



2017-11-01

A Content Analysis of the Portrayal of Refugees in U.S. News Media

Tambi Farouk Issac
Brigham Young University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Communication Commons](#)

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Issac, Tambi Farouk, "A Content Analysis of the Portrayal of Refugees in U.S. News Media" (2017). *All Theses and Dissertations*. 6621.
<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/6621>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

A Content Analysis of the Portrayal of Refugees in U.S. News Media

Tambi Farouk Issac

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Kevin John, Chair
Pamela Brubaker
Mark Callister

School of Communications

Brigham Young University

Copyright © 2017 Tambi Farouk Issac

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

A Content Analysis of the Portrayal of Refugees in U.S. News Media

Tambi Farouk Issac
School of Communications, BYU
Master of Arts

This content analysis examined the portrayal of refugees in the United States by comparing four online news outlets—two conservative outlets: *Fox News* and *Breitbart*; and two liberal outlets: *CNN* and *The New Yorker*. *Fox News* and *CNN* are the most popular outlets among conservatives and liberals, respectively, while *Breitbart* and *The New Yorker* are the most polar. The study explored whether the frames used by online U.S. news outlets differ based on the ideological leaning of the outlet, specifically in regards to stories about refugees. Media outlets can influence the public opinion by controlling what they publish and how often they publish it. They can also present information in ways that can alter the way the consumer processes it. For this content analysis, the search term “refugee crisis” was used to collect articles from each outlet’s online page. Two online news articles from each of the four news outlets were randomly selected from each month of the year 2016. The frames used to report on refugees were identified and compared between all outlets.

The five frames coded for were the responsibility frame, conflict frame, human-interest frame, morality frame, and the economic frame. The difference in the use of the five frames by the four news outlets was analyzed. *Breitbart*, the most conservative outlet of the four, used the human-interest frame significantly less than *CNN* and *The New Yorker*. *Breitbart* scored the lowest on the human-interest frame while *The New Yorker* scored the highest. *CNN* scored higher than *Fox News* and lower than *The New Yorker*; however, no significance was established. Comparing the score of the human-interest frame items between groups showed that *Breitbart* used less personal vignettes and adjectives that generate feelings of empathy-caring, sympathy or compassion than *CNN* and *The New Yorker*. On the other hand, *The New Yorker* used significantly more visuals that generated feelings of empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion than *Fox News* and *Breitbart*.

No significant differences between any of the outlets were found in their use of the responsibility, economic, conflict, and morality frames. However, when the mean scores of the 20 items were individually compared between outlets, significant differences were found. *Breitbart* and *The New Yorker* scored significantly lower on (morality) item-2 than both *CNN* and *Fox News*. This suggests that the coverage of the refugee crisis by highly polarized news outlets on both sides are less likely to reference morality, God, or other religious tenets when compared with more central news outlets.

Keywords: frames, responsibility, morality, human-interest, conflict, economic

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my graduate advisor and committee chair, Dr. Kevin John, for his continuous guidance and support ever since I have entered this program. Dr. John's confidence in my abilities gave me a high expectation to live up to during times of self-doubt. He has worked with me around the clock to make this thesis possible.

I would also like to express my gratitude to committee member Dr. Pamela Brubaker for the valuable knowledge she shared with me in and out of class. My visits to Dr. Brubaker's office always left me with a more positive outlook toward my research and career. I would also like to express my appreciation to committee member Dr. Mark Callister for his critical input and for inspiring me to apply to this program. I am very grateful for everyone in my graduate committee for working around their schedules so I could meet my deadlines.

Furthermore, I would like to convey my sincerest appreciation to Ania Rdzyn for helping me code and for always believing in me. I would also like to thank all the faculty at BYU, especially Dr. Robert Wakefield and Dr. Christopher Wilson for the important experiences they made possible. In addition, I would like to thank Debby Jackson and Dr. Robinson for working with me and my committee on such short notice.

Finally, I would like to thank Mr. Farouk Issac and Mrs. May Kadkoy for being relentlessly supportive parents. They have provided moral and financial support despite the many failures that preceded this accomplishment. I hope that the skills I have learned will be employed to benefiting the lives of refugees who continue to struggle daily. To them I owe the lessons of hope, strength, and resilience that keep me going.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
1 Introduction	1
2 Literature review.....	3
2.1 Framing Theory.....	5
2.2 Dehumanization	8
2.3 Portrayal of Refugees in the Media in Different Host Countries.....	9
2.4 Refugees, Crime, and Economic Strain	10
2.5 The United States and Refugees.....	13
2.6 Five Frequent Frames in News Media	14
2.7 Research Questions	16
3 Methods	17
3.1 Five Frequent Frames.....	18
3.2 Coding Scheme	20
3.2.1 Responsibility Frame	21
3.2.2 Human-interest Frame	21
3.2.3 Conflict Frame	21
3.2.4 Morality Frame	22
3.2.5 Economic frame.....	22
3.3 Inter-coder Reliability	22
4 Results	24
4.1 Frequency Data	24
4.2 ANOVAs.....	24
5 Discussion.....	27
5.1 Limitations	29
6 Conclusions and Future Research.....	31
References.....	33

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4-1: Means and Standard Deviations of News Outlets by Frame.....	38
Table 4-2: Means and Standard Deviations of News Outlets by Item.....	39

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 5-1: Mean Scores for the Human-Interest Frame	41
Figure 5-2: Mean Scores for the Morality Frame	41
Figure 5-3: Use of Adjectives or Personal Vignettes in Item-7	42
Figure 5-4: Use of Visuals in Item-10	42
Figure 5-5: Presence of Morality, God, and Religious Tenets in Item-16.....	43

1 INTRODUCTION

In 1951, the Refugee Convention defined a refugee as someone who:
owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (UN General Assembly, 1951).

More than 60 million people have been forced by external factors to leave their homes and seek safety in many different countries around the world (Guterres, 2016). In the past five years alone, there have been 15 new or reignited conflicts, which have contributed to a global displacement crisis, raising the demand for humanitarian needs throughout the international community (Guterres, 2016). The Declaration of Human Rights, established in Paris in 1948 and adopted by the UNHCR in 1951, was designed specifically to protect European refugees that were displaced because of the atrocities committed by Nazi Germany. It was amended in 1967 to remove any geographical limitations on who could be considered a refugee (UN General Assembly, 1967). The refugee crisis should not only be looked at because of its political significance, but should also be approached from a humanitarian perspective, where being able to flee persecution has been internationally established as a basic right for every human being.

Researchers at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) performed a content analysis on thousands of articles published by the press in five different European countries during 2014 and early 2015 (Berry, Garcia-Blanco, & Moore, 2015). The analysis revealed that media coverage of refugees is polarized within major European countries, like the United Kingdom, and showed a predominantly negative portrayal of refugees. Moreover, the authors noted that the United Kingdom's right-wing media was especially aggressive toward refugees. Although the UNHCR study was conducted in the United Kingdom, significant evidence suggests the same partisan media bias occurs in the United States. The negative portrayal of refugees has been documented in other European countries as well (Van Gorp, 2003), and studies have shown that the negative portrayal of refugees by news outlets could result in a dehumanizing outlook toward refugees (Esses, 2013). This paper uses framing theory as a framework to determine whether the portrayal of refugees by online news media in the United States is dependent on the political leaning of that news media.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

National broadcasting networks have traditionally served as a medium for political integration where the ideological center was nurtured (Katz, 1996). In 1996, Elihu Katz warned that the increase in television channels shrunk the public space that the nation used to share. He wrote that “dispersed spaces that lose sight of the center or provide escapist alternatives may even lead to the center’s collapse.” The golden age of American journalism that was unified in its objectivity and autonomy has been overcome by the commercialization of news and, in particular, by the introduction of the internet (Mancini, 2012). Although the warnings about the loss of centrist dialogue in the public space given by Katz in 1996 outdate the internet, their unfolding has become clearer since its invention.

The increase in media options, due to technological advancements such as the internet and cable, has given media consumers the ability to choose from a wide range of sources with varying opinions on different issues. The increase in media choices has made it easier for partisans to selectively expose themselves to information that does not challenge any pre-existing beliefs (Best, Chmielewski, & Krueger, 2005). The option to purposefully blind oneself to other opinions and beliefs is concerning to many scholars because exposure to diverse political information is crucial for disagreeing citizens to reach conclusions based on rational decision making (Delli Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004; Veenstra, Hossain, & Lyons, 2014). Confirmation

bias, or to seek information that reinforces pre-existing beliefs and opinions, is a natural tendency for people to have (Stroud, 2008). The most accepted rationale by scholars for this phenomenon is that individuals want to avoid the uncomfortable feeling of cognitive dissonance caused by contradictory cognitions (Festinger, 1957). Selective exposure includes confirmation bias but more generally describes how individuals consume messages they can choose from and do not spend their time equally between all messages available (Westerwick, Johnson, & Knobloch-Westerwick, 2017).

A Pew research study found that Americans with consistent ideological views, whether liberal or conservative, are very different from most Americans in the way they seek information about the government and politics (Mitchell, 2014). Although most Americans have mixed ideological views, and it is uncommon to be in an ideological bubble, the study showed that the number of Americans consistent in their political ideology doubled from 2004 to 2014. Those Americans with consistent ideological views are much more likely to seek information from media outlets that match their political leaning (Stroud, 2010). Furthermore, Americans who exist on those polar ends of the ideological spectrum are far more politically active than those who exist in the middle (Mitchell, 2014). Because polarized Americans are more likely to participate in politics, donate to campaigns, and cast votes, their opinions on serious global issues (such as the refugee crisis) are consequential.

The results of a study examining partisanship and partisan media use concluded that “ideology and partisanship are generally stronger predictors of beliefs than education” (Veenstra, Hossain, & Lyons, 2014). The article discussed belief gaps between liberals and conservatives on a variety of issues including scientifically settled topics such as climate change. In addition, a Pew study found that Republicans were less likely to relate human causes to climate change than

Democrats, and the most educated Republicans were the least likely (Pew Research Center, 2008).

Evidence of this partisanship has been seen regarding the refugee crisis as well. A Pew study showed that public opinion on accepting Syrian refugees to resettle in the United States is heavily partisan (Krogstad, 2017). Specifically, 87 percent of Donald Trump voters believed that the United States has no responsibility to accept Syrian refugees, while only 27 percent of Hillary Clinton voters thought the same thing in October 2016. Furthermore, an article published by *The New York Times* points to evidence of selective and sometimes false reporting by conservative media outlets intending to portray refugees in a negative light (Dickerson, 2017). An article published by *Fox News* also lists examples of bias from both sides of the ideological spectrum (Kurtz, 2016). A study from University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), identified that political orientation can determine how threatening Americans perceive outgroups to be (Holbrook, López-Rodríguez, Fessler, Vázquez, & Gómez, 2016). While in-groups are the people who consider each other part of the same social group, out-groups are not perceived to be similar enough to be included in that social group (Ashforth, 1989). Conservatives viewed outgroups as more threatening but found them to be physically weaker and smaller (Holbrook et al., 2016). While the UCLA article mentions genetic and hereditary reasons for higher levels of perceived threat of outgroups, it did not account for the impact the media can have in the matter.

2.1 Framing Theory

In this literature review, framing theory is employed as a framework to understand how refugees are portrayed by the media and how this portrayal could impact the public's opinion of refugees.

As defined by Entman (1993):

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.

Framing theory builds upon agenda setting theory, which describes the ability that the media has on increasing the salience of an issue in the public mind through frequent and persistent communication (McCombs, 2014).

Media outlets can change public opinion by making decisions about three things: 1) what to publish, 2) how often to publish it, and 3) how to frame the information being published (Entman, 1993). The first two can be explained by agenda setting theory, which describes the ability the media has in increasing the salience of an issue in the public mind by covering it more frequently (McCombs, 2014). If an audience perceives information as more salient, then they are more likely to remember it in the future (Entman, 1993). Framing theory goes further by explaining how the media can guide the public to think about the issues presented to them in a way that would achieve a desired conclusion to the problem identified. The way media outlets choose to frame information can determine how the public processes the information they receive (Entman, 1993).

Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) describe framing theory as a construct that exists on a macrolevel and on a microlevel. Framing as a “microconstruct” refers to the “modes of presentation” that communicators use to resonate with existing schemas that exist among their audience. This approach can help simplify a complicated topic in a way that the public can understand by providing it in a context relevant to their lives. Framing as a “microconstruct” explains how people use the information presented to them to create impressions about an issue.

Scheufele (1999) identified four processes of framing when looking at the theory from a media effects perspective. The first is “frame building,” which focuses on how media outlets can choose specific frames when communicating. The second is “frame setting”; this process describes the specific psychological processes that occur when an individual is exposed to a frame. The third process is “individual-level effects of frames,” which explains the impacts frames have on attitudes and behaviors. Finally, the fourth process, identified as “journalists as audience,” describes how people’s attitudes can impact the first frame building process.

In addition to the impact framing has on how people interpret information, it was found that one’s pre-existing beliefs and attitudes can influence how one interprets the media (Chong & Druckman, 2007). The same frame can have different effects on different people with different pre-existing beliefs and opinions. Although framing theory is a strong persuasive tool used deliberately by the media, it can also be viewed as a mere consequence of communication. Journalists may try to maintain objectivity in their reporting and yet unintentionally emphasize a frame that makes it harder for an audience to make a rational decision regarding an issue (Entman, 1993). A better understanding of framing by journalists could help them become more objective in their reporting (Entman, 1993).

Framing is not only important for journalists and their audiences; it is also important for politicians. Political campaigns use framing to target their audiences and influence their opinions regarding another party, individual, or issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Although an opposing frame can be used by the opposing party, not all frames are equally effective (Chong & Druckman, 2007). For example, a study showed that people were more willing to allow hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan to organize a rally if the issue was presented to them as a matter of free speech than a threat to public safety (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

Scholars have provided different explanations to why some frames are more effective than others. One explanation states that people simply accept the frame they hear more frequently because it comes to mind more quickly (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Another explanation suggests frames vary in their strength, and the frequency of exposure does not determine which frame is accepted by the individual (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Instead, the frame is found to be stronger if it has a more credible source, does not conflict with pre-existing values, and resonates with widely accepted values (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

Even though the competition between frames makes it more likely for individuals to resist frames, political groups with more resources can better survey the public to determine which frames are the most effective to use in debates (Chong & Druckman, 2007). In addition to the varying strength of frames, the frequency of exposure to a frame also determines its effectiveness, allowing more resourceful political groups to influence public opinion in their favor (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

2.2 Dehumanization

In his 2013 study, Esses notices that the negative portrayals of refugees in the media could result in a dehumanizing look toward refugees. In the past, these portrayals have ranged from describing refugees as “disease infected” and “queue-jumpers” to “terrorists.” Many developing countries benefit from refugees who take labor jobs and, therefore, Esses (2013) claims that refugees need to be protected, not dehumanized. David Cameron, the former British prime minister, described a French port as safe and secure against a “swarm” of migrants trying to get to Britain (Adam, 2015). Another public figure wrote in a column published by the *Sun* newspaper compared migrants to “cockroaches” that are going to drain the country’s resources

(Adam, 2015). One of the most famous dehumanizing portrayals of refugees came from Donald Trump Jr. when he compared accepting refugees to eating from a bowl of Skittles that had a few poisonous ones (Hauser, 2017).

2.3 Portrayal of Refugees in the Media in Different Host Countries

In media coverage of refugees in the United Kingdom, Philo, Donald, and Briant (2013) identified five perceived wrongdoings. First, a continuous and prevailing hostile tone dominated coverage of refugees in most of the U.K.'s national media. Second, news coverage interchangeably used the words "refugees," "migrants," and "asylum seekers," despite each term referring to very different, distinct groups. Specifically, asylum seekers refer to people who want to be recognized as refugees and are still in the process of doing so, while migrants left their countries by choice to pursue a better life for themselves and their families. The third key issue is the absence of the refugee voice in the media outlets. The fourth issue is caused by the policy changes that this coverage can breed, impacting the lives of U.K. communities. The fifth issue was found to impact the arriving refugees, causing them to feel isolated from society because of its hostile attitude toward them. Furthermore, Philo et al. identified various right-wing policy makers who used these times of uncertainty to generate public support by employing rhetoric that bolsters the already present hostility.

In Australia, it has been common for refugees to be portrayed negatively by the media by pairing the word "limbo" and "refugee" together in many titles and news stories in Australian media (Hightower, 2015). There are three main instances where the word limbo is used to represent refugees: 1) physical space of limbo, 2) legal limbo, and 3) psychological limbo. What the media failed to address is that the states of limbo do not exist by themselves, but are created

because of discriminatory policies toward refugees and the government's view of them as illegitimate residents in the country. As Hightower (2015) further explains,

It remains that refugees continue to be defined by limbo—they are bound to a discussion of being in limbo—a discourse which, it seems—at least for the time being—they cannot escape. What is needed is more clarity on what limbo is and what factors contribute to the creation of protracted limbos. Further, there needs to be more distinction on how to avoid or combat limbo situations and if necessary, who should be held accountable.

Van Gorp (2003) identified that Christmas influences Belgian media on refugees—increased positive portrayals of refugees persisted for months after the holiday. This example shows how events—holidays or otherwise—can drastically change the refugee condition. If Christmas resulted in this positive change, how much of a negative impact might the November 2015 Paris attacks have had on refugee portrayals? Belgian media is seen to skew negative due to the careless use of unsupported statistics and false generalizations.

Steimel (2009) performed a study on the coverage of refugees in the United States in Nebraska. He concluded that refugees—Muslims specifically—are seen as the least favored group living in the United States. Refugees are perceived as people who have grown up outside of the typical values and roles that Americans are expected to uphold. They are categorized differently than other citizens and other immigrants, and are also further subdivided based on their race and religious preferences.

2.4 Refugees, Crime, and Economic Strain

A prominent media frame has consistently portrayed refugees as a risk to safety and economic stability within their western countries of asylum. A study published by the Cato

Institute shows that four out of the 700,522 refugees admitted between 1975 and 2015 were terrorists (Nowrasteh, 2016). The terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, for example, was conducted by 18 people that entered the United States on tourist visas, and one terrorist who entered on a student visa. None of the attackers were refugees. The findings of the Cato Institute are extremely important because they show how skewed media frame can be when they represent refugees as the 0.0006 percent of terrorists that exist between them. Those extremist views have a significant negative impact on the rate acceptance of refugees to the United States and on the well-being of those who have already resettled (Kosho, 2016).

Politifact reported on the accuracy of a Fox News segment aired on Tucker Carlson Tonight where Ami Horowitz, a filmmaker, blamed the influx of refugees to Sweden for the increase in gun violence and rape cases there (Valverde, 2017). However, the article points out a clear contradiction in the data Horowitz cited. Specifically, a Swedish Migration Agency report showed that crime rates have been on the decline in the last few years despite the large number of refugees entering the country during that time. Data from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention shows a drop by 11 percent in sex crimes between 2014 and 2015. The increase in reported rape offenses over a 10-year period between 2006 and 2015 has been attributed to new legislation introduced in 2005 that broadened the classification of rape to include cases in which the victims were inert. When it comes to other crimes, political scientist Henrik Selin states,

In general, crime statistics have gone down the last (few) years, and no there is no evidence to suggest that new waves of immigration have led to increased crime. Generally, there's a certain over-representation of people with immigrant background in crime statistics, but that tends to be closely related to high levels of unemployment, poverty, exclusion, low

language, and other skills. Swedes with these characteristics are also overrepresented in crime statistics (Valverde, 2017).

A study published by the IZA Institute of Labor Economics by Brian Bell (2014) from the University of Oxford reported there is significant public concern where immigrants are perceived as responsible for the increase in crime rates. The study analyzed crime data from six countries, including the United States, and the results of the study show there is no evidence to suggest immigration caused an increase in crime, and immigrants are no more likely to commit crimes than citizens of the host country. To the weak association between immigrants and property crime, Bell states,

Studies have shown that larger immigrant concentrations in an area have no association with violent crime and, overall, fairly weak effects on property crime. However, immigrant groups that face poor labor market opportunities are more likely to commit property crime. But this is also true of disadvantaged native groups.

When it comes to arguments over the economic burden refugees inflict on host countries, the Lebanese government, which has accepted 1.2 million refugees, states the influx of Syrians to the country led to an estimated 1.6 percent of GDP loss (World Bank, 2015). A report by the World Bank in 2013 stated that the actual number is higher, with 2.9 percent loss in GDP being a more accurate number. However, a more recent report by the World Bank (2015) showed a substantial acceleration in the rate of growth of the country's economy. This suggests that accepting refugees might be a beneficial long-term investment that requires an initial down payment due to the costs of humanitarian aid to support refugees until they resettle.

Studies have shown that refugees are rarely the burden that media portrayals seem to show (Carpio, 2015; Foged, 2013). Strong evidence has also been found suggesting the

immigration of less-skilled native workers is not associated with a decrease in the employment of unskilled natives in Denmark (Foged, 2013). The influx of refugees between 1986 and 1998 in Denmark led to a positive mobilization of native workers from manual tasks to more complex jobs (Foged, 2013). Turkey is another example of the positive impact refugees can have on host countries. Turkey has taken in an estimated 1.8 million Syrian refugees as of 2014 and has seen an increase in average Turkish wages due to the occupational upgrading of native workers (Carpio, 2015).

2.5 The United States and Refugees

The United States has accepted more than 3 million refugees since 1980 (Krogstad, 2017). Pew research shows that the number of refugees accepted annually fluctuates based on the country's priorities and global events (Krogstad, 2017). For example, the number of refugees admitted to the United States dropped from 112,000 refugees on average to 27,000 in 2002 after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (Krogstad, 2017). This decline, which occurred during a Republican administration, happened even though no refugee was responsible for the attacks, with most terrorists involved coming from Saudi Arabia on tourist visas (Nowrasteh, 2016). It is worth noting that the number of admitted refugees was steadily rising until the recent immigration ban introduced by Republican President Trump (Krogstad, 2017). The Pew study also shows that public opinion on accepting Syrian refugees to resettle in the United States is heavily partisan (Krogstad, 2017).

This partisanship also holds true at the level of government as well. During the Democratic Obama administration in 2016, the United States accepted 84,995 refugees (Krogstad, 2017). The United States was on pace to accept 110,000 refugees in 2017, but this

expected number has drastically dropped since President Trump, a Republican, took office (Krogstad, 2017). In conclusion, more refugees are accepted in the United States when a Democrat is president.

2.6 Five Frequent Frames in News Media

Five frames that are frequently used by news outlets were identified by Semetko (2000):

- 1- The conflict frame focuses on conflict between individuals or groups. This frame is frequently used by the U.S. news media outlets where complicated issues are simplified to the conflict that exists between individuals, groups, and/or countries. This frame is highly common in the coverage of political campaigns by the U.S. news media (Patterson, 1993). The frequent use of this frame by the U.S. news media has been attributed to the rise of public cynicism and to the decline in the public's trust of political leaders (Capella, 1997). This frame is effective for the news media to garner public interest toward the story being covered.
- 2- The human-interest frame humanizes the issue by bringing an emotional angle to the message. This frame typically includes visual and/or written elements that are personal to a specific individual or group of people involved in the story being covered. Personal accounts and experiences of people impacted by an issue, event, or problem are usually included. This frame is commonly used by the news media to capture the public's attention toward an issue, problem, or topic (Bennett, 1995; Semetko, 2000).
- 3- The economic consequences frame focuses on the economic consequences that an event, problem, or issue has on an individual or group. This frame is commonly used

by the news media (Neuman, 1992) to cover the wide impacts that an event, problem, or issue can have. Specific costs due to a problem, event, or issue is usually addressed in the message (Semetko, 2000).

- 4- The morality frame is used when the message contains specific prescriptions on how the public should act regarding an issue. However, the morality frame is usually referenced indirectly by journalists to comply with the norm of objectivity in journalism. This frame reports in the context of moral and/or religious prescriptions to an issue, topic, or problem (Semetko, 2000).
- 5- The responsibility frame reports on a problem in a way that holds an individual or group responsible. Although this frame has not been concretely established by researchers regarding its frequency in U.S. news media, it has been clearly found when the media aims to educate the public on who is responsible for social issues such as poverty. It is argued that the news media is episodic in its reporting and focuses on specific cases without relating them to the larger historical context (Iyengar, 1991). “Thus, the poor woman on welfare is held responsible for her fate, rather than the government or the system” (Semetko, 2000).

A study conducted by d’Haenens (2001) analyzed the frames used by Dutch regional newspapers using the five frames introduced by Semetko (2000). The study determined that Dutch regional newspapers do not use the morality frame when discussing refugees, which means that morality and religious values are not inspired by refugee issues in Dutch media. Neither is the responsibility frame used, which means the media evades the answer to the question, who is responsible for those refugees? All publicity is not good publicity when it

comes to refugees. Their fragile lives are heavily influenced by public opinion that shapes policies of potential host countries (Fleras, 2001).

2.7 Research Questions

This study used the five frequent frames introduced by Semetko (2000) to determine whether the refugee crisis is polarized in U.S. news media. It is expected that the use of the conflict and economic frames by an outlet will be higher the more conservative it is. On the other hand, the use of the human-interest, responsibility, and morality frame will be higher the more liberal an outlet is. As such, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ1: Do more conservative media outlets employ conflict (RQ1a) and economic (RQ1b) frames more frequently than more liberal media outlets when covering the refugee crisis?

RQ2: Do more liberal media outlets employ human-interest (RQ2a), responsibility (RQ2b), and morality (RQ2c) frames more frequently than more conservative media outlets when covering the refugee crisis?

3 METHODS

A quantitative content analysis was used to answer whether the frames used to report on refugees by the U.S. news outlets differed based on ideological leaning. A content analysis is defined as the “systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics” (Neuendorf, 2002). It is frequently used by researchers to analyze how the media can influence public perception on individuals and/or topics (Freyenberger, 2013). Although analyzing content always contains some form of bias from the researcher, agreeing to the specific definitions of the variables analyzed before conducting the study reduces those biases. To quantify the portrayal of refugees in the media, a measure was agreed upon beforehand to provide a framework for the study.

The four news outlets selected for this study were chosen based on their ideological leaning. Using a Pew study graph that mapped out media outlets based on their ideological leaning (Mitchell, 2014), the two liberal news outlets selected were: *CNN* and *The New Yorker*, while the two conservative outlets selected were: *Fox News* and *Breitbart*. *The New Yorker* and *Breitbart* are the most polar news outlets, while *CNN* and *Fox News* are the most popular amongst liberals and conservatives respectively. Arranging the outlets during analysis from most conservative, conservative, liberal, and most liberal allows for potential patterns to be identified.

The sample of articles being used for this content analysis was obtained by searching the term “Refugee Crisis” on the search bar found on each of those news outlets’ websites. From those articles, only the ones published in 2016 were included and grouped based on month. The *Fox News* search engine displayed thousands of irrelevant articles that only mentioned the term

“refugee” once. Instead, all the *Fox News* articles used in the current study were collected from the Refugee news category. None of the other news outlets had a refugee category on their website, which further justified the use of their search engine to obtain the sample.

The year 2016 is particularly interesting because of the presidential elections that took place during that time. The refugee crisis was a highly debated issue between the presidential candidates, and it was highly covered by the media. Each article was assigned a number and two articles were selected randomly from each month using a number randomizer. The total number of articles analyzed were 86. The 86 articles included 19 from *The New Yorker*, 22 from *Fox News*, and 23 articles each from *CNN* and *Breitbart*. Articles completely irrelevant to the topic of the refugee crisis were discarded, resulting in less articles than the 96 articles expected.

3.1 Five Frequent Frames

To identify the difference in framing used by the online media outlets, the five frequent frames identified by Semetko (2000) were used. The definition of each frame was discussed with the coder, and edits to the coding sheet were made to increase inter-coder reliability. The five frames used were

- 1) The conflict frame focused on conflict between individuals or groups. Any reference of a problem/issue between individuals, groups and/or governments regarding the refugee crisis was coded as having conflict within the article. Those articles that made no reference to the different sides of the issue, or avoided discussions of controversy, were coded as having no conflict. For example, a *Fox News* article titled “Pure hatred: Translator reveals how Muslim refugees want to ‘Islamize’ Germany” discussed the

- experiences of a translator with Muslim refugees claiming that Muslim refugees had a pure hatred towards Christians. This article was scored as one that referenced conflict.
- 2) The human-interest frame humanized the issue by bringing an emotional angle to the message. This frame typically includes visual and/or written elements that are personal to a specific individual or group of people involved in the story being covered (Semetko, 2000). Articles that referenced personal accounts and experiences of people impacted by an issue, event, or problem regarding the refugee crisis were coded as having human-interest. Articles that completely avoided personal accounts of refugees and/or citizens of host countries were coded as having no human-interest within the article. An example of an article coded as having no reference of human-interest was a *Breitbart* article titled, “Revealed: Turkey’s Plan to Flood Europe with 3,000 Migrants a Day.” The article discussed the political consequences of Turkey’s decision and highlighted conflict between Europe and Turkey but avoided any personal accounts and/or descriptions of what the refugees involved were going through.
 - 3) The economic consequences frame focused on the economic consequences that an event, problem, or issue had on an individual or group (Semetko, 2000). Articles that referenced specific costs due to a problem, event, or issue regarding the refugee crisis were coded as fitting the economic frame. An example of an article coded as the economic frame was an article by *Fox News* that mentioned the cost of 25 Euros per day for each refugee staying in French reception centers.
 - 4) The morality frame was used when the message contained specific prescriptions on how the public should act regarding an issue (Semetko, 2000). Articles that included

quotes from politicians discussing how society should feel or behave regarding the refugee crisis were coded as having the morality frame. Furthermore, articles that referenced deity or religious tenets when discussing the refugee crisis were also coded as having the morality frame. Articles that avoided such moral recommendations or references of morality or deity were coded as having the morality frame absent in the article. An example of the absence of the morality frame is an article from *Fox News* that discussed the French president's position on the refugee crisis: "He said his country must show it is capable of being dignified, humane and responsible" (Fox, 2016c).

- 5) The responsibility frame reported on a problem in a way that held an individual or group responsible (Semetko, 2000). Articles that held any groups (ISIS, Syrian government, Iraq war, etc.), any individuals (Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel, Bashar Al-Assad, criminals amongst refugees, etc.), or any events responsible for the issues caused by the refugee crisis were coded as fitting the responsibility frame. Also included in this frame were any article that mentioned individuals or groups who were responsible for alleviating issues experienced by the refugees and local communities in countries of asylum experience.

3.2 Coding Scheme

To analyze the articles, a coding sheet was developed using a series of 20 yes/no questions developed by Semetko (2000) to identify the five frequent frames used in the news. The same questions were also used by d'Haenens (2001) when analyzing the depiction of refugees in Dutch regional newspapers.

3.2.1 Responsibility Frame

The five questions used to measure the responsibility frame (Semetko, 2000) were as follows:

- 1) Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the refugee crisis?
- 2) Does the story suggest that some level of government is responsible for the refugee crisis?
- 3) Does the story suggest that an industry (or group of people in society) is responsible for the refugee crisis?
- 4) Does the story suggest solution(s) to the refugee crisis?
- 5) Does the story suggest the refugee crisis requires urgent action?

3.2.2 Human-interest Frame

The five questions used to measure the human-interest frame (Semetko, 2000) were as follows:

- 1) Does the story provide a human example or “human face” on the issue?
- 2) Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion?
- 3) Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?
- 4) Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?
- 5) Does the story contain visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion?

3.2.3 Conflict Frame

The four questions used to measure the conflict frame (Semetko, 2000) are as follows:

- 1) Does the story reflect disagreement between refugees and U.S. citizens?
- 2) Does one party/individual/group/country reproach another?
- 3) Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem or issue?
- 4) Does the story refer to winners and losers?

3.2.4 Morality Frame

The three questions used to measure the morality frame (Semetko, 2000) are as follows:

- 1) Does the story contain any moral message?
- 2) Does the story reference morality, God, or other religious tenets?
- 3) Does the story offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave?

3.2.5 Economic frame

The three questions used to measure the economic frame (Semetko, 2000) are as follows:

- 1) Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?
- 2) Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved?
- 3) Is there a reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action?

Each question answered yes was given one point. The sum of the points given to each frame reflects the degree to which that frame was implemented in the article. The average score of the sum of items in each frame was compared between the four news outlets. Significant differences between outlets on each item on the scale were also identified. If an article scored zero on a frame, then it meant the frame was completely avoided. Although d'Haenens's study (2001) noted that some items in the morality and human-interest frames were not found when analyzing stories on refugees in Dutch newspapers, they were included in this content analysis to see if the same held true in the United States.

3.3 Inter-coder Reliability

Two coders, including the primary researcher, were used in this study. A *Fox News* article that was not used in the sample was coded by both coders and the results were discussed. There was very low percentage agreement on four items in the coding sheet, and their definitions were discussed to resolve any discrepancies between the coders. Ten articles from the *Fox News*

sample were coded separately, and the results were compared using recal. The inter-coder reliability analysis resulted in a Krippendorff's alpha with a mean of 0.87, a low of 0.74, and a high of 1.0.

4 RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study in illustrative tables and analysis, as well as the interpretation based on the treatment of the data.

4.1 Frequency Data

Looking at the frequency-level data in [Table 1](#), *Breitbart* scored the lowest on its use of the responsibility ($M = 2.30$), human-interest ($M = 0.96$), and morality ($M = 0.30$) frames, and the highest on the conflict frame ($M = 2.57$). *CNN* scored the highest on the responsibility ($M = 2.83$), morality ($M = 0.91$), and economic ($M = 0.39$) frames. *The New Yorker* scored the lowest on the economic ($M = 0.11$) and conflict frames ($M = 2.05$) and the highest on the human-interest frame ($M = 2.63$). *Fox News* scored lower on the conflict frame ($M = 2.14$) than *CNN* ($M = 2.22$) and *Breitbart* ($M = 2.57$). The frequency-level data for specific items on each frame can be found in [Table 2](#).

4.2 ANOVAs

Two one-way between subjects ANOVAs were conducted to compare the use of frames by two conservative and two liberal news outlets. This method provided inferential parametric statistics that tested for significant differences between the means of each group.

The first one-way ANOVA compared the incidence of each frame (as a whole) between the media outlets. The test revealed differences in the use of the human-interest frame between the news outlets ($F(3,86) = 4.77, p < 0.01$). Specifically, Bonferroni post hoc analysis revealed that Breitbart ($M = 0.96, SD = 1.11$) scored significantly lower on the human-interest frame than both CNN ($M = 2.43, SD = 1.65$) and *The New Yorker* ($M = 2.63, SD = 2.09$).

The answers to the research questions proposed by this study were proposed based on the results of the ANOVAs:

- RQ1a: The data did not show a significant difference between conservative and liberal news outlets in their employment of the conflict frame when discussing the refugee crisis.
- RQ1b: The data did not show a significant difference between conservative and liberal outlets in their employment of the economic frame when discussing the refugee crisis.
- RQ2a: The data showed a significant difference between far-right news outlets and far-left news outlets in their employment of the human-interest frame when discussing the refugee crisis. No significant difference was found between slightly right and slightly left news outlets.
- RQ2b: The data showed no significant difference between conservative and liberal news outlets in their employment of the economic frame when discussing the refugee crisis.

Although no significant differences were found between conservative and liberal news outlets on the responsibility, conflict, morality, and economic frames, a second one-way ANOVA was run to compare the incidence of each individual item from Semetko's (2000) framing criteria and look for significant differences on an item-by-item basis. This second one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference between news outlets on (human-interest) item-6

($F(3,83) = 3.37, p < 0.05$). Specifically, Bonferroni post hoc analysis revealed that *The New Yorker* ($M = 0.63, SD = 0.50$) scored significantly higher on (human-interest) item-6 than Fox News ($M = 0.36, SD = 0.49$) and Breitbart ($M = 0.17, SD = 0.39$). (Human-interest) item-7 showed a significant difference between news outlets as well ($F(3,86) = 3.37, p < 0.05$). Specifically, *Breitbart* ($M = 0.09, SD = 0.29$) scored significantly lower on (human-interest) item-7 than *CNN* ($M = 0.48, SD = 0.51$) and *The New Yorker* ($M = 0.47, SD = 0.51$). In addition, there was a significant difference between the outlets on (human-interest) item-10 ($F(3,83) = 4.83, p < 0.01$). Specifically, Bonferroni post hoc analysis revealed that *The New Yorker* ($M = 0.58, SD = 0.51$) scored significantly higher than *Breitbart* ($M = 0.00, SD = 0.00$) and *Fox News* ($M = 0.18, SD = 0.40$) on (human-interest) item-10.

Finally, a significant difference was found between news outlets on (morality) item-16 ($F(3,86) = 4.75, p < 0.005$). Specifically, Bonferroni post hoc analysis revealed that *Breitbart* ($M = 0.00, SD = 0.00$) scored significantly lower on (morality) item-16 than *CNN* ($M = 0.35, SD = 0.49$) and *The New Yorker* ($M = 0.05, SD = 0.23$).

5 DISCUSSION

It was anticipated that the frames used to cover refugees by U.S. news outlets would vary depending on ideological leaning. When frames (as a whole) were compared between all four news outlets, the results showed that *Breitbart* used the human-interest frame significantly less than both liberal outlets (*CNN* and *The New Yorker*). This outcome is aligned with the findings of previous studies that discussed the refugee crisis. Specifically, conservative outlets in the United Kingdom were found to be lacking in including the refugee's voice in their coverage (Berry et al., 2015). Similarly, very conservative news outlets were found to use the human-interest frame significantly less than liberal news outlets (Berry et al., 2015). Although no significant difference was found between *Fox News* and any of the outlets on any of the five frames, [Figure 1](#) points out a potential pattern that exists in the use of the human-interest frame when going from very conservative to very liberal. It is suspected that increasing the sample size of the current study would establish significance when comparing the use of the human-interest frame by conservative and liberal news outlets in general.

Although no statistical significance was found between the use of the morality frame by the news outlets, [Figure 2](#) demonstrates how much higher *CNN* scored on that frame than the other news outlets. A larger sample size could potentially confirm significance for the more frequent use of the morality frame by central liberal news outlets. When comparing the scores of

news outlets on individual items on the scale, significant differences were found between conservative and liberal news outlets. *The New Yorker* scored significantly higher on (human-interest) item-6 than both *Fox News* and *Breitbart*. This suggests that very liberal news outlets are more likely to put a human face on the refugee crisis than conservative news outlets. On (human-interest) item-7 *Breitbart* scored lower than both *CNN* and *The New Yorker*. This means that far-right outlets are less likely than liberal outlets to use personal vignettes that generate feelings of empathy when it comes to the refugee crisis. The potential pattern that identifies conservative news outlets as more likely to dehumanize refugees is highlighted in [Figure 3](#) when looking at the score of (human-interest) item-7. This pattern is suggested by the lower use of the human-interest frame among conservative outlets, but it is not confirmed due to no significance existing between *Fox News* and the other news outlets. Examples of dehumanizing terms used to portray refugees like “disease infected” (Esses, 2013) or describing their migration as “flooding” (Esses, 2013) have been found in both *Fox News* and *Breitbart*. In several articles, *Breitbart* describes refugees flooding Europe without referencing any human-interest aspect of the crisis (Friedman, 2016). Perhaps the most obvious example of dehumanization was from a *Breitbart* article titled, “Syrian Refugees Spreading Flesh-Eating Disease, Polio, Measles, Tuberculosis, Hepatitis” (Klein, 2016). Such articles clearly point out the tendency of conservative news outlets to dehumanize refugees.

The New Yorker scored significantly higher on (human-interest) item-5 compared to both *Fox News* and *Breitbart*. This suggests that very liberal news outlets use visuals that create feelings of empathy more than conservative news outlets. Although the difference was not found to be significant between *Fox News* and the other outlets, the findings suggest a potential pattern

that exists on this item based on political ideology. The presence of visual information that can create feelings of empathy, sympathy or compassion are presented in [Figure 4](#).

Finally, the analysis showed that *CNN* scored higher on (morality) item-16 than *Breitbart* and *The New Yorker*. *Fox News* scored higher on this item than both *Breitbart* and *The New Yorker* but the differences were not statistically significant. This does, however, suggest that more polarized outlets are less likely to mention morality, God, and/or other religious tenets than more central outlets regardless of political orientation. The pattern suggested by those findings are presented in [Figure 5](#). Expanding the study and including more articles would likely increase the significance of those findings as well.

It is worth noting that *Fox News* posted articles about terrorism and crime by non-refugees in the refugee category. An example was an article from the Associated Press that was posted in the refugee category by *Fox News*. The article talks about authorities arresting three British citizens smuggling weapons from Greece to Turkey (Associated Press, 2016). One of the citizens is of Iraqi origin, which fact is highlighted in the title (Associated Press, 2016). Furthermore, videos posted with some articles were extremely negative and used terms like “Muslim invasion,” as well as using the terms “Muslims” and “refugees” synonymously (Fox, 2016a). Many articles also reported on single events caused by criminals among refugees before raising questions and concerns about accepting refugees in the United States (Fox, 2016b).

5.1 Limitations

Only four news outlets were used in this study, which reduces external validity. Although the results compared how refugees were framed differently by the four news outlets, more news outlets need to be included to generalize the findings. However, the use of outlets with different

levels of political leaning helped identify a potential pattern based on ideological leaning. Another limitation arose from selecting only online articles; a broader study that includes all media platforms used by each outlet would allow for more concrete conclusions to be made. Using NexisLexis instead of each outlet's search engine could have made the sample selection methodology more uniform in this study.

This study only provided evidence of media bias when related to the coverage of the refugee crisis in 2016. Although the coverage in 2016 could be different than in other years, it is possible that the political bias may be more evident during the elections, making this bias more visible. Furthermore, a couple of *Fox News* articles contained misleading and misguiding videos. The written content may have shown positive portrayal quantitatively, but some of the videos on those same articles contained dehumanizing and deceptive content attacking refugees. This discrepancy in reporting could have had an impact on the data from *Fox News* that was not included in the coding. In addition, *Fox News* also posted articles on terrorism not related to refugees in the Refugee category. Selection was based on searching the term "refugee crisis," and some articles only briefly discussed refugees. If the articles were selected based on relevance of content, stronger findings would have been established and the measure used by the study would have allowed the coders to establish higher inter-coder reliability. Finally, the sample from *The New Yorker* was limited to 19 articles, only further limiting the scope of this study.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Far-right news outlets avoid the human-interest frame when reporting on the refugee crisis when compared to liberal outlets. The current study adds to the literature by confirming findings in the United Kingdom that suggest conservative outlets are less likely to include the voice of the refugees in their coverage also hold true in the United States. Furthermore, this study shows that far-right and far-left news outlets are similar when it comes to fewer references of morality, God, or other religious tenets. Central news outlets are more likely to include those references than more polarized outlets.

This study adds to the literature by introducing a quantitative method that can compare the portrayal of refugees between news outlets. Future research should aim to resolve the limitations of this study. Including more news outlets presented by the graph found in the Pew study would establish more generalizable findings. Furthermore, discarding articles that only briefly discuss refugees would allow for a more effective use of the measure used by the study by reducing the amount of discrepancies between the coders due to inconsistency of the topics discussed by some of the articles. Finally, examples of dehumanization have been identified in both central and polar conservative news outlets. The examples were only collected during supplement discussion, but they provide evidence that further research needs to be performed by future in-depth qualitative studies that aim to determine specific themes used by conservative

and liberal news outlets when discussing refugees. The themes would be important for follow-up quantitative analyses to establish measures that can quantify the presence of those themes based on the ideological leaning of the news outlet.

REFERENCES

- Adam, T. (2015, July 30). Why the language we use to talk about refugees matters so much. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/07/30/why-the-language-we-use-to-talk-about-refugees-matters-so-much/?utm_term=.b00f917a3b7a
- Ashforth, B., & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *The Academy of Management Review*, 14(1), 20.
- Bell, B. (2014). *Crime and immigration*. Retrieved from <https://wol.iza.org/articles/crime-and-immigration/long>
- Bennett, W. L. (1995). *News: The politics of illusion*. New York, NY: Longman.
- Berry, M., Garcia-Blanco, I., & Moore, K. (2015). *Press coverage of the refugee and migrant crisis in the EU: A content analysis of five European countries*. Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/56bb369c9.pdf>
- Best, S. J., Chmielewski, B., & Krueger, B. S. (2005). Selective exposure to online foreign news during the conflict with Iraq. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 10(4), 52–70.
- Cappella, J., & Jamieson, K. (1997). *Spiral of cynicism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Carpio, X. V., & Wagner, M. (2015). *The impact of Syrian refugees on the Turkish labor market*. Policy Research working paper, no. WPS 7402. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.
- Chong, D. & Druckman, J. (2007). A theory of framing and opinion formation in competitive elite environments. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 99–118.
- Delli Carpini, M. X., Cook, F. L., & Jacobs, L. R. (2004). Public deliberations, discursive participation and citizen engagement: A review of the empirical literature. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 7(1), 315–344.
- d’Haenens, L., & de Lange, M. (2001). Framing of Asylum Seekers in Dutch Regional Newspapers. *Media, Culture & Society*, 23(6), 847–860.
- Dickerson, C. (2017, January 28). Anxiety about Muslim refugees is stoked online by the far-right media. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/28/us/anxiety-about-muslim-refugees-is-stoked-online-by-the-far-right-media.html>
- Entman, R. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58.

- Entman, R. (2007). Framing bias: Media in the distribution of power. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 163–173.
- Esses, V. M., Medianu, S., & Lawson, A. S. (2013). Uncertainty, threat, and the role of the media in promoting the dehumanization of immigrants and refugees. *Journal of Social Issues*, 69(3), 518–536.
- Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson.
- Fleras, A., & Kunz, J. L. (2001). *Media and minorities: Representing diversity in a multicultural Canada*. Toronto: Thompson Educational.
- Foged, M., & Peri, G. (2013). Immigrants' effect on native workers: New analysis on longitudinal data. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 8(2), 1–34
- Fox News. (2016a, July 25). *Syrian who wounded 12, killed self in Germany bombing pledged allegiance to ISIS chief*. Retrieved from <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/07/25/syrian-man-denied-asylum-in-germany-injures-12-kills-self-in-blast.html>
- Fox News. (2016b, November 3). *Syrian convicted in Germany for throwing children, including 1-year-old, out window*. Retrieved from <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/11/03/syrian-convicted-in-germany-for-throwing-children-including-1-year-old-out-window.html>
- Fox News. (2016c, September 25). *'Unacceptable': French president vows to shutter squalid refugee camp*. Retrieved from: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/09/25/unacceptable-french-president-vows-to-shutter-squalid-refugee-camp.html> [Accessed 7 Nov. 2017].
- Friedman, V. (2016, November 28). Revealed: Turkey's plans to flood Europe with 3,000 migrants a day. *Breitbart*. Retrieved from <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2016/11/28/turkey-send-3000-migrants-day-greece/>
- Freyenberger, D. (2013). Amanda Knox: A content analysis of media framing in newspapers around the world. *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 1117. Retrieved from <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/1117/>
- Goldenberg, S. (2013, February 15). Media campaign against windfarms funded by anonymous conservatives. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/feb/15/media-campaign-windfarms-conservatives>
- Guterres, A. (2016). Risking All... No Other Option. *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017*.

- Hauser, C. (2017, September 20). Donald Trump Jr. compares Syrian refugees to Skittles that ‘would kill you.’ *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/21/us/politics/donald-trump-jr-faces-backlash-after-comparing-syrian-refugees-to-skittles-that-can-kill.html>
- Hightower, B. (2015). Refugees, limbo, and the Australian media. *International Journal for The Semiotics of Law*, 28(2), 335–358.
- Holbrook, C., López-Rodríguez, L., Fessler, D. M. T., Vázquez, A., & Gómez, Á. (2016). Gulliver’s Politics: Conservatives Envision Potential Enemies as Readily Vanquished and Physically Small. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 8(6), 670–678.
- Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible? How television frames political issues*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Katz, E. (1996). And deliver us from segmentation. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 546(1), 22–33.
- Klein, A. (2016, May 31). Syrian refugees spreading flesh-eating disease, polio, measles, tuberculosis, hepatitis. *Breitbart*. Retrieved from <http://www.breitbart.com/jerusalem/2016/05/31/syrian-refugees-spreading-flesh-eating-disease-polio-measles-tuberculosis-hepatitis/>
- Kosho, J. (2016). Media influence on public opinion: Attitudes toward the migration crisis. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, 5(5), 86–91.
- Krogstad, J., & Radford, J. (2017). Key facts about refugees to the U.S. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/30/key-facts-about-refugees-to-the-u-s/>
- Mancini, P. (2012). Media fragmentation, party system, and democracy. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 18(1), 43–60.
- McCombs, M. E., Shaw, D. L., & Weaver, D. H. (2014). New directions in agenda setting theory and research. *Mass Communication and Society*, 17(6), 781–802.
- Valverde, M. (2017, February 20). What the statistics say about Sweden, immigration and crime. *Politifact*. Retrieved from <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2017/feb/20/what-statistics-say-about-immigration-and-sweden/>
- Mitchell, A., Gottfried, J., Kiley, J., & Matsa, K. E. (2014). Political polarization & media habits. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from <http://www.journalism.org/2014/10/21/political-polarization-media-habits/>
- Neuendorf, K.A. (2002). *The content analysis guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Neuman, W. R., Just, M. R., & Crigler, A. N. (1992). *Common knowledge*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Nowrasteh, A. (2016). Terrorism and immigration: A risk analysis. *Policy Analysis: Cato Institute*, 798, 1–28.
- Patterson, T. (1993). *Out of order*. New York: Knopf.
- Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. (2008). *A deeper partisan divide over global warming*. Washington, D.C.: Author.
- Philo, G., Donald, P., & Briant, E. (2013). *Bad news for refugees*. London: Pluto Press.
- Semetko, H. (2000). Framing European politics: A content analysis of press and television news. *Journal of Communication*, 50(2), 93–109.
- Scheufele, D. A. (1999). Framing as a theory of media effects. *Journal of Communication*, 49(1), 103–122.
- Steimel, S. (2009). Refugees in the news: A representative anecdote of identification/division in refugee media coverage. *Kentucky Journal of Communication*, 28(1), 55–75.
- Stroud, N. J. (2008). Media use and political predispositions: Revisiting the concept of selective exposure. *Political Behavior*, 30(3), 341–366.
- Stroud, N. J. (2010). Polarization and partisan selective exposure. *Journal of Communication*, 60(3), 556–576.
- UN General Assembly. (1951). *Convention relating to the status of refugees*. Geneva: UNHCR. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.pdf>
- UN General Assembly. (1967). *Protocol relating to the status of refugees*. United Nations, *Treaty Series*, 606, 267.
- Van Gorp, B. (2003). *The influx of refugees bordered by frames: A frame analysis of the policy on immigration*. Paper proposal for International Communication Association, May 23–27, 1–22.
- Warner, K. (1977). The effects of the anti-smoking campaign on cigarette consumption. *American Journal of Public Health*, 67(7), 645–650.
- Westerwick, A., Johnston, B. K., & Knobloch-Westerwick, S. (2017) Confirmation biases in selective exposure to political online information: Source bias vs. content bias. *Communication Monographs*, 84(3), 343–364.

World Bank. (2013). *Lebanon: Economic and social impact assessment of the Syrian conflict*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.

World Bank. (2015). *Lebanon economic monitor: The economy of new drivers and old drags*. Lebanon Economic Monitor. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.

TABLES

Table 4-1: Means and Standard Deviations of News Outlets by Frame

Frame	Outlet	n	M	SD
Responsibility	Breitbart	23	2.30	1.55
	Fox News	22	2.46	1.47
	CNN	23	2.83	1.23
	The New Yorker	19	2.58	1.39
Human-Interest	Breitbart	23 _a	.96	1.11
	Fox News	22	1.82	1.56
	CNN	23 _b	2.43	1.65
	The New Yorker	19 _b	2.63	2.09
Conflict	Breitbart	23	2.57	.79
	Fox News	22	2.14	.99
	CNN	23	2.22	1.24
	The New Yorker	19	2.05	1.03
Morality	Breitbart	23	.30	.70
	Fox News	22	.32	.72
	CNN	23	.91	1.16
	The New Yorker	19	.32	.82
Economic	Breitbart	23	.22	.74
	Fox News	22	.27	.77
	CNN	23	.39	.78
	The New Yorker	19	.11	.32

Note. Ranges for Responsibility and Human-Interest Frames = 0 - 5. Range for Conflict Frame = 0 - 4. Ranges for Morality and Economic Frames = 0 - 3.

Table 4-2: Means and Standard Deviations of News Outlets by Item

Item	Outlet	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 1. (RESPONSIBILITY) Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the issue?	Breitbart	23	.43	.51
	Fox News	22	.59	.50
	CNN	23	.61	.50
	The New Yorker	19	.42	.50
Item 2. (RESPONSIBILITY) Does the story suggest that some level of government is responsible for the issue?	Breitbart	23	0.52	.51
	Fox News	22	0.59	.50
	CNN	23	0.78	.42
	The New Yorker	19	0.63	.50
Item 3. (RESPONSIBILITY) Does the story suggest that an industry (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue?	Breitbart	23	.65	.49
	Fox News	22	.64	.49
	CNN	23	.87	.34
	The New Yorker	19	.84	.40
Item 4. (RESPONSIBILITY) Does the story suggest solution(s) to the issue?	Breitbart	23	.39	.50
	Fox News	22	.41	.50
	CNN	23	.43	.51
	The New Yorker	19	.37	.50
Item 5. (RESPONSIBILITY) Does the story suggest the issue requires urgent action?	Breitbart	23	.30	.47
	Fox News	22	.23	.43
	CNN	23	.13	.34
	The New Yorker	19	.32	.48
Item 6. (HUMAN-INTEREST) Does the story provide a human example or issue?	Breitbart	23 _a	.17	.39
	Fox News	22 _a	.36	.49
	CNN	23	.35	.49
	The New Yorker	19 _b	.63	.50
Item 7. (HUMAN-INTEREST) Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion?	Breitbart	23 _a	.09	.29
	Fox News	22	.41	.50
	CNN	23 _b	.48	.51
	The New Yorker	19 _b	.47	.51
Item 8. (HUMAN-INTEREST) Does the story emphasize how individuals are affected by the issue/problem?	Breitbart	23	.43	.34
	Fox News	22	.64	.43
	CNN	23	.78	.50
	The New Yorker	19	.53	.46
Item 9. (HUMAN-INTEREST) Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?	Breitbart	23	.13	.34
	Fox News	22	.23	.43
	CNN	23	.39	.50
	The New Yorker	19	.42	.51
Item 10. (HUMAN-INTEREST) Does the story contain visual information that generates feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy or compassion?	Breitbart	23 _a	.13	.34
	Fox News	22 _a	.18	.40
	CNN	23	.43	.51
	The New Yorker	19 _b	.58	.51

Table 4-2 Continued

Item	Outlet	n	M	SD
Item 11. (CONFLICT) Does the story reflect disagreement between refugees and other groups or individuals?	Breitbart	23	.91	.29
	Fox News	22	.77	.43
	CNN	23	.74	.45
	The New Yorker	19	.80	.40
Item 12. (CONFLICT) Does one party, individual, group or country reproach another?	Breitbart	23	.53	.39
	Fox News	22	.64	.49
	CNN	23	.61	.50
	The New Yorker	19	.63	.47
Item 13. (CONFLICT) Does the story refer to two sides or more than two sides of the problem or issue?	Breitbart	23	.78	.42
	Fox News	22	.73	.46
	CNN	23	.83	.39
	The New Yorker	19	.63	.50
Item 14. (CONFLICT) Does the story refer to winners and losers?	Breitbart	23	.04	.21
	Fox News	22	.00	.00
	CNN	23	.04	.21
	The New Yorker	19	.00	.00
Item 15. (MORALITY) Does the story contain any moral message?	Breitbart	23	.04	.34
	Fox News	22	.05	.21
	CNN	23	.26	.45
	The New Yorker	19	.11	.32
Item 16. (MORALITY) Does the story make reference to morality, God or other religious tenets?	Breitbart	23	.00	.00
	Fox News	22	.18	.40
	CNN	23	.35	.49
	The New Yorker	19	.05	.23
Item 17. (MORALITY) Does the story offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave?	Breitbart	23	.17	.39
	Fox News	22	.09	.29
	CNN	23	.30	.47
	The New Yorker	19	.16	.38
Item 18. (ECONOMIC) Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?	Breitbart	23	.09	.29
	Fox News	22	.09	.29
	CNN	23	.17	.39
	The New Yorker	19	.05	.23
Item 19. (ECONOMIC) Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expenses involved?	Breitbart	23	.09	.29
	Fox News	22	.14	.35
	CNN	23	.13	.34
	The New Yorker	19	.00	.00
Item 20. (ECONOMIC) Is there a reference of economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action?	Breitbart	23	.04	.21
	Fox News	22	.05	.21
	CNN	23	.09	.29
	The New Yorker	19	.05	.23

Note. Range for all 20 items = 0 - 1.

FIGURES

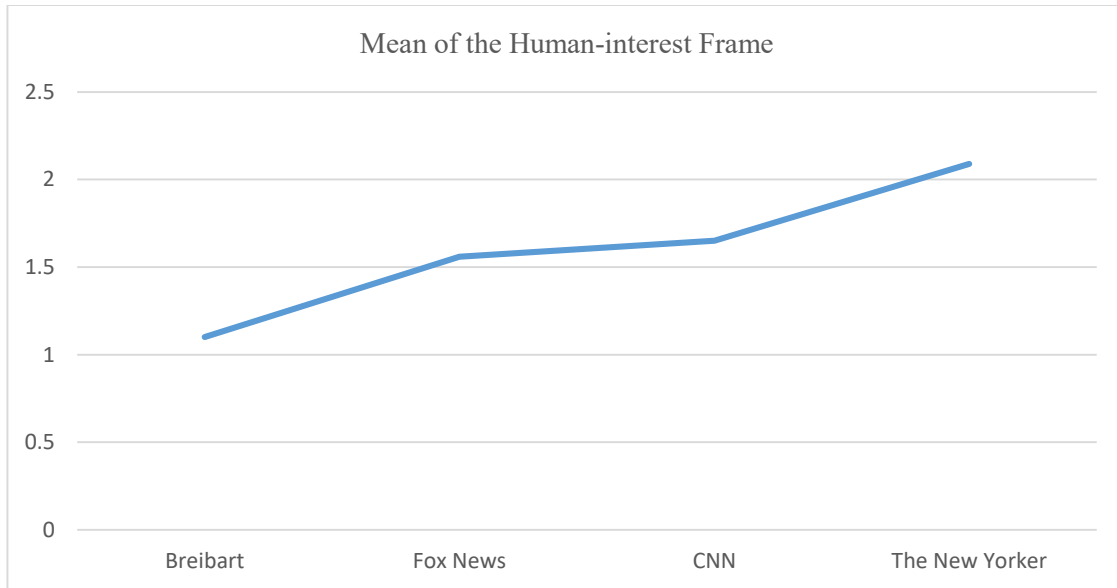


Figure 5-1: Mean Scores for the Human-Interest Frame

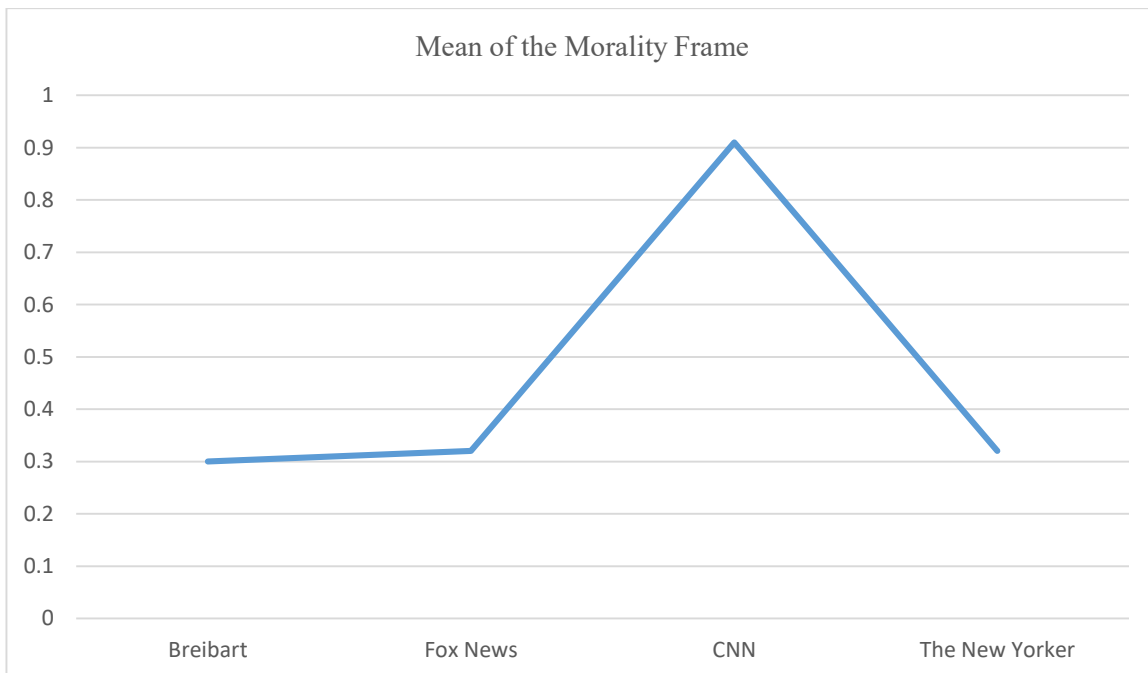


Figure 5-2: Mean Scores for the Morality Frame

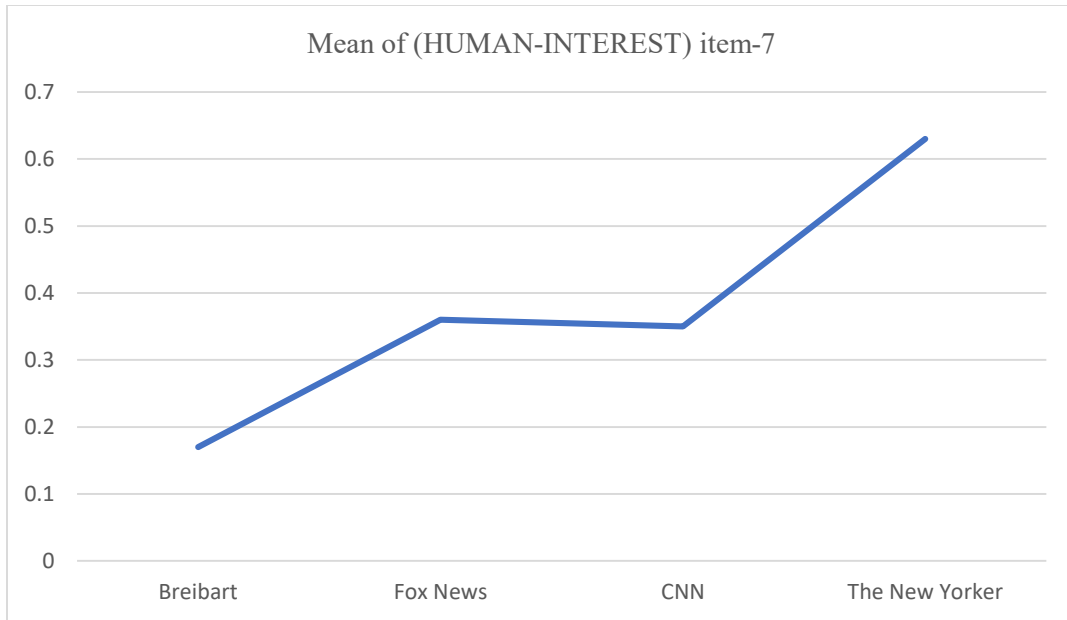


Figure 5-3: Use of Adjectives or Personal Vignettes in Item-7

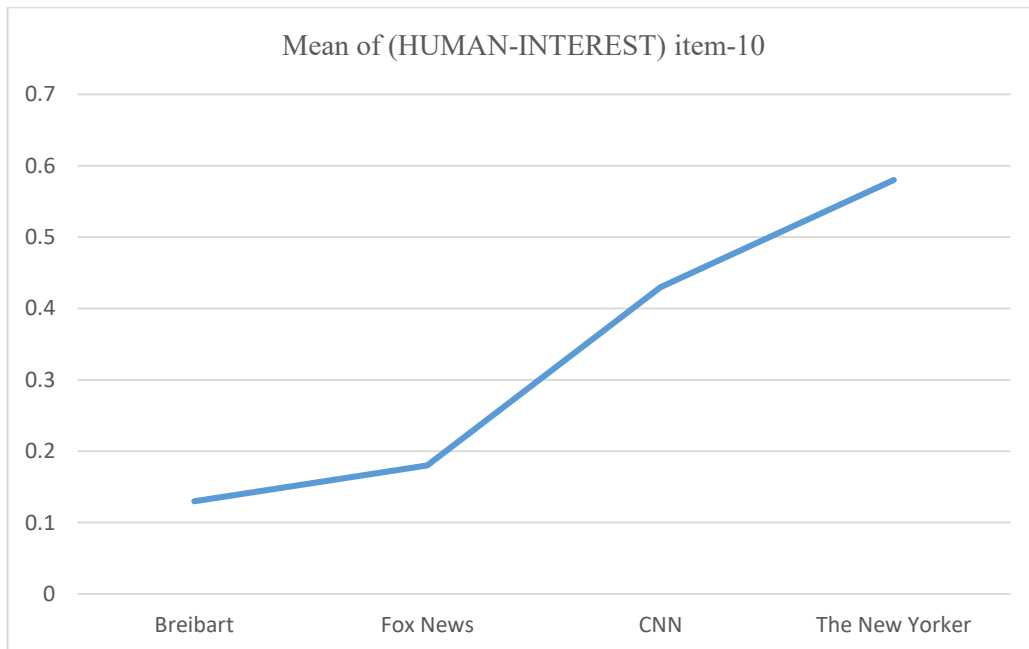


Figure 5-4: Use of Visuals in Item-10

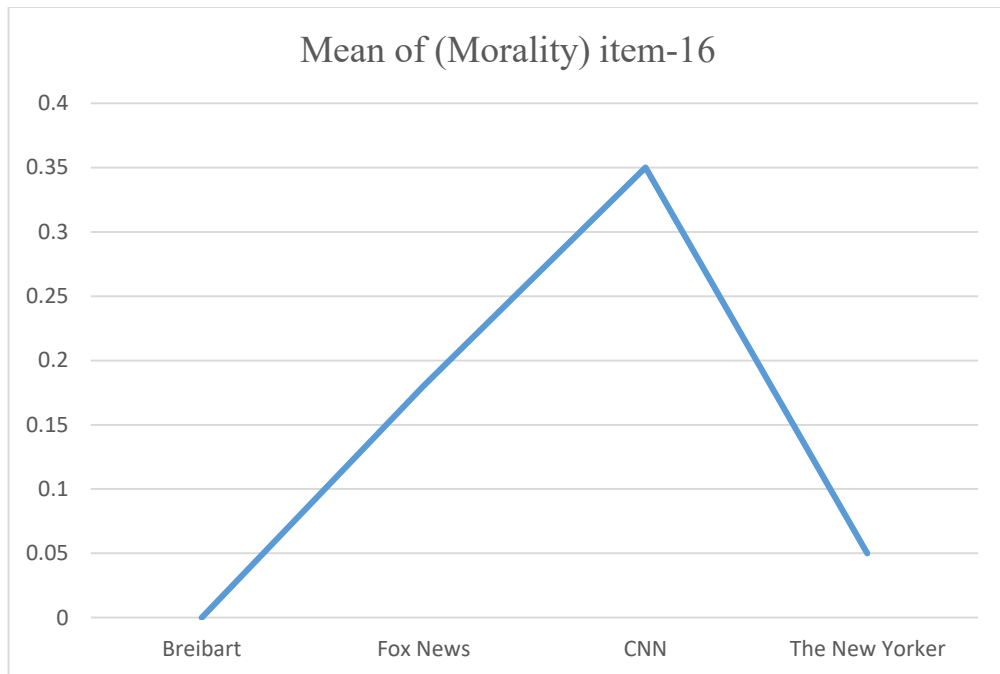


Figure 5-5: Presence of Morality, God, and Religious Tenets in Item-16