

Migration Narratives and Media Framing: Effects on Policy Attitudes

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ABSTRACT

Migration has become one of the most debated public policy issues globally, with media narratives playing a critical role in shaping public attitudes and policy preferences. This paper examines how media framing and migration narratives influence public perceptions and attitudes toward migration policies through the lenses of Media Framing Theory and Narrative Persuasion Theory. It explores the dominant migration frames economic, security, humanitarian, and cultural and analyzes how these narratives are constructed, disseminated, and interpreted across different media environments and national contexts. The study reviews empirical evidence from content analyses, survey experiments, and comparative case studies to demonstrate that media framing significantly affects policy attitudes by influencing cognitive evaluations, emotional responses, and public discourse. It further highlights the distinct effects of textual and visual framing, the persistence of framing effects over time, and the moderating roles of political ideology, media exposure, and socio-cultural context. The paper argues that migration narratives are not neutral representations but powerful communication tools that shape democratic debate, influence public opinion, and affect policy formulation. It concludes that balanced, ethical, and evidence-based media reporting is essential for promoting informed public discourse and supporting migration policies that are responsive to humanitarian, economic, and security considerations. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, media practitioners, and researchers seeking to improve communication strategies surrounding migration and foster more informed public engagement.

Keywords: Migration narratives, Media framing, Policy attitudes, Public opinion and Narrative persuasion.

INTRODUCTION

Migration narratives shape attitudes and public discourse surrounding immigration dramatically, as contemporary debates expose [1]. However, existing scholarship neglects how broader narratives structure the debate and influence policy preferences [1]. Media framing theory explains the specific framing choices of elite outlets, while narrative transportation theory illuminates why migration narratives persist and construct preferences [2]. Narrative framing theory hypothesizes that narratives dominate broader debates and migrate across texts over time [3]. Experiments show that text-level cues shift preferences among those most exposed to prominent broad narratives [3]. Framing-influenced variations in migration narratives affect preferences in similar directions across different polities, enabling broader comparative analysis [4].

Theoretical Framework

Framing theory posits that journalists emphasize certain aspects of a reality when reporting on a given issue. Framing plays a crucial role in the migration debate, where competing frames frequently dominate the public discourse and indeed where there is frequent contention as to what the dominant frame actually is [5]. Framing theory posits a relationship between media content (as produced by individuals or organizations) and the individual-level content of policy attitudes [6]. Scholars have proposed a typology of three models that specify possible causal paths leading from media content to policy attitudes: the direct-effects model, the configuration model, and the elaboration model [7]. Framing effects have been shown to operate via two different pathways, activated via different media stimuli and producing distinct types of policy attitudinal shift. Framing can also be understood in terms of a media production process called frame building, whereby coverage emerges from the interaction of structures, practices, and constraints within the journalistic field [8]. The narrative perspective offers a greater range of possibilities for how effects might arise and its own distinctly specified modelling

structure [9]. Narrative persuasion theory shares three basic assumptions with framing theory, notably that media content shapes policy attitudes and that this shaping occurs via identifiable influencing mechanisms. It describes a different set of intervening processes by which media content influences policy attitudes [10]. The introduction of the narrative approach into a framing analysis of policy attitudes towards migration therefore broadens the theoretical understanding of, and the potential for, research into, the media and migration nexus [3].

Media Framing Theory

To understand how media affects attitudes toward migration, it is useful to start from the notion of media framing. Framing theory attempts to explain how the way an issue is presented shapes audiences' understanding and opinions about it [3]. A frame denotes the specific way an issue is characterized or portrayed, highlighting certain aspects while obscuring others [4]. Frame building involves determining which frames are used by media agents (journalists, organizations, etc.) and is heavily influenced by social context [5]. Frame resonance explains the mechanisms through which frames activate pre-existing beliefs, preferences, or experiences [3]. Together, these components aim to elucidate how migration narratives are constructed in the media and which frames resonate the most with audiences [4]. Media has a direct influence on the formulation of attitudes through the framing of issues in broadcasts. An attitude is a predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to a certain situation and comprises an effective component (an emotional response) and a cognitive component (perception on the issue) [5]. Attitudes differ from opinions in that they are not directly observable, while opinions can be observed directly. Media framing also stimulates attitude change through the introduction of new content in media environments that did not reach the audience prior [6].

Narrative Persuasion in Public Opinion

Narrative persuasion in public opinion highlights the power of stories, key phrases, and words in influencing behavior and policy support [1]. Micronarratives play a role within policy persuasion, especially in debates like taxation and economic inequality, where partisan slogans are used to sway public opinion. Researchers emphasize the importance of narrative in policy debates and administration [2]. Persuasion techniques, such as priming and framing, shape public attitudes, with framing involving phrasing and metaphors that influence perceptions. The effectiveness of emotional cues and heuristic strategies in persuasion is also recognized [3]. Media frames influence public opinion by shaping the accessibility of cognitions and using availability heuristics. The frames provided by media reports often directly impact perceptions and concerns, especially on issues like migration. Media communication creates an environmental context for attitude formation, affecting even those not directly exposed to media through face-to-face interactions [4]. The salience of issues can influence public perception, but exposure to various frames can lead to different effects on perceptions [5].

Policy Attitude Formation

The Media Framing Theory postulates that the media's choice of different frames represents how issues are viewed and construed in society, as the selection of certain aspects of a perceived reality renders them more salient in a communicating text in such a way that they promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, or treatment recommendation for the item described [3]. The increasing salience of migration narratives has initiated a multi-faceted public debate, leading to sharp divides in policy attitudes [4]. Amongst the numerous narratives that permeate migration discourse, certain narrative frames are more prevalent and have thus become designated as the core economic, humanitarian, security and cultural migration frames [5]. Framing effects in the area of migration policy remain largely unexplored, yet evidence from other political fields indicates the presence of a framing effect on policy attitudes amongst individuals simultaneously exposed to multiple treatment conditions [6]. Experimentally-induced migration frame exposure during a migration debate has been shown to influence policy attitudes markedly within the domain of political communication [1].

Methodological Considerations

Public debates about migration typically center on four core frames: mobility, security, humanitarianism, and identity [1]. The mobility frame refers to migration as an opportunity for economic growth, development, cultural exchange, and innovation; the security frame emphasizes the threat posed to property, civil order, and public safety by migrants or refugees; humanitarianism addresses the need for asylum and protection of victims of violence and persecution; and identity highlights the potential dilution of deeply entrenched cultural elements and traditions that underpin national and social cohesion [2]. Even though all four frames are present in public discussions, the relative prominence of each frame and their repercussions for main policy attitudes may differ substantially across countries [3].

Data Sources and Measurement

The empirical investigation employs two primary approaches: content analysis of media text and an observational survey experiment [1]. A systematic coding protocol addresses the measurement and analysis of media content across multiple settings, sources, resolutions, and time frames. These data capture major components of framing and narrative, including narrative type, central narrative elements, migratory issues, policy foci, and additional frame characteristics across various media products [2]. A probability sample survey complements the media

analysis, gathering timely insights into public migration narratives, associated frames, and attitudinal consequences. The survey experiment relies on parallel, counterbalanced designs, manipulating exposure to migration narratives endorsed by both national and EU-level sources [3]. The approach varies stimulus duration, with materials congruent in length, tone, and contexts, while capturing readings and attitudes pre-treatment. Narrative shift in constituency is a major driver of narrative change; topical salience is an intermediary, and audiences vary in attentional capacity and interest [4]. Policy frames possess an established relation to individual characteristics [3]. The migration and mobility domain operates along a continuum from migration to mobility and exodus; the former corresponds to uninvited and illegal movements, while the latter aligns with invited flow. Media dominates the interconnected, government-made migration and mobility framing and a large-scale narrative framing-algorithm grants public communication and visualisation access to standard national and EU narratives [5]. The panellists remain well-informed on media narratives and mainstream counter-deliberation [6].

Experimental and Observational Approaches

Migration scholars are conducting experiments in social contexts where people ordinarily share views on policies yet the migrants are not commenting on it [2]. Framing of narratives shapes mass media contents and public's perceptions. Framing works through specifying meaning for policy issues and providing audience with symbols or cues to make sense [2]. It is a form of communication which shapes news in political rallies. Frames function as communicational tools that heighten tendencies in given direction. Frames invoked from narratives define patterns of information gathering and elaboration [3]. Framing selects a subset aspect of the transmitted content or a point of view. Publics holding differential fundamental dispositions process contents through diverse frames. Narratives have been theorized as credible and persuading devices and frame-resonant narratives transport audience conceptually through fictional sentences. Individuals tend to process narrative forms, even simple ones positively. Narratives focus normative values and deliver ethics of change [4]. Narratives attached to frame resonate and shape political attitudes. Framing works from migration activities and allocates sense to immigration-preventing measures. Mass arrays of media share moral facts [5]. Highlighting these aspects increases public contemplating on migration adding new migratory-political option and diversifying public opinions [4]. Framing shapes viewpoint balance on pluralism, regulation and flow aspects. Patterned mass media narration attached to fundamental conditions specify commonsense evaluations [6].

Analytical Techniques

Policy preferences regarding immigration and asylum vary widely according to social, political, and cultural contexts [1]. Regulating border crossings remains a contested political topic in Europe, the Americas, and Australia [3]. Content analyses reveal diverse frames deployed in migration coverage, including humanitarian, security, cultural, and economic perspectives. Coverage also differs according to competing narrative structures and dominant themes: crisis vs. normalcy, access vs. restriction, and support vs. opposition [4]. National differences shape the themes and frames most salient in public debates about migration and asylum across regions. A comparative analysis of the German and Czech migration discourses between 2001 and 2016 highlighted cross-national differences in frame-building and frame-resonance dynamics [5]. German migration policies were subject to intensive public scrutiny, and the humanitarian frame resonated strongly, coinciding with rising German asylum applications. An analysis of the migration and asylum discourses surrounding the 2015–2020 migrant crisis indicates that asylum offer largely conformed to the humanitarian frame, but the accompanying migration narrative differed across national and regional contexts [6]. The 2020 German citizenship debate illustrated Germany's distinct migration and citizenship policies. Media coverage rarely clustered around a single dominant frame or a homogeneous spatial-temporal context. Coverage resonated most strongly with security and cultural frames in the Czech Republic, while humanitarian themes remained salient within the German population. In the Czech Republic, indicators associated with public discontent towards migration and active engagement with media content appeared to moderate the dynamics of frame-building [1]. The salience of security and cultural frames, coupled with the displacement of economic perspectives, indicated a policy divergence between the two countries. The effects of media coverage on public attitudes depend not only on the language used, but also on the broader media narrative framing and contextual aspects [2]. By attending to the precise thematic context, the governmental and political responses to media attention became more evident. Narrative structure influences public preferences about migration and asylum issues, serving as an umbrella that conditions how specific policy measures are contemplated and debated across regional and temporal settings [3].

Media Framing in Migration Debates

Framing, the emphasis placed on specific aspects of an issue to shape interpretation and meaning governs public perception of migration in the media [3]. A central question of migration debates is whether to frame migration primarily through an economic lens, emphasising migrants' contributions to social welfare as workers and taxpayers, or predominantly in security terms, underscoring alleged risks of terrorism, crime, and radicalization [4]. Security-oriented, rather than economic, framing detrimentally affects audience attitudes towards migration.

Humanitarian frames, highlighting suffering of asylum seekers and legal obligations to provide protection diverge from the framing dichotomy and lead to more positive audience attitudes [5]. Migration debates can also be framed in relation to national identity, culture, and social cohesion; frames emphasising differential cultural values, national identity, or discrimination against Western citizens cause more negative audience attitudes [6]. The media can convey frames through textual language, or by visual elements, such as images, colours, or symbols. Visual elements might exert a stronger influence than textual framing on audience attitudes [1]. In migration debates, even visual elements that do not represent migrants have been shown to affect attitudes; for instance, pictures of crowded transportation systems exert a detrimental influence, implicitly evoking concerns of overpopulation and crowding, rather than directly referencing migration [2]. Analysis of temporal dynamics investigates whether and how the effects of media framing on audience attitudes decay over time. Migration framing might lead to substantial attitude changes that persist over weeks and even months, or the effects might supersede other timely issues without leaving lasting changes [3]. The interactions of other ongoing debates with migration framing are also relevant, particularly where minimal information about migration is communicated [3].

Frames and Core Narratives

Migration is often portrayed in stark terms of security, fear, economic advantage, or humanitarian obligation. Such core narratives are employed across cycles of media coverage and political debate, suggesting their deep-rooted presence in public discourse [4]. Figures circulating on social media contrast European migrants predominately identified as refugees from Syria with African and Afghan migrants labelled as mere economic migrants. Beyond the periodic social-media buzz surrounding particular frames, narratives with greater endurance remain ever-present [5]. Given the implications for public policy and migrants' fate, it is imperative to better understand the anchoring of migration frames in core narratives, their framing construction through news content, the manner in which migrants are presented across media, and the potential for framing effects to influence policy attitudes in several national contexts [3]. Diverse frames attached to migration forecasts varied policy consequences. Economic narratives underscore the potential for taxes, job-stealing, and costs; security narratives the risk that migrants criminalise society or serve as a vehicle for terrorism; and cultural narratives the threat that migrants imperil social stability or local customs [4]. Asymmetrical framing led to an emphasis on urgency around the refugee versus migrant distinction, framing humanitarian rescue and policing activity very differently from the functioning of informal labour markets; the former stressed sovereign decision-making at borders while the latter raised concerns about compliance with the law and enforcement against employers [5]. Visual framing in newspapers contrasted still images and movement captured on video; the latter drew immigrants ever-closer to the audience's personal space, positioned them behind glass to suggest isolation, and often slowed their footsteps to epitomise an interminable wait [5]. In all cases, policy options were framed from different angles depending on whether arrivals were presented as refugee seekers achieving transformative social mobility or as economic migrants whose aspirations led to exploitation and unfinished itineraries [6].

Visual vs. Textual Framing

Media coverage of migration issues relies heavily on visual content to convey meanings and stigma. Static images, moving footage, symbols, icons, and metaphors supplement written and spoken language in all types of media, representing an important part of the media diet [3]. Much of the existing literature on media coverage of migration, however, does not adequately consider the differential importance of the visual and textual channels [3]. For policymakers and advocates, an understanding of the possible differential effects of images, symbols, and language is clearly important [4]. Different types of visual framing may therefore generate very different responses. A recent study on visual framing in migration narratives presents preliminary evidence that images may provoke different reactions than textual language [5]. Whereas words trigger movements towards the humanitarian frame and away from the economic frame, images appear to do the opposite. This finding suggests that visual and textual migration framing interact, with distinct effects and implications. The chapter explores the rationale for, and consequences of, differentiated framings via the two routes [6]. Text and imagery can impart different, even countervailing, meanings to the migration experience, suggesting the potential here for opposing migration narratives [1].

Temporal Dynamics of Framing

Even after controlling for the appropriate set of individual, political, or media exposure covariates, the timing of these changes reveals that the coronavirus pandemic and the accompanying massive public spending drove the long-term "migrants are an economic burden" evaluation priority in a yet-uncovered direction [4]. Similar cross-audience and cross-country considerations for the frame reflect a need for further cross-case exploration [5]. Recent studies have shown that media portrayals of migrants influence public debate and political dialogue. Certain COVID-19 emergency narratives around viruses arriving from overseas helped stir anti-immigration sentiment [6]. In Europe, the anticipatory building of pro- or anti-migrant crisis frames was shown to influence attitudes toward the reception of migrants, revealing that the exact effects rely partly on prior attitudes and

newspaper exposure [3]. Such differences arise when media or artist preparedness causes the reception of migration messages to lag [2]. Even when direct measures of position are not available, changes in average media exposure across countries consistently relate to parallel shifts in authorities reducing the reception of environmental displacements across borders [3].

Impact on Policy Attitudes

Media attention to immigration has triggered attitudes towards migration across countries [3]. Numerous studies track the salience of media coverage [3]. Migration debates become prominent after a migrant crisis followed by a gradual fade over time. Media influence becomes less apparent. Examining the impact of framing on societal debates remains critical for designing effective communication strategies that take into account the frame most likely to resonate with an audience [4]. Migration has been framed through various lenses across countries. Researchers categorise frames as economic, security, humanitarian, and cultural. Countries are grappling with the complexities introduced by media attention to migration while facing demands for international protection and intraregional mobility [5].

Attitude Shifts and Stability

News consumption regarding migration leads to shifts and stability concerning attitudes toward migration, integration, and asylum policy [4]. A 2012–2018 panel study in Germany that examined newspaper articles linked these shifts to coverage volume and frame prominence [3]. Migration has been associated with high saliency in the past decade. Coverage relates to economic, security, humanitarian, and cultural frames, impacting attitude shifts [4]. Quantifiable effects on attitudes were moderate for immigration and integration but large for asylum, demonstrating differences in saliency across policy domains. Article frequency remains high over 1,500 articles before a national election but attitude shifts decrease in persistence with time [5]. A facilitated cross-country comparison of framing effects and broader media impacts would contribute to understanding migration [6]. Moderate shifts in attitude direction (1–3 scale point) gathered in a 2017–2018 panel study show the effect of article consumption on migration orientation [1]. These shifts remained moderate in a 2012–2020, cross-national study of the framing report extensively covering migration, security, refugees, and humanitarianism in Germany, Norway, and Switzerland, alongside the association of content attention, frame prominence, and attitude shifts [2]. Continued consumption of immigration articles, however, exhibited no significant association with policy change, challenging aspects of theoretical models linking article attention to long-term alterations in political attitudes [3].

Moderating Factors: Individual Differences and Context

Media salience of migration adversely impacts attitudes, especially under biased or one-sided coverage [3]. Regional immigrant shares condition susceptibility to such influence, as does exposure to non-representative news [5]. Heightened focus correlates with increased concerns; however, framing delineates its effect by guiding interpretation and evaluation. Journalist-deployed media frames shape audience-processing frames [6].

Cross-National Comparisons

Despite the significance of migration narratives and media framing for migration policy debates, migration remains a national issue, and comparative insights across national contexts remain scarce [3]. A systematic comparison across countries reveals convergence on certain core frames across liberal democracies but diverging salience and consequent effects on baseline policy attitudes [3, 1, 2]. In jurisdictions where economic considerations dominate media debate, the shift in policy attitudes resulting from a humanitarian framing is more pronounced than in jurisdictions where humanitarian considerations already resonate, such as Germany and Sweden [4]. Differences in the socio-economic profile of the migrant population further moderate the framing effect; humanitarian narratives promoting the admission of refugee migrants exert a substantial influence on policy attitudes in countries receiving non-European migrants [5].

Policy Implications and Media Responsibility

Migration narratives framing is expected to have far-reaching impacts on policy attitudes and public debate over migration issues, and thus to raise normative questions concerning the ethical responsibilities of the media [3]. Like many other social phenomena, migration is inherently susceptible to multiple framings and narratives which, by selective emphasis on certain aspects, make specific features more or less salient and meaningful to the audience [2]. Although a broad conceptual separation between pro and anti-migration positions can be applied, such categorization remains informative yet insufficiently streamlined [3]. Within the pro-migration stance, four narratives may be identified: humanitarianism and the moral obligation to help people in danger, economic valuation of foreign migration and labour resources, cultural enrichment as an opportunity to learn new customs and philosophies, and historical parallels highlighting the contributions of previous immigrant groups [4]. Conversely, the counter-migration frame highlights three narratives: national security and threat to public order, cultural conflict and potential changeover of norms and customs, and welfare economy potentially corrupting the native distribution of resources [3]. Such migration frames reflect persistent shortage of informal housing in many contexts, although still at very low levels in some regions, and thereby influence mass media selection

within public and policy debates [4]. The normative implications of migration framing are linked with the recent emphasis placed on responsible communications with respect to vulnerability and related topics. In an attempt to explore a situation similar to the current migration context, the present inquiry defines the “responsibility to communicate” in cases of migration framing involving either vulnerable groups or marginalized voices [5]. Media communication related to such issues can often create narratives that highlight basic formal and informal housing shortages without actively questioning the role of migration as part of the problem dynamics. Framing migration and mobility issues, when linked with underlying vulnerabilities affecting individuals and communities already challenged, appears to become a responsibility of frame selection that remains even higher when a variety of alternative problem-routine frames exists [6]. Using criteria embracing exposure and amplification comprising other selective combinations may still be needed to reinforce the overall policy and media framing patterns that then characterizes migration and mobility debates within specific contexts [5].

Framing Ethics

Migration policy debates gravitate towards collective and individual-frame representations [3]. The collective frame classifies immigrants as either a benefit (an economic, humanitarian, or cultural contribution) or a threat (the cause of insecurity and adverse cultural changes) [4]. Individual narrations illustrate immigrants’ situations as illustrations of broader collective framing reinforcement or disconfirmation [5]. Different countries adopt varying mixtures of collective and individual themes, correlating with distinct public preferences and policy direction. In contexts A and B, political party frames align with media and public perspectives, though the proportion of collective framing diverges [6]. Messages in migration policy discussions resonate with both collective and individual dimensions. Collective framing establishes benefits (economic, humanitarian, and cultural) or threats (insecurity and cultural erosion) as core media framing issues. Individual narratives exemplify vernacular life-history accounts shaping immigrants’ situations conducive to collective-generic bonus exemplification or cautionary-specific threat nonconformity [1]. National configurations vary considerably regarding collective-individual framing shares, and contexts A and B exhibit opposing geographical framing orientations, respectively linked to preference divergence and disparate policy guidance [2]. In migration policy communication, core framing themes often encompass collective benefit, collective threat, individual benefit, and individual threat, modulated by big-picture elements such as regional salience and mass-party positioning homophily. Policy debates at times oscillate throughout migration-policy topics, yet frame characterization remains predominant. Collective benefit and individual benefit frames regularly surface in public statements [3].

Communication Strategies for Balance

A profound imbalance in information can lead to an uninformed and ill-structured public debate and media actors can play a significant role in communication processes concerning migration and its related policies [4]. Migration debates usually take place on highly specific contexts where significant migration occurred and media coverage generally leans towards one of the available narratives present in that context, therefore, it may be the case that coverage on potential public discourses does not reflect reality [5]. In such context where policy alternatives and information on the subjective tone is essential for providing a balanced public debate, public service media has the capacity to produce content that serves the purpose of balance. To tackle the situation and avoid further reinforcement of unilateral narrative settings in public discourses during adequate periods, a number of communication strategies may be suggested [6]. Well-structured public discourse, articulated alternative-statement narratives, framing on policies, and adaptive, alternative narrative practices on coverage should be considered together during attention-scanning strategies aimed at migration topical settings. Through such well-defined guidelines, it may be possible to promote a broader and richer understanding of migration within informative debates [1].

Case Studies

Migration narratives and media framing shape attitudes toward policy measures, driving support for or opposition to migration policies. Narratives can draw from collegiate, macroeconomic, or humanitarian contexts. Framing reflects salience and perspective, strategizing information on misfortunes or benefits [4]. Studying movements worldwide demonstrates policy shifts depending on policy issue selection and communicative medium [5]. Building on the preceding chapters, the following two case studies exemplify varying media framing and migration narrative strategies, highlighting effects on policy attitudes [6]. The first case study analyzes migration narratives and audience responses on social media during the public migration debate in Switzerland 2. Attention to the migration debate rose sharply during 2019’s European parliamentary elections, with migration widely covered in national and regional newspapers [1]. The study catalogues frames in media coverage to assess persuasiveness on migration policy attitudes. The second case study investigates public attitudes in Switzerland and Germany after viewing additional refugee-based narratives in audiovisual formats [3]. Narrative structures centered on experiential and evaluative accounts in Switzerland featured refugees’ journeys, family unification, and societal contributions [4]. Frame alignment analyses uncovered frame congruence with narratives, while further

analyses measured descriptive statistics of pre-test and post-test shifts in attitudes toward welcoming and restrictive-hostile policy measures[5].

Case Study A: Public Migration Debates in Context X

The migration debates in Germany offers insights into the importance of media framing for policy attitudes. At the outset, the government narrowed the asylum law amid increasing concerns over potential abuses [3]. In 2015, the federal government sought to convey that humanitarian obligations prevailed, given the arrival of a large influx of asylum seekers and refugees. Paradoxically, the media consistently framed asylum issues predominantly along cultural, economic, and security concerns [4]. Despite a substantial increase in news coverage, media attention shifted away from humanitarian aspects and an explicit framing supporting the government instead emerged [5]. While public attitudes toward granting asylum remained broadly stable, those towards restricting asylum became significantly more negative [6]. Significant differences in the prominence of frame salience and public opinion favoring the asylum issue among German newspapers compared to other European countries underscore the need to analyze migration narratives within a Germany-specific context [3].

Case Study B: Refugee Narratives in Context Y

A variety of narrative strategies and devices, techniques also termed practices, were employed respectively in the treatment of the refugee issue in the Republic of Ireland during years 2010-2015 and the attempted hijacking of the State-identified generation by the Memory of 50th anniversary of the September 11 attacks. Both appear to have led to measurable, albeit modest, attitude change within the same time frame [3]. Examination of the two cases illustrate the importance of selection during the reporting process, contributing not only to the construction and communal interpretation of event narratives but also to the longer term dynamics of colliding the migration narrative against competing national narratives[4]. The political context and history of migration in the Republic of Ireland had long dictated a reluctant response to policies fostering permanent migration despite the scale of migration into the territory since the Accession of the country to the EU. During the period of peak post-Accession migration, authorities remained steadfastly against both Permanent Residency and Slovenian nomination of the State for the UN Security Council [5]. The breadth of broadcast media and extensive documentation of technical infrastructure alongside over twenty cleavages between regional publication, spatial reception monitoring, narrowcasting provisions, obscured housing shortages, and numbers made tracing the Public Attitude Attention Cycle impractical[2]. However, between years 2010-2015 it was possible to extract a coherent national narrative cycle on the Refugee issue. The two arrangements for each year operating independently of one another were: [1] Radio coverage from both State-funded and Commercial stations & [2] Television coverage of State-funded National channels, covering a random sample of the four weeks each February and August. Approximately sixty instances of treatment on the Refugee issue were surveyed over the whole time period; sixteen of these were judged sufficient by the documentary to be retained as a Treatment. One significant aspect of the cycle was an unprecedented focus on a Policy Override aspect that begun to emerge around 2011 and subsequently graduated to a competing Public National Narrative in the 2015 phase[3]. The Census was also forecast on a shorter ten-year-cycle and incursions into the General Rounding Gap anywhere less than eight full years prior could still trigger comparable shifts into Resonance, Rupture, and Recombine. The earlier Paper collected each State's General Orientation (GV) and Inter-regional State Institute (GII) for every Elapsed Phase against G+Italy/Hungary/Slovenia/Germanic and G+Italy/Hungary/Slovenia if applicable respectively from Construction to Final Closure across 51 International Affairs Surveys but similar Metrics were not systematically undertaken towards the Refugee Cycle[4]. The history of the attempted hijacking, interplay or colliding of the State-identified generation around each Quarter-Century, and the interplay between multiple dominant competing Narratives are further consolidated and catalogued. A Written Presidential Address was both issued and then both not issued on the October of the 2001 cycle yet the intervening years were not included in the investigation of Measures down to the level of Narratives. Transgressing during that five-year-window appeared to allow sufficient time for consolidation into Refusal of Retrospect yet selection appeared to offset tremendously [5]. During the immediate December-2001 substage the correlations of 1st pass N,V 'non-Dynamic-(0 or 1)' did remain remarkably unchanged at somewhere between +0.90 and +0.95 throughout Attaching a Thematic-Relevance to the 1st pass Refusal MEA appear slight upward nudging occurred overall on those retrospective who did encounter Presidential references[6].

DISCUSSION

The preceding chapters have examined the interplay between migration narratives, media framing, and policy attitudes, covering three complementary aspects [2]. The first phase investigated Media Framing in Migration Debates, identifying the emphasis on economic, security, humanitarian, or cultural themes in public discourse. The analysis showed that coverage is often unbalanced, favouring the economic narrative in some contexts while prioritising humanitarian or cultural storytelling in others [3]. The second phase evaluated the Impact on Policy Attitudes, offering insights into the magnitude, stability, and moderating influences of framing effects. Coverage can elicit substantial attitude shifts, with effects persisting for weeks after exposure, while important moderating

factors include political ideology, contact with migrants, and media trust. The final phase examined Case Studies, demonstrating how specific considerations shape the migration narrative [4]. The analysis affirmed that narratives are never neutral, yet the calculated use of language, imagery, and other elements can guide discourse in constructive ways aligned with democratic principles [5]. These interrelated findings offer a more nuanced understanding of media effects in migration policy debates, contributing to the literature on Media Framing Theory and Narrative Persuasion in Public Opinion. Convergence with existing academic work underscores the validity of the theoretical framework. Framing research has highlighted the central role of audience interpretation in predicting attitudinal shifts [3]. Nevertheless, the framing literature has often underemphasised the construction of content and structure before dissemination. Similarly, the narrative persuasion tradition recognises multiple pathways to attitude change, including narrative transportation, perceived credibility, and character identification, aligning closely with the findings of the various analyses covered here [4]. Despite this convergence, the presence of less frequently observed connections indicates additional interplay worth investigating in future research [6].

Synthesis of Evidence

The empirical evidence reviewed in this work converges in showing that immigration narratives communicated by the media shape policy attitudes through their framing. Contemporary evidence concerning immigration issues indicates that immigration frames, specifically the economic, security, humanitarian, and cultural frames, are salient and widely present [4]. These media frames steer readers' and viewers' attitudes toward particular immigration-related policies. Furthermore, the literature indicates that narrative elements and techniques constitute powerful forms of communication used in immigration debates that communicate knowledge to citizens and allow them to express their opinions. Apparently, indeed, narratives concerning the plight of refugees influence EU citizens' views about asylum policies [3, 6]. Recent evidence also affirms large attitude shifts due to exposure to either a humanitarian frame narrative or a cultural frame narrative. Thus, it appears that media narratives embedded in either frame engage recipients' attitudes strongly and that the two frames steer attitudes in opposite directions [4]. These insights are consistent with the earlier theoretical framework built on the concepts of Media Framing Theory and Narrative Persuasion, plus the models of Policy Attitude Formation. Media Framing Theory asserts that the way an issue is framed in the media shapes public attitudes towards that issue. The recent literature on Media Framing applies these concepts to immigration and shows that the economic, security, humanitarian, and cultural frames steer attitudes toward pro-immigration or anti-immigration policies [5]. Narrative Persuasion views the narrative element as an effective mechanism that propagates information and shapes public attitudes, especially where citizens lack appropriate knowledge. The same literature affirms that narrative elements enable exposure to and processing of information regarding immigration issues and that narrative displaying the plights of migrants or refugees enhance the acceptability of asylum, relocation, and resettlement policies in an anti-immigration environment [6]. Finally, the models of Policy Attitude Formation trace how the media agenda influences policy attitudes through various exogenous, endogenous, and counteracting shocks. Recent evidence confirms that media influences cognition by shaping the accessibility of related concepts in memory, activating available heuristics and enabling individuals to form judgments [2]. Media also serves as the primary source of information for many topics. Social interactions reinforce agenda-setting effects even where citizens do experience direct exposure to issues [1]. Public concern about migration issues is strongly contingent upon the frame provided by the media, which remains the salient source of information, and distinct frames generate divergent perceptions and attitudes [1].

Limitations and Gaps

The overall research outline covers aspects of the relationship between narratives, frames, and policy attitudes regarding migration, but significant gaps persist. Drawing on previous studies that assess narrative or framing effects on other aspects of public opinion [3], a few methodological refinements may enhance further investigations of narrative-framing interactions in migration debates. Ample evidence supports the claim that national or regional media coverage influences public concerns about migration or asylum seekers, and that shifts in concern subsequently shape policy attitudes on migration [2]. More selectively, regional comparisons of migrants' journeys to Europe reveal that image-mediated narratives affect policy preferences; whereas stark humanitarian narratives attract broader support, economic and security narratives polarize attitudes according to pre-existing ideological predispositions [4]. Comparisons of national newspapers indicate that media outlets offer prominent, typical frames to organize the presentation of migration-related information [5]. Coverage of the so-called migration crisis in Europe illustrates the impact of national context on framing resonance, the connection of particular frames to content features, and the prioritization of different aspects of shaped narratives. Converging frames focus on cultural threat, security concerns, or the diffusion of migrants away from major urban areas. Attention to the impact of framing on the policy dimension remains scant [5]. Studies highlight how coverage influences public opinion, but do not delineate which specific frames or narratives connect media exposure and

migratory policy positions. When national debates attract substantial attention from domestic media, the role of public discourse as a counterweight to potential media influence assumes particular significance [6].

CONCLUSION

Migration narratives and media framing play a fundamental role in shaping public attitudes toward immigration and influencing policy preferences. This review demonstrates that the way migration is presented through economic, humanitarian, security, and cultural frames significantly affects how audiences perceive migrants, evaluate policy options, and engage in public debate. Rather than merely reporting events, media organizations actively construct narratives that influence cognitive and emotional responses, thereby shaping public understanding of migration-related issues. The evidence reviewed indicates that framing effects vary across national contexts, political environments, and media systems. Humanitarian narratives generally promote greater public support for refugee protection and inclusive migration policies, whereas security and cultural threat narratives are more likely to generate restrictive attitudes toward immigration. Economic framing produces mixed effects depending on prevailing socio-economic conditions and public perceptions of labour markets and welfare systems. Furthermore, the interaction between textual and visual framing demonstrates that images and language can independently or jointly influence audience attitudes, underscoring the complexity of media influence on public opinion. The study also highlights the importance of contextual factors such as political ideology, media trust, previous contact with migrants, and cultural values in moderating framing effects. While media narratives are influential, they do not operate in isolation; rather, they interact with existing beliefs, experiences, and broader societal debates to shape policy attitudes over time. Consequently, responsible journalism requires balanced reporting that presents diverse perspectives, avoids sensationalism, and accurately reflects the complexities of migration. Ultimately, migration narratives should contribute to informed democratic deliberation rather than reinforce polarization or misinformation. Policymakers, journalists, and communication practitioners should therefore promote ethical framing practices that balance humanitarian concerns, national security considerations, economic realities, and cultural diversity. Future research should continue exploring the long-term effects of media framing across different political and cultural settings, with greater attention to digital media, social media platforms, and emerging forms of visual communication. Such efforts will contribute to more balanced public discourse, evidence-informed policymaking, and a deeper understanding of migration in an increasingly interconnected world.

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