These were the ones who should, in MP Tetzchner's (H) (NRK 2019c) opinion, be made accountable. 'Her er det jo snakk om at den norske velferdsstaten ikke har representanter der nede, hvilket

³⁰ 'We have to stop somewhere; when we see the amount of resources; when we see the justice, when we see other people in a situation where they have done nothing wrong, but still don't get help from the Norwegian authorities, almost because there is no IS-member in the case. But there are many people that would have wanted help from the Norwegian authorities, but who have not received the same media coverage' (NRK 2019q)

³¹ 'But now it is still the case that the majority sees the reality here, and are able to keep the values and principles that we usually have based our nation on, and do not wish for these women to return'

³² 'But this general intervention that is recommended by the Bishop here, completely unclear on what grounds, that is not the way to go, and none of the countries that we usually cooperate with on these questions, have adopted such an attitude' (NRK 2019h)

noen tror at vi har. Dette er nødt til å gå gjennom de vanlige konsulære behandlingene, ellers så blir det jo en grusom forskjellsbehandling ovenfor andre nordmenn som også har hjelpebehov³³. By invoking the notion of a ‘welfare state’, MP Tetzchner aimed to delineate Norway’s responsibility first of all for the citizens within the country. Since the affiliates had breached the official travel restrictions, active intervention by the state beyond its would be deemed unjust: ‘Det gjelder jo å ansvarliggjøre disse partene som har faktiske jurisdiksjoner over disse områdene og territoriell kontroll’³⁴(NRK 2019c).

In the French-Moland case, which took place in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Norwegian government framed the situation differently. A lack of trust toward the responsible authorities, partly because of the prison conditions, necessitated Norway’s strong response (VG 2017). Joshua French was returned in 2017, and the Prime Minister announced his return on the Constitution Day of Norway. Thereby French was highly included in the national ‘self’, though he had been working as a mercenary in DR Congo, something that was criminalised in 2016 (The Penal Code § 145 (2005). In contrast, the conditions for the ISIL affiliates in Al-Hol was not regarded as sufficient to precipitate the same response, despite that the conditions are severe, and considered the worst place the COVID-19 can hit in 2020 (International Rescue Committee 2020). Though the affiliates do not face a death penalty as the men in Congo did, they do face an uncertain humanitarian future – with no prosecution in sight. This situation led Hellestveit and Nystuen (2020) to question whether the affiliates’ passports are devalued: ‘Vi vil ikke bli som statene i Midtøsten men tidvis vil det koste oss noe’³⁵.

MP Tetzchner’s (H) referral to Norway as a welfare state meant to limit Norway’s responsibility for citizens abroad. A resonance that is highly in line with Leira’s (2017, p. 82)

³³ ‘We are indeed talking about that the Norwegian welfare state are not represented down there, in which someone think we are. There is necessity for this to pass the routine consular process, otherwise, other Norwegians in ned of help abroad are treated differently’ (NRK 2019h)

³⁴ ‘It is important to hold those parties accountable that actually have jurisdiction and territorial control over these areas’ (NRK 2019c)

³⁵ ‘We do not want to become like the states in the Middle East, but at times that will cost something’ (Hellestveit and Nystunen 2020).

argument that the duty of care abroad has been imbued with a larger personal responsibility than previously, for instance with the official travel restrictions. However, Leira (2017, p. 94) also stated the assistance to citizens abroad has often been more significant in cases with more considerable media attention. There have been some complaints from lawyers previously, for instance by then-lawyer Raja who assisted Shahid Azim in 2009, that the lack of attention in some cases may be a result of ethnicity or country of origin. The same critique was also directed by MP Raja (V) (2019a) to the handling of the female ISIL affiliates and their children in phase 2:

'I Norge har vi en lang tradisjon for å hjelpe norske borgere som havner i krevende situasjoner i utlandet. Vi må derfor, i den situasjonen vi ser i dag, spørre oss selv: Har vi to standarder for å hjelpe norske borgere i utlandet? Ser vi det som viktigere å hjelpe to etnisk norske menn som har blitt dømt for drap i Kongo, enn å hjelpe 40 norske barn med brune foreldre som har blitt utsatt for noe av det verste et barn kan utsettes for, mot sin vilje?'³⁶

MP Raja (V) here asked whether the principle of equal treatment has been applied to the ISIL affiliates' case. Similarly, Minister Skei Grande (V) (NRK 2019s), argued: 'Jeg ser ikke noen grunn til at vi skal ha norske IS-krigere, med norske pass, rekende rundt i verden uten å bli rettsforfulgt'³⁷. Considering that these were the only instances, in addition to some instances by other parties not selected for analysis, this thesis question why it was not brought up more. It would also have been more effective counter-arguments to the Progress Party's argumentation.

Still, the 29-year old ISIL affiliate and her child, amongst those a presumably critically ill five-year-old, was repatriated by Norway in January 2020. From the Government side, this

³⁶ 'We do have a long tradition of assisting Norwegian citizens that are struggling abroad. We, therefore, need in this particular situation to ask ourselves: Do we have a double standard of assisting Norwegian citizens abroad? Do we regard it as more important to help two ethnic Norwegian men who have been convicted of murder in Congo, than to assist forty Norwegian children of coloured parents who have been exposed to some of the worst a child can be exposed to, against their will?' (Raja 2019a)

³⁷ 'I see no reason to let Norwegian IS-fighters, possessing Norwegian passports, travel around the world without being prosecuted' (NRK 2019s)

action was framed as humanitarian and moral, in an extraordinary situation, which, therefore, would not create precedence (VG 2019a, NRK 2019n and q). Considering how much resistance the humanitarian and moral framing was met with by the Progress Party, illustrate the significance these still have in policy formulation. The majority of the Coalition was willing to stand up against the Progress Party in what was a difficult decision to swallow for them.

Overall, one can observe a framing of what are the moral and just options concerning the ISIL affiliates, across all parties. Anchoring policy in the humanitarian tradition, or international and legal principles, resonates with how Norway has perceived itself as a humanitarian soft power on the international arena (Tvedt 2017, p. 15). However, in line with an argument made by Tvedt (2017) - who first termed 'godhetstyranniet'³⁸ - the Progress Party have several times criticised the role moral and humanitarian arguments have in the Norwegian political debate (Sandvik 2015). Tvedt (2016) set forth that arguments rooted in what is moral or humanitarian reduce highly complex questions to simple dichotomies of what is good and bad, and also eliminate critical discussion because actions are well-intentioned. After the repatriation of the 29-year old, the Progress Party criticised PM Solberg (H) and Minister Søreide (H) for justifying it in moral terms and thereby making countering solutions look immoral (Persen et al. 2020).

On the other hand, this thesis also raises the question of why 'rettsstaten Norge', or Norway as a state governed by the rule of law, was not mobilised by the proponents for repatriation earlier. This concept has, in other significant cases been regarded as a significant marker of Norwegian identity as a state. Not only the emphasis upon how the conditions were in prisons in the Congo case but also the apology PM Solberg made to the 'German girls' in 2018 emphasising how Norway, after WWII, failed as a state that should have been 'governed by the rule of law' (Solberg 2018).

To justify the proposed solutions, actors have drawn upon different aspects of Norwegian identity as a state, which is heavily dependent on what principles they select, or overall how they make sense of the situation (van Hulst and Yanow 2016, p. 99). The uncertainty

³⁸ Tvedt (2017) –A term used to characterise the position humanitarian arguments have in political discourse and political solutions. It has also been brought into the political discourse by the Progress Party to criticise opposing parties.

regarding who the affiliates are, why they left and what they did in Syria - gives policymakers some autonomy to make effective rhetorical interventions to re-orient the audience's frame of reference (Martin 2015, p. 26). In this case, the justification for different policy approaches has been highly reliant on characterisations of who the affiliates are – traitors, terrorists or mothers, as will be explored in the forthcoming sections.

5.2 Traitors

The presentation of the ISIL affiliate during the analysed period has evolved around how they left not only Norway, but turned away from what Norway is – its values, and the protection it could offer. A few times they have been *named* 'traitors', but more generally, it has been cast doubt on whether they do 'belong' to Norway. Their nationality – and thereby belonging to Norway have often been defined in terms of citizenship. Still, some have reduced the importance of this, as the affiliates do not belong in Norway in a more normative sense. There is no reason to underestimate these women as active proponents of ISIL's ideology, in which cautions should be made. Nevertheless, one should also be cautious of how one talks about citizenship and belonging. What this *naming* also demonstrated, is how the affiliates were recognised as political and ideological beings, contrary to previously held assumptions.

Cautions concerning the affiliates was made by MP Michael Tetzchner (H), both in his argument that Norway was not necessarily responsible for this issue (see 5.1), but also in how he characterised people that have indeed broken the Norwegian travel restrictions, and the Norwegian penal code (2005). 'Også er jo dette i prinsippet norske personer som har meldt seg ut av Norge, og som ikke vil ha den beskyttelsen som det er å tilhøre Vesten eller det norske samfunnet'³⁹ (NRK 2019c). As was argued in chapter 4, and will be emphasised further on, the Conservative Party has generally pursued a more neutral tone, and have not extensively categorised the affiliates as outside of the Norwegian identity.

The Progress Party, as indicated in 5.1, defined the Norwegian identity by a set of values and moral to justify not acting on behalf of the ISIL affiliates. The differentiation of the ISIL

³⁹ 'These are in principle Norwegian people who have left Norway, and do not wish to have the protection belonging to the West or the Norwegian community' (NRK 2019c)

affiliates further substantiates this argument; by depicting them as individuals who have actively stepped out of our realm.

For instance, when discussing Aisha Shezadi's request, MP Per Willy Amundsen (NRK 2018) cast doubt on the passport and citizenship as a marker of belonging: 'Selv om hun har tilhørighet til Norge, materielt via passet sitt, så er det ikke sånn at hun hører hjemme her'⁴⁰. These women left Norway by an active choice, and will as a result live lives 'on the outside' (NRK 2019b). As a result, the responsibility is shifted onto them and away from Norwegian authorities: 'Hun har gjort et valg, hun står fremdeles for det valget åpenbart, og det har konsekvenser. Mennesker må ta ansvar for sine handlinger'⁴¹ (NRK 2018). Later, MP Helgheim (FrP) (NRK 2019b) even used the *name* traitor to characterise both the female and male ISIL-affiliates: 'Men så er det sånn at vi må se et litt større bilde her. Dette her er personer, altså de voksne, foreldrene er personer som er svikere. De har tilslutta seg noe av det mest groteske, sadistiske regimet vi har sett i moderne tid'⁴². The aspect that the female affiliates are often Muslims with origins outside of Norway, is perhaps a contributing factor to this framing. Their families were given a safe haven in Norway - with passports, but the ISIL affiliates not only left the fellowship and values that included them, but also the protection Norway could offer. On a side note, it should be mentioned that there is also an ethnic, Norwegian childless woman in Al-Hol; however, she has not been debated in the analysed data material.

The Progress Party also proposed that one should not automatically refer to the children as Norwegians (Helgheim 2019a). Even though Statsborgerloven §4 (2005) says that children of Norwegian citizens are automatically citizens by birth. However, as not all the presumed Norwegian children in Syria have been in Norway, they do not possess documentation for citizenship. In an opinion piece by MP Helgheim, he states that we should not refer to these individuals as Norwegians without any reservation, as we cannot be sure of their citizenship

⁴⁰ 'Even if is connected to Norway by passport, she does not belong here' (NRK 2018).

⁴¹ 'She has made a choice, she still stands by that choice, obviously, and that has consequences. People need to take responsibility for their actions' (NRK 2018)

⁴² 'We need to see a slightly bigger picture here. These are people, the adults, the parents, that are traitors. They have joined one of the most grotesque, sadistic regimes of our time' (NRK 2019b)

until they have been DNA-tested: ‘Regjeringen har åpnet for å hente foreldreløse barn, men jeg tar for gitt at det forutsetter at de har nødvendige dokumenter, slik det kreves av alle andre. I så fall vil det være noen ytterst få barn det er snakk om. Å hente andre barn eller voksne må være helt uaktuelt. Det vil være grov forskjellsbehandling av IS-barn og alle andre barn’⁴³ (Helgheim 2019a).

The *naming* of the children as ‘IS-children’ (IS-barn) effectively links the children; who did not make a choice to join ISIL, to a terrorist organisation. The Norwegian Red Cross has highly criticised this label for distancing oneself from the subject, and thereby also from accountability (Apeland 2019). The Christian Democratic Party, in contrast, countered this *naming* by defining the children as ‘ours’. First, then acting party leader and Minister of Agriculture and Food Party, Bollestad (KrF), (KrF 2019a) argued in phase 2: ‘Disse ungene er ikke IS-unger – de er våre unger, og KrF har hele veien ment at det er vårt ansvar og plikt å hjelpe dem’⁴⁴. Further, the new party leader (from 2019), and Minister of Children and Families, Ropstad (NRK 2019q), argued in phase 4: ‘For Norge har et ansvar for ungene som er våres. Dette er barn, norske barn, som er totalt uskyldige for handlingene som eventuelt foreldre eventuelt gjør’⁴⁵.

Although in line with their ideological foundation of taking care of the vulnerable - in this context the children first and foremost - the Christian Democratic Party’s MP Grøvan slipped and used ‘IS-barn’/IS-children during a Parliamentary Debate. After a counter-argument and criticism from the Green Party, he corrected himself and argued that Norwegian children were a more appropriate *naming*. ‘Jeg synes det er fint at vi kaller dem norske barn og ikke IS-

⁴³ ‘The government has begun to retrieve orphans, but it should be a given that they have the necessary documents, as is required of everyone else. In that case, we are only talking about very few children. To assist other children or adults must be completely unacceptable. That would be discrimination between IS-children and all other children’ (Helgheim 2019a)

⁴⁴ ‘These children are not IS-children – they are our children, and the Christian Democratic Party have argued, from the start, that it is our responsibility and duty to help them’ (KrF 2019a)

⁴⁵ ‘Norway has a responsibility for our children. These are children, Norwegian children, that are totally innocent for their parents’ actions’ (NRK 2019q)

barn’⁴⁶(S.tid (2019-2020), p. 44). This argument underlines the importance of *naming*; the foreign policy does not only draw upon framing of identity but also creates it (Hansen 2006, p. 26). In the same vein, Martin (2015, p. 33) has argued that effective rhetoric, in this case, a particular *naming* can become ‘unquestionable premises’ or common sense, by being used repeatedly. These feedback loops between policy and rhetoric thereby shows the significance, but also the danger of the framing of certain political subjects in a specific way.

After having distanced themselves from the Progress Party throughout most of the debate, the Christian Democratic Party’s Ropstad moved closer to their framing in phase 4 of the analysis. In a TV-debate, the renowned terrorism researcher Thomas Hegghammer (NRK 2019q) summed up the debate by arguing that there were two strands, forgiveness or condemnation of the traitor. Ropstad (KrF) (NRK 2019q) responded by emphasising the sentencing of the *traitor*: ‘Men da vil jeg si at du straffer forræderen, du straffefølger den, hvis de dømmes så skal de sitte i fengsel og helst så lenge som mulig’⁴⁷. The condemnation of the traitor may be seen as a surprising move by Ropstad, considering how little and mildly the other speakers in his party had confronted the issue in the previous phases. At this stage, Minister Ropstad (KrF) was the one closest to the Progress Party’s framing of the affiliates, in which he primarily spoke to the part of his electorate that fears Islam’s impact nationally and globally (Gillesvik 2010). This aspect might be the reason why the party, though very family-oriented in other issues, *selected* the children in this particular issue, and did not include the adult affiliates in their framing of the discourse.

However, as previously demonstrated in the section on rhetorical political analysis, the objective of the speaker is to make her solutions seem more appropriate than the alternatives; to naturalise a specific policy choice (Hawkesworth 2012, pp. 116-7). One, therefore, aims ‘to use the structural resources at their disposal rhetorically to ‘problematise’ and so (re)fashion the parameters of choice and conflict so that a preferred kind of agency becomes both legitimate and urgent, often in the face of competing arguments’ (Martin 2015, p. 33). In this

⁴⁶ ‘I believe it is better to call them Norwegian children and not IS-children’ (S.tid (2019-2020), p. 44)

⁴⁷ ‘But then I would argue that you punish the traitor, you prosecute them, and if they are convicted they should be imprisoned for as long as possible’ (NRK 2019q)

case, we see the Christian Democratic Party utilise some frames and *names* introduced by other parties, only to return to the claim that their solution to return her and sentence her, is sufficient. Section 5.4 will further illustrate this rhetoric.

As was illustrated in section 4.2, the Liberal Party's characterisation of the women has varied between the units analysed, which complicates analysis. For instance, in phase 3, MP Raja (V) made an argument, most likely based on the significantly different stories Aisha Shezadi (Kvamme et al. 2018) and the 29-year old told (Clausen 2019): 'Enkelte av de mødrene vil jeg si at jeg egentlig ikke ønsker på norsk jord, særlig noen av dem, nå skal ikke jeg gå inn på hvem av dem. Noen av de har karakterisert Norge på en så nedlatende måte, at jeg har ingen respekt for de mødrene'⁴⁸(NRK 2019m). This argument also emphasised a framing of the women as having made an active choice to turn away from Norway. Similarly, MP Raja (V) (NRK 2019b) argued at one stage that the affiliates had done something 'traitorlike' (svikaktig), but that this should not hinder repatriation to Norway. Thereby, he used the same *naming*, or characterisations, as the Progress Party, but argued for a different solution.

An overall trend is that the argumentation has excluded the female ISIL affiliates from what is essentially 'Norwegian'. Citizenship is, therefore of less importance when someone has turned away from the country in a normative sense. Concurrently, this thesis observed a move by MP Raja and Minister in the Liberal Party and the Christian Conservative Party, towards employing a harsher description of the affiliates than their party colleagues. This rhetoric illustrates how difficult it was for these parties to define these women as Norwegian responsibility; the women did indeed make an active choice, to join one of the worst contemporary terror organisations.

Although some have rejected the comparison; there is a similarity with the apology to the WWII 'German girls' made by PM Solberg in 2018 to the ISIL affiliates. The former was perceived as traitors of Norway: 'By having voluntarily given themselves to the enemy, many people felt that the girls and women had given away something that was not just theirs to give; it was something that also belonged to the nation' (2018). Although this might be a valid

⁴⁸ 'Some of these mothers I'd rather not have on Norwegian soil, particularly some of them, I will not go into detail about which of them. Some of them have characterised Norway in such a patronising way, that I have no respect for them' (NRK 2019m).

reaction to the ISIL affiliates, in her apology, PM Solberg (H) (2018) asked questions we should take account of in the future: ‘How did we treat the enemy we had defeated? How did we treat those who had betrayed their country?’. She clearly stated that the rule of law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should have implicated Norway’s policy response to WWII, particularly for the children who ‘have borne the burden of the way their mothers were judged’ (Solberg 2018).

By bringing in this comparison, the attempt is to illustrate how the *naming* of the affiliates as ‘traitors’ does not automatically presume a certain response. Perhaps controversial, it might also be possible to argue that Norway’s tradition as a ‘rettsstat’ that has actively flagged rule of law as a vital principle, indicate a welcoming of the traitor. This element will be explored further in 5.4.

5.3 Mothers and Parents

Except for one, the Norwegian female ISIL affiliates are mothers, caregivers, for small children in detention camps. As a result, the *naming* of them as mothers has occurred frequently in the data material. Is this *naming* a way to merely emphasise that the female affiliates had previously been connected to ISIL, and now have children? Or should it be considered a gendered *naming* with broader implications? Or perhaps both? Or, it may even be that by placing these women as outside of the discourse of the ideal woman mother, one differentiates them further away from the Norwegian identity.

Even though, as chapter 3 illustrated, by all likelihood the female affiliates’ primary role was as mothers and wives, some research has given us a more substantial picture of these women as more complex individuals. Driven by an ideological motivation, they may have had roles, or motives, for more violent and abusive positions (Almohammad and Speckhard 2017, Lia 2019). The analysis conducted in chapter 4 and 5 suggests that the perception of female ISIL affiliates as active political agents has also reached the political discourse. The *naming* of them as mothers contributes to this, by emphasising that this does not rule out any legal responsibility. Yet, an exception is the extensive discussion on the female affiliates’ failure as mothers and caregivers, which might be a gender reductive frame, but also a way to place them outside of what is considered Norwegian and expected. Some actors have used

motherhood as a measurement of the affiliates as individuals– if they fail as mothers, they have utterly failed.

First of all, as shown in chapter 4, the first phase of the political debate was characterised by a focus on Shezadi. In the initial radio-debate in May 2018, Shezadi was only *named* by MP Amundsen (FrP) as a *terrorist* and *traitor* (see 5.2 and 5.4), *emphasising* the possible risk she would be to Norway upon return. Her child and her role as a mother and a caregiver were, surprisingly, left out of the equation (NRK 2018). However, at the beginning of phase 3, the children and the affiliates' roles as mothers became part of the Progress Party's rhetoric.

Discussing the two sisters from Bærum, The Progress Party cast doubt on the female ISIL affiliates' motherhood and their lack of abilities to be a mother (NRK 2019j). By emphasising solutions that the policymakers are not authorised to, The Progress Party have continually argued that there is no reason to return the children along with their mothers. Considering what they have done to their children, they would be separated upon return to Norway anyhow: 'I langt mindre omsorgssviktsaker enn dette her, så ville andre barn blitt tatt fra foreldrene sine. Hvis du har utsatt barna dine for slike forferdelige ting, som disse mødrene har gjort, disse er mennesker som er uegna til å være mødre. Og da må man ikke bruke som argument at disse barna har best av å være sammen med mødrene: disse barna er satt i denne situasjonen på grunn av sine mødre, og burde hatt best av å være lengst mulig borte fra sine mødre som ikke klarer å ta vare på dem så det er ikke et godt nok argument'⁴⁹ (NRK 2019j). Here, the Progress Party crossed into other authorities' domain. Conversely, when the Foreign Minister Søreide was asked similar questions, she primarily stated that it is not up to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to answer but the relevant authority (VG 2019a).

Despite arguing for a return of both children and mothers, The Liberal Party and The Christian Democratic Party have not minimised the affiliates' responsibility or accountability. The use of the *name* 'mother' has often occurred concurrently with an emphasis on these aspects. The Liberal Party's MP Raja emphasised in phase 2 how the women should be made

⁴⁹ 'In far less serious cases, other children would have been separated from their parents. If you have exposed your children to such terrible things, like these mothers have done, then these are not suitable mothers. You can't argue that these children are better off if they are kept with their mothers: these children are in this situation because of their mothers, and are better off as far away as possible from their mothers' (NRK 2019j)

accountable both for their wrongdoing as parents, and their contribution to ISIL: 'Det er ingen tvil om at foreldre – mødre og fedre – som har tatt med barna sine til krigsherjede områder, eller latt dem bli født inn i et samfunn som har kollapset under krig, terror og fattigdom, har sviktet disse barna på det groveste. Det er hjerteskjærende å tenke på hva disse barna har måttet gjennomgå som følge av forkastelige valg deres foreldre har gjort. Om foreldrene kommer tilbake til Norge, mener jeg de må straffes strengt, både for det de har gjort i Syria, og for det de har utsatt sine egne barn for'⁵⁰ (Raja 2019a). Regardless of what the parents have done, Raja argued that we do have a moral responsibility toward the children. Prosecution and sentencing of the parents will nevertheless allow us to uphold this responsibility (Raja 2019a).

The Christian Democratic Party have also linked the *naming* of 'mother' to criminal liability. For instance, during the parliamentary debate in phase 3 of the study (4.3), discussing the critically ill child in al Hol, MP Hans Fredrik Grøvan (S.tid (2019-2020), p. 43) argued; 'Vi er opptatt av å få alle norske barn hjem, sammen med mødrene, for at barna skal kunne få en situasjon hvor de kan tas vare på og unngå radikaliserings, og at mødrene kan stilles strafferettslig ansvarlig for det de har vært med på'⁵¹. Similarly in phase 4, Minister Ropstad (NRK 2019n) stated: 'Mor kommer hjem, og så vil påtalemyndigheten ta seg av den jobben, vi har heldigvis et godt regelverk, så dersom hun har vært med i en terrorist organisasjon, som alt tyder på, så vil hun bli straffeforfulgt. Derfor så vil en ha kontroll på mor og en sikrer at ungene endelig kommer hjem'⁵².

⁵⁰ 'There's no doubt that parents – mothers and fathers – who have brought their children to warzones, or given birth to them in a society ruined by war, terrorism and poverty, have utterly failed their children. It is breaking my heart to think about what these children have had to endure because of their parents' choices. If their parents ever get back to Norway, I believe they need to be strictly sentenced, both for what they have done in Syria, but also for what they have exposed their children to.' (Raja 2019a)

⁵¹ 'We are concerned with getting all Norwegian children home, along with their mothers, so that the children can be taken care of and avoid radicalization, and so that their mothers can be prosecuted for what they have done' (S.tid (2019-2020), p. 43).

⁵² 'Mum will come home, then the prosecuting authority will take care of the prosecution. Luckily, we have a good legal framework, so that if she has been part of a terrorist organisation, which it seems like she has, then she will be sentenced. Therefore, we will be in control of the mother and ensure that the children finally come home' (NRK 2019n)

The *naming* of the affiliates as mothers was particularly relevant in the debate about the 29-year old and her critically ill child, whose return formed the debate analysed in phase 4 of the study, in January 2020. Her child was seen to by health care workers in the detention camp, and with help from doctors in Norway, the diagnosis cystic fibrosis was presumed to be the cause of the child's tremendous weight loss and cough. After having requested to be returned to Norway, the Foreign Ministry attempted to assist her child in the camp. However, informal text messages from Norway claimed that her son was suffering from a cyst and that they would offer him a surgery outside the camp. The local health care workers, on the other hand, argued that x-rays showed no signs of such a cyst. Norwegian authorities then gave the 29-year-old mother an offer; she could either accompany her son to surgery outside the camp and thereby leave her daughter in the Al-Hol. Or, she could stay with her daughter, and let the local health representatives take her child to surgery (Løf and Skjetne 2019). The woman also claimed that no health professionals there had diagnosed her son with a cyst.

Throughout phase 3 and 4, most parties have indicated in their argumentation the aspect that the 29-year old refused the treatment offered by the Foreign Ministry. Thus, she was linked to a characterisation of irresponsibility. Her lawyer Nordhus argued that there was an ongoing campaign by the Government to diminish her reputation. This statement was a reaction to The Christian Democratic Party's MP Grøvan's (S. Tid (2019-2020), p. 42) statement:

'Regjeringen har også tilbudt helsehjelp til den syke gutten, uten at tilbudet er tatt imot av moren'⁵³.

This emphasis also pervaded the Conservative Party's rhetoric, here by MP Tetzchner (NRK 2019m): 'Etter hva jeg har fått informasjon om, så har det også da vært slik at moren i dette tilfellet ikke har vært samarbeidsvillig, ikke ønsket å motta den medisinske hjelpen, og da er det slik at den norske velferdsstaten slår ikke i stykker internasjonale og andre grunnleggende prinsipper om at det er foreldrene som både har rett og plikt til å ta ansvar for sine barn'⁵⁴.

Here the parental duties are used to delineate the boundaries of responsibility; away from the Norwegian authorities and onto the parents. While it can be argued that the 29-year old was

⁵³ 'The Government has offered health care to the ill boy, without being accepted by the mother' (S. Tid (2019-2020))

⁵⁴ 'After what I have heard, the mother has not been cooperative, not wanted to receive the medical care. In these cases, the welfare state does not breach international and other basic principles that the parents have a right and duty to take care of their children' (NRK 2019m)

given a dilemma where it was impossible to be a fully responsible parent, the emphasis upon their duties also acknowledges the women as accountable, active agents.

In phase 4 of the study, we saw that the return of the mother and sick child was justified by PM Erna Solberg, as a necessary and right move in a difficult moral situation (NRK 2019q). The policymakers feared the child would die on their watch, and the parties then accepted that the mother could return along with her child (NRK 2019q, NRK 2019s). It was justified by the legal principles of parental rights, as the parents are free to decide where their children should reside, and therefore they could not return the child under duress.

While this reasoning made MP Tetzchner (H) argue (NRK 2019m) that the Norwegian Government did not have any responsibility if the mother would not consent to send her child, the members of the Coalition used this framing a different way. As Minister of Foreign Affairs Søreide (NRK 2019n) argued: 'Sånn vil det jo alltid være, dette tilhører foreldreretten, det er åpenbart. Og vi kan ikke, som jeg sa på pressekonferansen i dag også, gå inn og hente barn i utlandet mot foreldres vilje, de har full og hel suverenitet over hvor deres barn bor og oppholder seg. Men vi gjorde da den vurderingen at for å kunne få barnet i sikkerhet, så måtte vi da også ta med mor og søster'⁵⁵. Nevertheless, the image of an irresponsible mother was still used in their argumentation by indicating that one would expect a responsible mother to act in a different way than she did: 'Jeg synes at også enhver mor burde tenke på sitt barns beste og ha gitt mulighet for medisinsk behandling enten lokalt, eller ved at disse barna kom til Norge'⁵⁶ (NRK 2019q).

The image of an accountable, yet irresponsible mother is also repeatedly used by The Progress Party. However, they have had a harsher tone than the Conservative Party and linked the women to traits such as being cynical and self-centred. As a result, the mother was given the sole responsibility for the situation of her child. 'Det vi må huske i disse sakene det er at

⁵⁵ 'It will always be like that, this is about parental rights, that is obvious. And we are not authorised to, like I said at the press conference today, to walk in and take children away against their parents' will, they can fully decide where their children live and stay. But we made the difficult call to get the child to safety, so we had to take the mother and sister too' (NRK 2019n).

⁵⁶ 'I think that any good mother should think about her child's best and give the opportunity for medical care either locally, or by bringing the children to Norway' (NRK 2019q).

det er mor som har hele ansvaret både for den situasjonen som har oppstått, og at det eventuelt ikke hadde funnet noen løsning, hun nektet barna hjelp'⁵⁷ (NRK 2019n). MP Helgheim (NRK 2019q) even argued that he would have pressured her to let her child return to Norway without her, if only she had been less cynical and self-interested: 'Så her har vi en kynisk mor, som tenker først og fremst på seg selv, og har fått gjennomslag for det'⁵⁸ (NRK 2019o) The day after, the Progress Party claimed that she used her child as a shield to get back herself (NRK 2019p). These arguments indicate the highly gendered perception that runs through the debate; if you fail as a mother, then you have utterly failed. So, even though the *naming* of mother is linked to a significant personal responsibility, it is dependent on the woman's task as a caregiver.

These statements differ from previous arguments made by MP Helgheim (FrP) (NRK 2019b), as he as early as in March 2019, stated repeatedly that there is no way one can legally return the children without their mothers: 'Det er sånn verden er når foreldre tar så dårlige valg for barna sine, og det er trist.... La meg bare avslutte med et poeng, for det er faktisk ingen som vil disse barna noe vondt, men vi må faktisk innse hvordan verden er. Og verden er sånn at barna faktisk er der de er, og hvis vi skal ha de hit så kommer foreldrene'⁵⁹. It, therefore, remains a question, why the Progress Party suddenly diverged from legal principles they were proponents of earlier.

What sets this analysis apart from other studies into the female ISIL affiliates (Owe 2017, Strømmen, E 2018); is how I have come to a contrasting argument of how the female affiliates have been portrayed, specifically regarding their gender. It has been illustrated how the *naming* 'mother' has been represented as a woman with duties and accountability, parentally and legally. Particularly the Progress Party's argumentation, as demonstrated, has

⁵⁷ 'What we need to remember in these cases – the mother is fully responsible for the situation, for the lack of solution, she refused her children any help' (NRK 2019n)

⁵⁸ 'So here we have a cynical mother, who is thinking first and foremost about herself, and has received the impact of that' (NRK 2019o).

⁵⁹ 'The world is like that when parents make such bad choices for their children, and that is sad... but let me conclude with one point. No one wishes to hurt these children, but we need to realise what the world is like. And the world is such that the children are where they are, and if we shall have them here then the parents will be coming too' (NRK 2019b)

gone far by presenting the female affiliates as rational, calculated, and able to negotiate with policymakers, traits that have been more widely linked to male perpetrators in the past (NRK2019n, q, o, p, b, Sjoberg and Gentry 2007).

Even with some gendering in how the 29-year old was described, overall, there is observed a clear break from previous studies. This literature set forth the argument that female perpetrators are denied agency by presenting women's violence: 'as reliant on her role as a wife and mother, and thus not of her own doing' (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007, p. 30). However, this analysis has found that women's accountability has been emphasised, also when narrated as mothers.

Similarly, to how the 'self' was defined, the 'mother' frame is dependent on how the actor frames what is moral and responsible in the given scenario. The Norwegian authorities gave the 29-year old a choice on the treatment of her son; placed her in a paradox and gave her an impossible ultimatum on how to act responsibly in the given situation. We need a more critical questioning of the arguments about the affiliates' failure as women, rather than a rapid judgment of them as irresponsible. Nonetheless, this section has illustrated how the affiliates are framed with more agency and accountability than previous studies have indicated (see 2.1), and even been directly linked to the crime and violence pursued by ISIL.

5.4 Terrorists

A topic particularly relevant to the policy on the female affiliates is: what kind of response does it require on our part when we face a presumed terrorist? The female ISIL affiliates have joined a terrorist organisation that has performed attacks both against civilians in Syria and against western targets locally in Syria and other parts of the world. Nonetheless, if Leira (et al. 2007, p. 8) is right, that for foreign policy to be credible state practice needs to reflect the images the population have of themselves, then this debate needs to be reconsidered. By assessing Norwegian precedence in other significant cases, one can question why the rule of law was not more widely debated in this case.

Norway has a tradition for being a strong proponent for the rule of law regarding the prosecution of terrorists. The trial which followed the domestic terrorist attacks in Norway, in

2011, displayed several aspects unheard of in other countries. Not only did the prosecutor shake hands with the perpetrator, but he also put forward a lengthy personal explanation of the attacks. Both described as strange, but also a significant marker of the rule of law principle: ‘Anders Breivik trial displays Norway’s formal legal system’ (Associated Press 2012). The Norwegian criminology professor Christie (2011) argued in an opinion piece that the nation’s core values should stay strong also when dealing with a terrorist attack: ‘Det er en katastrofe det som har skjedd, en katastrofe som bare kan møtes ved å holde fast på grunnverdiene i det norske samfunnet. Svikter vi dem, har Behring Breivik fått til noe.’⁶⁰

Considering the Norwegian tradition, what response should the naming of ‘terrorist’ implicate? Would it mean a turn towards exclusion or inclusion and an enhancement of the rule of law by making sure the affiliates are prosecuted fairly?

The public does not yet know what exactly the women have done; only that some have been charged with participation in a terrorist organisation (Svendsen 2019); but not yet for pursuing any specific *acts* of terrorism. However, this has not stopped political actors from labelling these women as terrorists, or more broadly, link them to crimes against humanity, violence, abuse, and other aspects of ISIL’s brutality. Though highly criticised by legal experts as breaching the presumption of innocence (Spence 2020), this frame recurred throughout the whole period examined in this thesis. The actors that have fought for a return of the affiliates have not neglected these women as participants in a terrorist organisation, but have had a different emphasis on control and prosecution, effectively counteracting the frame of security risk, which this section will illustrate.

The *naming* of the female ISIL affiliates as ‘terrorists’, or a linking of these to ISIL, has been most prevalent in The Progress Party’s argumentation (see appendix 1). As a result, the affiliates were categorised as political subjects; spatially and temporally differentiated from the not only Norwegian identity, but also posed as a threat to National security (Hansen 2006, pp. 47-8). The Progress Party have also, more prominently than the other parties, directly linked the return of the affiliates to a heightened security threat in Norway. Not under any

⁶⁰ ‘It is a catastrophe, a catastrophe that can only be met by keeping the basic principles in Norwegian society. If we fail them, Behring Breivik has succeeded’ (Christie 2011).

circumstance have they been willing to risk even the smallest change in the threat level in Norway (NRK 2019q).

For instance, discussing Aisha Shezadi's formal request in phase 1 of the study, MP Per Willy Amundsen (NRK 2018) connected the female ISIL affiliates to war crimes. 'Så er det et faktum at når du deltar i en så grusom organisasjon som IS representerer, så bør det ikke være noen tvil om at du har gjort en del av det som er krigsforbrytelser, herjinger, grusomme handlinger, som du må ta ansvar for. Og kommer du tilbake til Norge, vil du selvfølgelig bli straffeforfulgt for det og det bør du bli dersom du gjør det'⁶¹. Although we know that many of the female ISIL affiliates are under investigation for participating in a terrorist organisation, it is highly uncertain that they were directly involved with war crimes. Nor is there any evidence that the women necessarily have had any violent role within ISIL (see c. 3). Still, it has been claimed by the Progress Party that the female affiliates have been schooled in methods by ISIL, so that they will pose a threat to the Norwegian people even *after* they have served any potential prison sentence (NRK 2018).

In line with the Progress Party's argument envisioning a more insecure future, the *name* 'ticking time bombs' has been used throughout the debate. The label communicates an impression that there is an uncontrollable security threat in individuals formerly associated with ISIL. Also, 'a ticking time bomb' cannot be rehabilitated; but will eventually go off.

As MP Helgheim (NRK 2019b) argued in the TV-debate analysed in phase 2: 'Hvorfor skal vi gjøre det med tikkende bomber, som er en trussel mot samfunnet. Det er farlige personer vi snakker om, og det må vi først og fremst beskytte samfunnet i Norge imot'⁶². Both the Christian Democratic Party and the Liberal Party reacted strongly to the depiction of insecurity created by the Progress Party. After the repatriation in phase 4, Minister and party leader Ropstad (KrF) (NRK 2019q) argued that they had taken security precautions

⁶¹ 'It is a fact that when you participate in such a horrendous organisation as IS, then there should be no doubt that you have taken part in what are regarded as war crimes, terrible acts, that you need to take responsibility for. And if you come back to Norway, you will be prosecuted for that and she should be if she does' (NRK 2018)

⁶² 'Why should we do that with ticking time bombs, that are a threat against society. These are dangerous people we are talking about, and we need to first and foremost protect our society from them' (NRK 2019b)

throughout the whole process: 'Og derfor så reagerer jeg også på at en bruker denne frykten eller at resten av regjeringen ikke har tenkt på sikkerhet, det har vært nøye gjennomtenkt hele veien'⁶³. While MP Raja (V) (NRK 2019b) criticised the label ticking time bombs more directly: 'det å snakke om de små barna og si at de er tikkende bomber, det vil jeg ta avstand fra'⁶⁴ (NRK 2019b).

As was previously argued, the Christian Democratic Party has primarily emphasised the children in their argumentation. However, after the repatriation in 2020, the Party leader and Minister Ropstad (NRK 2019q), characterised the female ISIL affiliates in a harsher tone and indirectly linked these to terrorism: 'la meg understreke, jeg har ingen sympati med disse kvinnene. Og jeg tror heller ikke en skal være naiv, de har deltatt, meldt seg inn i noe, de er i en situasjon som er veldig krevende, de har vært med på ting som kan ha vært veldig ille'⁶⁵. But in contrast to the Progress Party, whose argumentation is reliant upon creating an impression of security threat, the Christian Democratic Party argued that the Norwegian legal framework and the penalty system could contain and control the ISIL affiliates upon return. 'Men poenget er jo at de kan komme, de er norske statsborgere og kan dukke opp på grensa når som helst, og får i utgangspunktet vandre fritt. Jeg tror jo vi har nok kontroll til å ta de da også, men i utgangspunktet så har vi nå full kontroll over denne kvinnen, og hun vil bli straffeforfulgt og hvis hun dømmes for noe så vil hun jo selvsagt være under myndighetenes kontroll'⁶⁶ (NRK 2019q).

⁶³ 'And that is why I react to one using this fear or the idea that the government has not considered security, that has been carefully considered during the whole process' (NRK 2019q)

⁶⁴ 'I want to distance myself from talking about these small children as ticking time bombs' (NRK 2019b)

⁶⁵ 'let me emphasise, I do not have any sympathy with these women. And I do not think that you should be naïve, they have participated and joined something, they are in a difficult situation, and they may have contributed to horrendous acts' (NRK 2019q)

⁶⁶ 'The point is that they can come, they are Norwegian citizens and can show up at our border anytime, and get to wander around freely. I do think we have enough control to take them then too, but now we are in full control of this woman, and she will be prosecuted. If she is convicted she will of course be under the control of the authorities' (NRK 2019q)

While Ropstad leaned towards the Progress Party's rhetoric, he found an opening to turn it in favour of a different solution, which was to return the affiliates. Illustrating what Hansen explained as the unstable nature of discursive structures; one can unsettle a narrative either by challenging the identity the argument conveys, or the policy itself (Hansen 2006, p. 31). By cutting the link between the identity of the women as perpetrators and the uncontrolled environment a return would lead to, Ropstad linked the same identity to a situation one can control (NRK 2019q, Hansen 2006, p. 21 and 35).

There were also tendencies within the Conservative Party to *name* the affiliates and their children as security threats and terrorists. In the same vein as the Progress Party, PM Erna Solberg linked the female ISIL affiliates to the violence and abuse by ISIL. However, she did so in a weaker manner by emphasising the uncertainty of what the individuals have undertaken (NRK 2019e). Nevertheless, she also emphasised, that regardless of how little or how these women may have been responsible for, they have actively joined one of the worst terror regimes we have seen. This act is a breach of Norwegian law and makes them accountable for this. 'Vi vet hvordan IS er organisert, det vil være en sikkerhetsrisiko med alle som har vært i dette området, vi vet ikke helt hvordan og på hvilken måte de har deltatt'⁶⁷ (NRK 2019e).

This argumentation has been necessary for the Prime Minister. She has emphasised that her role is indeed to safeguard the citizens by minimising the security threats in Norway, but also to make sure that individuals are held responsible for their actions. 'Samtidig som vi ikke skal importere sikkerhetsrisikoer til vårt land. Og samtidig så må vi sørge for at det ikke er noe frikort, folk som har brutt loven skal også straffes for dette' (NRK 2019e). These statements came in the aftermath of the return of the five Norwegian orphans. When the 29-year old was returned with her presumably critically ill child, PM Erna Solberg's tone was different. She framed the repatriation as a 'moral' and 'humanitarian' dilemma. There was an imminent possibility that a Norwegian child could die on Norway's watch, superseding other concerns. The Ministers also stated that Norway would not repatriate the other women left in the camps, but that they could assist their children on their own (NRK 2019q).

⁶⁷ 'At the same time, we will ensure that we do not import security risks into our country. But we also need to make sure that there are no free passes – people who have broken the law should be charged for this' (NRK 2019e)

The framing and emphasis of the rhetoric thereby changed to justify the solution adopted. While a securitisation of an issue grants the speaker the responsibility to act upon the constructed threats, it also makes the issue more significant. ‘Once on the political agenda, politicians cannot turn their back on threats to national security without rearticulating the situation in such a manner that it is no longer one of security’ (Hansen 2006, p. 35). With the emphasis of humanitarian and moral aspects; the policymakers attempted to tone down the security. These strategic choices did, as it was argued in 4.4, granted them the legitimacy to make the decisions on this issue. For the Progress Party, the securitisation was absolute, while on the other hand, the Conservative Party was willing to tone down the securitisation after the repatriation in January 2020. The importance of studying rhetorical effects and how rhetorical interventions have implicated the environment is in this way illuminated (Martin 2015, p. 35).

Not not all the speakers within the Conservative Party were as cautious as their Ministers. MP Peter Frølich (H) took on a more securitised tone, not only by using the *naming* ‘ticking time bombs’, but also by emphasising that security concerns supersede the International Convention of the Rights of the Child (ICRC). ‘Barnekonvensjonen er selvfølgelig noe som skal følges, men den stiller ikke urealistiske krav til hva norske myndigheter skal gjøre’⁶⁸ (NRK 2019g). Moreover, on the contrary to other speakers from the Conservative Party, Frølich (H) took the legal obstacles into account and argued that we are not able judicially to return children without their parents (NRK 2019g). On the other hand, this aspect has been de-emphasised or silenced by both Solberg and Søreide. Their solution was that the mothers in Al-Hol could consent for their children to be returned without them (NRK 2019h). Why did not the Conservative Party pursue a more common line of argumentation on this issue, particularly in terms of what solutions and legal principles *selected* as the primary emphasis?

While the terrorist *naming* does enhance the agency and active choice made by affiliates and thereby diverging from previous studies (see 2.1), this label may have over-emphasised the affiliates’ agency to the point that they are portrayed as dangerous and uncontrollable by some actors. It is puzzling to observe how little attention the male foreign fighters that have already returned and sentenced in Norway in comparison to the affiliates; pointing our attention to how disproportionate the possible security threat one female affiliate and her children may

⁶⁸ ‘ICRC is of course something that should be adhered to, but it does not impose unrealistic demands on what the Norwegian authorities shall do’ (NRK 2019g)

pose to Norway, appears. So, perhaps we have moved towards a gendered understanding of the female affiliates after all?

6 - Conclusion

How do images of 'Self' and 'Other' attribute responsibility for the fate of Norwegian female ISIL affiliates, thus enabling appropriate course(s) of action?

The debate on the repatriation of female ISIL affiliates and their children engendered a highly polarised public discourse in Norway. By being so intrinsically linked to the pre-existing fear of Islamic terrorism in Norwegian society, it quickly evolved as a rhetorical debate on who these women were and how different they seemed to be from the Norwegian community. The affiliates were regarded as having left the Norwegian fellowship; the values, the community and the protection it could offer, and personal characterisations were widely applied to justify not taking responsibility for them rhetorically. This thesis has analysed the debate amongst the four coalition parties; these were the closest to the decision-making process and, therefore, their framing was significant for the actual policy formulation (Bratberg 2018, p. 64, Hansen 2006, p. 64).

The question of repatriation was mainly an issue of identity, something it shares with many other matters within the foreign policy domain (Hansen 2006). Who we are, and what we regard as important, are often framed to legitimise policies amongst the population (Leira et al. 2007, p. 8). Frames also enable us to understand the issues that we encounter; they are indeed 'implicit theories of situations: They model prior thought and ensuing action, rendering that action sensible' (van Hulst and Yanow 2016, pp.98- 99).

How should we deal with the 'other' in light of who we consider ourselves to be? Policy formulation involves an element of contingency concerning the appropriate course to pursue. In the case of the female ISIL affiliates, uncertainty applies not only to who 'they' are and what they have or might have done; but the uncertainty also extends to what responsibility Norway has in addressing the dire situation these individuals find themselves in, in Syrian refugee camps. Repatriation could be framed as a case of humanitarianism or counter-terrorism, and similarly, fairness could be framed in contrasting ways; helping to naturalise distinctly different courses of action. Thus, identity is discursively framed and dependent on rhetorical intervention by political actors. Also, the analysis shows that arguments are formed in relation to one another. In this way, effective argumentation is dependent on the re-framing

of other actors' rhetorical arguments, so that they can be used to one's favour (Hansen 2006, p. 21, Martin 2016, p. 26).

To understand how the images of 'self' and 'other' that delineates responsibility for the female ISIL affiliates' fate, this thesis has provided an analysis in two parts. First, a timeline of events was developed and assessed. This timeline gave an idea of how the debate unfolded, and what 'key events' (Hansen 2006, p. 32) and rhetorical interventions affected the framing of the issue. This part also illustrated how the debate was primarily based on responses to individualised stories of the female affiliates. However, the stories were dependent on the actors' agency to anchor them within their argumentation and political narrative. The response to these narratives was therefore not self-evident. Secondly, the results of an exploratory textual analysis were presented. This portion of the study specifically looked into the images of self and the ISIL affiliates, that were used in the contesting arguments to define responsibility. The analysis showed that the debate on whether to repatriate the ISIL affiliates, has essentially become a contestation of how identity should implicate foreign policy, and here rhetorical interventions have played a significant part in what has been emphasised.

6.1 'The Active Choice'

A significant part of the framing of responsibility regarding the ISIL affiliates is the emphasis of 'the active choice'. Previous research (ex. Owe 2017, p. 39) have found that women's motivations were often linked to marriage and their husbands. In contrast, this analysis has found that women now are regarded as more active and independent in their choice to leave Norway. With an active, rather than passive, voice, they have been widely characterised as having turned away, not only from territorial Norway but also its national identity. Depicted as 'traitors' and 'terrorists', they were even presented as potential ideological and physical threats to Norway upon return. The parties proposing a return of both children and mothers, for the sake of the children, struggled to include these women. Not only because of the inherent difficult in including someone who has been affiliated with ISIL, but also due to how the Progress Party were able to set the tone and brought about this shift.

The rhetorical shift from passive victims to ideological agents was primarily made possible with the first story that was presented in the media (see 4.1). How Aisha Shezadi presented

herself to the public, was quickly mobilised and used by the Progress Party. Her lack of regret, defence of brutal acts and a refusal to comment on ISIL, portrayed a picture that was everything else than the passive victims. Even her children or her destiny as a mother, in what was functioning as a detention camp, did not make it into the Progress Party's argumentation in the initial debate (NRK 2018). When the second story came, of the regretful 29-year old mother, it did not successfully sway the depiction of these women that was already entrenched through the story of Shezadi. The regret of the 29-year-old mother was even turned against her, as the Progress Party's leader and Minister Siv Jensen (2019) argued: 'Og for noen dager siden var det flere av oss som så et intervju med en norsk IS-kvinne på Dagsrevyen, som nå angreir og vil til Norge. En kvinne, må ha visst hva hun har gjort....Jeg mener at vi ikke skal løfte en eneste finger, for å få deg tilbake til Norge'⁶⁹.

The central hypothesis of a gendered shift, that precipitated this study is thereby confirmed, with some exceptions. Firstly, the *naming* of the irresponsible mother, as cynical, failing caregivers, has still been a dominant way of framing some of these women. The female ISIL affiliates have been measured up against how they have failed as mothers since they have failed here they have utterly failed as individuals. Secondly, it can seem that in the Norwegian political debate, the affiliates' determination has been over-emphasised to the point that they cannot be controlled. Perhaps reflecting Gentry and Sjoberg's narrative *monster* (see 2.1), and thereby illustrating the continued relevance of their framework.

The gendered might somehow reflect the research made available on the female affiliates' motivations and the ideological material that attracted them to ISIL (see chapter 3). The last few years an image of a religious, yet ideological and political ISIL affiliate has been illustrated in research on propaganda sources and reports on sources within ISIL (Almohammad and Speckhard 2017, Europol 2019, Lahoud 2018).

6.2 'Who is holding the moral compass?'

According to the Government, the repatriation of the five orphans and the presumed critically

⁶⁹ A few days ago, there were several of us that watched an interview with a Norwegian IS-woman on the news, who now regrets it and wants to come back to Norway. A woman must have known what she was doing. I mean that we should not lift a single finger to get you back to Norway' (Jensen 2019)

ill five-year-old with her mother were two actions Norway had to do. Not only did the Government fear the possible humanitarian consequences of not acting; these were issues in which the subject was easily framed as the vulnerable and in need of protection.

The Progress Party's portrayal of this particular female affiliate as threatening national security upon return made it impossible for the party to stay in the Coalition Government.

Previous consular cases, such as the transfer of Joshua French, have illustrated how significant the humanitarian aspect is for Norway, with its traditions as a humanitarian power (Tvedt 2016, p. 15). However, similarly to Tvedt (2016), the Progress Party have questioned the established picture of Norway's framed humanitarian' actions. In this particular case, PM Solberg not only argued with humanitarian needs, she even justified the Government's decision as a 'moral' duty. Is the perceived morality of a decision setting other actors with differing positions in an immoral light? This framing of the choice angered the Progress Party that left the Government in response. In an interview MP Helgheim explained the decision: 'Jeg reagerer på at man i en kontroversiell avgjørelse begynner å forklare det med et moralsk kompass, som om et moralsk kompass er bedre innstilt hos Høyre enn Frp'⁷⁰ (Persen et al. 2020).

The decision thereby revealed a significant dimension of the Norwegian policy debate: how should humanitarian and even moral arguments implicate foreign policy, and is this a way to frame a decision as *the* right thing to do? In this particular issue both sides made attempts to frame a just decision rhetorically. On the one hand, the Christian Democratic Party and the Liberal Party emphasised Norwegian values and traditions as an argument to intervene on behalf of the children. Because we are who we are, forces us to act on behalf of vulnerable people. However, these two parties have pursued this argument by a *selection* of children as the most vulnerable subjects in question. Because the other three parties in the then Coalition did not emphasise why we should assist the *adults*, the Progress Party were given an opening to frame the issue in their favour (Martin 2015, p. 33). Thereby, Progress Party rhetorically circumscribed the national emphasis to be about national security and citizens present in Norway, to frame what was the fair solution. What is also significant, is how the legal basis

⁷⁰ 'I do mind that you justify a controversial decision with a moral compass, as if a moral compass were more finely tuned in the Conservative Party than in the Progress Party' (Persen et al. 2020)

changed for the Progress Party from being the first to emphasise that Norway was not authorised to separate mother and child abroad (phase 2). To then argue that they should have pursued this in January 2020 when mother and child were brought to Norway (NRK 2019q).

Assessing arguments in a broader public debate, in response to other ideas and arguments, illustrates how national identity have been formed or defined, to justify political solutions. The framing has been strategic and tactically applied by the actors; to naturalise a specific response, in which the Progress Party, for instance, have used significant legal principles to enhance their goal of excluding the women.

6.3 A State Governed by the Rule of Law..

The Progress Party's framing of the women as more or less uncontrollable security threats was countered by arguments emphasising how Norway's legal system and framework could control a possible return. However, the Christian Democratic Party did not emphasise this until the repatriation of an adult was a fact, in January 2020. Their lack of emphasis upon the women was understandable, but gave the Progress Party a more significant position in the framing of the affiliates, a framing that to some extent was inherited or shared by other actors. A focus upon legal principles, such as the rule of law, humane treatment and equality under the law, could have enabled more parties to delineate responsibility to Norway without any compelling characterisation of the women.

In previous cases, Norway has been an active defender of the rule of law. During the 22nd July Trial, it was regarded as crucial that the perpetrator was guaranteed the same legal rights, despite that he was threatening both security and shared values (AP 2012). In a different, yet relevant case; the return of Joshua French from DR Congo was justified in humanitarian arguments; to free him from the prison conditions (VG 2017). This decision was indeed made by the current Government, which included Progress Party, and his return, on the Constitution day, signified an inclusion of him into the national self.

There is, therefore, a reason to question why the rule of law was not flagged as significantly in the debate on the ISIL affiliates. Can this be partly explained by the fact that nearly all of the affiliates have origins outside Norway, being part of families that was given a safe haven

in Norway? Their active decision to leave a country in which they were privileged to protection and community, but in which they were not ethnic citizens in, was used to frame them as traitors. Their passports were in this rhetorical framing, not documents that first and foremost gave the affiliates rights and inclusion, but to some extent transformed to be arguments that showed their betrayal.

It should be added that prosecuting the perpetrators where the crime has been committed is a significant legal principle. However, there does not seem to be any ongoing, credible processes to ensure this (Flydal and Fjellanger 2020).

This thesis, therefore, sets forth the argument that Norway's identity as a 'rettsstat' /state anchored in the rule of law, should be reflected upon in future policy issues. We need a more thorough debate on how this principle should be understood and interpreted regarding Norwegian citizens in trouble abroad, and how it should form policy issues in the future. Particularly now, when there have been repeated escapes from the detention camps in Al-Hol; states may have a greater responsibility for ensuring that their citizens are first, prosecuted, but also in a fair manner (Hellestveit and Nystuen 2020). Even more important if we want this to be a significant element of Norwegian identity and policy.

6.4 Concluding Remarks

This thesis has shed light upon how rhetorical political analysis can make Hansen's (2006, p. 21) process of *linking* and *differentiation* more dynamic with a conceptualisation of the political environment and rhetoric's place. By investigating how actors can strategically re-direct characterisations - not only by reconstructing frames within different discourses as Hansen emphasised (2006, p. 21) - but also by how specific rhetorical interventions have directed the debate and the following practice. With the assumption that argumentation 'can resituate prevailing circumstances' (Martin 2015, pp. 39-40), rhetorical political analysis illustrates how the theorisation upon ideational structures, or discourses, along with rhetorical devices; opens up for opportunities to investigate how arguments are formed in tandem with each other.

This analysis has mostly been concerned with the national identity that has been defined in a contested debate. However, there is still a need for comparable research into how the national

‘self’ has been brought up in a more significant amount of cases, to get a firmer grasp upon how the national ‘self’ has been applied in rhetorical framing of political solutions.

Overall, there is a need for more exploration of how foreign policy is formed, and what assumptions and principles guide foreign policy decisions. A significant question is whether morality should be used by a Prime Minister to legitimise such a controversial decision, as the decision to repatriate ISIL affiliates. Maybe we can move to a legitimisation of policy that is moral because it is principled but not necessarily framed as such.

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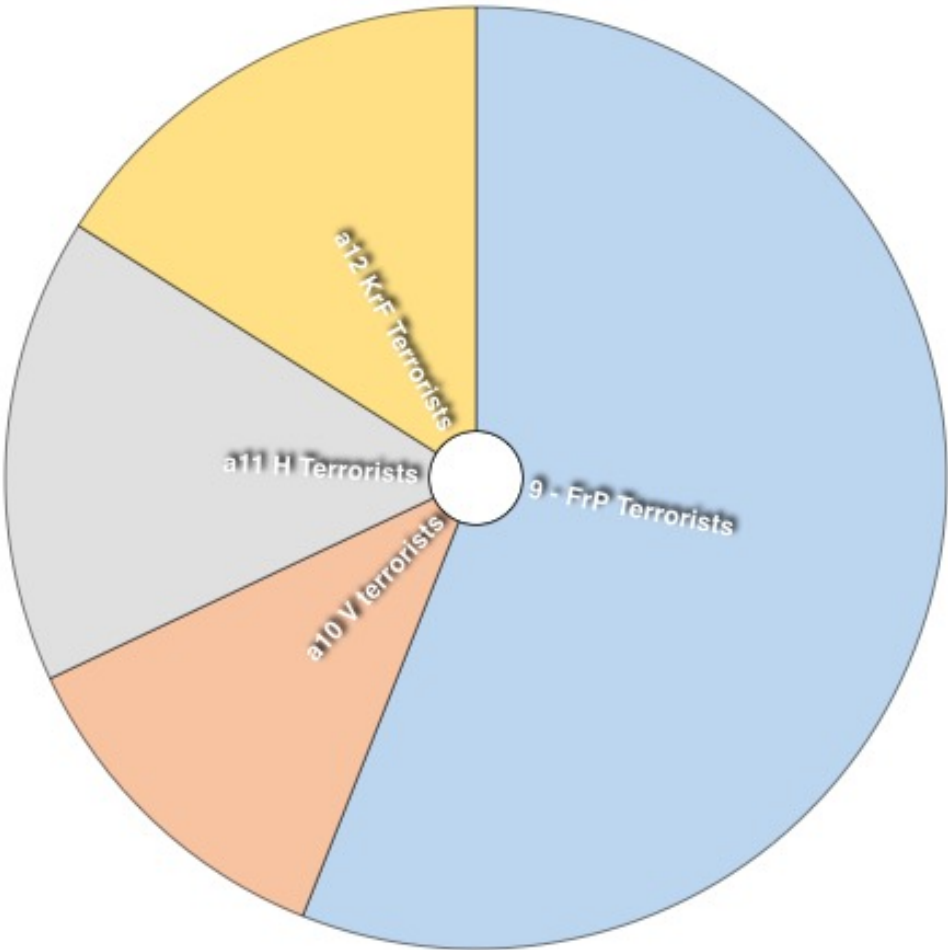
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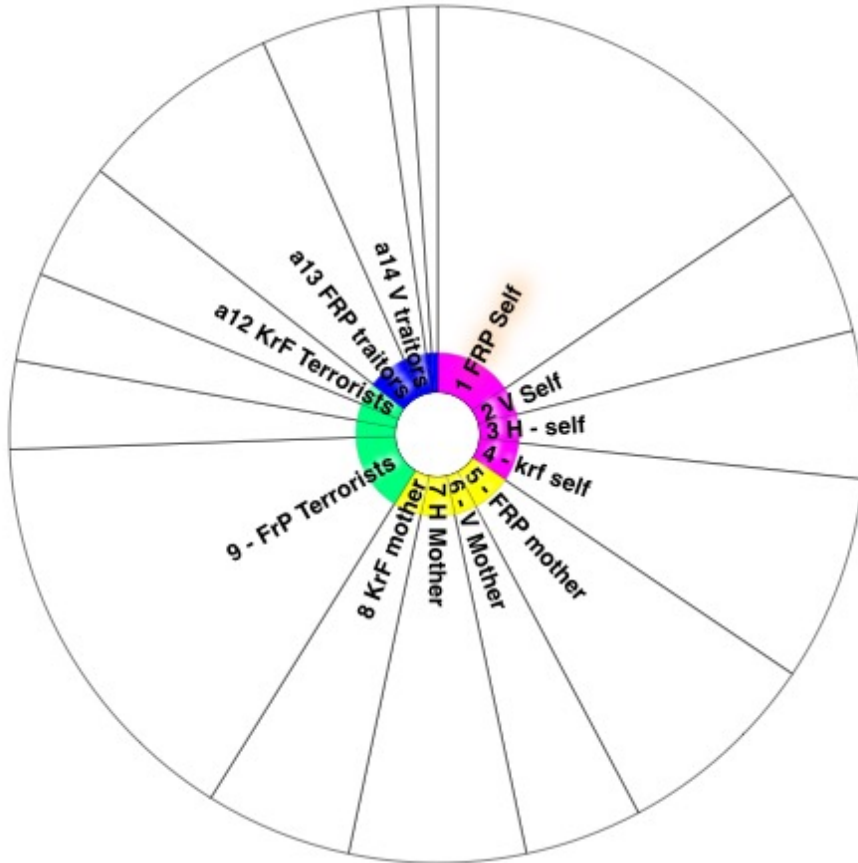
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Appendix -1



Appendix 2 – Distribution of the Coding



Appendix 3 – Example of the Coding – Code: FrP Self

Files\\1(NRK 2018) Dagsnytt 18 28.mai 2018 - § 6 references coded [12.71% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.51% Coverage

Selv om hun har tilhørighet til Norge, materielt via passet sitt, så er det ikke sånn at hun hører hjemme her. Den islamistiske forestillingen, den ideologien som hun står for, den har ingenting i Norge og den vestlige verden å gjøre, disse grusomme handlingene som IS representerer, de vil vi ikke ha i Europa.

Reference 2 - 1.55% Coverage

Per Willy Amundsen: Ja det tok jo sin tid, og den var utfordrende nok i seg selv. Det som vi må ha i bakhodet, er hva vi snakker om av sikkerhetsrisiko når disse personene ankommer Norge. Det er personer som er farlige, de har lært seg å bruke metoder i opplæring av IS, som gjør at dem er potensielt farlige mennesker i Norge.

Reference 3 - 1.81% Coverage

Men at Norge skal bruke ressurser, sette inn mannskap, gjøre noe for å få henne tilbake til Norge, det ser jeg overhodet ikke noe behov for. Og der også sånn at dersom hu kommer til Norge, så vil denne straffen på et eller annet tidspunkt være over, og da er hun løs i det norske samfunnet og da presenterer hun en risiko mot det norske folk. Sånne personer trenger vi ikke i Norge.

Reference 4 - 3.25% Coverage

Men poenget er det dersom disse personene kommer til Norge, har gjennomført sin straff, så er de potensielt svært farlige elementer i det norske samfunnet, det er ressurskrevende og følge dem opp. Og det å ta for gitt at norske tjenester, i dette tilfellet PST, har ubegrenset ressurser til å følge opp disse personene, det tror jeg man skal være forsiktig med å anta, for det er mange og det er ressurskrevende i seg selv, og det er også fare for den norske befolkningen. Og da er det veldig lett for meg som stortingspolitiker og ta et standpunkt, jeg er mer opptatt av sikkerheten for nordmenn i Norge enn å ivareta såkalte beleilighetshensyn for en person som har begått

Reference 5 - 0.71% Coverage

Per Willy Amundsen: Det å belønne dem med et opphold i Norge, det anser jeg ikke som vår oppgave, det er mange andre mennesker som lenge før det....

Reference 6 - 3.89% Coverage

Per Willy Amundsen: Nei, det er ingen endelig løsning i dette. Men det vi ihvertfall må sørge for at det er at ikke disse tilhengerne av radikal Islam, med sitt hat. Dette er mennesker som hater Norge, som hater alt vi står for, hater våre frihetsverdier, hater hele den vestlige sivilisasjonen, dem har ingenting her å gjøre, og vi ønsker dem ikke i Norge, de bør kanskje ta et tilhold et annet sted i verden, hvor de kan oppleve sitt kalifat, oppleve sine Sharialover som dem ønsker, her har dem ingen framtid og der bør ikke vi legge til rette for.

Det er en helt annen behandling hun vil få i Norge enn hun vil få de fleste andre plasser i verden, dersom hun blir straffeforfulgt der hun er nå. Det å belønne med et norsk fengsel, et tidlig frislipp, og å bli en del av det norske samfunnet det er ikke jeg med på.

Files\\2 Pol kvarter 11~2-19 - § 1 reference coded [2.19% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.19% Coverage

Hva med hensynet til det norske samfunnet, den norske sikkerheten, som blir satt under press ved at man reiser rundt og henter tilbake folk med kamptrening fra Syria.

Files\4 Debatten 5~3-2019 - § 6 references coded [7.87% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.99% Coverage

De andre må vi anse som har tatt et valg, de har forlatt vestlige verdier, de har forlatt Norge, de har forlatt Sverige, og kommer til å leve sine liv utenfor, fordi de forakter alle verdiene vi står for. Dette er farlige personer, altså foreldrene, som vi må beskytte samfunnet vårt imot.

Reference 2 - 2.82% Coverage

Jon Helgheim: Det er veldig mange barn som lever rundt i verden, både på grunn av foreldrenes gode, og mindre gode valg. Det er veldig mange barn som er norske statsborgere som ikke lever i Norge. Det i seg selv er ikke noe problem. Det er helt utopi og tro at norske myndigheter, fordi norske politikere får noen fikse ideer, at vi skal dra rundt og hente barna til de vi tror ikke har noe godt av å være i utlandet, at det kommer til å være en ordening. Det har aldri skjedd før, selv om det er massevis av barn og massevis av voksne som soner straffer i utlandet for at de har gjort dumme ting, som det ikke er noe tema å hente verken foreldrene eller barna. Hvorfor skal vi gjøre det med tikkende bomber, som er en trussel mot samfunnet. Det er farlige personer vi snakker om, og det må vi først og fremst beskytte samfunnet i Norge i mot.

Reference 3 - 0.80% Coverage

Jon Helgheim: ...det er toppen av naivitet, og når du sier vi må beskytte disse barna, hva med de barna som vokser opp i Norge, som har et krav på beskyttelse, mot livsfarlige terrorister, som du ønsker hjertelig velkommen til Norge

Reference 4 - 0.79% Coverage

Jon Helgheim: det vet vi ingenting om, det vi vet er at foreldrene ble radikaliseret i Norge, og hvis du mener de må komme til Norge for ikke å bli radikaliseret, så er det like stor grunn til at de blir det i Norge for det ble foreldrene,

Reference 5 - 1.24% Coverage

Jon Helgheim: Jeg skjønner ikke hvor det kommer inn at de trenger oss aller mest, når vi vet at ingen, bortsett fra én kvinne har gitt signaler om at de ønsker å komme hjem. De har vendt seg bort i fra Norge og ønsker å leve sine liv i utlandet, det er ikke vårt ansvar lenger da, da får vi heller sørge for at disse blir straffeforfulgt i utlandet, og får dommen sin der

Reference 6 - 1.23% Coverage

Abid Raja: For det første gjør det ganske vondt å høre Gerd Fleisher sin historie. Og jeg tror veldig mange har hatt dårlig samvittighet og i fjor så fikk de også en unnskyldning fra statsministeren. Vi må ikke komme dit om 30, 40, 50 år, at det står en ny statsminister og ser disse barna inn i øynene og sier beklager vi gjorde ingenting, vi vendte ansiktet vekk

Files\5 Siv Jensen landsstyre - § 4 references coded [59.73% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 21.68% Coverage

For meg har det vært utrolig å tenke på, at noen norske statsborgere har reist til Syria og Irak, for å slutte seg til dette forferdelige samfunnet. De har tatt et aktivt valg, og forlatt den frie og vestlige verden med velstand og trygghet, til fordel for et kvinneundertrykkende og menneskefiendtlig samfunn og en terrororganisasjon som halshugger, som dreper, som voldtar, som undertrykker andre mennesker. Og de har gjort dette, fordi de mener at vårt samfunn er feil, at vårt levesett, at våre vestlige, demokratiske frihetsverdier er noe de skal

bekjempe.

Reference 2 - 3.22% Coverage

Hun har reist fordi hun hater alt det Norge står for, våre vestlige frihetsverdier.

Reference 3 - 5.61% Coverage

Det er ikke statens ansvar. Det er ikke skattebetalernes ansvar. Og jeg mener at vi ikke skal løfte en eneste finger, for å få deg tilbake til Norge.

Reference 4 - 29.22% Coverage

Men Norge har altså Europas mest effektive terrorlovgivning, og det var det Fremskrittspartiet som fikk igjennom, tross massiv kritikk. Vi kan dømme for rekruttering til, finansiering av, og støtte til terrororganisasjoner. I dag så er jo kritikerne ganske stille. Og hadde det ikke vært for at vi hadde engasjerte oss i dette, så hadde mange av disse menneskene kunnet gå fri. Til nå så har vi hatt 11 domfellelser etter dette regelverket i Norge. De strengeste dommene er gitt mennesker som ikke engang har vært i Syria. Resten av Europa ser jo nå på muligheten for å kopiere dette regelverket, og det viser, kjære landsstyre, at Fremskrittspartiet utgjør en forskjell i det som er samfunnets viktigste oppgave; nemlig å sikre trygghet for våre innbyggere.

Files\10 Helgheim 23-4-19 - § 2 references coded [50.65% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 20.73% Coverage

I Norge har vi lenge hatt strenge regler for hvem som kan ta med seg sine barn hit. Selv i tilfeller der slektskapet er rimelig åpenbart, kreves det at barna har gyldig fødselsattest med mer.

Det er mange rundt om i hele verden som har barn som sannsynligvis vil ha rett til å komme til Norge fordi foreldrene er norske, men som ikke har papirene i orden, og derfor ikke får komme. Mange av disse barna lever sannsynligvis under svært vanskelige forhold.

Det er sannsynligvis ingen av IS-barna som har noen av de nødvendige dokumentene.

Hvorfor skal vi plutselig endre regler eller gjøre unntak fra de strenge reglene som gjelder for alle andre, bare fordi vi her snakker om barn av terrorister?

Reference 2 - 29.91% Coverage

IS-barna omtales gjerne uten forbehold som norske. Det er helt feil.

De aller fleste barna har aldri vært i Norge, og før det er grundig undersøkt hvem de er og hvordan tilhørighet de måtte ha til Norge, kan de ikke omtales som norske.

Det var vanlig i IS-kalifatet at mødre tok seg av sine egne og andres barn. Man har selvsagt ingen garantier for at IS-mødrene snakker sant.

I Aftenposten har det kommet uverifiserte opplysninger om at barn født i Norge er blitt tatt med til Syria og i dag sitter der som foreldreløse. Dersom dette kan verifiseres, er dette barn som sannsynligvis vil ha nødvendige dokumenter, og som er i en annen situasjon enn de andre.

Regjeringen har åpnet for å hente foreldreløse barn, men jeg tar for gitt at det forutsetter at de har nødvendige dokumenter, slik det kreves av alle andre. I så fall vil det være noen ytterst få barn det er snakk om.

Å hente andre barn eller voksne må være helt uaktuelt. Det vil være grov forskjellsbehandling av IS-barn og alle andre barn.

Files\14 Siv Jensen tale landsmøte 3.5.2019 - § 1 reference coded [10.19% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 10.19% Coverage

Så kjære landsmøte, vi må ta i bruk alle verktøy. For å skape en trygg by og et trygt land

Files\15 frp res landsmøte 5-5 2019 - § 1 reference coded [9.58% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 9.58% Coverage

Norske myndigheter har et overordnet ansvar for å beskytte samfunnet mot farer og trusler. IS-krigere og deres støttespillere utgjør en stor sikkerhetstrussel, og Norge må derfor beskyttes mot disse. Norske myndigheter skal ikke under noen omstendigheter hjelpe eller medvirke til at IS-krigere eller IS-sympatisører kommer tilbake til Norge. Norge kan ikke avvise norske statsborgere på grensen. Dette betyr at dersom IS-krigere og sympatisører med norsk statsborgerskap kommer til Norge på egen hånd, skal de pågripes, etterforskes og straffes. Dersom de kommer med barn, skal barna deres tas hånd om av barnevernet.

Files\16 pol.kv. 8~5~2019 - § 1 reference coded [6.04% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.04% Coverage

J: Nei, altså, etter den mediedekningen som har vært, hvor man ofte fremstiller disse kvinnene som ofre, som har tatt et valg om å reise og slutte seg til en av verdens verste terrorhærer som støtter brenning, halshugging, voldtekt og drap av uskyldige mennesker, og når det perspektivet forsvinner og man blir mere opptatt av å fremstille disse som ofre så kanskje folk glemmer. Men nå er det jo fortsatt sånn at et flertall ser realitetene her, og klarer å beholde de verdiene og prinsippene som vi pleier å basere nasjonen på og ønsker ikke at disse kvinnene skal komme tilbake. Jeg synes det er helt merkelig jeg, at man har gjort det til kampsak akkurat sånn når disse foreldrene har vist seg som så gode foreldre at de ikke på død og liv skal skille seg fra barna sine. Og hadde dette skjedd i Norge så hadde de blitt fratatt barna med én gang.

Files\18 Dagsnytt 18 4~6-19 - § 2 references coded [5.37% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.81% Coverage

J: Ja, det kan man jo godt diskutere, men sånn som jeg sa, foreldrene ble radikaliserert i Norge, så det er ikke noen grunn til å tro at det er lavere sjans for å bli radikaliserert i Norge. De som har blitt radikaliserert i Norge, er de som er ansett for å være de verste terroristene i IS. Og når jeg sier ”de som ønsker”, da mener jeg nødvendigvis ikke deg alene, da mener jeg et stort påtrykk fra mange organisasjoner og også politiske partier, som en helhet utgjør de et svært press som ikke vil gi seg ved å hente barna til Norge.

Reference 2 - 2.56% Coverage

J: Det vil jo da bryte med alt rettsprinsipp, all internasjonal politikk som sier at man skal dømme der forbrytelsene har blitt begått, det skjer også hvis en asylsøker har gjort noe galt i Norge, så skal straffes han her og soner som regel alltid her. Hvis nordmenn i utlandet gjør noe galt så er prinsippet at man skal dømmes der man har gjort noe galt. Og det har også med rettighetene å gjøre til de som er ofre, de skal også ha muligheten til å dømme sine, og da må vi bidra.

Files\19 møte i stortinget - § 3 references coded [0.99% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.37% Coverage

et norske straffesystemet gir et godt rammeverk for å kunne straffeforfølge norske borgere som har inngått terrorforbund, deltatt i, rekruttert til eller økonomisk eller på annen måte støttet ISIL, eller vært delaktig i de massive overgrepene som er begått i Syria og Irak. Flere personer er allerede blitt domfelt av norske domstoler, og påtalemyndigheten vurderer om det er grunnlag for å innlede etterforskning mot fremmedkrigere som antas å befinne seg i konfliktområdet, og dersom de senere returnerer til

Norge.

Reference 2 - 0.36% Coverage

Min uenighet med forslagsstillerne gjelder spørsmålet om Norge aktivt skal hente tilbake IS-krigere på det nåværende tidspunkt. Som jeg viste til i mitt svar til Stortinget den 23. mai i år om disse spørsmålene, er det å foretrekke at IS-krigerne blir straffeforfulgt i de landene hvor de har begått sine kriminelle handlinger. Enhver stat har rett til å straffeforfølge lovbrudd begått på eget territorium, og det har også klare etterforskningsmessige, bevismessige og ressursmessige fordeler.

Reference 3 - 0.26% Coverage

Men det er også viktig – som representanten Eide påpeker – å sikre at disse straffeforfølgelsene skjer innenfor menneskerettighetenes rammer, og det ønsker Norge å bidra til. Derfor er det også viktig at Norge bidrar til at vi kan få gode regionale løsninger der nede, der man er nærmest ofrene som har blitt utsatt for disse grusomhetene, og som kan bevitne at de har blitt det.

Files\25 Kallmyr 4-10 - § 1 reference coded [6.98% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.98% Coverage

Jeg håper den åpne debatten rundt IS-fremmedkrigenes skjebne fortsetter, for vi trenger den. Hvordan vi håndterer denne krevende saken vil definere oss som rettstat og samfunn. Vi lever heldigvis i et fritt demokrati og en rettsstat, der spørsmål om straffeforfølgelse og straff besluttes av påtalemyndighetene og til sist domstolene – og ikke av politikere.

Files\28 Dagsnytt 18 14~1-20 - § 1 reference coded [3.06% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.06% Coverage

Jon Helgheim: Det vi må huske i disse sakene det er at det er mor som har hele ansvaret både for den situasjonen som har oppstått, og at det eventuelt ikke hadde funnet noen løsning, hun nektet barna hjelp. Og da er det faktisk grenser for hvor langt norske myndigheter kan strekke seg, norske myndigheter har gjort alt i sin makt for å hjelpe barna uten at mor, som den potensielle trusselen hun er, skulle kome

Files\30 Politisk kvarter 16.1.20 - § 1 reference coded [4.76% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.76% Coverage

Siv Jensen: Jeg skjønner ikke at programlederen ikke ser forskjellen på dette, det at noen selv beveger seg over landegrensene er en sak, men at myndighetene skal bruke tid, penger, ressurser på å hente borgere hjem som aktivt har forlatt dette samfunnet, tatt avstand fra alt vi står for, som vil bekjempe den måten og styre et samfunn på, demokrati, frihet, ikke minst frihet for kvinner, likestilling, ja dette er jo verdier de snakker forkastelig om. Det er jo dette som opprører, ikke bare FrPere, jeg tror det opprører veldig mange nordmenn. Og FrP har vært tydelige på dette hele tider, så det må ikke komme overraskende på noen at vi reagerer.

Files\31 Debatten 16~1-20 - § 3 references coded [6.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.31% Coverage

on Helgheim: Ja, dette er en så viktig sak fordi den river i folks rettferdighetsfølelse. Jeg må si jeg reagerer på bruk av ord som moral, jeg kan ikke se noe som helst rett moral i det å hente en terrorist tilbake til Norge. Det er mange, rundt om i Norge og i utlandet, som sliter som aldri får norske myndigheters oppmerksomhet. Men hvis man da har vært medlem, i ikke bare én men to terrororganisasjoner, da får man plutselig en så massiv innsats. Det mener jeg strider mot all moral, det er ingenting moralsk i det, også er det sånn at alle har vært enige om

å hjelpe barna, men grensen skulle også gå der. Vi ønsker ikke å bidra til at en terrorist kommer tilbake på norsk jord, med den risikoen det har, og med det moralske ansvar det faktisk er. Og dermed måtte vi sette grensen et sted, de aller fleste andre partiene har jo hoppet og snudd kappen etter vinden her mange ganger, og da måtte vi til slutt si stopp, for hva med neste sak? Vi har sett at de andre har flyttet på seg hele tiden, og hvis ikke noen sier stopp nå, så ender

Reference 2 - 1.86% Coverage

Jon Helgheim: Dette her høres ut som en farlig person, som trenger et sånt apparat rundt seg for å ikke begå noe farlig for omverdenen, og mot Norge som nasjon. Jeg mener det er uansett feil, men jeg tror også vi har et apparat som kan stagge risikoer, det har vi, men er det både moralsk og politisk riktig å bruke så mye ressurser? Nå har vi brukt masse ressurser og flere måneder med arbeid for å få en terrorist til Norge, og nå skal vi i mange år overholde henne og holde henne i lenker, og stagge henne mot å gjøre noe galt. Det synes jeg ikke høres ut som en fornuftig politikk.

Reference 3 - 1.62% Coverage

Kjell Ingolf Ropstad: Det hadde du aldri klart. For det prøvde vi på, og valget var enten å la de sitte der eller å få ungene hjem. Men poenget er jo at de kan komme, de er norske statsborgere og kan dukke opp på grensa når som helst, og får i utgangspunktet vandre fritt. Jeg tror jo vi har nok kontroll til å ta de da også, men i utgangspunktet så har vi nå full kontroll over denne kvinnen, og hun vil bli straffeforfulgt og hvis hun dømmes for noe så vil hun jo selvsagt være under myndighetenes kontroll.

Appendix 4 – Chronological List of the Data Material

Date, ref. - nvivo	Prog.	Participants	link	Ref. in text
28/5 2018 1	Dagsnytt 18	Erling Folkvord (Rødt) Per Willy Amundsen (FrP) Adele Mestad (NIM) Åsne Seierstad (Espen Aas	https://tv.nrk.no/serie/dagsnytt-atten-tv/201805/NNFA56052818/avspiller	NRK 2018
11/2- 2019 2	Politisk kvarter	<u>Abid Raja (V)</u> <u>Jon Helgheim (FrP)</u>	https://radio.nrk.no/serie/politisk-kvarter/NREP01002919/11-02-2019	NRK 2019a
5/3- 2019 3	Utenrikspolitisk redegjørelse fra Regjeringen	<u>Ine E. Søreide</u>	https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/utgreiing_190305/id2631307/	Søreide 2019
5/3- 2019 4	Debatten , NRK1	Kristin Nesse Thue <u>Jon Helgheim (FrP)</u> <u>Abid Raja (V)</u> <u>Thomas Hegghammer (FFI)</u> Gerd Fleischer Heidi Wittrup Djup	https://tv.nrk.no/serie/debatten/201903/NNFA51030519/avspiller	NRK 2019b
16/3- 2019 5	Party Leader speech at FrP's meeting in the party's national executive committee	<u>Siv jensen</u>	https://www.frp.no/aktuelt/2019/03/is-kvinner	Jensen 2019b

18/3-2019 6	Dagsnytt 18	Ingeborg Nordtømme (Biskop I Møre) <u>Michael Tetzchner (H)</u>	https://tv.nrk.no/serie/dagsnytt-atten-tv/201903/NNFA56031819/avspiller	NRK 2019c
17/4-2019 7	Opinion piece	<u>Abid raja (V)</u>	https://www.vg.no/nyheter/meninger/i/jdv3Bo/norske-barn-av-is-kvinner-er-et-norsk-ansvar	Raja 2019a
23/4-2019 8	Politisk kvarter	<u>Erna Solberg (H)</u> <u>Jonas Gahr Støre (AP)</u>	https://radio.nrk.no/serie/politisk-kvarter/NREP01008019/23-04-2019	Nrk 2019d
23/4-2019 9	Dagsnytt 18	<u>Erna Solberg</u>	https://tv.nrk.no/serie/dagsnytt-atten-tv/201904/NNFA56042319/avspiller	Nrk 2019 e
24/4-2019 a10	Opinion piece	<u>Jon Helgheim (FrP)</u>	https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/debatt/i/rAM4Ra/er-barn-av-is-krigere-mer-verdt-enn-andre-barn-jon-helgheim	Helgheim2019
26/4-2019 a11	Politisk kvarter (krf's biannual party conference)	<u>Olaug Bollestad (KrF)</u>	https://radio.nrk.no/podkast/politisk_kvarter/nrkno-poddkast-247-153007-26042019074600	NRK 2019f
26/4-2019 a12	Speech by the Party Leader at KrF's bi-annual party conference	<u>Olaug Bollestad (KrF)</u>	https://www.krf.no/nyheter/nyheter-fra-krf/olaug-bollestads-tale-til-landsmotet-2019/	KrF 2019a
27/4-2019 a13	Resolution krfs landsmøte	<u>KrF</u>	https://www.krf.no/nyheter/nyheter-fra-krf/hent-barna-hjem/	KrF 2019b
-5-2019 a14	Speech by the Party Leader at FrP's landsmøte	<u>Siv Jensen (FrP)</u>	https://www.frp.no/landsmote2019	Jensen 2019a
5/5-2019	Resolution from FrP's landsmøte	<u>FrP</u>	, https://www.frp.no/~/_/media/02-dokumenter/landsmote/2019/vedtatte-resolusjoner.pdf?la=nb-no	FrP 2019a

a15				
8/5-2019 a16	Politisk kvarter	<u>Hans Fredrik Grøvan (Krf)</u> <u>Peter Christian Frølich (H)</u> <u>Jon Helgheim (FrP)</u>	https://radio.nrk.no/serie/politisk-kvarter/NREP01009119/08-05-2019	Nrk 2019g
3/6-2019 a17	Pressekonferanse	<u>Ine E. Søreide (H)</u> <u>Erna Solberg (H)</u>	https://www.nrk.no/norge/solberg-om-foreldrelose-syria-barn--ma-ikke-dommes-for-foreldrenes-valg-1.14574845	NRK 2019h
4/6-2019 a18	Dagsnytt 18	<u>Kjell Ingolf Ropstad (Krf)</u> Sidsel Wold (NRK) Åsne Seierstad (author) <u>Jon Helgheim (FrP)</u>	https://radio.nrk.no/serie/dagsnytt-atten/NMAG03011019/04-06-2019	Nrk 2019j
18/6-2019 a19	Parliamentary meeting	<u>Jøran Kallmur (FrP)</u>	https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Representantforslag/2018-2019/dok8-201819-143s/?all=true	S.tid. (2018-2019) pp. 5145-51
Besvart 18/6 A20	<u>Skriftlig spørsmål</u>	<u>Ine. E. Søreide</u>	https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Sporsmal/Skriftlige-sporsmal-og-svar/Skriftlig-sporsmal/?qid=76508	Dok. 15:1815 (2018-2019)
26/6-2019 a21	<u>Politisk kvarter</u>	<u>Kjell ingolf Ropstad(Krf)</u>	https://radio.nrk.no/serie/politisk-kvarter/NREP01012619/26-06-2019	Nrk2019k
26/7-2019 a22	Dagsnytt 18	<u>Jon Helgheim (FrP)</u> <u>Monica Sydgård (Redd Barna)</u>	https://radio.nrk.no/serie/dagsnytt-atten/NMAG03014819/26-07-2019	Nrk2019l

30/9-2019 a23	Dagsnytt 18	<u>Abid Raja (V)</u> <u>Michael Tetzchner (H)</u>	https://radio.nrk.no/podkast/dagsnytt_atten/nrkno-poddkast-3720-159524-30092019172500	NRK 2019m
3/10-2019 a24	Trontaledebatt	<u>Hans Fredrik Grøvan</u>	https://www.stortinget.no/globalassets/pdf/referater/stortinget/2019-2020/refs-201920-10-03.pdf	S. tid (2019-2020), ss.41-44
4/10-2019 a25	Opinion Piece	<u>Jøran Kallmyr (FrP)</u>	, https://www.vg.no/nyheter/meninger/i/AdWvlr/kallmyr-om-is-fremmedkrigerne-ikke-et-politisk-spoersmaal	Kallmyr 2019
18/11-2019 a26	Written question in Parliament	<u>Une Aina Bastholm (MDG)</u> <u>I.E Søreide</u>	https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Sporsmal/Skriftlige-sporsmal-og-svar/Skriftlig-sporsmal/?qid=77733	Dok. 15:238 (2019-2020)
14/1-2020 a27	Press Conference	<u>Ine E. Søreide (H)</u>	https://www.vgtv.no/video/190900/ine-eriksen-soereide-moette-pressen-i-forbindelse-med-saken-om-returen-fra-syria	VG 2019a
14/1-2020 a28	Dagsnytt 18	<u>Ine E. Søreide (H)</u> <u>Jon Helgheim (FrP)</u> <u>Kjell Ingolf Ropstad (KrF)</u> <u>Karin Andersen (SV)</u>	https://tv.nrk.no/serie/dagsnytt-atten-tv/202001/NNFA56011420/avspiller	NRK2019n
15/1-2020 a29	Politisk kvarter	<u>Trine Seki Grande (V)</u> <u>Jon Helgheim (FrP)</u>	https://tv.nrk.no/serie/politisk-kvarter-tv/202001/NNFA07011520/avspiller	Nrk 2019o
16/1-2020 a30	Politisk kvarter	<u>Siv Jensen (Frp)</u>	https://tv.nrk.no/serie/politisk-kvarter-tv/202001/NNFA07011620/avspiller	Nrk 2019p
16/1-2020 a31	<u>Debatten</u>	<u>Kjell Ingolf Ropstad (KrF)</u> <u>Sofie Høgestøl (UiO)</u> <u>Thomas Hegghammer (FFI/UiO)</u> <u>Jon Helgheim (FrP)</u> <u>Erna Solberg (H)</u>	https://tv.nrk.no/serie/debatten/202001/NNFA51011620/avspiller	Nrk2019q

17/1-2020 a32	Dagsnytt 18	Michael Tetzchner (H)	https://tv.nrk.no/serie/dagsnytt-atten-tv/202001/NNFA56011720/avspiller	NRK 2019r
20/1-2020 a33	debatten	<u>Jan Tore Sanner (H)</u> <u>Siv Jensen (FrP)</u> Une Aina Bastholm (MDG) Trygve Slagsvold Vedum (SP) Jonas Gahr Støhre (AP) Trine Skei Grande (V)	https://tv.nrk.no/serie/debatten/202001/NNFA51012020/avspiller	NRK 2019s