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State-of-the-art report on public attitudes, political discourses and media coverage on the arrival of refugees

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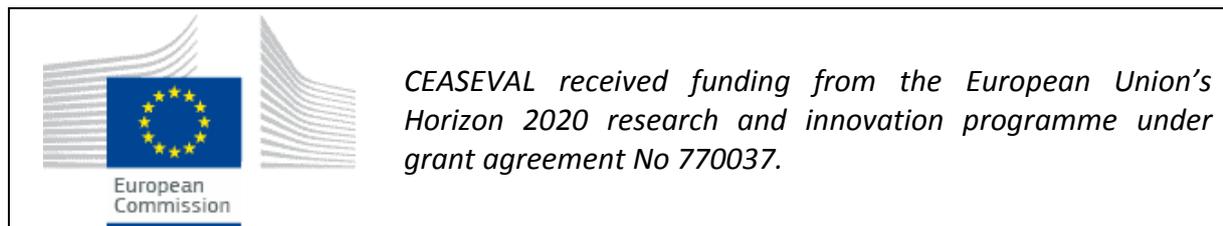
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Abstract

Since 2015, migration towards and within Europe has created a 'stress' in the EU asylum and migration systems, challenging the adequacy of the legal design of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). In particular, the 2015 Refugee Crisis has raised major questions for what fair burden sharing, and harmonization means in practice and whether the current CEAS can cohesively deliver a harmonized asylum system. This report presents results from a systematic literature review on public attitudes, media discourse and political discourse towards asylum seekers and refugees, with a particular focus on discourse around and since the 2015 Refugee Crisis. Our state-of-the-art review finds that public attitudes towards immigration are differentiated by the type of migrant and that publics overestimate the amount of immigration that transpires in their country, leading to more restrictive preferences on immigration policy. A key component in shaping public attitudes to immigration is the mass media. Our review finds that that the dominant media portrayals and framing of immigrants as a security threat and/or a problem. In terms of the Refugee Crisis specifically, the evidence suggests that there has been temporal shifts in the framing of the Crisis as it has evolved, from an initial humanitarian and empathetic framing towards a hostile or suspicious framing. The Crisis unfolded in phases with triggering events across Europe, which are reflected in the media discourse and narrative. The evidence also demonstrates large regional and country variations in media coverage of the Crisis. Political discourse has mirrored media discourse of the Crisis, shifting from a humanitarian/moralistic frame in the early stages whilst gravitating towards a securitization or threat framing as the Crisis unfolded. However, our review found that the Crisis has been crafted according to national, not union, perspectives, and there have been wide cross-country variations as to how political discourse has responded to the crisis, with pre-conceived institutionalized national framings of asylum dominating.

Keywords: Refugee Crisis, media framing, public attitudes, political discourse, asylum policy

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1. Introduction

Since 2015, migration towards and within Europe has created a 'stress' in the EU asylum and migration systems, challenging the adequacy of the legal design of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). In particular, the 2015 Refugee Crisis has raised major questions for what fair burden-sharing, and harmonization means in practice and whether the current CEAS can cohesively deliver a harmonized asylum system. The aim of the CEASEVAL project is to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the CEAS in terms of its framework and practice. A major component of which is analyzing harmonization beyond the formal institutional settings, taking into account the multi-dimensional and complex relations between actors, and the challenges of the CEAS, including the political negotiation between the imperative need to address harmonization in asylum policy whilst at the same time appeasing rising public concerns over humanitarian immigration. In this report, the state of the art on public attitudes, media and political discourses on asylum seekers is presented.

The 2014-2016 Refugee Crisis has generated debate across the EU regarding the CEAS and beyond. The Crisis has unfolded in different ways in different states, with divergent triggering events forming part of the wider narrative. National discourses were internally diversified as different actors from political parties to civil society actors adopted opposing perspectives (Triandafyllidou 2018, p.199). The Crisis has been politicized generating conflict across the political spectrum, and increasing the salience of the issue. Such politicization stems from the way the Crisis has been reported, constructed and reconstructed through media and political discourses, leading to criticism of states for their inaction or unwillingness to adequately respond to the Crisis

A key reason for the unwillingness of EU leaders to take a more decisive and coherent approach to the refugee crisis has been the high levels of public anxiety about immigration and asylum across Europe (UNHCR 2015/Berry et al.). Whilst many European publics have long held restrictive preferences for immigration, the increasing rise in public anxieties fuelled by media and political discourse, has made reacting responsively and coherently to the increasing number of humanitarian migrants problematic. This recent public backlash creates serious challenges for the reform of the CEAS, as in many cases such reforms would result in increasing the number of asylum seekers allocated to most countries. At the same time, the recent crisis has resulted in political conflict and social tensions across Europe, including rising popularity of far right-wing parties, attacks on asylum centres and the partial closing of Schengen borders.

This report presents results from a systematic literature review on public attitudes, media discourse and political discourse towards asylum seekers and refugees, with a particular focus on discourse around and since the 2015 Refugee Crisis. Whilst work package 1 provides themes and concepts for the CEASEVAL project, this report has been prepared with a particular focus on Work Package 5 on patterns of politicisation on refugees. The CESAEVAL team will carry out empirical analysis on the main drivers of differentiated patterns of politicisation. This report aids the identification of key themes relevant for Tasks 5.1-5.3.

In general terms, *politicization* serves as a description of the process of making "all questions political questions, all issues political issues, all values political values and all decisions political decisions" (Hartwell 1979, 7). In this sense, 'politicization denotes the growing power of the state and thereby of the political actors who, in the process of competing for power over the state system, tend to politicize matters and issues that are of public-wide concern' (Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, and Wodak 2018)

The degree of saliency and polarization condition whether an issue is politicized or not. Drawing from van der Brug et al. (2015, p.6) it is the combination of agenda-orientated and conflict-orientated approaches that configure whether an issue is politicized. The agenda-setting literature (Jones and Baumgartner 2004; Kingdon 1995) tells us that it is only when a social topic is defined as a problem that we can really speak of a political issue. Agenda-setting theory focuses on the different thresholds that prevent a topic from becoming a political issue. It serves to reinforce that as long as 'the topic is treated as one that does not require state action, it is not politicized; it is not even a political issue' (van der Brug et al. 2015).

An issue only qualifies as politicized if there is also a high degree of conflict, be this conflict over the policy direction or conflict upon the means, and instruments to resolve the problem (Consterdine 2018). The polarization element of politicization draws from the party politics or electoral competition school of thought (Downs 1957), scholars of which highlight the importance of positional competition and the extent to which different parties have polarizing positions on the issue. When political actors have different positions on an issue they are in conflict, and thus the issue is polarized. Opposing positions may have always existed, but if the issue is not on the political agenda, the conflict is dormant (van der Brug et al. 2015, p. 5).

To operationalize the concept of politicisation for empirical analysis, we need to deconstruct the components of how an issue becomes politicised. Politicisation refers to 1) an increase in salience and 2) diversity of opinions on specific societal topics (in our case, the refugee crisis and, more specifically, who is responsible for). (De Wilde, 2011: 561).

- **Salience:** salience results from societal actors like political parties, interest groups, social movements and mass media paying more attention to a specific issue. The more an issue is discussed, the more politicised it becomes.

- **Diversity of opinions (polarisation):** An issue can only become politicised when there are at least two different opinions on the subject (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, in De Wilde, 2011: 567). Thus the more opinion of involved parties diverges and crystallises into opposing groups, the stronger polarisation of opinion contributes to increasing politicisation.

- **Relation bewteen salience-polarisation:** It would seem logical to expect polarization of opinion and intensified debate to co-occur in reality. However, it is not always the case (e.g. Van der Eijk and Franklin (2004) argued that the issue of European integration was a "sleeping giant", they meant that there was a strong polarisation of opinion but not an intense debate.). We should therefore include polarisation of opinion and intensifying debate as two analytical independent but interrelated components of politicisation in our analytical framework (ibid. 567).

Politicisation can be very **time and space specific**. In other words, contentiousness flares up in intense debates within some Member States, only to die away again. Thus, instances of politicisation take place in specific "**episodes of contention**" (Tilly &Tarrow 2007, in De Wilde, 2011: 563).

2. Methodology: literature search

The collation of academic articles to review for this report were collected through three modes: the annotated bibliography collated by work package one for CEASEVAL, the author's own google scholar and scopus searches for articles specific to politicisation, public attitudes and media discourse, and contributions from work package 5 team.

In order to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing literature our strategy followed the logic and initial steps of a systematic review. First of all, we conducted a systematic search of two major databases for academic literature – *Scopus and Web of Science (Core Collection)* – using various combinations of search terms, which are listed in Table 1, and applying the filter "published since 2000".

Table 1: Search terms

Search terms	No. of hits in Scopus	Aggregate	No. of hits in WoS	Aggr.
"commoneuropeanasylumsystem"	74		56	
eu AND (asylum OR refuge*) W/10 (system OR regime)	130	157	90	115
eu AND (asylum OR refuge*) AND (burden-sharing OR responsibility OR solidarity)	88	218	63	156
eu AND (asylum OR refuge*) AND (policy OR law) AND (evaluation OR fail* OR reform OR change OR convergence)	167	340	115	241
eu AND (asylum OR refuge*) AND (illegal OR irregular OR undocumented OR unlawful) W/5 (immigra* OR migra* OR entry OR crossing)	95	400	65	282
(eu OR europe) AND asylum W/5 (determination OR procedure)	68	449	39	312
(eu OR europe) AND (asylum OR refuge*) AND (reception OR politicization)	116	529	74	362
eu AND (asylum OR refuge*) AND (border* W/5 control)	62	546	45	380
Total aggregate after excluding 261 duplicates	665			

Source: Search terms and hit rates from data sets

Both aggregated lists were exported as BibTex files and subsequently imported into the reference management programme *Mendeley* in order to detect and delete any duplicates. The titles and abstracts of the remaining 665 items were then independently pre-screened by two reviewers who excluded another 182 items given their apparent lack of relevance. This resulted in an alphabetically ordered list of 483 references.

In a second step, and in order to diversify the search results beyond the purely academic, another search was conducted in *Google Scholar* (on 9 Feb. 2018), using a combination of search terms1 and applying the filter "2000-2018". Of the 242,000 hits (sorted by relevance) both reviewers independently screened the first 100, of which (only) 15 had also come up in the previous searches, 62 were deemed irrelevant, and 23 were added to the existing list, thus increasing the overall number to 506 references.

3. Public attitudes to immigration and asylum

Political science literature has shown that in democratic countries, highly salient and high-profile public policies often react markedly to public opinion. Whilst public opinion may not determine policy outcomes, it does set the boundaries for policymakers (Freeman, Hansen & Leal 2013).

The vast literature on public attitudes towards immigration is broadly divided between on the one hand rational/economic explanations or realistic conflict (otherwise known as conflict theory) versus social identity and culture explanations. More broadly this could be conceived as economic versus identity, instrumental versus symbolic, or rationalism versus constructivism. Coenders et al. (2005) place instrumental perspectives in the context of realistic conflict theory. This argues that competition for scarce resources between social groups stimulates hostile inter-group attitudes, with further differentiation between perceived and actual competition. At the core of symbolic interpretations, on the other hand, is the contention that behavior is rooted less in calculations of individual self-interest than in long-standing cognitive predispositions (Freeman and Kessler 2005).

Scholars likewise diverge between those that look at individual level characteristics and those that look at broader contextual factors. Studies have examined variation in attitudes across individuals (McLaren and Johnson 2007), local or regional geographical locations (Markaki and Longhi 2013), nations (Citrin and Sides 2008), and economic contexts (Sniderman 2004). Those that look at economic contextual factors as explanatories to public opinions on immigration further diverge between those who argue that concerns are driven by egocentric rational calculations, and those who argue that socio-tropic economic concerns dominate. A recent state of the art review by Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014, p.225) concluded that 'immigration attitudes show little evidence of being strongly correlated with personal economic circumstances (but) are shaped by socio-tropic concerns about national-level impacts, whether those impacts are cultural or economic'. Whilst others contend that identity and cultural factors play a more dominant role in shaping restrictive public preferences (Sniderman 2004). Nonetheless, results are varied and drivers of public attitudes are contested.

A major limitation of much of the literature which may explain contradictory results is that most public opinion surveys conflate immigrant groups, which runs the 'risk of glossing over variations in the bases of support for specific immigrant communities' (Hellwig and Sinno 2017, p.14). This is especially acute for CEASEVAL, as the majority of academic studies do not disaggregate attitudes between migrants and asylum seekers and refugees. Therefore, whilst we draw on the main studies

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1 The search term used here was: "(eu OR europe) AND (asylum OR refugee) AND (system OR regime OR policy) AND (evaluation OR fail OR reform OR change OR convergence)"

on public attitudes towards immigration, with a few exceptions, the majority of studies do not assess whether attitudes between labor and humanitarian migrants differ.

Whilst public attitudes to immigration are diffused, heterogeneous and can only be explained in a multi-dimensional framework, a number of key themes and consensus can be derived from the literature. Firstly, **perception** of migrants including who counts as a migrant, and **overestimation** of the stocks and flows of immigration determine individual level attitudes towards immigration. On the whole economic and demographic situations seem to matter less in informing opinions on immigration than **social identity and culture** (Ivarsflaten 2005). The amount of immigration in a country or a local context may have some bearing, but equally the speed of ethnic change as a result of immigration rather than stock of immigration itself seems to contribute towards permissiveness of immigration (Kaufman 2016). Secondly, **contact theory or the "halo effect"** seems to hold true – the majority of studies (where they have specifically studied) found that the relationship between immigrant contact and permissiveness towards immigration is positively related. Thirdly, in terms of individual level characteristics, there is overwhelming consensus in the literature that levels of **education** attainment an individual possesses shapes attitudes towards immigration, with those that have higher attainment levels adopting less restrictive attitudes to immigration. Fourthly, the limited evidence that does disaggregate public attitudes by types of immigrants shows conclusively that public attitudes are indeed differentiated depending on the **type of migrant** both in terms of ethnicity and nationality– with public being far more resistant to **Muslim migrants** specifically – but also migration stream with international students for example not necessarily being perceived as immigrants and softer permissiveness towards humanitarian migrants (Blinder 2013).

Scholars diverge as to whether gender and age shape immigration attitudes; findings are mixed but on the whole these characteristics appear to have limited effect on attitudes towards immigration (Markaki and Longhi (2013). However, education has some explanatory power in explaining attitudes. More educated individuals are less likely to express prejudice, negative stereotypes towards minorities and racism, they seem to be more favourable to immigrants 'regardless of their origin or skill level, and less likely to evaluate immigration as having a negative effect on culture, crime or the economy'(Markaki and Longhi 2013, p.2.3; Herreros and Criado 2009). This could stem for two reasons: firstly labour market competition theory predicts that low-skilled migrant workers complement rather than threaten those who are highly skilled. Secondly, education is shown to generate more permissive attitudes.

TÁRKI's (Sik and Szeitl 2016) research based on two waves of representative surveys carried out in October 2015 and January 2016 and recent Eurobarometer survey results supported findings regarding socio-demographic characteristics to an extent. They found that fears regarding immigration can be explained by the same social and demographic variables (level of education, region of residence, age) as those explaining xenophobia; the main difference is in the explanatory power of age and party preference. While gender does not affect whether someone is found to be a xenophobe or a xenophile, in the combined fear index women on average perceive higher levels of fear than men, especially in responding to questions related to anxiety. They found similar relationships as in the cases of xenophobic attitudes, meaning that—out of the examined socio-demographic 'predictors—place of residence (both *type of settlement* as well as *region*), and party preference all play a significant role in welcoming attitudes (level of education had an effect only in the first wave, but neither gender or age had a statistically significant effect at all)' (Sik and Szeitl 2016, p.2). Additionally, Sik and Szeitl (2016) found as far as the public opinion of the EU member

states is most of the EU population (85 per cent) agreed that "additional measures should be taken to fight illegal immigration of people from outside the EU" and three fourth of them would also support "a common European policy on migration". Hungary was one of those countries (next to Denmark and Estonia) where 'a higher proportion of whose population supported additional measures to fight illegal migration than the EU average, and a lower proportion of whose population agreed with the concept of a common migration policy than the EU average' (Sik and Szeitl 2016, p.17).

A consistent finding across the literature on public attitudes towards immigration and migrants generally is that publics have differential preferences towards different types of migration, including specific characteristics of migrants such as race, ethnicity or class (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2010) but also in terms of migration streams. Blinder (2013) in his research on public attitudes towards immigration in Britain found that public perceptions focus on asylum seekers and permanent arrivals, while mostly ignoring international students. Attitudes have also been found to be more positive towards high-skilled immigrants in the US (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010). Similarly in Britain attitudes are more positive toward migrants in particular skilled occupations such as doctors and nurses, or those with the means to support themselves (Crawley, 2005; German Marshall Fund 2011; Blinder 2013). Markaki and Longhi (2013) correspondingly found that anti-migrant attitudes are more pronounced towards non-EU migrants.

Blinder (2013) goes on to argue that public opinion toward immigrants and immigration is directed toward pictures in our heads of immigrants rather than immigration per se, supporting the symbolic interactions over instrumental grievances account. Blinder (2013) agues that the distinction between perceived and actual (or statistical) immigration frequently arises in related research on public misperceptions of the size of immigrant populations (Sides and Citrin, 2007), and that overestimation of immigrant populations may play an important part of public perceptions of immigrants, even if it is more an effect than a cause of attitudes toward immigration. Blinder's (2013, p.95) key finding was that:

> Individual variation in perceptions of immigrants is associated with variation in attitudes toward immigration as a whole. In particular, viewing immigrants as asylum seekers and permanent immigrants – the very categories that appear much more frequently in imagined immigration than in statistical estimates – is associated with support for reducing immigration levels.

This suggests that public attitudes towards immigration overall are strongly predicated on what they imagine the dominant type of migration to their country to be, and whether they deem such migrant stream a burden or an opportunity. As Blinder notes (2013, p.96) 'the findings suggest that public attitudes might be responsive to further information or education about immigration, framed neither as persuasion nor as simple numerical facts, but rather as varied and accurate depictions of what sorts of people actually make up the category 'immigrants''.

Correspondingly to Blinder, Hellwig and Sinno (2017) – deploying an original experimental design embedded in the British Elections Study's June 2011 Continuous Monitoring Survey (CMS) and administered by YouGov– find that that the 'context framing immigration concerns leads publics to associate different types of immigrants with different threats' (Hellwig and Sinno 2017, p. 339). They found that security fears affect attitudes towards Muslim immigrants but economic concerns bear on

views towards Eastern Europeans. While concern about crime adversely affects sentiment for East Europeans but casts Muslims more positively, cultural threats were found to have the opposite effect. Hellwig and Sinno (2017) argue then that the substance of threats, be they real or just perceived, depends on how various minority and immigrant groups activate different types of threat perceptions. Immigrant types are related in the public's mind to economic and labour market considerations, to cultural identity, or to more palpable considerations such as safety and law and order. Therefore, Hellwig and Simno (2017) conclude that perceiving a specific threat leads individuals to react negatively to immigrant groups associated with this specific threat.

In their seminal study Freeman and Kessler (2005) used the Eurobarometer surveys from 1988 to 2000 to explore the impact of symbolic and instrumental variables on European Union opinion on immigration and asylum. They found best predictors of immigration positions are attitudinal variables including political ideology, prejudice and evaluations of the EU. While a majority of respondents held restrictive attitudes towards immigration in the late 1980s and mid-1990s, Freeman and Kessler (2005) found that by the end of the decade only political conservatives, individuals highly prejudiced towards persons of different nationalities, races, or religions, and those who believe their country has not benefited from membership of the European Union, contended that there were too many foreigners in their countries. They also found a clear majority in the EU rejects the restriction of labour migration throughout the period, supporting Blinder's (2013) findings that publics have differential preferences to different types of migrants. Supporting Freeman's "good times, bad times" hypothesis, Kessler and Freeman (2005) found that economic as conditions worsened, opinions takes a turn towards restrictiveness; as they improve, opinion becomes more permissive. These results support instrumental accounts of attitudes towards immigration that derive from theoretical propositions about the interplay between individual calculations of personal utility and broader economic (especially labour market) conditions and migration flows. However, when focusing in individual level predictors Kesller and Freeman (2005) found that the independent variables most strongly associated with immigration opinions are prejudice, ideology and attitudes towards Europe. Their findings support symbolic factors as explanatories for attitudes towards immigration. Finally, Kessler and Freeman (2005) found that there was a sizeable minority in Europe composed of persons who are highly prejudiced, politically conservative and anti-Europe. These individuals tend to hold restrictive views on immigration, especially migration from south of the Mediterranean.

Sides and Citrin (2007) based on the European Social Survey (2002-03) similarly found that publics overestimate the number of immigrants living in each country. They found that at the individual level, cultural and national identity, economic interests and the level of information about immigration are all important predictors of attitudes. However, Sides and Citron (2007, p.477) concluded that:

> Symbolic' predispositions, such as preferences for cultural unity, have a stronger statistical effect than economic dissatisfaction. Variation across countries in both the level and the predictors of opposition to immigration are mostly unrelated to contextual factors cited in previous research, notably the amount of immigration into a country and the overall state of its economy.

In short, Sides and Citrin (2007) found limited evidence of contextual or economic determinants but that culture and identity play a decisive role in forming attitudes.

One strand of the literature on public attitudes towards immigration derives from contact theory –the impact of intergroup contact on immigrant derogation. Drawing on contact theory, Markaki and Longhi (2013) focus on the impact of regional characteristics (local context). They used the European Social Survey (ESS) and the European Labour Force Survey (EU LFS) to analyze what factors contribute to regional differences in attitudes to immigration. By using individual-level data from the EU LFS they were 'able to compute the size of the immigrant population in the region, the proportion of immigrants by education level, and the proportion who are unemployed, which [they] compare with the proportion of natives in the region who have the same qualification or who are unemployed' (Markaki and Longhi 2013, p. 313). They measured anti-immigration attitudes by using three measures that ask respondents to evaluate the impact of immigration on the country's economy, culture, and on the quality of life overall. Markaki and Longhi (2013) found that regions with a 'higher percentage of immigrants born outside of the EU, and a higher unemployment rate among the immigrant population show a higher probability that natives express negative attitudes to immigration' (p. 313). In contrast, they found that regions with a higher unemployment rate among natives showed less pronounced anti-immigrant sentiment. Markaki and Longhi (2013, p.323) also found that older people, those who are retired, those with less than 'lower secondary education, those working in elementary occupations and those who are dissatisfied with the current state of the economy or have difficulties coping on their current income are more likely to have negative views about immigration'. Markaki and Longhi (2013, p.332) results revealed that higher proportions of both natives and immigrants with 'low-level qualifications are associated with lower feelings of economic threat from immigration, while anti-immigration attitudes are significantly higher in regions where natives on average overestimate the level of immigration', supporting Blinder's (2015) contention that overestimations of immigration flows and stocks contribute to anti-migrant sentiment. Their findings did not fully support hypotheses based on intergroup conflict theory, which would suggest that employment competition within the low-skilled manual workforce increases feelings of threat from immigration, nor do their results support contact theory since they do not find that a larger relative proportion of immigrants over the population is associated with lower feelings of threat (Markaki and Longhi 2013, p.332).

Coenders, Lubbers, and Scheepers (2013) studied attitudes toward immigrants and asylum seekers across European Union nations also based on the European Social Survey 2002/2003. They found that the public is more resistant to immigrants, than to asylum seekers. This being said, they found wide attitudinal differences between nations, even after taking into account economic and demographic factors. A surprising finding from their analysis was that retirees were more resistant to both immigrants and asylum seekers and self-employed individuals were more hostile to immigrants than other workers. Consistent with contact theory, the authors also found that resistance to immigrants and asylum seekers was weaker in bigger cities. Overall, Coenders, Lubbers, and Scheepers (2013) find that anti-immigrant attitudes are most prevalent among the underprivileged — those with lower incomes, less education, and manual labor occupations. Like Blinder (2013) and others, Coenders, Lubbers and Scheepers (2013) stress the importance of perceptions. While 'economic conditions and net migration were not significant variables, resistance to immigrants was associated with perceptions of migration numbers, feelings of insecurity, perception of threats from migrants, and feelings of general social distrust' (Freeman, Hansen and Leal 2013, p.6).

Although research is in its infancy, social media may also play a determining role in shaping public attitudes to immigration. For example, Wolling and Arlt (2016) found that while indirect effects of

social media on hostile media perceptions is small the frequent users of social media have more negative attitudes towards refugees. At the same time, frequent users of social media are also more aware of the amount of coverage on the topic. This in turn reduces the perceived positive bias.

Focusing on asylum and refugees specifically, Bansak et al (2017) conducted a survey asking 18,000 citizens from 15 European countries – signatories to CEAS – about their preferences regarding different mechanisms for allocating asylum seekers across countries. In one survey Bansak et al. (2017) asked respondents to choose between three allocation rules: Dublin Regulation (status quo), proportional allocation that distributes asylum seekers in proportion to each country's capacity (defined by population size, GDP and other factors), and an equal allocation rule in which each country receives an equal number of asylum seekers. They found that a large majority of respondents supported an allocation that is proportional to each country's capacity over the status quo policy of allocation based on the country of first entry (Bansak et al. 2017 p.13). In contrast, only 18 per cent of voters preferred the country of first entry (Poland, UK, Czech Republic) despite this being the status quo since the inception of Dublin in the 1990s. This majority support was weakened but persisted even among a randomly assigned subset of respondents who were made aware that moving to proportional allocation would increase the number of asylum seekers allocated to their own country (Bansak et al. 2017, p.1). The strong public support for proportional allocation is surprising given that most countries would receive a higher number of asylum seekers under this system. Under the baseline condition, they found 'no systematic relationship between the changes in the number of asylum seekers a country would experience and the support for proportional allocation compared with country of first entry' (Bansak et al. 2017, p. 6). Overall Bansak et al. (2017) found that considerations of both consequences and fairness shape voters' preferences over asylum allocation policy. Yet 'when the two collide, the norm of proportional equality overrides consequentialist preferences for most voters' (ibid., p.5). This suggests that voters would tolerate an increase in the number of asylum seekers allocated to their own country as long as responsibilities are fairly shared across Europe (ibid.). Bansak et al conclude that their results suggest that citizens 'caredeeply about the fairness of the responsibility-sharing mechanism, rather than only the consequences of the asylum policy' (ibid., p. 1). They suggest their findings highlight a potential pathway towards reform of the Common European Asylum System.

Further public opinion (online) survey research conducted by Bansak et al (2016) with public voters in 15 European states revealed that publics have preferences for asylum seekers who have higher employability, more consistent asylum testimonies and severe vulnerabilities and are Christian, over Muslim asylum seekers. This supports Burns and Gimpell's (2000) finding that attitudes on immigration policy are highly contingent upon stereotypical beliefs about the work ethic and intelligence of other groups, especially among white publics. Bansak et al (2016) results demonstrate that European voters do not treat all asylum- seekers equally. Instead, the 'willingness to accept asylum-seekers varies strongly with the specific characteristics of the claimant' (Bansak et al. 2016 p.4). Preferences over asylum-seekers appear to be structured by three main factors: economic concerns, humanitarian concerns, and anti-Muslim sentiment. Publics had stronger preference for accepting asylum seekers who had worked in high skilled occupations, and spoke the host language proficiently, suggesting that economic contribution or economic burden play a significant role in public preferences. Asylum seekers who have faced torture and/or persecution fare better with publics over those with inconsistent asylum testimonies, suggesting that public preferences are also highly sensitive to 'humanitarian concerns about the deservingness and legitimacy of the asylum

request, as well as the severity of the claimants' vulnerabilities' (Bansak et al 2016, p.5). The fifteen surveyed countries exhibit major differences with regard to several potentially relevant factors for shaping domestic asylum preferences. These included 'the previous influx of immigrants, the number of asylum applications per capita, the existence of an EU external border, the generosity of their welfare states, their economic strength and levels of unemployment, and other general political and economic characteristics that impact the number of asylum-seekers they can integrate' (Bansak et al 2016, p. 7). Despite these differences, the asylum preferences follow a similar pattern across the fifteen surveyed countries (Bansak et al. 2016).

Bansak et al (2016) also found that religion is a significant factor driving public preferences: Muslim asylum-seekers were about '11 percentage points less likely to be accepted compared to otherwise similar Christian asylum-seekersThis penalty is sizable and larger than the penalty applied to unemployed asylum-seekers versus teachers' (Bansak et al 2016, p.5). These results suggest that anti-Muslim sentiment is a third important factor that structures asylum preferences. Bansak et al (2016) also found that country of origin of an asylum seeker plays a minor role in generating support. They found that the effects of the attributes are 'broadly similar across the different subgroups, suggesting that there is a general consensus—among left- and right-wing, young and old, less and more highly educated, and richer and poorer voters—on which asylum-seekers are preferred' (ibid., p.6). Supporting previous established research on public attitudes towards immigration (Ivarsflaten 2005), Bansak et al (2016) findings confirm that public preferences over asylum-seekers are shaped by socio-tropic evaluations of their potential economic contributions (economic impact on host country as a whole) over egocentric economic concerns alongside humanitarian concerns about the deservingness of their claims, and anti-Muslim bias.

4. Media discourse on immigration and asylum

Wright (2002, p.1) argues that three factors drive the Western press to cover refugee crises:

Firstly, in order to attract Western press coverage, it is necessary for the [refugee] crisis to be of such a magnitude that it cannot be ignored; or else it is necessary for it to be perceived as having some obvious connection with Western concerns. Secondly, the story will gain airtime if the nature of the crisis is such that it produces dramatic imagery-pictures with impact. Finally, if the style of the media coverage is sufficiently innovative it will stimulate interest in the viewers.

According to Baker and McEnery (2005), asylum news usually refers to refugees in terms of their numbers; locations (where they are from, where they are now, and where they are going); circumstances (political, economic, war); movements (collective group, and flow of water); tragic plight; official attempts to help; and, less commonly, in terms of crime and nuisance (Nickels 2007, p.43). This means that 'the movement of refugees is constructed as an elemental force which is difficult to predict and has no sense of control' (Baker and McEnery 2005, p.10).

Whilst the established literature on public attitudes towards immigration is contested, in contrast established literature on media coverage of immigration is consistent with most studies adopting a triangulation approach in methodology combining content analysis and critical discourse analysis. Firstly, the established literature finds that the media's framing of immigration – often through securitisation or threat frames – is highly significant in forming public attitudes including inducing a

sense of panic (UNHCR 2015) and **causing public anxieties** which in turn political elites respond to, resulting in high politicization. Media does not operate in isolation to the wider politics of the issue, and the majority of research has found that political discourse and media discourse are highly interlinked and presenting a "causality dilemma" between the two spheres. Secondly, a large body of literature has analyzed media framings of immigration, where the research overwhelmingly finds that migrants are presented and referred to in a **negative manner and as a problem** (Berry et al. 2016; Nickels 2017; Esses et al. 2013). Thirdly, whilst media reporting tends to conflate all types of migrants and political actors make implicit distinctions between **genuine political asylum seekers and so-called bogus economic refugees**, a pattern which has persisted since the 1990s (Kaye 2001; Nickels 2007; Crawley 2005). In terms of the Refugee Crisis specifically, the evidence suggests that there has been **temporal shifts in the framing** of the Crisis as it has evolved, from an initial humanitarian and empathetic framing towards a hostile or suspicious framing. The Crisis unfolded in phases with triggering events across Europe, which are reflected in the media discourse and narrative. The evidence also demonstrates **large regional and country variations** in media coverage of the Crisis with divergent framings between the East and West, although the UK is found to be especially hostile. Finally, there is an **absence of migrants voice** in the press, and **political elites dominate** in the press coverage with the press mirroring the language of such elites.

Examining the interlinking between media framing and public perceptions through an online quantitative survey with the public, Jens and Wolling (2016) explored the effect of positive and negative attitudes towards refugees as well as of mainstream media, social media and interpersonal communication on hostile media perceptions in Germany. They found that perceptions of media bias were strongly influenced by people's negative and positive attitudes towards refugees, in turn confirming their basic hostile media hypothesis. Additionally, Jens and Wolling (2016) found that the perceived intensity of media coverage on contested aspects of the refugee issue also has an effect on perceptions of hostility. Yet, the 'various communication variables did not prove to have direct effects, whereas mainstream media use, social media use, and interpersonal communication with refugees had indirect effects on the hostile media perception' (ibid., p.1).

Müller (2018) in his study of Muslim depictions in the German and British press, found that, much like research on public attitudes revealed (Bansak et al. 2016), that the press construct Muslim refugees as the culturally inferior "other" to an exclusive "European Christian Culture". Müller (2018) conducted analysis on all newspaper articles in two one-week periods (31st of August to 6th September in 2015 and 2016 respectively) that contain keywords relating "refugees" and "Islam" on four newspapers (two in each country). Müller (2018) found three major discursive strands across both countries: the construction of a "Christian European Culture"; the construction of cultural difference, self-responsible victims and a security threat; and attributions of responsibility linking chancellor Merkel, Muslim refugees and the rise of the far-right. In terms of comparative differences in media discourses between Germany and the UK, Müller (2018) found that firstly 'refugees and Islam are much more often discursively linked in German media' (ibid., p.273). Secondly, 'the cultural and religious composition of the receiving society is only directly problematized in German media' (ibid., p.274). Thirdly, 'the reference to a (Judeo-) Christian heritage is only used in Germany to mark the difference between Muslim refugees and the host society. It seems that the construction of the "other" in Germany is much more focused on Muslim refugees as non-Christians' (ibid., p.274). Also, only in German media the "cultural compatibility" of Muslim refugees was questioned' (ibid.). However, Müller (2018) found that in both the British and German media Muslim refugees are linked

to terrorism on a cognitive and an affective level. Finally Müller (2018) found that in both countries, the association of the 'territoriality of a European, British or German "homeland" with certain cultural and political elements such as liberal democracy and rule of law constructs a socio-cultural border' (ibid., p.275).

Turning to methodology, Baker et al (2008) employed a novel approach in their study on *Discourses of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the UK Press 1996–2006*, by combining corpus linguistics with critical discourse analysis (CDA). Both the corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis strands used data from a corpus of 140 million words, compiled specifically for the project, which comprised articles related to RASIM and issues of asylum taken from twelve national and three regional newspapers, as well as their Sunday editions, between 1996 and 2005. The CDA analysis was carried out on a sample of texts from the corpus, chosen in order to facilitate comparability of the results of the two strands. Two theoretical notions, and analytical tools were central in their analysis: keyness – statistically significant higher frequency of particular words or clusters- and collocation - the above-chance frequent co-occurrence of two words within a pre-determined span (the node). The statistical calculation of collocation is based on three measures: the frequency of the node, the frequency of the collocates, and the frequency of the collocation (*see Baker et al 2008 for full methodology*).

A dominant pattern in the empirical studies of media and migration is that the media continuously conflate the terms economic migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers without making attempt to separate. Gabrielatos and Baker's quantitative based content analysis on the UK press's representation of *RASIM* (refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants) based on the Baker et al. 2008 project concluded:

> The continued use of conflated and confused meanings of *RASIM* words, along with the deployment of nonsensical terms and collocates indexing negative topoi or embodying negative metaphors suggests that the conservative and tabloid press are responsible for creating and maintaining a moral panic around *RASIM*, which has increasingly become the dominant discourse in the UK press (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008, p. 33).

Similarly, Kaye found from his research on press representation of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK in the 1990s, that the terms 'phoney' and 'bogus' asylum seekers and refugees were markedly high in comparison to other expressions. Kaye suggests that this is potentially very damaging for the public's perception of refugees and asylum seekers (Kaye, 2001, p. 59). Additionally, Kaye suggests that the term asylum seeker itself has become demonised by the British press (Kaye, 2001, p. 68). However, Kaye does contend that in the case of media representation of refugees and asylum seekers:

> ...there is insufficient evidence to show that the media significantly sets the agenda. On the contrary it is suggested that, on the evidence presented, public concerns are more likely to be shaped by political elites, with the media playing a largely intermediary role (Kaye, 1998, p. 178).

Research by Esses et al. (2013) also found that media coverage on immigration dehumanizes immigrants, including portrayals depicting that immigrants spread infectious diseases, that refugee claimants are often bogus, and that terrorists may gain entry to western nations disguised as refugees.

A further common theme in the literature on media discourse on asylum seekers is the way in which the political sphere and the media issue agenda interact, influence and shape each other, ultimately underpinned by the question of who controls the agenda? Roggeband and Vligenthart (2007) for example found in their study of the public debate on migration and integration in the Dutch parliament and the media between 1995-2004, that the framing differences between the political realm and the media realm were vast:

> We found that (a) there is relatively little correlation between both spheres, (b) we see divergent shifts in framing in both realms during different periods in time (following important events in society) and (c) there are differences in frame variation between the two arenas (Roggeband & Vligenthart, 2007, p. 24).

Their research suggests that in the case of the Netherlands at least, restrictive policies were pursued before the negative framing the media placed on immigrants. Therefore, this suggests a top down approach in relation to political discourse and media discourse.

In contrast, Bauder (2008) found in his content analysis of immigrants and immigration law in Germany between 2001-2005, that:

> ...media attention to the topic of immigration and the law was influenced by on-going political discussions as well as external events [...] They also reveal that the media used different models of argumentation in different phases of the debate (Bauder, 2008, p. 96).

This implies that in Germany at least there is no one dominant discourse on migration, but a few distinct modes of argumentation which are utilized at different moments.

Similarly, using frame analysis – deploying problem definition, problem diagnosis, moral evaluation, treatment recommendation with equivalent for media – in examining media and political asylum discourses in Luxembourg between 1993 and 2000, Nickels (2007) found that media and political actors used four frames to refer to the refugee and asylum question: administrative, genuineness, human dignity and return home. In terms of data, Nickels (2007) used 1,301 news articles explicitly mentioning refugees, asylum seekers or asylum in their headlines between 1993 and 2000. Covering two national newspapers with the highest circulation. The political data set comprised 31 policy documents contained in the two parliamentary projects concerned with asylum legislation.

For the media headline analysis, Nickels (2007) found that issues relating to the return home of refugees and asylum seekers dominated, followed by humanitarian aspects and issues related to legal aspects. International actors were the most prominent actors featured, followed by national governmental actors, and finally local actors. Twenty-five types of refugees appeared in their sample, the majority of which stemmed from specific ethnic groups. Nickels (2007) found that the analysis between political and media discourse had a high degree of within-and between-group agreement in terms of how actors framed asylum discourse. He found that 'the main difference between media and politicalframes is that the press focuses more on humanitarian aspects of asylum, while political actors focus more on legal aspects of asylum' (ibid. p.53). Furthermore, the genuineness and human dignity frames were 'strongly shaped by international discourses relating to the end of the Cold War, European harmonization, and Human Rights' (ibid., p.54), and that 'the overall framing of asylum discourse in Luxembourg was strongly shaped by supranational concerns with the drive towards

harmonization of asylum and immigration policies on the European level 'paying a central role in the process' (ibid., p.57).

4.1 Media coverage and framing of the 2015 Refugee Crisis

Examining the framing of online media of the refugee crisis in Romania, Corbu et al. (2017) used agenda-setting and framing theory, analyzing 1493 online news article published between April 2015 and February 2016 with 21 keywords. To assess the extent to which a frame appeared in a news story Corbu et al. (2017) adapted a scale from Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), leading to five generic frames, using 18 questions to which the coder had to answer with "yes" (1) or "no" (0). The answers were then grouped into scales for the five generic frames typically used in news analysis: responsibility, conflict, morality, economic consequences, human interest2. The key findings from Corbu et al (2017) show that online media outlets mainly refer to the refugee crisis in terms of firstly responsibility and secondly conflict: 'Journalists were deeply concerned with identifying the actors responsible for the refugee crisis, and also with casting blame, identifying solutions, and emphasizing conflict' (Corbu et al. 2017, p. 15). The refugee crisis was covered from a responsibility point of view – that is the 'subjects covered were discussed in terms of who is (or should be) accountable for solving the crisis, finding solutions or focusing on finding solutions' (ibid., p. 10). The second most visible frame was conflict which denoted emphasizing difference of opinion in multilevel governance or country level disagreements:

> The fact that the most visible topic were the decisions taken in the member states illustrates the urgency of the refugee crisis, which prompted member states to take action, instead of gradually building consensus towards shared solutions (Corbu et al, 2017,p.14)

Human interest ranked as the third dominant framing, especially due to the "episodic" framing of moments of the crisis (ibid., p.11). The economic consequence frame was not prominent. However, they also found that online media portals prefer using a reasonably balanced viewpoint when portraying the refugees, and a slightly negative one in terms of attitudes towards the European Union.

Similarly, Greussing and Boomgaarden (2017) sought to identify the dominant frames of 2015 refugee crisis in the media. Using computer assisted content analysis Greussing and Boomgaarden (2017) analyzed frames in six Austrian newspapers (N = 10,606), particularly focusing on potential differences between quality and tabloid media, and on frame variations over time. Drawing on existing literature, Greussing and Boomgaarden (2017) found that the framing of refugee and asylum issues in mass media coverage can be grouped into three common types: firstly, refugees and asylum seekers are represented as passive victims, secondly as threat to the culture, security and welfare of the host country, or thirdly as a dehumanized, anonymous (out-)group. Their principal component analysis revealed seven factors based on 89 terms, explaining 16% of the total variance. The seven factors were interpreted as eight distinct frames: Settlement, Reception/Distribution, Securitisation,

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2Corbu et al. (2017) then computed composite variables for each scale, by averaging the unweight scores for all items of each scale. Therefore the maximum value for a frame (1) would mean that the specific frame is present in the news story in all its aspects, while the minimum (0), the frame is totally absent from the news story. The tone of voice of the news stories was measured on an ordinal scale of -1 to 1 (negative, neutral, positive), assessing both the tone of voice regarding the refugees and the European Union in this context.

Criminality, Economisation, Humanitarianism, Background/Victimisation, and Labour Market Integration.

Greussing and Boomgaarden (2017) found that apart from administrative aspects of coping with the arrivals, established narratives of security threat and economisation were most prominent frames. In contrast, humanitarianism frames and background information on the refugees' situation were minimal. Significantly, during the most intense phases of the crisis, Greussing and Boomgaarden (2017) found that the framing patterns of tabloid and quality media become highly similar - the rank order of the frames under study was identical for both media types. However, as the issue salience sharply increased, 'media coverage broadened to multiple prominent frames, and then 'crystallised' into a more narrow set' (ibid., p.1759). Overall, the authors found that their results confirmed to a 'predominance of stereotyped interpretations of refugee and asylum issues' (ibid., p. 1749). The authors conclude then:

> In the aftermath of the crisis climax, audiences thus were provided with a more limited set of interpretations of a still complex and multifaceted issue. Whether such focus may have contributed to a turning point in public and political perspective subsequently warrants further analysis' (Greussing and Boomgaarden 2017, p. 1763).

Also adopting a national country case study but through the medium of TV news during the 2015 stage of the crisis, Vezovnik (2018) explored the process of securitization of immigration in Slovenia. His analysis illustrated 'how the rhetorics of exceptionality, criminalization, security, and militarization all eventually became constituents for the wider securitization of discourse' (Verzovik 2018, p. 9).

In contrast to national case studies, Georgiou and Zaborowski, R. (2017) conducted a cross-national report for the Council of Europe on the media representation of the refugee crisis. The report primarily drew from the analysis of European influential press in eight Member States of the Council of Europe (CoE), and also from two major Arabic-language newspapers. There were a number of key findings. Firstly, the European press played a 'central role in framing refugee arrivals in 2015 as a crisis for Europe – new arrivals were see as outsiders and different from Europeans' (Georgiou and Zaborowski 2017, p.3). Secondly, the authors found significant differences across regions – there was a 'stark contract between media coverage on the West and the East and especially between media in receiving and non-receiving countries' (ibid.). Thirdly, like Greussing and Boomgaarden (2017) Georgiou and Zaborowski, R. (2017) found significant temporal trends, with sympathetic and empathetic frames in the early stages of the crisis 'gradually being replaced with suspicion and in some cases hostility towards refugees' (ibid.). Georgiou and Zaborowski, R. (2017) identified three key periods of the crisis where framings changed: period 1 (July 2015) – careful tolerance, period 2 (September) – ecstatic humanitarianism, period 3 (November) – fear and securitisation. Fourthly, the authors found systematic and persistent hate speech and hostility towards refugees, especially in Eastern Europe (and Hungary specifically). Fifthly, refugees and migrants had limited agency and no voice in the press, and in particular female refugee and migrant voices were hardly heard. Sixthly, the media played little attention to the context of the refugee plight – there were limited connections between stories on new arrivals and war reporting for example.

A further cross-national comparison was commissioned by UNHCR (Berry et al. 2015) to explore the factors driving media coverage in five different European countries: Spain, Italy, Germany, the UK

and Sweden. Researchers sifted through thousands of articles written between 2014 and 2015. The report found major differences,

> In terms of the sources journalists used (domestic politicians, foreign politicians, citizens, or NGOs), the language they employed, the reasons they gave for the rise in refugee flows, and the solutions they suggested. Germany and Sweden, for example, overwhelmingly used the terms 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker', while Italy and the UK press preferred the word 'migrant'. In Spain, the dominant term was 'immigrant' (Berry et al 2015, p.1).

These terms had an important impact on the tenor of each country's debate' (UNHCR 2015). The most homogenous press systems were those of Spain, Italy and Sweden

Berry et al. (2015) also found wide differences between the framing and themes. For example, humanitarian themes were more common in Italian coverage than in British, German or Spanish press. Threat themes (such as to the welfare system, or cultural threats) were the most prevalent in Italy, Spain and Britain. Berry et al. (2015) found that the Swedish press was the most positive towards refugees and migrants in contrast to the UK, which was the most negative and polarised. Indeed, 'amongst those countries surveyed, Britain's right-wing media was uniquely aggressively in its campaigns against refugees and migrants' (ibid., p.1).

In terms of actors and representation in the media, Berry et al found that patterns of political 'sourcing indicated that governing parties or coalitions tended to dominate political sourcing, with in most cases the key challenger or challengers coming from the anti-immigration right' (ibid., p.7). Furthermore, 'explanations for migration flows appeared at the highest level in the UK press (featured in 57.5% articles) and at the lowest level in the German (39.0%) and Italian press (32.9%)' (Berry et al. 2015, p.8). Supporting Georgiou and Zaborowski, R. (2017) findings, Berry et al. (2015, p.9) found that 'very little attention was paid to the push factors that were driving population flows'. Significantly for CEASEVAL, 'the European Union's response to the crisis was widely seen as inadequate, yet it was still defined as the key institution responsible for solving the crisis' (Berry et al. 2015, p.10).

Much of the emerging literature on media discourse on the 2015 Refugee Crisis has been inspired by established literature on triggering events and moral panics, especially as the refugee crisis evolved through specific events (see Triandafyllidou 2018). Taking one such triggering event – the New Years Eve 2015 Cologne event –Braun-Klöpper (2016) analysed press coverage in Germany. She found that the sexual assaults that transpired Cologne and other cities triggered changes in the refugee discourse. However, she argues that the event did not lead to more negative press coverage of refuges. Rather:

> The consequence was rather triggered by the initial concealment of the nationalities of the perpetrators, as well as the belated reporting of the facts of the crimes. The uproar provoked by this, lead to a higher coverage of crimes committed by immigrants, paired with an increasing rebuttal of rumours and the concrete addressing of false assumptions (Braun-Klöpper 2016, p.55).

This implies wider lessons for media advocacy in terms of addressing public concerns before they escalate to racism or xenophobia.

Also addressing the media coverage through triggering events, Gábor and Messing (2016) examined 2015 press coverage of the Refugee Crisis in Austria and Hungary. Media discourses on three 'symbolic events' were examined: 'the death van', the 'refugee march' and the 'closure of the Serbia-Hungarian border and the clash at Rozke'. Gábor and Messing (2016) found five dominant frames within the media reporting on these events: the humanitarian crisis frame, the security threat frame, criticism of EU and other countries refugee policies frame, framing events in terms of the consequence of war, and the integration challenge frame. Whilst in Austrian the humanitarian frame was consistent, in Hungary the securitisation frame dominated. Gábor and Messing (2016) found significant differences in media reporting of these events between the two countries. In contrast to the Austrian news media, 'the Hungarian media displayed a strong emphasis on the governmental and political agenda' (ibid., p.58). The authors also found significant differences between presses within countries. A substantial difference between the two countries' media coverage was the weight given to various actors especially in cases of conflicts. Firstly, whilst volunteers received media coverage in both countries, Austrian news reports tended to represent volunteers more emphatically. Secondly, in the Austrian media there was a strong emphasis on the responsibility of the government (and state) for the situation, whilst in Hungary whilst media were critical of the government's policy, they did not emphasis responsibility. A final major difference was that the Hungarian media coverage 'was marked by a near- complete absence of discourse about the social inclusion of refugees, whereas Austrian media frequently talked about Willkommenskultur and framed the refugee crisis also as an issue of social inclusion and integration, especially during the first two key events' (ibid.).

Perhaps the most comprehensive research to date on the media coverage of the 2015 Refugee Crisis comes from the Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) supported by the Commission, EuroMed Migration and ICMPD (EU 2017). This comparative report, conducted by journalists, sought to understand the dominant media narratives on migration across different national contexts, including how the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on migration. The following countries in Europe formed the case studies: Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Spain and Sweden. The following countries formed case studies for the Middle East and North Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. Whilst the report found resourceful good practice examples across the Mediterranean, at the same time there were many instances of media stereotyping and social exclusion. The authors attribute this to journalists under pressure – where many journalists are under resourced, ill experienced with the complexity of migration, and 'of newsrooms vulnerable to pressure and manipulation by voices of hate, whether from political elites or social networks' (ibid., p.1). The report summarises that:

> The migration story is told in two voices. The emotional coverage of human loss through iconic images of human suffering and the hard realities of massive movements of population that have the potential to disrupt the living conditions, security and welfare of host communities (EU 2017, p.2).

Significantly the report found that 'while Islamophobia and anti-Arab rhetoric was present in some media coverage in parts of Europe, this was mirrored by similar racist narratives directed notably at sub-Saharan migrants in some countries of North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean' (EU 2017, p1). Supporting Greussing and Boomgaarden (2017) and Georgiou and Zaborowski, R. (2017) findings', the report found that the tone across countries shifted over time from empathetic solidarity frame towards negative stereotyping and a focus on crime, threats of terrorism and anti-

social behaviour. Much like the established literature, the report found that journalists tended to use hate speech and loose language of "waves" and "tides" typical of migration reporting. They also found that some journalists were concerned that to negate using racist language would be to deny the reporting of publics' legitimate fears. The report also found that media is dominated by national narratives rather than the wider context of the crisis, and that the media struggled to achieve balanced reporting when political elites respond with panic or prejudice. Like Georgiou and Zaborowski, R. (2017), the report found limited scope for migrant voices being represented. The report poignantly comments that: 'the issue of terminology – and migration as a whole being predominantly reported as, and thus becoming, almost a synonym for irregular (im)migration – might be the biggest challenge when it comes towards more balanced reporting on migration' (EU 2017, p.1).

5. Political discourse on asylum

The political discourse around asylum (and the CEAS specifically) has long been a contentious and contradictory one, symptomatic of broader underlying discourses over the EU, convergence and harmonization. Both welfare-based and nationalist or racist views 'have pervaded discourse and influenced policy on refugees since the problem first emerged in its modern form in the 1880s' (Boswell 2000, p. 539). Essentially, a 'realist frame of internal security' competes with a 'liberal frame of humanitarianism' in the realm of refugee and asylum at the European level (Lavenex 2001b). The realist frame derives from member states' desire to prevent illegal immigrants and so-called bogus asylum seekers from seeking refuge in the EU, as this would prevent abuses of Europe's asylum system. The liberal frame denotes the member states' commitment to preserve freedom of movement within the EU and 'their desire to fulfil moral and legal obligations they have towards people in need of protection from persecution' (Nickels 2007, p. 43). Since the 1999 Tampere summit, when EU leaders declared the development of a comprehensive immigration and asylum policy as a top priority, narratives and framings of asylum at the EU level have been consistently mediated and re-negotiated:

> Before 1992, the predominant discourse within the 'Schengen laboratory' and the 'ad hoc immigration group' was that free movement within the EC required compensatory measures at the external borders lest Europe become a 'sieve'. This political version of the 'spillover' theory of integration was largely replaced in the 1990s by a more securitarian perspective, as the number of asylum-seekers and persons displaced by war rose. 'Asylum shopping' and 'immigration risks' were now common 'problems' that could best be dealt with through co-ordination. The view here resembles liberal intergovernmentalism, which poses that major member states cooperate to upgrade common interests and reduce transaction costs (Guiraudon 2003, p. 264).

Recent debates on the integration of immigrants have raised questions about the ability of liberal democratic states 'to provide adequate scope for cultural diversity or to recognize problems of socio-economic inequalities between different ethnic groups' (Boswell 2000, p. 537), critiques which practically challenge whether supposed neutrality and universality of the liberal model can define asylum policy (ibid., p.537). Since 9/11 – perhaps predating – political discourse on asylum has been arguably securitized as the EU has sought to strengthen convergence and cooperation within the bloc whilst externalizing migration regulation to build so-called "fortress Europe". European external

migration regulation' has been the outcome of national officials responding to the convergence of internal and external pressures for change; the pressures are the results of domestic and European policy failures and fluctuation in migratory flows' (Chou 2009, p.543). The security discourse (Dover 2008; Huysmans 2000) has depicted 'asylum seekers as economic migrants exploiting the generosity of EU states and foreign workers as competitors for scarce jobs and social security; after the terrorist attacks since 2001, efforts were made to link migrants with the perpetrators of these acts' (Chou 2009, p. 542).

5.1 Political discourse on the Refugee Crisis

Across Europe and especially in the key EU countries, there have been divergent interpretations of the 2015 Refugee Crisis (here-on-in referred to as "the Crisis") and its causes. Indeed, labelling such humanitarian movements as 'a crisis' in itself' is strongly ideologically charged and has been developed in media and political discourse mainly to legitimize the alleged urgency, including various "special measures," that were or were supposed to be taken in recent months and years' (Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, and Wodak, R. 2018, p.3). A number of 'mobilizing and politicizing concepts—including *humanitarianism, security, diversity, protectionism*—were deployed in public discourses to legitimize the ever-new restrictions of migration and asylum policies and diverse expressions of solidarity or lack thereof' (Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, and Wodak, R. 2018, p.1). Much of the political discourse, divergent national discourses and responses to the Crisis itself have been underpinned by historical legacies and ultimately each nation states relationship and history with the EU as a collective force. Indeed, as national level responses ranged from hospitality to hostility, 'asylum seekers from Syria and other war-torn countries test the very ideas upon which the EU was founded: human rights, tolerance and the free movement of people' (Kattago 2017, p.35). Such underlying relationships between states and the EU as an institution have been mediated in discourse in varying and surprising ways. For example, Radu (2016) argues that European political leaders (namely Merkel and Juncker) 'have tacitly fueled – through their emotional and solidarity-centered discourse – 'the intra-EU cleavages between the Member-States, as well as public attachment to far-right xenophobic ideologies' Radu 2016, p.21). In this sense, Europe as an identity has been reconstructed through political discursive mechanisms related to the Refugee Crisis: 'This is the political leaders' attempt to recover the lost symbolical appeal of European integration' (Radu 2016, p.30).

While much focus has centred on a common and cohesive response to the crisis, research has highlighted, similarly to media coverage, a difference in approach between East and West member states. Furthermore, different triggering events have shaped discourses at the national level, such as the closure of the Hungarian border on September 2015 for South-Eastern and CEEC countries, while for Italy the shipwrecks outside Sicily in April 2015 marked a defining point, and for Greece a crisis event was the closure of the Balkan route in February 2016 (Triandafyllidou 2018). The famous political statement of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, "Wir schaffen das" (we can do this) declared on August 31, 2015, referring to Germany's capacity and ability to 'receive high numbers of Syrians seeking asylum in the country marked an important point in European solidarity'(Triandafyllidou 2018, p.202). These events have been presented and reconstructed by political discourses in different ways. The ethno-nationalist "politics of fear" promoted by far right parties has further contributed to discourses of fear around asylum seekers. Nonetheless, with the notion of staying 'in control' pervading in the 2000s, one of the main discursive shifts that occurred in Europe during the Refugee Crisis is many countries' 'mainstream political movements and parties

(including governments') ever-more obvious endorsement of anti-immigration rhetoric and/or of a harshened stance on openness toward refugees' (ibid.).

A double special issue of the *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies* edited by Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, and Wodak (2018) focused specifically on patterns of mediatisation and politicization of what has overall been dubbed as the "Refugee Crisis". In the concluding article Triandafyllidou (2018) adopts a comparative approach drawing on the issue articles to demonstrate the contrasting political discourses deployed. In all countries, the political discourse was contextualised in relation to the positioning of each country as a:

> Frontline or final destination as directly or peripherally involved, and also were historically and politically contextualized in terms of past experiences of seeking or offering refuge and hosting migrants (or lack thereof) and in relation to current challenges including Euro-skepticism (Triandafyllidou 2018, p.207).

Indeed, in all cases the Crisis has been crafted according to national, not union, perspectives (Hadfield and Zwitter 2015). The key overriding discursive pattern across states was a shift,

> From seeking to manage and to channel the flows distributing responsibility through quotas in the spring and fall of 2015, to the construction of the refugee flows as an effective emergency, a crisis that called for more drastic measures. These policy developments were obviously in an interactive relationship with developing media, political discourses, and civil society mobilizations around the refugee crisis (Triandafyllidou 2018, p.207).

Key events in Italy that mediated political discourse included the massive shipwreck south of Lampedusa in April 2015—an event that naturally marked the highpoint in Italian discourse and which was chosen by the Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi to elaborate on Italy's role and future policies in his speech in Parliament on April 22, 2015.This speech in itself was a turning point and represents an important juncture in the political discourse in Italy, as Colombo (2018, p, 168) outlines:

> First of all, it was delivered in a moment when public opinion was particularly shaken not only in Italy but internationally. Second, the media had largely reported the incident emphasizing its humanitarian implications and Renzi recontextualizes their arguments in his speech. Third, the domestic political debate was particularly harsh. Fourth, through this speech Renzi positions himself and the government with regard not only to their political opponents' discourses but also to news media discourses, and he attempts to reframe the refugee crisis in several ways.

The main political standpoint in Italy has been to consider immigration as a socioeconomic "emergency," rather than a structural phenomenon and a resource, both at a cultural and economic level and with Italy being a frontline country, political discourse has centred around the construction of a 'threat as "moral panic", the idea of "national insecurity," have been used by politicians to justify the implementation of "emergency" measures towards them'(Armillei 2017, p.144).A central part of the political discourse in Italy has also concerned the responsibility of the EU to help Italy deal with the large number of asylum seekers, and in turn the Prime Minister has consistently framed the debate in terms of shared EU security concerns (Colombo 2018).

Greece followed a similar pattern in terms of highlighting EU responsibility with the addition of a recent history of contestation with the EU following the bailout. Greece political discourse was defined by the 'the "blame game" idiom [which] was soon turned into a cliché that dominated the Greek political rhetoric and gained a position in Alexis Tsipras's social media texts' (Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou2018, p.187). However, Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou (2018) highlight how both political leaders transformed the European issue of the Crisis into a national one. Nonetheless, Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou (2018, p.195) show through their analysis the different frames adopted by the two political leaders:

> The prime minister exalts the philanthropy of Greeks and presents the two "faces" of Europe through his contradictory references to European states and the EU. He also reveals the deep European chasm by criticizing those bureaucratic xenophobic European powers that ask for Greece's exclusion from the Schengen zone. On the other hand, Mitsotakis underlines the inefficiency of the government that led to the gigantism of the refugee crisis and its turn into a humanitarian one. He also emphasizes the necessity of open borders within the EU.

In CEE countries, the erection of a fence at the Hungarian and Serbian border in September 2015 was a landmark turning point. Alongside the "march" of the refugees across the Balkans these events structured the politicization of the refugee crisis in Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Poland. The Hungarian political discourse was squarely evolved from the securitisation frame, although this was deployed in different ways:

> Refugees were presented as a threat in the government's discourse on different levels: as abstract threat (embodiment of different cultures), as potential threat (they bring 'diseases ... which haven't been present for decades') and as actual, tangible threat (aggressive crowd attacking the country's border) (Gábor and Messing 2016, p.48)

Concordant with such securitization discourse Barlai and Sik (2017) argue that the Hungarian government public relations through the propaganda structure of the Hungarian media system served to fuel xenophobia and construct a moral panic, on the assumption that the government is using the xenophobia widespread in Hungary (explained below) to build a longer-term strategy of national unity (ibid., p.153).

Chancellor Merkel's "Wir schaffen das" speech was evidently marking point for the political discourse in Germany, espousing humanitarian and solidarity principles although Mushaben (2017) argues that Merkel's attempt to transform the nation united into a land of immigration and integration derived from her experiences as a former GDR citizen. Aside from these major political statements, Vollmer and Karakayali (2018) demonstrate that in Germany the "refugee emergency" is depicted by a representation of people on the move. They argue that images of people being rescued at sea and dead corpses serve to reinforce the sense of emergency.

In Austria and Germany, the welcoming of refugees by citizens in Munich and Vienna in September and October 2015 served to organise coverage in Austria and Germany although the discourse later shifted away from openness. The Cologne incidents on New Year's Eve signalled a turning point: 'a re-contextualization of the refugee emergency in terms of body politics, the emergence of a "sexual nationalism" wherein the nation, the homeland, or Europe is represented as a young and innocent woman assaulted by these foreign, evil men' (Triandafyllidou 2018, p.209). The Cologne incidents

were linked with eventual closure of the Austrian borders and closure of the Balkan routes, which both had repercussions for Greece's political discourse and Europe's collective response:

> They [Cologne & Balkan route closure] not only create an additional emergency—people are stranded in Greece, just before the Greek-FYROM border in the north but also force Greece to take a stance. And while the Greek government refused to close its border with Turkey, upholding its obligation to offer asylum, it had to come to terms with the dilemma and the pressure while simultaneously being threatened with expulsion from the Schengen treaty. These two related events, the closure of the Austrian borders and the subsequent complete closure of the Balkan route became, thus, matters that represent more widely the belonging to the European Union (Triandafyllidou 2018, p.209)

Triandafyllidou (2018, p.211) argues that two competing interpretive frames emerged to discuss the emergency: the moralization frame and the threat frame. In the moralizing frame the responsibility of the flows are placed on wars, conflict, and violence in the regions of origin. In this framing people moving are perceived as victims deprived of agency. This frame emphasises European values embedded in its humanitarian values of proving protection to those who are persecuted which are mediated by political elites in divergent ways. For example, Colombo (2018) demonstrates how Italy's Prime Minister referred to Christian solidarity. He paraphrases Apostle Matthew (verse 25:35): "For I knocked at your door and you welcomed me," while also making reference to the very statements of Pope Francis. In contrast, In Greece left-wing prime minister stressed through social media and a 'speech in Parliament that the country remains true to the European ideals' (Triandafyllidou 2018, p.211). Whilst Social Democratic parties in Sweden and Austria maintained an initial framing of solidarity with refugees. The same is true for the Social Democrat parties in Sweden and Austria, with both parties maintaining this view of solidarity with refugees in 2015 (Triandafyllidou 2018). However, in Croatia and Serbia, public intellectuals have chastised "Europe" for not upholding humanitarian EU values (Sicurella, 2018).

The second frame (Triandafyllidou 2018) identifies concerns the notion of "threat" – the sense that the movement of people is a natural disaster which is uncontrollable. Whilst moralistic framing centres around solidarity, threat frames promote division. The threat frame resonates strongly in Poland and Slovenia, but also in the UK and in Austria. In particular the "jungle" in Calais is used as a symbol of threat (Bennett 2018). The polarisation of "Us versus Them" comes to play strongly in this discourse, pitting divides between those that belong and those deemed not to belong (Anderson 2013). Significantly, the divisions between "us and them" extends beyond natives and migrants, but rather in Italy and Greece "them" is also an unresponsive Europe which has left frontline countries with little solidarity or support Triandafyllidou (2018, p.212)

Triandafyllidou (2018 p.214) concludes that whilst there is a common line of events relevant in all countries:

> The selection of what is the turning point has more to do with the geographical and political proximity/relevance of the event for each country (e.g., the closure of the Hungarian-Serbian borders for Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia or the closure of the Austrian borders and the overall Balkan route for Greece) and also with the ways in which the events resonate with underlying national themes and historical legacies, such as notions of who we are and what are our values, what are the common European values, what is the positioning of the country

in the wider European geopolitical context, and of course, the left wing versus right wing positioning of the party and political leader speeches and Twitter strategies analyzed.

6. Conclusions

Evidently, it is challenging to isolate on the one hand media influence on public attitudes, and on the other hand political discourse on media discourse and vice versa. Political scientists have long acknowledged that all three facets in mutually reinforcing ways shape the contested public sphere. The issue of migration and asylum provokes anxieties around national identity, culture and the discourse in both public, political and media debates have long been dominated by securitisation, threat and the politics of fear. Whilst literature pertaining to public attitudes, media discourse and political discourse on immigration and asylum is vast, a number of key consistent themes emerge across discipline, space and time relevant for CEASEVAL.

Public attitudes towards immigration are determined by a number of factors. Scholars contest whether symbolic or instrumental accounts explain public grievances with immigration. On the whole, the level of education an individual has alongside social identity and culture seem to predetermine public attitudes over instrumental concerns, although it needs to be reiterated that there is evidence of socio-tropic economic (as opposed to ego-centric) concerns shaping public attitudes. Our review conclusively demonstrates that public attitudes towards immigration are differentiated by the type of migrant – both in terms of ethnicity and nationality but also in terms of migration purpose or stream. The existing research also consistently highlights that publics overestimate the amount of immigration that transpires in their country, and that such overestimating leads to more restrictive preferences on immigration policy.

A key component in shaping public attitudes to immigration is the mass media. The established literature finds unequivocally that media portrayals and framing of immigrants as a security threat and/or a problem is significant in shaping negative public attitudes towards immigrants, and this is especially the case in the media coverage of the Refugee Crisis. However, whether the media sets the agenda on such framing, or whether the media takes cues from political discourse (or vice versa) is contested. Indeed, a further finding from the established research is that in terms of voices represented in media coverage on asylum, political elites dominate in the press whilst migrants and asylum seekers themselves lack any voice. In terms of the Refugee Crisis specifically, the evidence suggests that there have been temporal shifts in the framing of the Crisis as it has evolved, from an initial humanitarian and empathetic framing towards a hostile or suspicious framing. The Crisis unfolded in phases with triggering events across Europe, which are reflected in the media discourse and narrative. The evidence also demonstrates large regional and country variations in media coverage of the Crisis.

Political discourse has mirrored media discourse of the Crisis, shifting from a humanitarian/moralistic frame in the early stages whilst gravitating towards a securitization or threat framing as the Crisis unfolded. This was also reflected in policy responses that initially began as managing flows distributing responsibility through quotas, towards the construction of refugee flows as an effective emergency which require drastic measures. The Crisis itself is bound with the EU's contestation over solidarity, legitimacy and liberal universalist mode, with responsibility and burden sharing forming major themes of political discourse from frontline, Southern states. Having said this, in all cases the

Crisis has been crafted according to national, not union, perspectives, and there have been wide cross-country variations as to how political discourse has responded to the crisis, with pre-conceived institutionalized national framings of asylum dominating. National political discourse has been underpinned by historical legacies and ultimately each nation states relationship and history with the EU as an institution, with national level responses ranging from hospitality to hostility, with large variations between East and West member states (although the UK arguably deploys the most hostile political discourse). The geographical position in terms of being a frontline, final or peripherally involved country has also determined national level political discourse and policy responses. Different triggering events – many causing moral panics - have shaped discourses at the national leveland have been presented and reconstructed by political discourses in different ways. If there is a common EU political discourse on the Crisis it is one circulating around notions of control.

7. Literature

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