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# Framing Migration: A frame-analysis of the Dutch press during the European Refugee Crisis



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## 1. Introduction

Prior research has indicated two things. Ideological differences within press media constitute differences in how information is presented and there were found considerable differences between and within European countries on how immigration was framed. (Edelman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999; Moore, Berry and Garcia, 2018, p 69).

Despite all this, relatively little attention has been devoted to the Dutch context. This study fills this gap, as it aims to answer the following research question: *“To what extent were the Dutch left- and right-wing press divided in their framing of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers during the European refugee crisis?”*

It is built on the rhetoric of Edelman (1993) that the choice of frames is often driven by ideology and prejudice and the selection of the frames used to cover news is also the result of the political or ideological orientation of the medium or news organization that publishes these articles. And on the notion of McCombs and Shaw (1972) that the information in the mass media has become, for most people, their only information source for politics, daily news and world affairs (p 176).

Furthermore, this rhetoric was tested through conducting a content-analysis of two ideological different Dutch newspapers, which were analyzed throughout the first half of 2018. A categorization of 8 frames was used to determine, whether and to what extent there existed a difference between left- and right-wing press in framing refugees, migrants and asylum seekers as victims or intruders.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Media framing theory

A lot of research has been conducted on the way elites, or media, frame information and how this affects the way individuals and groups receive and process that information (Igartua & Cheng, 2007; Berry, Garcia and Moore, 2015; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007; Haynes, Breen and Devereux., 2016). A ‘frame’ within this research is defined according to Entman’s definition:

“Frames highlight certain bits of information while (un)deliberately neglecting other aspects. A frame then is conducted through relatively increasing the salience of

certain parts on information compared to other parts. Essentially, the information within the frame becomes more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences. Therefore, an increase in salience enhances the probability that receivers will perceive the information in the context of a frame” (Entman, 1993, p 53).

The definition of Entman is built around ideas of selection and salience, also described in the literature as salience frames (Cacciatore, Scheufele, & Iyengar, 2016, p 11). Elements in the news articles are identified because they are emphasized by the communicator (Joris, d’Haennens, Van Gorp and Mertens, 2018). Frames call attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements, which might lead audiences to have different opinions or reactions. Moreover, framing can be done by placement, repetition or by associating information with culturally familiar symbols (Entman, 1993, p 54). In this sense, framing theory suggest that how an event or information is framed influences the way in which people process and perceive that information (Arowolo, 2017). An experimental study by Igartua and Cheng (2009) supports this preposition. In their experiment subjects were exposed to the two different news stories on immigration. For one group a story portrayed immigration inside a conflict frame (an article that discussed a crime committed by an immigrant), while the other highlighted immigration within an economic contribution frame. The authors found that subjects confronted with a conflict frame had more cognitive responses linking immigration to crime, than respondents that were exposed to the economic contribution frame (Igartua & Cheng, 2009). Moreover, they found that subjects exposed to the conflict frame ranked immigration as a problem significantly higher, than subjects confronted with the economic contribution frame. Furthermore, the economic contribution frame resulted in a more positive attitude towards immigration overall, in contrast to the conflict frame (Igartua & Cheng, 2009, p 738). This indicates that the way in which information is presented or rather ‘framed’ by the media can have a vast impact on the way citizens, politicians or in general the public’s opinion is shaped.

This is also acknowledged in the work of Entman (1993). Entman found that on most matters of social or political interest, people are not so well-informed and cognitively active that they question the frames that are being imposed on them through and by the media. It is therefore believed that framing can immensely determine the way in which people respond to information (Entman, 1993, p 56). Moreover, it remains uncertain whether citizens are aware of the fact that they acquire information through frames. Essentially, the information in the mass media has become, for most people, their only information source for politics, daily

news and world affairs. The pledges, promises, and rhetoric mentioned in news articles, columns, and editorials constitute much of the information upon which voting decision are made, and form the basis on which public opinion is shaped (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, p 176).

Moore et al. (2018) state that the way in which the press reports on “hotly debated” items like immigration shapes public discussions and storytelling practices of journalists in other media outlets, influences the opinions of politicians, citizens and the public’s understanding of these items (p 69). Amongst others, Moore et al., (2018) conducted a comparative frame analysis of how the press in five different European countries framed refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers. All scholars found striking variations in the use of these migration frames between and within the national contexts. The studies indicated that ideology was one of the key factors that accounted for these differences in the use of frames within the diverse national contexts (Joris et al., 2018; Berry et al. 2015; Philo, Briant & Donald. 2013; Moore et al., 2018). In the following section, the different frames that were found are discussed.

## *2.2 Frames on migration*

### *2.2.1 Victim frame*

The first category is the victim frame. It entails a technique or tactic used by the media that victimizes refugees, immigrants or asylum seekers. This victimizing is done through emphasizing the vulnerability of migrants. It highlights that the reason why these refugees and asylum seekers are outside their country of nationality or habitual residence is due to a rational fear of being persecuted based on race, religion, or nationality, being a member of a certain social group or having a political opinion. For this reason, they ought to be helped and offered a safe place because this is their international right (Van Gorp, 2005, p 489). In other words, this frame views refugees as passive actors who are in need of help and are on the run as an unavoidable response to their current domestic situation (Joris et al., 2018, p 3).

Furthermore, the victim frame suggests a more flexible attitude or vision on who fits the definition of asylum seeker as constituted by the United Nations Geneva Convention in 1951. By emphasizing the consequences for children or women left unprotected and traumatized, the victim frame evokes sentiments like compassion and empathy. In this sense, the victim frame can also be seen as what in other studies is referred to as the so-called *human-interest frame*. The human-interest frame evokes sentiments like compassion and empathy through emphasizing the personal, dramatic and emotional side of an event, issue or

problem (d'Haenens & De Lange, 2001, p 850; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p 95). For example, an article that discusses refugees' dangerous experiences with human traffickers belongs to the human-interest and victim frame as these articles often highlight the horrific conditions under which this trafficking takes place.

### 2.3.2 *Intruder frame*

The second frame indicated by Van Gorp (2005) is the intruder frame. It focuses on highlighting the inflow of refugees or asylum seekers as 'unknown identities' and emphasizing them as a threat to the nation's cultural domestic identity and community (Van Gorp, 2005, p 489). This frame is mostly used to portray and refer to refugees as economic migrants or fake asylum seekers who migrate illegally and seek asylum illegitimately (Joris et al., 2018, p 4). They are considered fake or illegitimate asylum seekers, as they are not fleeing from persecution, conflict or war. In this sense, these immigrants are not seen to be in need of desperate help, compared to 'legal' asylum seekers. They are merely seeking better economic conditions, are often labeled as 'economic immigrants' and are within this frame not considered as eligible for asylum.

Two other frames that can be categorized as falling inside the intruder frame are described by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) and Haynes et al. (2015). Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) *conflict frame* emphasizes conflict between individuals, groups or institutions (p 95). In this sense the article presenting a conflict frame aims to capture the public's attention through covering some problematic issue or event that happened (d'Haenens & De Lange, 2001, p 850; Joris et al., 2018, p 4). Within the context of the refugee crisis this would entail linking immigration as threats to the security of citizens. For example, through portraying migrants, refugees or asylum seekers as potential criminals and possibly even terrorist (Haynes et al., 2005; Joris et al., 2018, p 4).

The other frame mentioned by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) is the *economic consequences frame* which is present when an article discusses an event, problem or issue in terms of the economic consequences immigration has or will have on an individual, group, institution, region or country (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p 96). It is often used to clarify what the negative economic impact is of a certain event, policy or problem. If placed within the context of the refugee crisis the presence of this frame could be seen when an article presents concerns regarding increased unemployment rates, job competition, or for example portrays migrants as a burden on the welfare system (Joris et al., 2018, p 4; Haynes et al. 2015).

### 2.2.3 Subframes

In order to determine whether an intruder or a victim was present in the analyzed articles, several subframes are introduced. Frames 1 to 5 belong to the intruder frame and frame 7 to the victim frame. These ‘subframes’ are based upon the findings of a frame analysis of the UK press by Philo et al. (2013):

- (1) *representing asylum seekers as illegal immigrants or as economic migrants*
- (2) *asylum seeker policy is too soft (‘we take too many’),*
- (3) *asylum seekers as a burden on the welfare system and job market,*
- (4) *asylum seekers increase insecurity as they pose a threat, increase criminality and are possible terrorists,*
- (5) *advocating stronger controls and deportation of failed refugees,*
- (6) *the benefits of immigration on economy and culture,*
- (7) *representing problems and suffering of asylum seekers.*
- (8) *the role of the West and its responsibilities in the refugee crisis*

#### *Frames 1 to 5*

Berry et al. (2015) conducted a frame analysis on press coverage in different European countries and found that the ‘Telegraph’ (right-wing) was considerably more likely to use terms like ‘illegals’, ‘illegal migrants’ or ‘illegal immigrants’ than the ‘Guardian’, its broadsheet left-wing counterpart (p 37). Moreover, when they looked at tabloid press this ideological division was even more significant. ‘The Sun’ a right-wing tabloid newspaper was specifically more liberate in its use of labels that refer to migrants, refugees or asylum seekers as illegal, compared to for example the ‘Daily Mirror’ a left-wing tabloid newspaper. Other headlines of right-wing press suggested that refugees were being pampered and ungrateful (p 41).

Another finding was that the ‘Guardian’ (‘left-wing’) “overwhelmingly presented refugee flows as being driven by people attempting to escape war, conflict or repressive regimes” (Berry et al., 2015, p 44). While on the contrary, the right-wing press was more prone to stress the economic pull factors over these humanitarian push factors (p 44). Moreover, in general, tabloid right-wing press were found to have a much greater concentration of themes regarding threats to domestic social welfare, compared to their left-wing counterparts. Furthermore, threat themes focused on the numbers of refugees trying to go the UK or the violence of migrant groups were also more prominent in headlines across

the right-wing press (p 40). In addition, right-wing newspapers, like 'The Daily Mail', were more likely to link refugees and migrants to violent crimes, property crime or even terrorism. This crime or conflict frame was also found in the left-wing broadsheet newspapers, however, when these threat frames were present these were usually only referred to as a 'neutral' statement and would later on often be challenged within the body of the article (p 42).

Moore et al. (2018) found that the German left-wing press was also less likely to see refugees as economic, cultural or security threats. On the contrary, the more right-leaning German newspaper 'Die Welt' tended to focus more often on the scale of refugee flows as a burden on the welfare system and that this burden was disproportionately shouldered by Germany (Moore et al., 2018, p 73).

A study by Brouwer et al. (2017) that focused on news articles in the Dutch press also found that, with regards to framing immigrants as possible criminals, there were differences between the left-wing newspaper 'De Volkskrant' and the right-wing newspaper 'De Telegraaf'. In De 'Telegraaf' the words 'criminal' and 'criminals' appeared three to four times more often than in 'De Volkskrant' (Brouwer, van der Woude and van der Leun, 2017, p 112).

On the other hand, the 'Süddeutsche Zeitung', which can be seen as a left-leaning newspaper, covered more on humanitarian themes. For example, through reporting the ordeals suffered by refugees trying to escape war or repressive regimes. Furthermore, the work of Moore et al. (2018) also indicated that within the German right-wing press ('Bild' and 'Die Welt') the 'threat' frames were twice as prevalent compared to their left-wing counterparts (Moore et al, 2018, p 74).

Articles that revolved around how to deal with influx of immigrants during the refugee crisis were not often discussed in the UK press. However, the need for better border securities as a solution to this problem was mentioned more in the left-wing compared to right-wing newspapers. When comparing the two broadsheet newspapers: the 'Guardian' mentioned this as a solution only in 7.7% of the cases, while the 'Telegraph' did this in 12.3% of the cases. Moreover, when looking at the tabloid newspapers, this ideological division was also seen. Respectively, in 'Daily Mirror' 4.2% and in the 'Daily Mail' 6.5% (Joris et al., 2018, p 45).

Within the German sample, this ideological division was found to be more dominant. The 'Süddeutsche Zeitung' only mentioned more deportation or stronger controls in 1.8% of the cases as a solution to the refugee crisis. On the contrary, the 'Bild' mentioned this in 7.0%

of the cases (Berry et al., 2015, p 120). In general, in the right-wing press most focus was put on the need to turn people away, to reduce eligibility, to claim asylum or to strengthen overall deportation policy (Berry et al., 2015, p 49).

#### *Frame 7*

As already mentioned earlier, left-wing press was more likely to feature humanitarian themes. As it focused on the hardships and struggles the refugees were either fleeing from, or had experienced on their journey to Europe (Berry et al., 2015, p 115). All three studies found that in general sympathetic stories of refugees were most likely to be featured in the left-wing press, regardless of having a broadsheet or tabloid format (Berry et al., 2015; Moore et al., 2018; Joris et al., 2018). Although some right-wing newspapers did occasionally mention the hardships that refugees faced in their home countries, they were far more likely to merely mention that the refugees were determined to get to the UK because they would be safe. Moreover, the presence of articles on refugee advocacy groups were also mostly found in left-wing press compared to right-wing press (Berry et al., 2015, pp. 31-33). The right-wing tabloids featured the perspective of migrants and their supporters relatively infrequently and were found to be much more likely to frame stories in a more negative light. The humanitarian frame, which refers to refugees, asylum seekers or migrants as victims, was found in more than half of the coverage of the 'Guardian' (left-wing, broadsheet), in one third of articles in the 'Mirror' (left-wing, tabloid) and 'Telegraph' (right-wing, broadsheet) respectively in one out of 5 and in one out of 13 of the right-wing tabloids 'The Daily Mail' and 'The Sun' (Berry et al., 2015, p 43). The same conclusion was drawn in the German context. Refugee stories were significantly more prevalent in the left-wing quality newspaper 'Süddeutsche Zeitung'. The authors argue that this is presumably because of the fact that as being a left-liberal newspaper, refugee stories and their experiences are more likely to be seen as more newsworthy to their target audience when compared to their ideological counterparts (Moore et al., 2018, p 74; Berry et al., 2015, p 106).

#### *Frame 8*

In general, very little literature and results were found on the 'the role of the West' and how this frame differs between left and right. Nevertheless, Joris et al. (2018) were capable of findings some results. In their comparative analysis of European countries they found that 'the role of the West' frame had an overall high appearance, it was used more frequently to

promote pro-migration compared to anti-migration perspectives and was mostly presented as voices of European, national and local politicians. More specifically, when frame 8 was found promoting pro-migration ideas within one's country this was mostly based upon humanitarian grounds, highlighting refugees as victims and in need of help. While on the contrary, when found within an anti-migration context this 'the role of the West' was linked towards blaming other European countries by indicating "we have too many, you should take them too" (Joris et al., 2018, p 13).

As frame 8 was found in combination with pro- as well as anti-migration perspectives Joris et al. (2018) concluded that it could be regarded as 'two-sided' (p 13). This 'two-sidedness' was also the reason why it was impossible to exclusively place an article within an intruder or victim frame on the basis of frame 8 alone.

### *Frame 6*

Finally, the last frame that is discussed is the 'economic or cultural benefits' frame. It would be used in articles to encourage the pro-migration perspective, positive effects of immigration may be used to accentuate this (Joris et al., 2018). The authors expected a substantial use of this frame, however this turned out to be exact the opposite. The same was found in the other studies (Philo et al., 2013; Berry et al., 2015; Moore et al., 2018). The benefits for the economy were not found at all in their sample (Joris et al., 2018).

## *2.4 Hypotheses*

In the literature review it was discussed that left-wing press were more prone to publish articles that contain a humanitarian frame (frame 7) and thus victimize immigrants, through for example covering refugees' success stories and the sufferings and hardships they face in their home country. While on the contrary, right-wing newspapers were found to be more liberate in the use of frames 1 to 5 and thus in portraying these immigrants as intruders. In order to determine whether the Dutch press can be regarded as ideologically divided between left and right the first hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Frames 1 to 5 (intruder frame) are most dominant in the Dutch right-wing press, and frame 7 (victim frame) in the left-wing press.

The second hypothesis takes its form when looking at the ‘role of the West’ frame that was introduced. As stated this frame is regarded as two-sided in the sense that it cannot be simply placed within an intruder or a victim frame. It is for this reason in particular that the second hypothesis is formulated, as this frame allowed for a more qualitative study on whether a division within the Dutch press was present. The first side of the frame is linked towards a more ideological left position, as it focuses more on the humanitarian aspect and stresses a country’s obligations to provide asylum for refugees and asylum seekers (Berry et al., 2015). This would mean that it is expected that whenever found in the left-wing press (‘De Volkskrant’) it would be in combination with an human-interest frame, more specifically frame 7. On the other hand, the ‘role of the West’ frame was also found to be present in right-wing press (‘De Telegraaf’), however by referring towards the responsibilities of other countries to also contribute in bearing the weight of the influx of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Therefore, it is expected that whenever ‘the role of the West’ frame is found present within ‘De Telegraaf’ this is going to be in a combination with frame 2 (‘asylum seeker policy is too soft, ‘we take too many’). On the basis of these considerations following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 2: When ‘the role of the West’ frame is found in the Dutch left-wing press this will be in combination with frame 2 (‘asylum seeker policy is too soft, ‘we take too many’) and when found in the right-wing press this will be in combination with frame 7 (‘presenting problems and suffering of asylum seekers’).

Finally, the reason why the ‘economic and cultural contribution’ frame was not included in both hypotheses is due to the fact that, like frame 8 it was not possible to categorize it inside an intruder nor a victim frame. Nor was it, in contrast to frame 8, deemed relevant enough to base an entire new hypothesis on it as earlier research found that it was overall underrepresented in the press. However, it was included in the content analysis and on the basis of the literature it is, when found to be present, expected to be most dominant in the Dutch left-wing press. This is because it entails a more positive and pro-migration perspective, which is found more often in left-wing press.

### 3. Methodology

#### *3.1 Research design & units of analysis*

In order to determine to what extent there existed an ideological division between the Dutch left- and right-wing press a content-analysis was conducted of newspaper articles. Newspaper articles were chosen as units of analysis, because they allowed for a quantitative as well as for a more qualitative study of the different frames used in the Dutch press. These articles were analyzed and, when possible it was determined whether an intruder or a victim frame was dominant. Whether an intruder or victim frame was present was determined per article. This in turn was done on the basis of what frames were found present in the article, and what the overall tone was of the article. For example, if only intruder frames were found in an article, the article was categorized as portraying an intruder frame. When a mix of victim and intruder frames were found, the overall message and tone of the article was decisive in categorizing it as either victim or intruder. In which an overall negative tone and message would point towards an intruder frame.

This method accounted for answering the first hypothesis, however the second hypothesis was tested in a slightly different way. Whenever an article indicated the presence of frame 8, it was analyzed more qualitatively to determine how the ‘role of the West’ was framed and whether this was done in combination with frame 2 or 7.

#### *3.2 Case selection*

##### *3.2.1. Why The Netherlands*

The findings of earlier studies strongly suggest that ideology played a role in the way in which left- and right-wing press framed immigration, however, as scholars have indicated this varied greatly per country. Therefore, it needed to be established why this could also be the case in The Netherlands.

The analysis of Berry et al. (2015) found that in some countries, the press was not that divided in their use of frames and covered on migration in broadly similar terms. For example regarding Spain, the authors claimed that these similarities were partly due to the fact that, in contrast to countries that did show significant differences like Britain and Germany migration

was not an issue on which the main political parties in Spain actively campaign. Furthermore, Spain lacked an large far-right populist party (p 195).

In respect to the Dutch context, this would not be the case due to the following reasons. First of all, the 'PVV' a far-right populist party is the second largest party in the Dutch 'Tweede Kamer' and immigration is considered as one of the party's top priorities. Secondly, within the European context, The Netherlands has been identified as a pioneer in the adoption of restrictive migrant policies and the strong anti-migration discourse surrounding these policies. Throughout the years immigration and integration issues have climbed their way up the public and political agenda and while these issues did not receive widespread public and media attention in the 1990s, a sharp increase has been noticed since especially 2001 (Brouwer et al., 2017, p 101).

The similarities found in the Italian news agendas can be explained by the fact that all three newspapers, despite of being traditionally labeled as centre-left or centre-right, have throughout the years grown more towards the centre. Also these similarities, could also be explained by the fact that all three sampled newspapers: 'La Repubblica', 'La Stampa' and 'Il Corriere della Sera' were all considered as quality newspapers (p 219).

In contrast to the Italian case, the Dutch newspapers were still considered as ideological left- and right-wing and this has not changed significantly throughout the years. In this sense they differ from (e.g.) the more conservative NRC-Handelsblad. This is also indicated by the study of Brouwer et al. (2017) which stated that the Dutch 'De Volkskrant' and 'Trouw' are considered as belonging to the ideological left and papers like 'De Telegraaf' and 'Het Algemeen Dagblad' are more drawn to the right of the ideological spectrum (p 105). The statement of Berry et al. (2015) that the Italian newspapers were all considered broadsheet or 'quality' newspapers and that this potentially explains why little difference was found between them, can be counterbalanced by the claim of Brouwer et al. (2017) that "the distinction between tabloid and broadsheet newspapers holds minor relevance in the Netherlands" (p 105).

Taking all this into account, it would seem that Dutch context can be regarded as the right context to test whether there did in fact exist some sort of ideological division between left- and right-wing press in their use of immigration frames.

### *3.2.2. Newspapers and time-frame*

Both ‘De Volkskrant’ and ‘De Telegraaf’ were used in the content-analysis. These newspapers were chosen because they published a vast amount of articles about migrants, asylum seekers and refugees and differed in ideological background. ‘De Volkskrant’ is a left-wing ‘quality’ newspaper in broadsheet format, while ‘De Telegraaf’ is considered as a right-wing ‘popular’ newspaper in tabloid format (Brouwer et al., 2017, p 105). The estimated circulation of ‘De Volkskrant’ and ‘De Telegraaf’ in 2017 was 210,000 and 353,000 respectively. Making them the third biggest and biggest Dutch national newspaper.

The first half of 2018 was chosen as the period of analysis due to the following reasons. At the end of 2017 a total amount of 103.8 thousand refugees were present in The Netherlands and 5,818 asylum seekers were waiting for a response on their asylum request. According to a report of the UNHCR these numbers changed to respectively, 101.8 thousand refugees and 12,303 asylum seekers waiting for a response at the end of 2018 (UNHCR Global Trends, 2018). These numbers are the highest since 2006 and thus the highest since the start of the EU refugee crisis in 2013. Secondly, the first half of 2018 was selected because, considerably, it did not have any significant events that caused major spikes in media coverage. Analyzing a period in which certain media hypes did not occur allows for a more accurate and trustworthy image of the Dutch press and the way they frame migrants. Various scholars also utilized this ‘routine coverage’ strategy of choosing a “period without any significant events that caused a media hype” in their own content analysis of Belgian national and Dutch regional newspapers (Van Gorp, 2005, p 493; d’Haenens & De Lange, 2001, p 852).

### *3.3 Sampling and data selection*

The sample exists of all the articles published in the first half of 2018 (2412) from January 1st to the 30th of June on asylum seekers (302 articles, 168 Telegraaf and 134 Volkskrant), refugees (526 articles, 205 Telegraaf and 321 Volkskrant) and migrants (375 articles, 129 Telegraaf and 246 Volkskrant) that appeared in the two newspapers. The ‘NexisUni’ database was used to search for and access relevant articles published by both newspapers. Three search terms were used, namely: ‘asielzoekers’ (asylum seekers), ‘vluchtelingen’ (refugees) and ‘migranten’ (migrants). This was done to ensure that as many relevant articles as possible were included in the sample. However, this did not exclude the possibility that some relevant articles were not included in the sample. Additionally, this also meant that especially with the

last search term there were considerably less relevant articles left per month, because articles were already accounted for by the the first two terms.

A total of 5 articles per month and per search term were picked, analyzed and categorized as either falling within the intruder or victim frame. In the most perfect way, this would have resulted in a total of 30 articles per search term and month, indicating a total of analyzed 180 articles. However, as discussed within the results this turned out to be less.

Only the first half of 2018 was selected. Throughout this half year, articles were chosen on the basis of random selection. First of all, the articles were ordered from old to new. Then the range of the number of articles per month was established (e.g. article 1 to 25). On the basis of this range a simple random number generator found on the internet was used to pick out which article were going to be analyzed.

### *3.3.1 Trial run*

In order to test the efficiency of the sampling method, a minor trial run was done. This was done in the first month of 2017. In general, it was observed that there was a necessity for some sort of screening procedure for relevant articles that does not introduce any selection bias. For example, small public opinion “articles” like “Opinie en Debat” or the “WATUZEGT” and “BRIEVEN” (De Telegraaf) were not relevant and thus should not be taken into account. On the other hand, sections like “Binnenland” (‘De Telegraaf’) and “Ten eerste” (‘De Volkskrant’) do provide good and relevant articles, therefore these should ought to be focused on.

Based on these findings, in the main sample the articles were screened for relevance, in order to make sure they were actually referring about migrants, refugees or asylum seekers within the context of the European refugee crisis. An article was deemed as relevant for the analysis when it talked about:

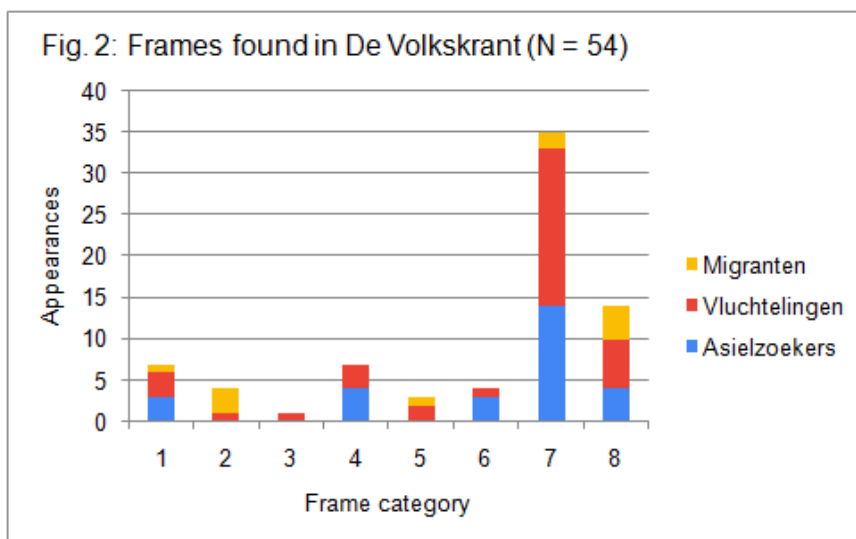
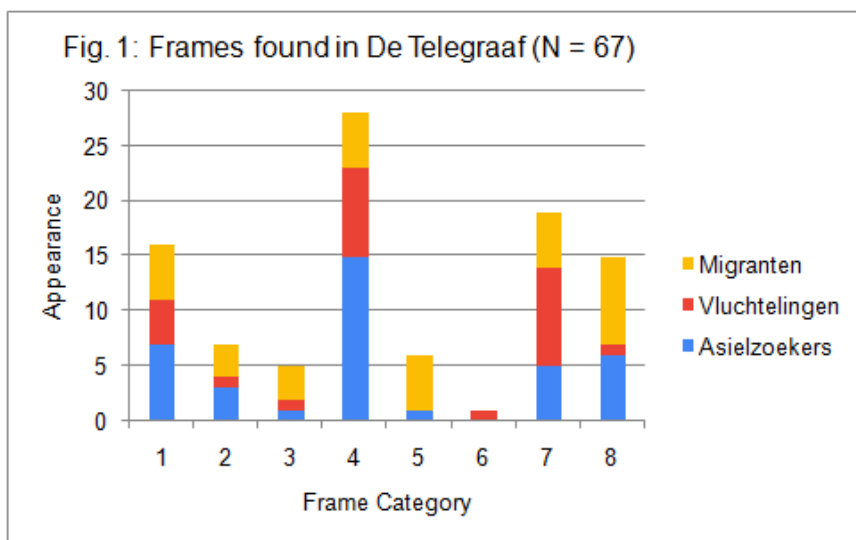
- African or Middle Eastern asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants travelling, arriving or living within the EU;
- Immigration and asylum policy.

Also,

- sections such as the “WATUZEGT”, “BRIEVEN” and “Opinie en Debat” were left out of the analysis.

## 4. Results

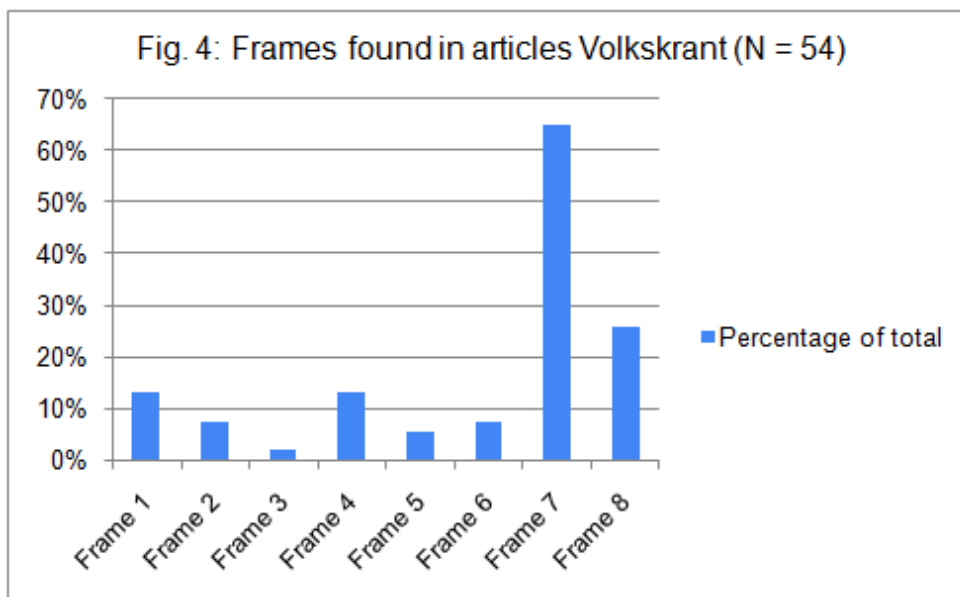
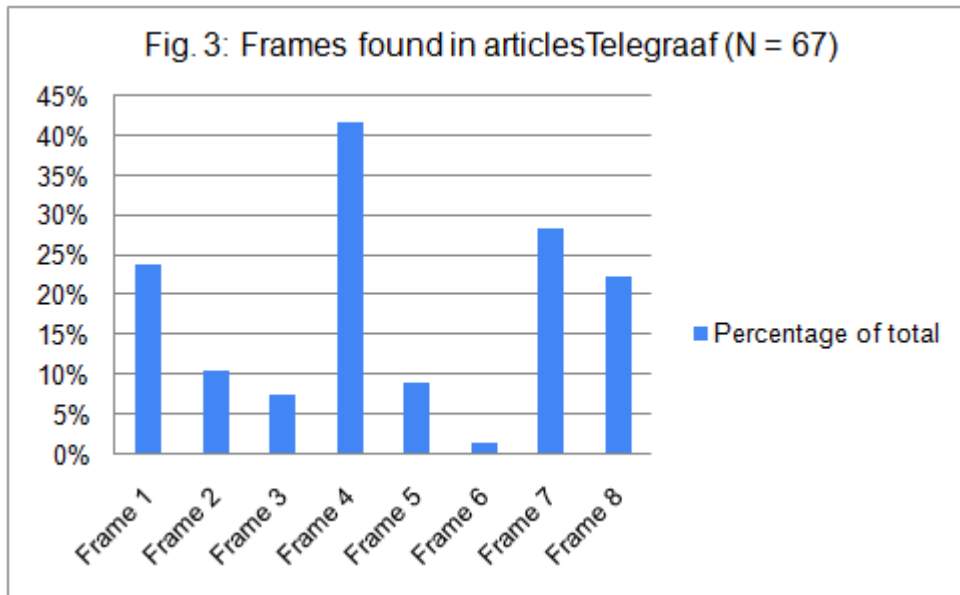
Ultimately, a total of 121 articles were analyzed. From which 67 were found in ‘De Telegraaf’ and 54 articles were found in ‘De Volkskrant’. From the 67 articles of ‘De Telegraaf’, 30 were found with the search term ‘asielzoekers’, 20 with ‘vluchtelingen’ and 17 with ‘migranten’. In ‘De Volkskrant’ 23 were found with using ‘asielzoekers’ as a search term, 24 with ‘vluchtelingen’ and only 7 with ‘migranten’ (see figures 1 and 2). Moreover, the analysis showed that all eight frames occurred at least once in both newspapers and that within articles it was not uncommon that multiple frames were present. More specifically, in the 67 articles of ‘De Telegraaf’ a total of 97 frames were found and in the 54 articles of ‘De Volkskrant’ a total of 75 frames were indicated (see figure 1 and 2 and tables 1 and 2 appendix).



*Hypothesis 1: Frames 1 to 5 (intruder frame) are most dominant in the Dutch right-wing press, and frame 7 (victim frame) in the left-wing press.*

As shown in figure 3 and 4 the intruder frame was mostly dominant within ‘De Telegraaf’. As for the fact that frames 1 to 5 were found to be most frequent here and constituted approximately 64% of the total frames found, compared to 25.32% of the total frames found in ‘De Volkskrant’. On the contrary, frame 7 which refers to a victim frame was found to be most dominant in ‘De Volkskrant’ making up for 46,67% of the total frames found, compared to 19,59% in ‘De Telegraaf’. These findings show that, in general, the intruder frame was found more often in the ‘De Telegraaf’ and the victim frame was found to be relatively more present inside the ‘De Volkskrant’. It would seem then that the expectation stated in the hypothesis can be accepted. However, if a closer look is taken at the results it can also be argued that the hypothesis does not hold when taking into account the amount of times frame 7 ‘problems and suffering of asylum seekers’ was mentioned in the ‘De Telegraaf’. When analyzing the results per frame, instead of per bloc (intruder vs. victim) it becomes salient that frame 7 is ranked as having the second highest occurrence in ‘De Telegraaf’ with a total amount of 19 appearances in 67 articles (28%) (see figure 3, table 3 and 4 in appendix).

Two things can be concluded from these findings. First off, the hypothesis can only be partially accepted. As the intruder frame was indeed found to be most dominant in the Dutch right-wing press, however on the contrary the victim frame was not only dominant in the left-wing press as it was the second highest represented frame within the ‘De Telegraaf’. The latter brings up the second conclusion that on the basis of these findings it is not possible to wholly determine whether or to what extent there existed a division between the Dutch left- and right-wing press in their use of frames.

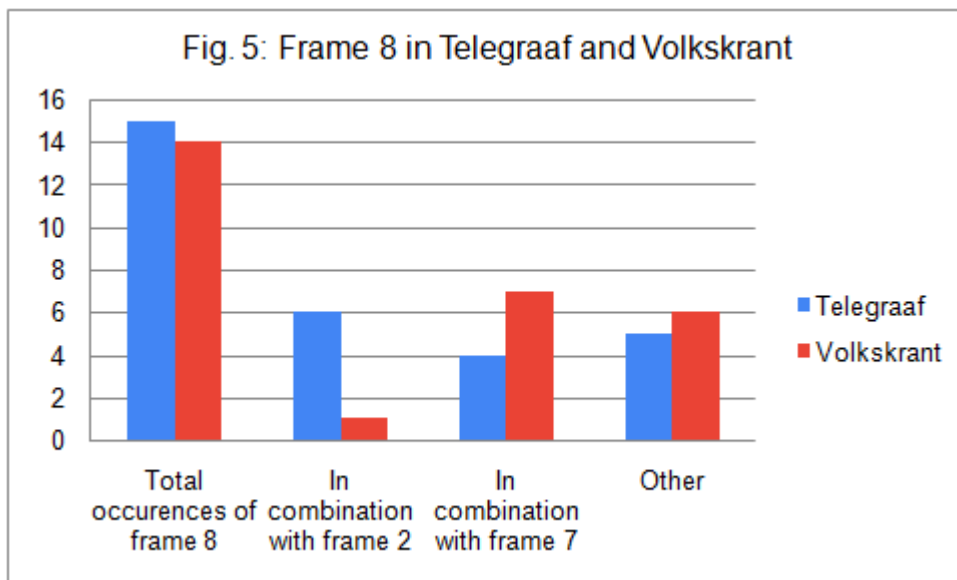


*Hypothesis 2: When ‘the role of the West’ is mentioned in Dutch right-wing press this will be in combination with frame 2 (‘asylum seeker policy is too soft, ‘we take too many’) and when mentioned in the left-wing press this will be in combination with frame 7 (‘presenting problems and suffering of asylum seekers’).* \

It was stated earlier on in this study that it was not possible to simply place frame 8 ‘role of the West’ within an intruder or victim frame. Nevertheless, it was still expected to provide important insights on whether and to what extent a division between the two papers was present in their use of migration frames. The latter turned out to be true. As the ‘role of the West’ was mentioned quite often in both newspapers. In ‘De Telegraaf’ frame 8 was found in

22% of the analyzed articles, and in ‘De Volkskrant’ it was present in 26% of the total articles (see figure 3 and 4). Moreover, it was expected that whenever frame 8 occurred in right-wing press this would be in combination with frame 2 ‘we take too many’. On the other hand when frame 8 was evident in left-wing press this would mostly be together with frame 7 ‘problems and suffering of asylum seekers’. These expectations were based on the findings of Joris et al. (2018) that ‘the role of the West’ frame could be considered as two-sided. On the one hand, it was found in combination with pro-immigration perspectives that were stimulated by the use of humanitarian frames (such as, frame 7), while on the other hand it was mentioned together with statements that other countries are ‘not taking as many’ compared to the particular host country (frame 2) (Joris et al. 2018, p 13).

In ‘De Telegraaf’ frame 8 was found together with frame 2 in 40% and with frame 7 in 26,67% of the articles. In ‘De Volkskrant’ these percentages were, 7,14% and 50% respectively. Other occurrences of frame 8 include mostly a solo appearance and/or talked about the responsibilities of European countries in a more neutral tone (see figure 5, table 5 and 6 in the appendix).



On the one hand, the results are align with the literature. That is to say that when frame 8 was found in combination with another frame in ‘De Volkskrant’ this would almost exclusively be frame 7 ‘suffering and problems faced by asylum seekers’. This indicates that ‘De Volkskrant’ did have a tendency to show more pro-immigration perspectives in the form of ‘we should take them (asylum seekers)’, instead of indicating anti-immigration sentiments such as ‘we have enough already’ and let others do the work. This came as expected, as for

the overall notion of being obligated to help is considered to be a more dominant thought within the ideological left (Berry et al.2015; Moore et al., 2018; Joris et al., 2018). This is exemplified in the following quote, which is frame 7 followed by 8:

De FSA-strijders waren gewapend. Iedere burger in Afrin die niet meewerkt, wordt al snel beschuldigd van terrorisme en een kopje kleiner gemaakt (...) Vrije meiden worden gedwongen zich in lange zwarte gewaden te hullen, anders worden ze aangerand. Alles wat Koerdisch is, wordt weggepoetst”

“Nederland moet de Turkse actie veroordelen, zich sterk maken voor humanitaire hulp aan de regio en voor de veilige terugkeer van vluchtelingen naar Afrin.”

*(de Volkskrant, April 25 2018)*

The dominance of pro-immigration in combination with frame 8 found in ‘De Volkskrant’, could, in turn, be regarded as an indication that a division was present if an anti-immigration trend was found to be dominant in ‘De Telegraaf’. However, these anti-immigration trends were not found to be very salient in the form of frame 2, nor in any other in ‘De Telegraaf’. More specifically, the results actually show that to a certain extent ‘De Telegraaf’ used ‘humanitarian frames’ which were expected to be found predominantly on the ideological left. These results are in stark contrast to what was expected on the basis of prior research. When ‘the role of the West’ frame was found in ‘De Telegraaf’ it was not as exclusively mentioned within the context of referring to a ‘we take too many compared to others’ frame as expected. The following quotes exemplify this. The first one is an example of the expected combination of frame 8 ‘role and responsibilities of the West’ and 2 ‘we take too many’ and the second one of frame 8 in combination with frame 7 ‘problems and suffering of asylum seekers’ found within ‘De Telegraaf’:

“In Europa geldt momenteel de regel dat asielzoekers zich moeten registreren in het eerste land waar ze aankomen. Dáár moeten ze aankloppen voor bescherming. Maar dat is slechts theorie.”

“Asielzoekers kunnen nu nog eenvoudig door Europa trekken naar het land waar ze zich het liefst willen vestigen. Dat is tegen de regels, maar die worden al jaren niet

nageleefd. Nederland is daar de dupe van en het kabinet pleit daarom in Brussel voor snelle verandering.”

*(de Telegraaf, March 8 2018)*

“Het gaat hier om jongeren met een heftig vlucht verleden (...) In het rapport van de Gemeentelijke Ombudsman Bert van Alphen staat onder meer dat de jongeren op ongeschikte plekken zijn gehuisvest met weinig privacy. Ook liet de begeleiding te wensen over. De slechte huisvesting en onvoldoende begeleiding op het gebied van onderwijs en taal, vindt de partij schokkende uitkomsten van het rapport”.

“De begeleiding van kinderen uit oorlogsgebieden moet goed zijn (...) Zij moeten de aandacht krijgen die nodig is. Wij willen de garantie krijgen van de wethouders dat ze fatsoenlijk worden begeleid en gehuisvest”.

*(de Telegraaf, June 22 2018)*

## 5. Discussion/ conclusion

### 5.1 Key findings

This study investigated to what extent the Dutch left- and right-wing press were divided in their use of migration frames during the time of the European refugee crisis. In regard to the first hypotheses:

*Frames 1 to 5 (intruder frame) are most dominant in the Dutch right-wing press, and frame 7 (victim frame) in the left-wing press.*

It was concluded that on first sight the results seemed to indicate that the hypothesis could be held true, because the intruder frame was found to be most dominant in the Dutch right-wing press. However, when analyzing the results per frame, instead of per bloc (victim vs. intruder) the victim frame could not be deemed as solely dominant in the left-wing press as it was represented as the second highest frame within ‘De Telegraaf’ and therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

The result that the intruder frame was most prevalent in ‘De Telegraaf’ is in line with the the work of Brouwer et al. (2017) that right-wing newspapers, in contrast to left-wing newspapers, are more prone to criminalize immigrants (2017). However, the finding that the

victim frame was found to be the second most frequent frame within ‘De Telegraaf’ is in stark contrast to what was found in prior research. As it was argued that all three studies found that in general sympathetic stories of refugees were most likely to be featured in the left-wing press, regardless of having a broadsheet or tabloid format (Berry et al., 2015; Moore et al., 2018; Joris et al., 2018). Moreover, it was argued that this was due to the fact that stories about refugees their stories and experiences were more to be seen as newsworthy to their target audience (Moore et al. 2018 p 74).

In regard to the second hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 2: When ‘the role of the West’ frame is mentioned in Dutch right-wing press this will be in combination with frame 2 (‘asylum seeker policy is too soft, ‘we take too many’) and when mentioned in the left-wing press this will be in combination with frame 7 (‘presenting problems and suffering of asylum seekers’).* \

The results showed, as expected, that within ‘De Volkskrant’ ‘the role of the West’ was almost exclusively discussed together with frame 7, however on the contrary in ‘De Telegraaf’ the ‘role of the West’ was not predominantly found in combination with frame 2. In this sense, the expected link between ‘the role of the West’ and the ‘we take too many compared to others’ frame was not found to be dominant in ‘De Telegraaf’. More specifically, the results showed that to certain degree ‘De Telegraaf’ used ‘humanitarian frames’ which were expected to be found mainly on the ideological left. However, compared to the first hypothesis this is not in a stark contrast to what prior research has indicated. As other scholars did not exclude the fact that right-wing press occasionally mention the hardships that refugees faced in their home countries. However, they did argue that (e.g.) UK right-wing press were far more likely to merely mention that the refugees were determined to get to the UK because they would be safe” (Berry et al., 2015, pp. 31-33).

It would seem that in the analysis there were found some similarities with what prior research has found. Namely, that the intruder frame was found more frequently in right-wing compared to left-wing press and in the left-wing press the humanitarian frames were dominant overall. In addition, the results of the ‘economic and cultural contribution’ frame were also found to be in line with prior studies. As it turned out to be almost completely absent throughout the sample, with 1 and 4 occurrences in ‘De Telegraaf’ and ‘De

Volkskrant' respectively. However, when present as indicated it was found almost exclusively in 'De Volkskrant'.

On the other hand, the dissimilarities found within this study are more noteworthy. In contrast to what was expected in 'De Telegraaf', as being regarded a right-wing newspaper, a fair amount of frames were found that were originally categorized as falling within the lines of a left-wing newspaper. This fundamentally differs from what other scholars such as Berry et al.(2015), Moore et al. (2018), Joris et al. (2018) and Philo et al. (2013) have found. This deviance in results can potentially be explained by fact that the results found by these scholars are primarily based upon findings within the German and English press and that the former two have a more strict ideological division within their national press and have a 'harder' ideological right-wing press, compared to The Netherlands.

The latter would seem to be true as for the fact that at least at the time in which the sample was taken it can be concluded that 'De Volkskrant' was considerably more dominated by an ideological left position, than 'De Telegraaf' by an ideological right position in their use of migration frames.

Finally, based on these results it does seem credible that a division existed between the two newspapers in their use of migration frames at the time. However, as argued this turned out to be relatively small.

### *5.2 Limitations and suggestions for further research*

On the basis of the results it seemed that there, in fact, did exist a small division between the Dutch left- and right-wing press in their use of frames. However, there are some limitations to this logic.

First of all, there is the possibility that with a bigger sample different result would have been found. It is for this reason also acknowledged that the results found in the research are considered conclusive only for this particular sample and in this sense lack generalizability on its own. Nevertheless, as stated the results that were found are, partially, in alignment with findings of earlier studies and in this sense can be regarded as having some theoretical validity. However, despite the fact that it seemed like there did exist a small division, this was not tested statistically and can thus not be explicitly concluded.

Furthermore, this research aimed to proof to what extent the Dutch press was divided in their use of frames, however only two newspapers were analyzed due to word and overall size limits. Nevertheless, it remains questionable whether a convincing argument can be made about a national press when merely two newspapers were analyzed. On the contrary,

‘De Volkskrant’ and ‘De Telegraaf’ are the two biggest Dutch left- and right-wing newspapers and therefore, were seen as the best candidates to base an analysis on.

Thirdly, despite the fact that random assignment was used to select the articles, selection bias still played a role. As for the fact that in order for an article to be categorized and labeled it had to be read first and such a process is always prone to be influenced by the researchers own frame of mind. Therefore, as subjectivity was minimized it should be acknowledged that it did play a role.

Finally, as both newspapers have a different format, it can be argued that the differences found between the two are not a result of differences in ideology, but rather through a difference in format. However, as this is a possibility it is deemed rather unlikely. This is also indicated by Brouwer et al. (2017) as they stated: “the distinction between tabloid and broadsheet newspapers holds minor relevance in the Netherlands: the ‘popular’ newspapers are generally far less populist and sensationalist than, for example the *Sun* or the *Daily Express* [emphasis as in original]” (p 105).

Taking all this into consideration, a suggestion for further research would be to look at the same subject however beyond the Dutch context. For example, a comparison of The Netherlands with other European countries can be conducted. Moreover, in order to determine whether the results found in this sample are valid, a bigger sample could be taken and the significance of the division could be tested statistically with a chi-square test. Furthermore, the ideological range could be extended through including a more liberal-conservative newspaper like the “NRC Handelsblad” and over a longer period of time. Finally, it might be interesting to conduct a more in-depth analysis on why the ‘economic and cultural contribution’ frames were found to be rather unrepresented, as this appears to be not only the case in The Netherlands, but also in other European countries.

### 5.3 Contributions

This study contributed to the field on two levels. First of all, it lend more empirical support for conclusions found by prior research. As it showed support for the conclusion made by Brouwer et al. (2017) that right-wing papers are in fact more prone to utilize a crime frame. It contributed to the empirical credibility of the notion that left-wing press are dominated with a tendency to promote pro-migration perspectives and this is mainly done through highlighting humanitarian aspects.

Furthermore, it contributed to the theory on media framing as it allowed for a better and more profound understanding of how immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers are framed within the Dutch context.

And, finally the study allowed for a better understanding of the overall landscape in which the Dutch press is found and what type of role ideology plays within this context. As it was shown that 'De Volkskrant' can be regarded as having a more ideological left position on immigration, while 'De Telegraaf' which was expected to have an ideological right perspective on the matter, actually showed alignment, especially in regards to particular areas such as humanitarian aspects with its left-wing counterpart.

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## Appendix A: Tables

### *Frame Categories:*

- (1) representing asylum seekers as illegal immigrants or as economic migrants
- (2) asylum seeker policy is too soft ('we take too many'),
- (3) asylum seekers as a burden on the welfare system and job market,
- (4) asylum seekers increase insecurity as they pose a threat, increase criminality and are possible terrorists,
- (5) advocating stronger controls and deportation of failed refugees,
- (6) the benefits of immigration on economy and culture,
- (7) representing problems and suffering of asylum seekers.
- (8) the role of the West and its responsibilities in the refugee crisis

*Table 1. Telegraaf (total articles is 67)*

<b>Search term</b>	Frame 1	Frame 2	Frame 3	Frame 4	Frame 5	Frame 6	Frame 7	Frame 8	<b>Total</b>
Asielzoekers	7	3	1	15	1	0	5	6	38
Vluchtelingen	4	1	1	8	0	1	9	1	25
Migranten	5	3	3	5	5	0	5	8	34
<b>Total frames</b>	16	7	5	28	6	1	19	15	97
Percentage	16,49%	7,22%	5,15%	28,87%	6,19%	1,03%	19,59%	15,46%	100,00%

*Table 2. Volkskrant (total articles is 54)*

<b>Search term</b>	Frame 1	Frame 2	Frame 3	Frame 4	Frame 5	Frame 6	Frame 7	Frame 8	<b>Total</b>
Asielzoekers	3	0	0	4	0	3	14	4	28
Vluchtelingen	3	1	1	3	2	1	19	6	36
Migranten	1	3	0	0	1	0	2	4	11
<b>Total frames</b>	7	4	1	7	3	4	35	14	75
Percentage	9,33%	5,33%	1,33%	9,33%	4,00%	5,33%	46,67%	18,67%	100,00%

Table 3. Telegraaf total frames found (total is 97)

Frame Category	Percentage of total
Frame 1	16,49%
Frame 2	7,22%
Frame 3	5,15%
Frame 4	28,87%
Frame 5	6,19%
Frame 6	1,03%
Frame 7	19,59%
Frame 8	15,46%

Table 4. Volkskrant total frames found (total is 75)

Frame Category	Percentage of total
Frame 1	9,33%
Frame 2	5,33%
Frame 3	1,33%
Frame 4	9,33%
Frame 5	4,00%
Frame 6	5,33%
Frame 7	46,67%
Frame 8	18,67%

Table.5: Telegraaf frame 8

Search term	Asielzoekers	Vluchtelingen	Migranten	Total
Total frame 8	6	1	8	15
Combination with 2	2	1	3	6
Combination with 7	1	1	2	4

Table. 6: Volkskrant frame 8

Search term	Asielzoekers	Vluchtelingen	Migranten	Total
Total frame 8	4	6	4	14
Combination with 2	0	0	1	1
Combination with 7	3	4	0	7

## Appendix B: Codebook

Random number generator used:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=random+number+generator&oq=random+nu&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j69i59l2j0l5.1834j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

The selection of the articles found in ‘De Telegraaf’ and ‘De Volkskrant’:

NexusUni > ‘Geavanceerd zoeken’ > ‘Geef een zoekterm op’ (‘asielzoekers’, ‘vluchtelingen’ or ‘migranten’) > ‘Datum is van 1 Januari 2018 tot 30 Juni 2018’ > ‘Dutch’ > ‘Bron ’ (‘De Telegraaf’ or ‘De Volkskrant’)

Name of the article: constitutes the name of the article.

Date: the date on which the article was originally published.

FramePresent: Coded as Yes or No.

FrameCategory: Ranging from frame 1 to 8.

FrameEnd: Victim or intruder frame. This was determined on the basis of what frames categories were present in the article.