

THE EFFECTS OF FRAMES IN POLITICAL TELEVISION NEWS ON ISSUE INTERPRETATION AND FRAME SALIENCE

By Claes H. de Vreese



This experiment investigated the effects of television news frames on (1) audience interpretations of a political issue, (2) the salience of news frames versus other information in the story, and (3) support for future policy. A sample of 145 adults watched an experimental television news bulletin produced in cooperation with reporters and editors at a national television news program about the enlargement of the European Union. A news story was manipulated to reflect a conflict frame or an economic consequences frame. The two frames provide direction to the audience's thoughts about the issue but do not yield different levels of policy support. Frames in the news are as important as core facts in a news story when citizens conceive of a political issue.

Frames in the news may affect our perception of issues and generate specific evaluations about politics. By means of activation of certain constructs, news can encourage particular "trains of thought"¹ which citizens may make use of in subsequent judgments. This study investigates the effects of two news frames commonly identified in content analyses: the *conflict* frame and the *economic consequences* frame. The conflict frame follows from the observation that news about politics and the economy is often framed in terms of disagreement between, for example, individuals or political parties. In this way of framing the news, controversy and diverging aspects between conflicting parties are emphasized.² The economic consequences frame reflects a "preoccupation with the 'bottom line,' profit and loss."³ Focusing on the economic consequences of an issue is a frequently observed strategy for packaging the news and news producers use the consequence frame to make an issue relevant to their audience.⁴

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The study builds on previous research to investigate the *salience* of news frames. Many authors suggest that a news frame consists of specific elements, also called framing devices (e.g., the headlines, introductions, lead-outs etc.).⁵ These studies explicitly define the news frame as distinct from other elements in the news. Conceptually, we may conceive these elements of a news story as the *frame* while other elements may be referred to as *core news facts* (e.g., answers to the questions of when, where, and who). In fact, most experimental framing studies implicitly apply this conceptual distinction in their operationalizations by keeping a core part constant and varying, for example, headlines and opening and closing paragraphs to constitute the framing manipulation.

It remains an open question, however, whether audiences pick up more of the news frame or the core news facts when conceiving of an issue presented in the news. This current study disaggregates a news story into different elements and subsequently assesses the salience of the different elements. Extant media effects literature has discussed *salience* as a dependent variable (e.g., agenda-setting research assesses the salience of audience issues) or as an independent variable (e.g., priming research where the salience of certain considerations drives evaluations of political leaders). Framing is also a process of selection and salience and to frame is "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient."⁶

Recent advancements of second-level agenda-setting suggest that in addition to setting the agenda of issues, the media may also set the agenda in terms of, for example, candidate attributes.⁷ Studies in Spain found that attributes of candidates emphasized by news media correlated with candidate attributes salient to media audiences.⁸ Corroborating experimental evidence suggested that emphasis on candidate attributes in the news was mirrored by readers.⁹ Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley and Druckman have demonstrated how frames also make certain considerations more salient for subsequent judgments.¹⁰ News frames affect attitudes by stressing specific values, facts, or other considerations and endowing them with greater relevance to an issue than would an alternative frame. Tewksbury and colleagues found evidence that the degree of presence—the weight or salience—given to a frame in the news affected the relative emphasis given to this frame in readers' interpretation of a local policy issue.¹¹

The current study investigates an aspect of the framing process that previous research has alluded to but not addressed empirically. Though we know that frames in television news may, for example, generate negativity and cynicism about politics¹² and affect the degree of tolerance extended toward political movements,¹³ no study to date has investigated how salient, relatively speaking, a news frame is for understanding an issue. Two studies focus on the differential effects of frames according to the weight of a frame in the news and suggest that audiences are more susceptible to frames that are strongly present.¹⁴ This research, however, does not assess the relative salience of the frame compared to other information elements in a news story. For example, if audiences respond to news about unemployment, how

important are the core facts (e.g., employment rates, number of lay-offs, etc.) compared to the frame?

Frames in Political and Economic News

The framing process consists of distinct *frame-building* and *frame-setting* phases.¹⁵ Thus, frames can be investigated as both independent and dependent variables. In framing effects research, the independent variable is typically the news frame, itself conceptualized and utilized differently in previous studies. Some studies document the validity and real-life occurrence of the frames as investigated through data base word searches,¹⁶ literature reviews,¹⁷ or content analyses.¹⁸ The argument is that a valid study of the effects of frames must be preceded by systematically collected evidence of the way events and issues are framed in the news. Cappella and Jamieson suggested that frames must have identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics and be commonly observed in journalistic practice.¹⁹

This study investigates effects of frames identified in content analyses. *Conceptually*, the notion of news frames employed here is indebted to a definition of a frame as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue."²⁰ This definition is consistent with the perspective offered by political communication scholars,²¹ but is broader than one of the initial definitions of framing stemming from psychology, in which reversing identical information constituted the experimentally manipulated framing.²² This broader conceptualization reflects the fact that the political world is oftentimes too complex to meaningfully reduce to identical scenarios. *Operationally*, the study is consistent with, for example, Tankard's empirical approach to framing research in which a frame is defined as specific elements in a news story.

Studies in several countries²³ and overviews of framing research²⁴ have identified a number of frames commonly found in political and economic news. Some studies investigated frames sensitive to particular issues. One study, for example, identified a "disruption" and a "bargaining" frame in the coverage of a labor strike.²⁵ Others focusing on generic news frames in political and economic news, that is, frames that are not confined to a specific issue, have discussed the presence and effects of the *conflict* frame and the *economic consequences* frame. The conflict frame emphasizes controversy and disagreement while the economic consequences frame focuses on economic implications and considerations.

Content analyses have demonstrated how the conflict and the economic consequences frames are manifest in news reporting in both the United States and Europe.²⁶ The antecedents of the two frames in journalistic practice are evident. Research on news values points to the importance of conflict.²⁷ The presence of conflict is consistently listed as an essential criterion for a news story to make it into the news, not only because it "sells,"²⁸ but also to meet professional standards of balanced reporting. It is also argued that, by framing news in terms of its (economic) consequences for the audience, the journalistic news values of "proximity" and "relevance" are translated into the news.²⁹

The study has three goals: first, to advance our understanding of framing effects by investigating how the conflict and the economic consequences frames in television news affect audience responses; second, to investigate the relative importance of news frames versus “core facts” in a news story; and third, to enhance the validity—both internal and external—of experimental framing research by using realistic and professionally produced television news stimulus material.

Experimental research on the impact of news frames has dealt with issues salient to a particular sample³⁰ and social issues such as poverty and crime.³¹ The issue of the enlargement of the European Union was chosen as an example of a routine political/economic topic. Moreover, only very limited scholarship investigates the relationship between news coverage and public perceptions of European affairs. One study using aggregate-level survey data found a correlation between news with a negative tone and negative public sentiments toward Europe.³² However, such relationships have not been investigated on the individual level in an experimental context.

The study focuses on the effects of two frames in television news, the main source of information for a majority of citizens in the United States and Europe.³³ The majority of studies investigating framing effects focus on print media.³⁴ Some focus on television,³⁵ but we have limited knowledge about audience responses to television news frames, despite evidence suggesting an impact different from print's.³⁶ Rhee found stronger framing effects of exposure to newspaper articles while Valentino, Beckman, and Buhr speculated that broadcast news was likely to impact audiences more.³⁷

Initial investigations of exposure to these frames in print news suggest their ability to direct readers' thoughts, define which aspects of an issue they consider particularly important, and change issue interpretations.³⁸ It is unclear whether the conflict and economic consequences frames in television news yield similar effects. Based on previous research on print news, the first set of hypotheses was formulated:

H1a: Television news framed in terms of conflict stimulates and renders conflict-related thoughts about an issue.

H1b: Television news framed in terms of economic consequences stimulates and renders economic consequences-related thoughts about an issue.

While recent studies have found that the relative importance of the frame within a news story was influential,³⁹ they did not address the relative salience of the frame compared to other information elements in a news story. Frames are important to understand the “packaging” of news, so an unanswered question is whether viewers pick up more of the news frame than of the core news facts when conceiving of an issue presented in the news. Thus:

Hypotheses and Research Questions

RQ1: What is the relative importance of the news frame compared to the core information/news facts in a news story?

Finally, the study investigates effects of framing of a political issue on policy support. Previous research indicates that frames may have such influence. Nelson and Oxley, for example, contrasting an "environmental" versus an "economic" framing of a land development dispute, found that participants exposed to the economic frame considered economic beliefs more important and endorsed the land development plan. Conversely, participants exposed to the environmental frame considered environmental beliefs more important and had unfavorable evaluations of the plan.⁴⁰ Tewksbury et al. found that news frames affected attitudes towards restricting hog farms.⁴¹ These studies contrast frames that emphasize either pros or cons of an issue. The conflict and the economic consequences frames do not have inherent valence, and given the scarcity of research on the effects of frames on policy support, a research question was formulated:

RQ2: Does exposure to news framed in terms of conflict or economic consequences affect the level of policy support?

Method

To investigate the hypotheses and the research questions, an experiment was conducted. Experimentation is criticized for low external validity given, for example, the artificiality of the viewing situation, but it is superior in an attempt to investigate effects of a key independent variable.⁴² Experimental research on the effects of frames in television news has a number of additional potential shortcomings in design and external validity. First, scholars are in some cases not able to exercise full control over the creation of the stimulus material, i.e., specifically manipulating the independent variable. This jeopardizes the experimental design.⁴³ Second, framing research suffers from lack of validation of the frames whose effects are investigated. In the past, research has documented effects of frames that were designed specifically for a study. To increase the external validity of framing effects research, the frames investigated must be observed in journalistic practice.

The present study attempts to address these shortcomings. First, the frames explored in this study—the conflict and the economic consequences frame—are theoretically grounded, have been shown to occur through content analyses of political and economic news, and reliable measures for identifying their presence in the news have been developed. Second, the news stories are *produced* rather than *selected* as being representative of a particular frame. This ensures full control over the stimulus material, i.e., variation in the manipulation only and exclusion of other, unintended, variation in the material.⁴⁴ In addition, it ensures that participants in the study have not been exposed to the news story in advance of the study. Finally, the experi-

mentally manipulated news story is inserted into a simulated bulletin of a national main evening news program to create an appropriate context.⁴⁵

Sample. A convenience sample of 145 participants was drawn from the database of the Audience Research Department of the public broadcaster in the Netherlands. Participants were recruited to reflect the composition of the adult Dutch population as previous research has suggested that gender, age, and education may affect levels of support for European integration.⁴⁶ The sample consisted of 46% females with age ranging from 16 to 65 ($M = 39.9$, $s.d. = 12.5$). The education level of the participants varied from primary school (age 12 in the Netherlands) to university degree.

Stimulus Material. Various scholars have stressed the necessity of utilizing realistic material in experimental research on television news.⁴⁷ The stimulus material was produced in cooperation with the national Dutch public broadcaster which produces the most widely watched main evening news bulletin. A version of the regular 8 o'clock news was produced, including the nationally known anchorwoman, according to common practices at *NOS Journaal* in terms of style of reporting and technical standards. Within the bulletin, the experimentally manipulated news story was placed as story number two, consistent with editorial practices for the priority of routine political/economic stories. New footage was recorded, new interviews were held, and new stories were constructed.⁴⁸

The focal point of the news story was the (simulated) publication of a report by the European Commission encouraging a fast entry of Poland into the EU. The simulation of this—at the time of the study—plausible event ensured that all participants would be confronted with new information in a story that had not been broadcast previously. Two different versions of the experimental news story were produced. One contained a “conflict” frame, the other an “economic consequences” frame. Both consisted of an identical core section, with the final part of the news story designed to set the frame, a design consistent with extant framing experiments.⁴⁹

First, the anchor introduced the story. The core provided background information about the EU developing from a 1950s Steel and Coal Community to a 1990s Economic and Monetary Union. The core also outlined current EU plans to expand with a number of Eastern European countries, including Poland. The story framed as conflict continued with a clash of opinions between two members of Parliament about the desirability of an accelerated entrance process. The MPs from the two governing parties stated opinions consistent with official party policy. Their quotes had been scripted specifically for the experiment. The story framed in terms of economic consequences continued, after the core, by addressing the potential economic and financial ramifications of an early entrance of Poland. The potential repercussions for Dutch taxpayers were emphasized. These effects were stated by the president of the National Central Bank.

Procedure. Participants were invited to the headquarters of the Audience Research Department to participate in a study of television

news.⁵⁰ The experiment was conducted on four weeknights in May 2000. Participants were reimbursed for travel costs and received a gift voucher for approximately \$15. As they arrived, they were randomly assigned to different conditions/viewing rooms.⁵¹ A control group was not included in this post-test only, between-subjects experimental design.⁵² The viewing rooms were identical and participants watched the news bulletin in groups ranging in size of eight to twelve persons. The experimental leaders were randomized between the different conditions and viewing locations. They had received extensive briefing and a manual in writing to eliminate any experimenter bias.

The participants were informed that the study was about their "experience of television news" and would involve watching a proof of the day's 8 o'clock news, taped in the late afternoon of that day, and completing a questionnaire. An initial questionnaire addressed demographics, interest in news and current affairs, media use, political preference, and general political knowledge. A pre-test as such was inappropriate, as it could cue participants to watch the news in a specific manner. After viewing the experimental news bulletin, participants received three questionnaires, filling in one at a time and immediately placing them in individually sealed envelopes.⁵³ Participants were then debriefed.

Measures.

Issue Interpretation. Thought-listing procedures were used in order to test the effect of the conflict and the economic consequences frames on viewers' cognitive responses. The question wording was "We are interested to hear how you think about the issue of the enlargement of the European Union. You have just seen a news story in 'Het Journaal' about the enlargement. We are interested to hear all your thoughts and feelings about this issue. Please list all your thoughts about the enlargement."

This open procedure, known from social psychology, has successfully been employed in previous experimental research on the effects of frames in the news.⁵⁴ The technique is preferred over closed and pre-defined measures which have the inherent risk of reflecting the researchers' presuppositions and eliminating aspects provided in the responses that were not anticipated a priori.⁵⁵

To determine the extent to which the two news frames emerged in the responses, measures used in an earlier study of news frames in print media were adapted.⁵⁶ The thoughts listed by the participants were analyzed by means of eight items designed to capture the presence of a dimension of a news frame. Examples are "Does the answer reflect disagreement between parties/ individuals/ groups?" (conflict frame) and "Does the answer mention the costs/ degree of expense involved?" (economic consequences frame).⁵⁷ All items questions were used with the thoughts listed by each individual and were coded as yes (1) or no (0). The coding was completed by a student blind to the experimental condition. A second coder double coded all the open-ended responses, yielding a satisfactory inter-coder reliability with Cohen's κ above .84 for all except one item with $\kappa = .63$. Scales ranging from 0 (frame not present) to 1 (frame present) were created for each of the two frames by

averaging the scores on the questions defining the frame. A high score indicated strong presence of that frame in the thoughts listed. Cronbach's α for the conflict frame scale was .66 and for the economic consequences scale .64.⁵⁸

Salience of News Frame. To measure the relative importance of the news frame compared to the core information, an open-ended free account procedure asking participants to retell the story to a person who has not seen the story him/herself was employed.⁵⁹ This procedure has been used successfully in previous studies to explore which aspects of a story a respondent considers most salient.⁶⁰ The responses were coded by means of a grading scheme: each participant was assigned a score for *information pertaining to the frame* and a score for *information pertaining to the core facts* in the story. The text of each news story was divided into units containing the frame and the core news facts. Participants received 0.5 point for mentioning half of any unit and 1 point for mentioning the entire unit. For example, if a participant named three of the countries on the "entry list" to the EU, the participant received 0.5 point, whereas a participant listing all six countries in the first entry group would receive 1 point for that particular unit. Each participant was assigned a total score for the core part of the story and for the frame part of the story by averaging the number of points received. Each score consequently ranged between 0 and 1.

Support for European Integration. To test the effect of the two frames on support for European integration, three items, measured on 5-point Likert agree-disagree scales, were used.⁶¹ The three items formed a scale from 1 to 5 of support for European integration ($\alpha = .79$).

Covariates. Based on previous framing effects research, we included political knowledge and the degree of issue elaboration as covariates in the analysis.⁶² Political knowledge was measured by a scale of eight factual questions, averaged to range from 0 to 1 ($M = .61$, $s.d. = .28$) ($\alpha = .78$). The degree of elaboration on the issue was assessed by verbosity, i.e., the number of words participants listed for the open-ended measure ($M = 40.5$, $s.d. = 25.5$). For the analysis of support for European integration (RQ2), gender was included as fixed factor and age, education, political interest (one 5-point scaled item), and political knowledge as covariates.

Data Analysis. To test the first set of hypotheses two separate ANOVAs with conflict versus economic consequences frame as main factor were carried out. To assess the influence of the covariates, two separate analyses of covariance (ANCOVA) were carried out with conflict versus economic consequences frame as main factor and political knowledge and issue elaboration as covariates. To investigate the first research question, two paired-sample t-tests were carried out because RQ1 addresses a within-condition effect. In addition, two ANCOVAs with conflict versus economic consequences frame as fixed factor and political knowledge and issue elaboration as covariates were used. To investigate the second research question, an ANCOVA with conflict versus economic consequences frame and gender as fixed factors and age, education, political interest, and political knowledge as covariates was used.

TABLE 1
Use of News Frames in Thoughts by Experimental Condition

	Experimental Condition	
	Conflict (<i>n</i> =73)	Economic Consequences (<i>n</i> =72)
Use of Conflict Related Thoughts	.25 ^a (.24)	.05 ^b (.12)
Use of Economic Consequences Related Thoughts	.05 ^b (.08)	.40 ^a (.29)

Note: Cell entries are means; entries in parentheses are standard deviations. Row means with different superscripts are significantly different ($p < .001$).

Results

The Effect of News Frames on Issue Interpretation. The results in Table 1 support the first set of hypotheses. Participants in the conflict condition ($M = .25$) used more conflict-related thoughts than economic consequences thoughts ($M = .05$) ($F[1, 144] = 35.45, \eta^2 = .20, p < .001$). Similarly, participants in the economic consequences condition reflected the experimentally induced frame in their thoughts ($M = .39$) and hardly used any thoughts related to conflict or disagreement ($M = .05$) ($F[1, 144] = 87.79, \eta^2 = .38, p < .001$).

Covariates. Introducing the two covariates did not substantially affect the observed impact of exposure to the frame. The effect of exposure to either conflict or economic consequences framed news remained significant after adjustments by the covariates.⁶³ Political knowledge was positively but not significantly correlated with the dependent variable. The number of words used by participants positively affected the dependent measure for both the conflict ($\beta = .03, t[144] = 4.45, p < .001$) and the economic consequences condition ($\beta = .03, t[144] = 3.59, p = .001$).⁶⁴

The Importance of News Frames versus Other Information in the News. The first research question addressed the relative importance of the news frame compared to other information in the news story. Table 2 presents mean scores for presence of information pertaining to the core part and information pertaining to the news frame by condition. Because the research question does not deal with a between-condition effect, but rather a within-condition effect, two paired-sample *t*-tests were conducted. The amount of information in the unaided account pertaining to the frame and information pertaining to the news facts did not differ, in neither the conflict condition ($t[72] = -.63, p = .53$) nor in the economic consequences condition ($t[71] = -1.50, p = .14$). In other words, to the participants the news frame was as important as the news facts presented in the core part when retelling the news story in their own words.

TABLE 2

Reference to Information Pertaining to News Frame versus Core Part

	Experimental Condition	
	Conflict (<i>n</i> =73)	Economic Consequences (<i>n</i> =72)
Reference to Core Part	.38 (.35)	.47 (.43)
Reference to News Frame	.42 (.47)	.47 (.39)

Note: Cell entries are means; entries in parentheses are standard deviations.

In addition, an ANCOVA revealed no main effect of framing condition for referring to core elements ($F[1, 144] = 1.44, \eta^2 = .01, p = .19$) suggesting that the two conditions elicited a similar amount of references to information from the core part of the news story. Verbosity ($F[1, 144] = 7.46, \eta^2 = .05, p < .05$) and political knowledge ($F[1, 144] = 40.08, \eta^2 = .22, p < .001$) contributed positively to making reference to the core information in the news story. For making reference to the frame elements, two ANCOVAs revealed a main effect of framing condition on making references to the frame in the free account responses.⁶⁵ In addition, the more politically knowledgeable participants and those offering greater issue elaboration were more likely to make use of the news frame. This finding was statistically significant in the conflict condition.⁶⁶

The Effect of News Frames on Support for European Integration.

The second research question addressed the impact of the two news frames on support for European integration. Participants in the conflict condition ($M = 3.3, s.d. = .96$) and participants in the economic consequences condition ($M = 3.2, s.d. = .96$) did not differ in their support for European integration. Inclusion of the covariates yielded a significant effect of political interest on support for European integration ($F(1, 137) = 4.41, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .04, p < .05$).

The study showed that frames in television news have the ability to direct viewers' thoughts when conceiving of a contemporary political issue. Participants exposed to a news story framed in terms of conflict or economic consequences expressed thoughts about the issue that reflected how the news was framed. Participants who watched a story framed in terms of the potential economic consequences displayed thoughts in which this specific spin on the issue was present. The thoughts addressed costs, benefits, and financial implications of the enlargement of the European Union. Participants who watched the story

Discussion

framed in terms of a party conflict over the enlargement issue displayed thoughts referring to the public and political friction over the issue, often including more and opposing points of view in their thoughts.

These findings support previous studies of the impact of conflict and economic consequences frames for print news,⁶⁷ and they seem to provide robustness to the effects of the conflict and economic consequences frames. The effects have been found in different national contexts, for both television (this study) and the press,⁶⁸ in relation to personally obtrusive issues (such as increasing tuition fees for a student sample), and with respect to the less personally obtrusive political-economic issue of the enlargement of the European Union.

The first research question addressed the relative importance of a news frame compared to other information in a news story and found that the news frame is equally important to core facts. Moreover, the study suggested that both the more politically knowledgeable and those participants offering greater issue elaboration were more likely to make reference to *both* the core information *and* the news frame than less knowledgeable and less elaborative participants. These findings stress the importance of individual-level differences for understanding framing effects and specifically the results suggest—in line with previous research⁶⁹—that knowledge facilitates deeper and more sophisticated information processing.

This study also suggests that the *salience* of news frames is an area in need of further research. The news frame is as important as core news facts when audiences perceive of political issues. Agenda-setting research addresses the salience of issues (first-level agenda setting) and of, for example, candidate attributes (second-level agenda setting). Priming research demonstrates how the salience of certain considerations can affect public evaluations of political leaders. Framing research is still in a stage of infancy with respect to assessing the magnitude of framing effects and explicating which elements of a news story are particularly salient to audience members when thinking about political issues.

Extant research is divided over the role of salience in the frame-setting process. One perspective suggests that framing does *not* affect how audiences think about issues “by making aspects of the issue more salient.”⁷⁰ Another perspective, however, concludes that to frame is essentially about making some aspects of reality more salient.⁷¹ In this vein, framing research has demonstrated how frames make certain considerations more salient for subsequent judgments.⁷² News frames affect attitudes by stressing specific values, facts, or other considerations and endowing them with greater relevance to an issue than under an alternative frame. Previous research, as well as this study, suggests that salience is a concept relevant to framing research. Given the terminological inconsistencies in media effects research, however, there is need for precision and explication not only of the antecedents of, but also the labeling of, the dependent variables.

The second research question asked whether the two news frames would elicit different levels of support for future European integration. The study showed no difference in the policy support between the two conditions. Previous research has demonstrated significant effects of

different frames on, for example, political tolerance⁷³ and support for local political issues.⁷⁴ These studies, however, manipulated news frames that carry a clear valence. Another plausible explanation for the lack of effect on support for European integration in comparison with those previous studies could be the nature of the issue under study. Previous research has focused on controversial rather than routine political and economic issues. Issues such as social protests and local politics might be more personally obtrusive and controversial in the news than the enlargement of the European Union. The findings here seem to dovetail with Vallone, Ross, and Lepper's study of media bias perception.⁷⁵ They found effects only for a controversial, evocative issue and not for a routine political issue. This explanation, however, is of course tentative.

Beyond implications for framing research, the current study also addresses issues important to both news practitioners and politicians. First, the experimental bulletin used in this study points to the potential fruitful cooperation between practitioners from news organizations and academia. Second, the study suggests that news frames are influential in shaping an individual's direction of thoughts on a political issue. Previous research has demonstrated that public opinion about European issues is volatile.⁷⁶ With television news consistently the most important source of information for Europeans about Europe, the framing of news about "Europe" plays an important role in contributing to public opinion formation about issues such as the enlargement of the European Union.

NOTES

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21. E.g., Cappella and Jamieson, *Spiral of Cynicism*; Druckman, "The Implication of Framing"; Entman, "Framing"; Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible*; Donald R. Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders, *Divided by Color. Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996); John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

22. Daniel Kahneman, Amos Tversky, and Petra Slovic, *Judgment under Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

23. E.g., Cappella and Jamieson, *Spiral of Cynicism*; Patterson, *Out of*

Order; Holli A. Semetko and Patti M. Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News," *Journal of Communication* 50 (summer 2000): 93-109.

24. E.g., Paul D'Angelo, "News Framing as a Multi-paradigmatic Research Program: A Response to Entman," *Journal of Communication* 52 (winter 2002): 870-89; Entman, "Framing"; Scheufele, "Framing as a Theory."

25. Adam Simon and Michael Xenos, "Media Framing and Effective Public Deliberation," *Political Communication* 17 (winter 2000): 363-76.

26. William L. Bennett, *News: The Politics of Illusion* (New York: Longman, 1995); Patterson, *Out of Order*; Semetko and Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics"; Claes H. de Vreese, Jochen Peter, and Holli A. Semetko, "Framing Politics at the Launch of the Euro: A Cross-National Comparative Study of Frames in the News," *Political Communication* 18 (spring 2001): 107-122.

27. Price, "Social Identification."

28. McManus, *Market-driven Journalism*.

29. Doris A. Graber, *Media Power in Politics* (Washington DC: CQ Press, 1997); McManus, *Market-driven Journalism*.

30. E.g., Price, Tewksbury, and Powers, "Switching Trains" dealt with university funding using a student sample.

31. Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible?*

32. Pippa Norris, *A Virtuous Circle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

33. Steve Chaffee and Sandra Kanihan, "Learning about Politics from the Mass Media," *Political Communication* 17 (autumn 1997): 421-30; Eurobarometer/ European Commission, "Eurobarometer: Public opinion in the European union" (2001, Rep. No. 55) (Brussels, Belgium: Directorate-General X).

34. See, e.g., Price, Tewksbury, and Powers, "Switching Trains"; Dhavan Shah, David Domke, and Daniel B. Wackman, "To Thin Own Self Be True": Values, Framing, and Voter Decision-making Strategies," *Communication Research* 23 (1996): 509-560; Tewksbury et al., "The Interaction of News and Advocate Frames"; Nicholas A. Valentino, Matthew Beckmann, and Thomas Buhr, "A Spiral of Cynicism for Some: The Contingent Effects of Campaign News Frames on Participation and Confidence in Government," *Political Communication* 18 (2001): 347-67; Patti M. Valkenburg, Holli A. Semetko, and Claes H. de Vreese, "The Effects of News Frames on Readers' Thoughts and Recall," *Communication Research* 26 (1990): 550-69.

35. Cappella and Jamieson, *Spiral of Cynicism*; Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible?*

36. E.g., Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley, "Media Framing"; June W. Rhee, "Strategy and Issue Frames in Election Campaign Coverage: A Social Cognitive Account of Framing Effects," *Journal of Communication* 47 (autumn 1997): 26-48.

37. Rhee, "Strategy and Issue Frames"; Valentino, Beckmann, and Buhr, "A Spiral of Cynicism for Some"

38. E.g., Price, Tewksbury, and Powers, "Switching Trains."

39. McLeod and Detenber, "Framing Effects"; Tewksbury et al., "The

Interaction of News and Advocate Frames."

40. Tom E. Nelson and Zoe M. Oxley, "Issue Framing Effects and Belief Importance and Opinion," *Journal of Politics* 58 (1999): 1055-1078.

41. Tewksbury et al., "The Interaction of News and Advocate Frames."

42. David R. Kinder and Thomas Palfrey, eds., *Experimental Foundations of Political Science* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

43. Byron Reeves and Seth Geiger, "Designing Experiments that Assess Psychological Responses to Media Messages," in *Measuring Psychological Responses to Media*, ed. Annie Lang (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1994), 165-80; Michael D. Slater, "Use of Message Stimuli in Mass Communication Experiments: A Methodological Assessment and Discussion," *Journalism Quarterly* 68 (autumn 1991): 412-21.

44. Previous studies have addressed these challenges differently. Iyengar used news stories that were "actual news reports that had been previously broadcast by one of the three major networks" (Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible?*, 20) which is similar to McLeod and Detenber ("Framing Effects") and Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley ("Media Framing"). Cappella and Jamieson (*Spiral of Cynicism*, 90) re-edited segments already broadcast, but when these "were clearly of one type or the other, they were left unchanged." These approaches have inherent disadvantages given the lack of control over the stimulus material. Producing new material, such as in this study, alleviates these problems, but requires caution, lest inquiries focus only on "researcher-defined" frames.

45. Utilizing an entire broadcast increases the external validity of the design. News is typically consumed in segments and not as individual stories. The study includes one experimental story to create the condition. Future research may consider multiple experimental stories to avoid the possibility that the effects are due to the idiosyncratic nature of a specific story.

46. Matthew Gabel, "Public Support for European Integration: An Empirical Test of Five Theories," *Journal of Politics* 60 (1998): 333-54.

47. Hans-Bernd Brosius, Wolfgang Donsbach, and Matthias Birk, "How Do Text-picture Relations Affect the Informational Effectiveness of Television Newscasts?" *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 40 (spring 1986): 180-95.

48. An overview of the stories in the experimental bulletin can be obtained from the author. A post-test item asked participants to evaluate the trustworthiness of the experimental and other stories. The evaluation of the experimental story did not deviate from other stories.

49. See e.g., Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible?*; Price, Tewksbury, and Powers, "Switching Trains."

50. The experiment used a 2 x 2 factorial design. For both the conflict and the economic consequences story, two versions were made. One contained a traditional field report with visuals and an accompanying voice over, the other a live cross-talk between the anchor in the studio and the Brussels-based EU-correspondent. The differences in format pertained to the visual side of the news stories only while the audio side (the text), either in the form of accompanying visuals and short quotes, or in the form of a scripted live interview with the Brussels correspondent, was kept identical. The two versions were produced to investigate the

impact of format differences on news learning and appreciation, which is not the goal of the present study and is reported in detail elsewhere (Roland Snoeijer, Claes H. de Vreese, and Holli A. Semetko, "The Effects of Live TV Reporting on Recall and Appreciation of Political News," *European Journal of Communication* 17 [2002]: 85-101). Because there were no interaction effects between frame and format and for reasons of clarity, the data will be presented as a single factorial design.

51. Analyses of variance for a number of individual characteristics such as gender, age, education level, political interest, and political knowledge (an 8-item index, $\alpha = .79$) revealed no significant differences between participants in the experimental conditions on any of the measures, suggesting a successful randomization.

52. A control group would have to be treated to a "frameless" television news story which would violate the conventions for the nature of television news. To omit a control group in the design is in line with the other experimental framing research by, for example, Iyengar (*Is Anyone Responsible?*); McLeod and Detenber ("Framing Effects"); and Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley ("Media Framing").

53. This procedure was chosen because the final questionnaire provided information that could cue participants to alter answers to previous questions. Given the small viewing group size, the experimental leader easily monitored the participants' compliance with this guideline.

54. E.g., Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible?*; Valkenburg, Semetko, and de Vreese, "The Effects of News Frames."

55. Michael A. Shapiro, "Think-aloud and thought-list procedures in investigating mental processes," in *Measuring psychological responses to media*, ed. Lang, 1-15.

56. Valkenburg, Semetko, and de Vreese, "The Effects of News Frames."

57. The other items were, for the conflict frame: "Does the answer refer to one or more parties reproaching each other?"; "does the answer refer to two or more sides of the issue/ problem?"; "does the answer refer to political disputes over the issue?" For the economic consequences frame the items were: "Does the answer refer to financial consequences of pursuing or not pursuing an action?"; "does the answer mention financial losses/ gains, nor or in the future?"; "does the answer mention the impact on Dutch economy/ tax payers?"

58. A GLS factor analysis confirmed the loading of the items on the two factors. The factor analysis explained 44% of the variance and resulted in a non-significant χ^2 ($\chi^2 = 22.08$ [19], $p = .28$) indicating a satisfactory fit.

59. The question read: "We are also interested in what you can remember from the story about the enlargement of the European Union. Please write below how you would tell this story to a friend that has not seen the story. You can think of, for example, persons and countries mentioned, what happened, why it happened, and what the consequences are. Please write down everything you can remember."

60. Doris A. Graber, "Seeing is Remembering: How Visuals Contribute to Learning from Television News," *Journal of Communication* 40 (spring 1990): 134-55.

61. The three items were "The European Union should be enlarged with central and eastern European countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Rumania," "It is a good thing that the Netherlands participates in the euro," "Turkey should become a member of the EU."

62. Price, Tewksbury, and Powers, "Switching Trains"; Rhee, "Strategy and Issue Frames."

63. For the conflict condition ($F[1, 144] = 49.74$, partial $\eta^2 = .26$, $p < .001$) and for the economic consequences framed news ($F[1, 144] = 82.59$, partial $\eta^2 = .37$, $p < .001$).

64. For the conflict condition ($F[1, 144] = 19.84$, partial $\eta^2 = .12$, $p < .001$) and for the economic consequences condition ($F[1, 144] = 11.27$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$, $p < .001$).

65. The effect of the frame was significant in both the conflict condition ($F[1, 144] = 59.92$, partial $\eta^2 = .30$, $p < .001$) and in the economic consequences condition ($F[1, 144] = 96.82$, partial $\eta^2 = .41$, $p < .001$).

66. Political knowledge ($F[1, 144] = 2.82$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$, $p < .10$), verbosity ($F[1, 144] = 3.75$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$, $p < .05$).

67. Price, Tewksbury, and Powers, "Switching Trains"; Valkenburg, Semetko, and de Vreese, "The Effects of News Frames."

68. Price, Tewksbury, and Powers, "Switching Trains."

69. Maria Hsu and Vincent Price, "Political Expertise and Affect: Effects on News Processing," *Communication Research* 20 (autumn 1993): 671-95; June W. Rhee and Joseph N. Cappella, "The Role of Political Sophistication in Learning from News: Measuring Schema Development," *Communication Research* 24 (spring 1997): 197-233.

70. Scheufele, "Agenda-setting, Priming and Framing," 309.

71. Entman, "Framing."

72. Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley, "Media Framing."

73. McLeod and Detenber, "Framing Effects"; Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley, "Media Framing."

74. Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley, "Media Framing"; Tewksbury et al., "The Interaction of News and Advocate Frames."

75. Robert Vallone, Lee Ross, and Mark R. Lepper, "The Hostile Media Phenomenon: Biased Perception and Perceptions of Media Bias in Coverage of the Beirut Massacre," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 49 (winter 1985): 577-85.

76. William E. Saris, "The Public Opinion about the EU Can Easily be Swayed in Different Directions," *Acta Politica: International Journal of Political Science* 32 (winter 1997): 406-435.

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