

**Integration: For, Against or on the Fence?  
German Media Frames of the Europe Migrant Crisis to  
a Global Audience**

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## Abstract

At the height of the European migrant crisis of 2015, Angela Merkel promised refuge to many migrants fleeing the ravages of civil war. The result of this decision is reflected through an ongoing influx of refugees into Germany, with every fifth person in the country now having a history of immigration. A situation like this raises subsequent questions about the changing dynamics of society and the effect of these changes on sentiments of intolerance. This research will focus on the issue of cultural tension in the form of Islamophobia and the consequential anxieties emerging in Germany as conveyed through dramatic events involving migrants and German citizens. The research will aim to identify leading German public discourse surrounding the representation of cultural tensions between new Muslim migrants and existing German citizens, in order to contribute to the research field of migration and integration. This aim will be undertaken through the content analysis of 150 media publications pertaining to four specific events from three of Germany's most influential and popular online news outlets, *Spiegel Online*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. The events all involve attacks by migrant men on German women, conveying a high level of emotional resonance for analysis.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

*In many regions war and terror prevail. States disintegrate. For many years we have read about this. We have heard about it. We have seen it on TV. But we had not yet sufficiently understood that what happens in Aleppo and Mosul can affect Essen or Stuttgart. We have to face that now.*

Chancellor Angela Merkel (as cited in Richards, 2015, p. 1).

At the height of the European migrant crisis of 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel promised refuge to many migrants fleeing the ravages of civil war, violent conflict and oppression from various countries around the world. This decision led to an ongoing influx of migrants into Germany. On New Year's Eve 2015, German media reported on dozens of women being attacked by masses of migrant men in the town of Cologne. The women were sexually harassed, robbed and had fireworks thrown at them. Later, in 2016, a nineteen-year-old university student named Maria L. was raped and murdered in Freiburg. The perpetrator was found to be a recent migrant from Iran. The following year, Mia V., a fifteen-year-old girl from Kandel, was publicly stabbed to death by her migrant, Afghani boyfriend. In 2018, fourteen-year-old Susanna F. went missing in Mainz. When her body was found, it became evident that she had been raped and murdered by her migrant boyfriend, who was originally from Iraq. The research will henceforth utilise the term 'migrant' to refer to those who have entered Germany during the period of European irregular migrant crisis to seek a better life for themselves and/or their families. According to UNESCO, a migrant is "any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country" (2017). Alternatively, the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees states that a refugee is:

A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and



being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (The United Nations Refugee Agency, 1951, p. 3).

A situation like the European irregular migrant crisis raises subsequent questions about the changing dynamics of society and the effect of these changes on ethnocentric sentiments. William Graham Sumner defined ethnocentrism as “a universal tendency for human beings to differentiate themselves according to group membership” (Thompson, 2014, p. 456). This research will focus on the issue of ethnocentrism in the form of Islamophobia and the consequential anxieties emerging in Germany as conveyed through cultural tensions between recent migrants from Muslim countries and German citizens. The important concept of Islamophobia is defined by Elman as being “both a prejudice and hostility toward Muslims that manifests as a distorted simplification of Islam and the Muslim world, and as an irrational hatred, alarmism, dread, and fear of the faith and its followers” (2019, p. 146).

This study aims to contribute to the debate about ways to ensure and support tolerant and peaceful societies within the European Union (EU) challenged by newfound intolerance towards masses of new migrants. Arguably, Islamophobia has increased since the migration crisis of 2015. To reach this aim, the research will identify German public narratives surrounding these cultural tensions. Specifically, the thesis undertakes textual analysis of media publications pertaining to four dramatic events in the most recent German political history, all linked to migration, violent crime and gender. The media in focus are three of Germany’s most influential mainstream popular newspapers: *Spiegel Online*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. These events include the New Year’s Eve attacks by migrant men on groups of women in Cologne in 2015/2016; the rape and murder of a 19 year-old female university student in Freiburg in 2016; and two closely-aligned murders of German girls aged 14 and 15 by their migrant boyfriends (in Kandel in 2017 and in Mainz in 2018). The analysis explores media framing of these events for recurring themes and emotively-loaded representations in order to assess the projection of Islamophobic sentiments, if any. The events were of high emotional impact and generated a strong public reaction with a strong focus on gender roles.

## 1.1 Research Question:

The leading research question for this study is: *How do reputable mainstream German news sources (English editions) frame and narrate present-day cultural tensions between new Muslim migrants and German citizens since the European migration crisis of 2015 until 2018?* This research expects that phenomena of Eurocentrism, Euroscepticism and ethnocentrism – if present in the framing – will impact the levels of cultural tensions surrounding irregular immigration. While the definition of ethnocentrism is above, Eurocentrism is defined here as “a paradigm rooted in global colonization and capitalism that privileges a European way of knowing and being” (Thompson, 2014, p. 463). Euroscepticism is defined by Paul Taggart as expressing “the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration” (1998, p. 366). This research is informed by another assumption that higher levels of Eurocentrism, Euroscepticism and ethnocentrism in the host societies in the context of the heightened immigration rates will be associated with higher levels of cultural tensions.

This research focuses only on the media framing of interactions between German citizens and new Muslim immigrants in the context of violent crimes committed by the latter. It considers the impacts of the 2015 irregular migration crisis on the framing and explores if the sentiments of Islamophobia -- as the main form of cultural tension – enter the media frames and narratives projected onto the public. This analysis deals only with three mainstream printed media sources in Germany and limits its focus to the three years of observations 2015-2018. It is important to keep these limitations in mind, as media sources of different countries, types (broadcast or online), orientation (extreme right or left), or periods (before and after the crisis) may present different frames. Future research may look into comparative analysis, comparing frames and narratives along the lines identifies above.

## 1.2 Sub-questions:

This research aims to answer the following five sub-questions. They mark crucial junctures in the analysis that questioned if sentiments of Islamophobia marked media framing of cultural tensions in the context of the violent crimes committed by new migrants against German citizens:

1. How do German media narratives frame victims and perpetrators in cognitive terms?
2. How do German media narratives frame victims and perpetrators in emotive terms?
3. To what extent do German leading media project messages of Islamophobia in the narratives?
4. What do the media frames mean for German society on domestic level?
5. What do the media frames mean for Germany as a part of a wider European story as well as Germany as a global actor?

### 1.3 Background:

In this research, the term “irregular migration crisis” will be utilised to refer to the vast influx of people into Europe that reached peak numbers in 2015. Sometimes this event may also be referred to as the “European irregular migration crisis”, as this research focuses on the impact of irregular migration on the EU member state, Germany. According to the *European Parliamentary Research Service Blog*, irregular immigrants can be defined as “third-country nationals who do not fulfil the conditions of entry as set out in Article 5 of the Schengen Borders Code or other conditions for entry, stay or residence in that Member State” (Poptcheva and Sabbati, 2015). Therefore, the irregular migration crisis will be defined in this research as the recent event in Europe involving masses of irregular immigrants endeavouring to enter EU countries.

A stark rise in levels of irregular immigration into Europe over recent years can be attributed to the current chaotic and perilous status of a number of nations worldwide. Whilst countries such as Syria, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq experience ongoing conflicts, others (including Pakistan, Nigeria and Eritrea) are in a state of turbulence due to oppressive regimes (Lyck-Bowen and Owen, 2018). The severity of the migration influx into Europe reached a peak in 2015, when over one million migrants left their homelands “with the hope of finding

a safe-haven on European shores” (Quinn, 2016, p. 275). This massive arrival of displaced people has since created a monumental humanitarian and political crisis, as the European Union struggles with the responsibility of resettling them (Balkan, 2016). It has also resulted in disparities and tensions between EU member states, with some upholding radically different views about how to solve the irregular migration issue. Sweden and Germany, for example, enforced the importance of a welcoming, humanitarian approach, whilst countries such as Hungary, Poland and the United Kingdom expressed deeply sceptical viewpoints (Lyck-Bowen and Owen, 2018). In September of 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel allowed thousands of people to enter Germany to apply for protection following a back-track in its strict asylum policy (Bock, 2018). Subsequently, hundreds of thousands of migrants entered Germany via Greece throughout the following months to apply for political asylum (Bock, 2018). Once the number of migrants entering Germany in 2015-2016 hit one million, the situation was referred to as a “national crisis” (Bock, 2018). Whilst the authorities grappled with the issue at hand, public debates began to surface about whether these new migrants were deserving of Germany’s protection, or not, uncovering polarising viewpoints among society (Bock, 2018). It soon became clear that, although Germany had taken on a strong and morally-driven leadership position amongst the EU member states on the migration crisis, the responsibility would have to be taken on equally (Balkan, 2016). Professor Osman Balkan stated that, unless European leaders reach burden-sharing agreements surrounding resettlement of new migrant populations, “political pressures will encourage the sealing of borders and the strengthening of a fortress Europe” (2016, p. 1).

Although the concept of a migration crisis may not necessarily be a new phenomenon, the way in which migrants act and how German public discourse has reported these actions is newfound (Karakayali and Vollmer, 2017). One of the leading modes of reporting in Germany is through newspaper format. Despite claims that the German newspaper landscape has lost visibility, in reality it continues to uphold major influential power over public discourse (Karakayali and Vollmer, 2017). Therefore, Germany’s mainstream newsprint media is still proven to be a suitable source to analyse public debates and narratives. The reporting of new migrants, in particular, can be analysed as a growing trend among topics in German newsprint. Since the European migrant crisis of 2015, Muslim migrants have come to be perceived as a threat to European tradition, religion and communities (Lyck-Bowen and

Owen, 2018, p. 1). The main drive behind these anxieties is the fear of terrorism, which has thus resulted in negative stereotyping of migrants, and has even led to Islamophobia-fuelled violence in some cases (Lyck-Bowen and Owen, 2018, p. 1).

#### 1.4 Importance, Novelty and Key Concepts

Although literature exists on the concept of Islamophobia and the effects of mainstream media narratives on society, this study is specifically focused in Germany. In addition to this, the issue itself is relatively new, as the European migration crisis peaked in 2015, with ongoing effects. This focus on finding solutions for the issue of cultural tension in Germany in the context of the migration crisis may contribute to the debate on peace and tolerance in other EU societies. It will also be of use to the academic community in terms of exploring modern-day ethnocentrism and Islamophobia in developed countries. The research will utilise theories from the field of social psychology such as those of Henri Tajfel about group-specific traits (2010, p. 120). These sociological theories provide a comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon under study and give an insight into why German society may react in particular ways or have certain narratives and sentiments towards Muslim migrants. Additionally, Tajfel's work may also offer possible solutions to the problem of an intolerant multicultural Europe.

In terms of methodology, the research undertakes a content analysis of three of Germany's popular mainstream media outlets working with the data pertaining to the coverage of the four dramatic events involving Muslim migrant men and German women. The method of data analysis is novel in its approach through the inclusion of the notion of gender roles and the way in which leading German media frame the issue of tension between Germans and migrants since the migrant crisis from a gendered perspective. Importantly, the dramatic events were reported by the chosen newspapers as being acts of violence by males towards females. Gender also features in other instances of media coverage of the most recent irregular migration crisis. For example, female migrants in refugee camps are known to be at high risk of sexual assault (*Al Jazeera*, 2017) and young migrant men in Greece report prostituting themselves in order to earn a living (Samuels, 2016). Although these events will not be analysed in this research, as a part of the story about the most recent migrant crisis in

Europe, they relate to gender. They prescribe the consideration of the gender roles in the context of migration into conceptual framework.

### 1.5 Outline of Thesis:

This thesis will firstly provide a review of the existing literature surrounding key aspects of the research. Secondly, the theoretical framework of the research will be presented. The main theoretical concepts utilised in this study include constructivism, the sociological theories of Henri Tajfel, and, specifically, Robert M. Entman's cascading activation framing theory (Entman, 1993). The following section will outline various methods selected to answer research questions. Next, the findings of the empirical analysis will be presented before a discussion section in which theoretical choices and the empirical analysis are brought together. Finally, a conclusion will summarise the research as a whole.

## Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The literature review deals with the literature relevant to the German perspective on the migration crisis of 2015 and its continuing repercussions. As mentioned earlier, this research focuses on media framing of four dramatic events in the most recent history of Germany. With the four events outlined in Chapter 1 in mind, the following literature review will firstly assess key literature that analyses media framing of the most recent Muslim migration to Germany. Special attention goes to review the works that reflected on the German media reports of the irregular migration crisis that took place in 2015. The literature review then will move to consider other commentators on migration to Europe and in this context, dissect a controversial notion of the 'death of Europe'. The first of these sections, an overview of existing research in the field, will help to uncover how current-day leading media project messages of cultural tension and whether or not this has changed, at all. The section on methods of integration will contribute towards the study of cultural tensions between new migrants and German locals, in addition to the sub-question on what the media-frames mean for Germany on a domestic level. The following section on Islamophobia will also contribute to this facet of this research in addition to the sub-questions relating to the framing of the

perpetrators and how the media projects messages of Islamophobia. The final sub-section on the 'death of Europe' will present key literature that can be utilised to answer the final sub-question surrounding what the frames mean for Germany as part of a wider European story. This thesis builds upon the preliminary literature review by the author (Wakefield, 2018).

## 2.1 Overview of Existing Research on Media Framing European Migration

Media framing of the irregular migrant crisis in Germany has attracted growing scholarly attention. Tobias Müller is one of the scholars who contributed to this research (2017). In his work, *Constructing Cultural Borders*, Müller specifically focused on the challenge of Muslim integration and media framing of it through inclusions of Islamic themes in British and German mainstream newspapers (2017, p. 263). The research spanned two time periods, being the 31<sup>st</sup> of August to the 6<sup>th</sup> of September in 2015 and 2016, respectively, and focused on newspaper articles that included keywords surrounding "refugees" and "Islam" (Müller, 2017, p. 266). The four newspapers analysed in Müller's research represent the most widely-read news sources in Germany and the United Kingdom, being: *Die Welt*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The Guardian* (2017, p. 266). He argued that "Muslim refugees are not only considered to be unfamiliar with tolerance and principles of liberal democracy" in media frames, but that these individuals are also conceived by the German public to be absolutely different to them from a cultural perspective (Müller, 2017, p. 269). Müller suggested that German media construct the image of Muslim refugees as being "passive postcolonial subjects" that depend on the rules and procedures put in place by supposedly culturally-superior Europeans (2017, p. 270). On the one hand, a Muslim refugee is framed to be a victim of the perils of war, and yet they are simultaneously represented to be a deficiently educated, culturally unaware and religiously backward individual who has exercised their own free-will in choosing to come to Europe (Müller, 2017, p. 270).

In *Media Discourse on the Refugee Crisis*, Stergios Fotopoulos and Margarita Kaimaklioti consider the reporting by German media outlet *Die Welt*. The authors argued that this outlet appeared to focus heavily on the issue of unaccompanied refugee children in some way. They observed *Die Welt's* thematic priority given to the costs of tackling this problem -- as just too high for German authorities (Fotopoulos and Kaimaklioti, 2016, p. 272).

Serhat Karakayali and Sebastian Vollmer succeeded in discussing the media coverage of the migration crisis in Germany from a broader perspective. They considered the very nature of German media report on the migrant crisis in their 2017 article, *The Volatility of the Discourse on Refugees in Germany*. They provided an analysis by describing the phenomena of 'the extraordinary' in mass media, stating that it is "part of the logic of modern mass media to focus on the extraordinary" (Karakayali and Vollmer, 2017, p. 123). The migration crisis of 2015 created an ideal scenario for mass media attention through its intense mixture of both "catastrophe and extraordinariness" (Karakayali and Vollmer, 2017, p. 123.) Consequently, the catastrophism embodied by the crisis attracted journalists in search of "the sensational and spectacular" (Karakayali and Vollmer, 2017, p. 123). The empathy created by media outlets for refugees quickly became a problem for conservative and right-wing members of German society (Karakayali and Vollmer, 2017, p. 126). Images of suffering migrant children caused these right-wing individuals to accuse mass media of manufacturing sympathy, but these images also resulted in a more philanthropic relationship between migrants and other members of German society (Karakayali and Vollmer, 2017, p. 127). However, following negative events involving refugees such as the mass sexual assaults on German women in Cologne, media outlets began to produce increasingly pessimistic material about refugees in Germany. After the events in Cologne, some news outlets became "outright xenophobic and racist" in their indignations towards Muslim refugees (Karakayali and Vollmer, 2017, p. 130). These insightful observations are a highly relevant source of information for this analysis. However, the authors admitted that they did not provide "a full account of the role of new media and their relevance for discourse analysis," despite acknowledging the growing relevance of media of this kind (Karakayali and Vollmer, 2017, p. 119). This research follows a similar pattern, in that social media is not analysed throughout this study.

Anna Triandafyllidou also emphasises the effect that the events in Cologne on New Year's Eve in 2015 had on media outlets in Germany in her article, *A "Refugee Crisis" Unfolding*, in which she calls the events a "turning point" that re-contextualised the refugee crisis (2017, p. 209). The author observed how the horrific happenings in Cologne were framed by a variety of German media, including the press, TV, social media, and political leaders' speeches, in terms of comparing Germany to a "young and innocent woman assaulted by these foreign, evil men" (Triandafyllidou, 2017, p. 209). However, Triandafyllidou also stated that German media discourse simultaneously projected empathetic tones towards those seeking asylum



(2017, p. 211). Arguably, this contrast of highly positive and very negative representations of the refugee crisis reflects the volatile nature of the current media discourse in Germany when it frames the crisis.

These findings on ambivalent framing are also supported by David Abadi, Leen d'Haenens, Keith Roe and Joyce Koeman in their 2017 article, *Leitkultur and Discourse Hegemonies*. The authors emphasised the negative frames of Muslim immigrants that endure in some German media: "nearly half of right leaning newspapers refer to Muslims as problems" (Abadi *et al.*, 2016, p. 574). It must be said that this 2014 study was published one year prior to the 2015 peak in irregular migration crisis in Europe. Arguably, the levels of negativity towards Muslim immigrants may have increased since the time of its publication. Further research should be undertaken about this issue on both left- and right-leaning newspapers.

To summarise, the main themes running throughout the existing research on German media framing of the migration of Muslims to Germany in the most recent years often references intolerance, raises the issue of unaccompanied refugee children, engages with the concept of the extraordinary, potentially projects messages of xenophobia, as well as empathy and ambivalence. Overall, the various themes detected by the relevant research point to a predominantly pessimistic framing of the irregular migration crisis by German media outlets. All themes appear to be framed in negative terms, with the exception of empathetic frames, and even those tended to be replaced by reports that rendered xenophobic messages following the Cologne attacks. Some gaps in the existing research can be identified. There appears to be a one-sided focus on media publications that are more conservative or right-wing. Additionally, existing research seem to analyse only a limited number of German news outlets. There is a need to broaden the sample of observation. New media such as social media platforms also represent a gap in the previous research surrounding this topic. Lastly, it is important to broaden the time-span of observations. Most of existing research covers 2015, as this time period involves the peak of the irregular migration crisis in Europe. To address these gaps, this research observes both left- and right-wing German newspapers to diversify the sample. It also includes three different media outlets as opposed to a singular source to ensure a more comprehensive comparative analysis. Although this research will not focus on social media platforms in its analysis, the news outlets selected were accessed via their online editions. Finally, the research covers a

time period spanning 2015-2018 in order to cover the framing of the European irregular migration crisis at its peak as well as during the following years.

## 2.2 Methods of Integration

Whilst addressing the prevailing issues of mixed media perceptions, integration and intolerance in modern-day Germany, we must take into account possible methods of integration that may be utilised for future efforts of adaptation. However, it is acknowledged that this is a very broad, multi-faceted field of research and this study will limit its attention to broader concepts surrounding the issue. An article by the OSCE argues that migrants, along with every other member of society, should also be included in the political decision-making processes of their country of residence (2018, p. 5). By facilitating the political participation of migrants, the OSCE region can legitimize the democratic political systems of their participating States (OSCE, 2018, p. 5). Angela Merkel stated in a press release by the German Federal Government that “the national and state governments must work together to establish viable structures, also for Islam” (German Federal Government, 2018). Merkel stressed the importance of the coexistence of various faiths despite the challenges that this poses. She cited Article One of the German Basic Law which states that “human dignity shall be inviolable” (German Federal Government, 2018). However, statements that embody highly positive sentiments represent desires or beliefs of society as a whole to a certain degree only. In another occurrence covered by the Federal Government, Merkel called for help from other European states who have not taken on as large a refugee quota as Germany in a “burden-sharing” scheme (German Federal Government, 2018). Merkel called for the migrants who are entitled to stay in Germany to be integrated as quickly as possible, whilst those without this entitlement should return to their countries of origin (German Federal Government, 2018).

Academic, Justin Gest offers up two further methods of integration in his article, *Western Muslim Integration*, citing the two modes of either assimilation or adjustment (2012, p. 192). Gest suggested that some believe that integration involves the assimilation of new cultural groups to the “requirements of local culture”, whilst others think that both immigrants and locals should be expected to change their preferences in order to reach a mutual agreement (2012, p. 192). Further research in this area is needed to find and test in more methods of

integration for Muslim migrants into Europe. Communication by media sources and framing of the relevant debate in term of assimilation or adjustment is an important input into shaping the methods of integration of Muslim migrants into German society.

### 2.3 Islamophobia

Ethnocentrism is a concept under which Islamophobia is a sub-heading. Current-day Islamophobia, in particular, is described by John L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin as a representation of intolerance, discriminatory acts, unreasonable fear and racism aimed at Islamic and Muslim individuals (2011, p. 31). In Western countries, the debate surrounding multiculturalism often becomes a debate concerning Muslims, with “almost every reason for toleration’s apparent fall into disrepute” concerning Islam (Esposito and Kalin, 2011, p. 31). In his book, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, Tajfel explains the psychological processes behind concepts such as Islamophobia. He argued that humans feel the need to manage “complex social environments” by reducing them to smaller units (1982, p. 112). This subsequently results in stereotypes, which are used as a method of grouping people in accordance with generalised psychological traits (Tajfel, 1982, p. 112). Tajfel enforces that this act of categorisation by society results in inter- and outer-group behaviour, wherein “the ingroup is favoured and the outgroup is discriminated against” (1982, p. 112).

In *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria*, P. J. G Pulzer outlined the history of Germany’s ethnocentrism through the concept of ‘Aryan citizens’ versus ‘Semites’ (1964, p. 52). It was once widely accepted that the Aryan races were superior to the Semitic races in every way (Pulzer, 1964, p. 52). Pulzer writes that much of German society believed that Aryans were the “true creators in philosophy, religion, and science”, whilst the Semites were merely imitators and plagiarists (1964, p. 52). This past displays the history of extreme intolerance once exhibited by the German society. For this reason, it is useful for background information and understanding of current-day examples of cultural intolerance such as Islamophobia. However, there are many differences between past and present cultural tensions in Germany. These differences, in both eras and public perceptions, must be taken into account as not to group two events that differ in severity of discrimination.

In *Suitable Enemy: Racism, Migration and Islamophobia in Europe*, Fekete and Sivanandan discuss the issue of Islamophobia, taking into account how present-day

discrimination occurs in Germany. This research states that integration measures put in place by European governments may actually reflect the Islamophobic views of the extreme-right (Fekete and Sivanandan, 2009, p. 77). The scholars commented on the fact that in current-day Europe, issues of xenophobia and Islamophobia are “the warp and woof of the war on terror” (Fekete and Sivanandan, 2009, p. 77). The right-wing figures of authority in European states utilise their state power as a way to construct fear of alien cultures and allow for the implementation of laws that discriminate against Muslims (2009, p. 77). By arguing relentlessly that Muslim individuals refuse to integrate properly into European society, forever clutching onto their alien values and religion, these authority figures justify Islamophobic attitudes among European peoples (Fekete and Sivanandan, 2009, p. 85).

While it is difficult to deny that Islamophobia exists in Germany as well as in many other European countries, the idea that Western anti-Muslim attitudes reflect feelings of racism is usually contested in the social sphere (van der Noll *et al.*, 2017, p. 1). Instead, the authors argued that this divide is actually a result of a difference in cultural values between typically Western ideals and Islam (van der Noll *et al.*, 2017, p. 1). Der Noll recognised that Muslims now represent the largest minority population in Western Europe in her 2013 study *Religious Toleration of Muslims in the German Public Sphere* (p. 61). For this reason, the future state of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims can be seen as being one of the most prevalent issues of our time (van der Noll, 2013, p. 61). Despite Western Europe’s high-regard of values such as religious freedom and tolerance, events over recent decades involving Muslim immigration have unearthed a need to backtrack on these ideals (van der Noll, 2013, p. 60). This is largely due to the view that Islamic modes of living generally go against Western values surrounding discrimination and gender equality (van der Noll, 2013, p. 60). In Germany, in particular, the author mentions the disparity in Islamophobic sentiments between societies in the East and West. According to van der Noll, societies in East Germany are usually less tolerant of Muslim groups than those living in West Germany (2013, p. 69). Again, it is crucial to acknowledge that this study was undertaken two years before the worst of the migration crisis hit Germany. This may mean that outlooks on Muslim migrants could have become even more negative in terms of Islamophobic attitudes.

Importantly, it is critical to understand the roots of Islamophobia in German society. Van der Noll explores this idea in a combined study with Vassilis Saroglou, entitled *Understanding Objection Against Islamic Education*. Despite the fact that the role of a liberal

state is largely defined by its neutral position on concepts such as religion, many Western societies have emphasised their traditionally Christian values in order to challenge diversity (van der Noll and Saroglou, 2014, p. 220). These values, in combination with societal anxiety and a general aversion to Muslim ways of life, have ultimately challenged the place of Muslim individuals in Western Europe (van der Noll and Saroglou, 2014, p. 220).

Karolin Machtans confirmed the volatile position of Muslim groups in Western European societies, outlining that Islamophobia can be explained through five societal viewpoints: “1. Islam as monolithic and static; 2. Islam as separate and other; 3. Islam as inferior; 4. Islam as the enemy; and 5. Islam as manipulative” (2016, p. 91). She also argued that Islamophobic outlooks are not purely driven by religious intolerance, but are also spurred by racist sentiments towards cultural traditions and ethnicity (Machtans, 2016, p. 91). According to Peter Berger, these issues of ethnocentrism and Islamophobia thus make pluralism, or “the co-existence of different ethnic, moral, and religious communities in one society”, extremely difficult to achieve in today’s Western European societies (Berger, 2014, p. 15).

## 2.4 The “Death of Europe”

The aforementioned ideas all feed into the increasingly popular idea of “the death of Europe,” a concept formed out of the supposed decline of European values and traditions since the mass immigration of those from different cultures into the continent. Bruce S. Thornton states that Europe had a “suicidal response” to the so-called “invasion” of immigrants, becoming consumed by sentiments of self-loathing and guilt over “supposed” Western crimes such as imperialism and colonialism (2007, p. 80). This guilt ultimately weakens Europeans whilst simultaneously making the newcomers more bold in their approach (Thornton, 2007, p. 80). This idea is flawed due to the bold belief that the West is not solely responsible for past atrocities such as colonialism, alongside the view that immigrants are ‘invading’ Europe. This idea that Western Europe is effectively being forcibly stolen from Europeans by foreign immigrants needs to be altered in its controversial approach in order to provide adequate context. Thornton also expresses the belief that immigration has spurred a decline in European civilisation by pointing out the overrepresentation of Muslim immigrants and their children in recorded crime-rates and prison-records (2007, p.

84). The author puts this down to the Islamic faith, stating that the religion has generally been “exclusionary and chauvinistic” due to the view that many Muslim immigrants are not willing to follow the customs of their new countries (Thornton, 2007, p. 87). Yet again, the decline of the West is blamed on largely racist and xenophobic beliefs that do not hold any real traction. Thornton’s ideas must firstly be stripped of their discriminatory sentiments and broken down to their core objectives before being of any use to this cause.

In *The Routledge Handbook of Euroscepticism*, Benjamin Leruth, Nicholas Startin and Simon Usherwood assert that the anti-EU perspectives that the migration crisis aroused were also linked to intensified feelings of Islamophobia (2017, p. 191). According to the authors, there are three modes of Eurosceptic thought with varying degrees of hostility towards the institution of the EU, being Euro critics, Eurosceptics and adamant Eurosceptics (Leruth *et al.*, 2017, p. 191). Critical European citizens call for improvement of EU institutions and policies whilst adamant Eurosceptics instead demand complete abolition of the EU (Leruth *et al.*, 2017, p. 191). Due to Europe’s drastic influxes of immigration, many Eurosceptic citizens believe that the region is no longer the dwelling of Europeans, but a “home for the entire world” (Murray, 2017, p. 2). Eurosceptic theorists believe that soon Europe will no longer be Europe as we know it, and that the people of Europe will lose their homeland and cultures completely (Murray, 2017, p. 1). In *Suicide of the West* by Chris Smith and Richard Koch, the authors criticise the role of Liberalism in facilitating Europe in its decline (2006, p. 9). Smith and Koch state that Liberalism allows Western societies to reach their dissolution (2006, p. 9). The authors also enforce that there are three main, current issues surrounding Euroscepticism that need to be dealt with. The first is “the jungle” that is spreading through society, the second is the drastic rise in population growth and political activity in developing countries, and the third involves the communist movement and its overall goal of a monopoly of world power (Koch and Smith, 2006, p. 9). As long as the migration crisis is analysed from a Liberalist perspective, Koch and Smith argue that it is impossible to realise the extent of the resulting challenges (2006, p. 9).

## 2.5 Conclusions

To conclude, this review demonstrated that literature in the above fields of research is incredibly mixed in its approaches and perspectives. It should be expected that research surrounding topics to do with race, culture and integration will often contain bias and controversy. There are definitely points of disagreement from varying works throughout all five facets of the investigation, however this is to be expected. Overall, the analyses under review conveyed various degrees of uncertainty about the future of Germany and the wider Europe, as a whole. The literature often is urgent and strongly-worded in its approach – and as such, it should be considered carefully to avoid any bias or prejudice. The following chapter will lay-out the theoretical framework of the research by explaining each theory that will be utilised in the study and why it is important in fulfilling the research goals.

## Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

This research is informed by four main theoretical models which, in interaction, constitute the over-arching theoretical framework of this study. The basis of this framework is laid out by constructivist theoretical approach. This approach is suited to this research due to the general subjectivity and social nature of the topic at hand. Secondly, sociological and psychological theories of integration by various leading theorists are looked at. On the next level is agenda setting theory. It is used to explain how the media coverage of migrant integration impacts the public's perceptions of the issue. The core component of this level is Robert M. Entman's cascading activation framing theory. Entman's theory enables this analysis to uncover key messages that German sectors wish to send to the rest of the world about the local impact and impressions of the migrant crisis on German society.

### 3.1 Constructivism in International Relations Studies

As stated above, the theoretical framework of this research is within constructivist theoretical approach. According to J. Samuel Barkin, constructivist theoretical tradition prescribes to the states that international politics and international relations (IR) are not "reflective of an objective, material reality but [instead] an intersubjective, or social, reality" (2003, p. 326). The interests and actions of IR actors are postulated to be driven by "social

norms and ideas rather than by objective or material conditions” (Barkin, 2003, p. 326). This research is, inherently, a study of the framing of social interactions and how they are represented by newsmakers. It utilises social theories with an end-goal of establishing whether or not an influx of predominantly Muslim immigrants has created changes in levels of group intolerance (including Islamophobia) in German society and assesses it through the projections by the leading opinion making news sources. Barkin enforces that there are two main epistemologies of constructivist thought. The first argues that “an identifiable reality exists out there and can be accessed through empirical research, [whilst] the other contends that we can never know for sure if what we observe really exists independently of our observation of it” (Barkin, 2003, p. 326). This research follows the former ideology, endeavouring to discern a fragment of reality through empirical study. In this case, the research aims to identify the impressions of German society in regards to intolerance towards Muslim immigrants through research into German media’s representations surrounding the European irregular migration crisis.

According to Stefano Guzzini, constructivism can be understood by firstly establishing where it is positioned on the level of observation, and secondly on the level of action proper, before distinguishing the relationship between both of these levels (2000, p. 147). Furthermore, with this distinction in mind, Guzzini enforces that, from an epistemological standpoint, constructivism is about “the social construction of knowledge”, whilst, ontologically, it is about “the construction of social reality” (Guzzini, 2000, p. 147). This research is especially concerned with the ontological stance of constructivist thought, as it endeavours to analyse the construction of social reality surrounding interactions between German citizens and Muslim migrants. Guzzini also states that, in the field of international relations, the significance of identity has become integral to the empirical analysis of the social construction of others (2000, p. 154). As this research aims to analyse the way in which others, in the form of new migrants, are socially constructed through German media, a focus on identity is important. Therefore, the significance of identity is noted by analysing the social construction of both migrant perpetrators and German victims in media framing.

Moreover, Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander define constructivists as individuals who believe that these identities may change through interaction, and that this is important (2006, p. 95). The authors enforce that these definitions of identity have the power to “influence security practices and the type of anarchy states find themselves in” (Guzzini



& Leander, 2006, p. 95). This idea plays a crucial role in the research, as it is hypothesised that the way in which migrants are perpetuated in German media may negatively impact the general perception of the European irregular migration influx, as a whole. This widely-held negative perception of immigration into Europe may then result in the vision of state anarchy.

In their book *Constructivism and International Relations: Alexander Wendt and His Critics*, theorists S. Guzzini and A. Leander point to leading social constructivist researcher, Alexander Wendt, in their study of constructivism in IR (2006, p. 96). Wendt argues that perceptions of the self and others emerge from interaction between states (as cited in Guzzini & Leander, 2006, p. 96). Wendt suggests that states have four main 'national interests', being: "to preserve and further their physical security, autonomy, economic well-being and collective self-esteem" (as cited in Guzzini & Leander, 2006, p. 96). Outside of these interests, Wendt states that reality is developed through social interaction, during which "conceptions of self and interest tend to mirror the practices of significant others over time" (as cited in Guzzini & Leander, 2006, p. 96). This idea is also useful for the research, as global readers of German media reports on the European irregular migrant crisis could begin to 'mirror' the views expressed in the articles by German news journalists.

However, it is acknowledged that constructivism is not a theoretical approach without flaws. Maja Zehfuss points to a potential flaw in the constructivist mode of thought, stating that constructivism "stresses the significance of meaning but assumes, at the same time, the existence of an a priori reality", consequently placing it in a problematic, middle-ground position (2002, p. 10). This concept of the 'middle ground' envisages constructivists as being situated somewhere between rationalists and those deemed to be more radical than themselves (Zehfuss, 2002, p. 5).

### 3.2 Sociological and Psychological Theories of Integration

On another level of theoretical thought, sociological and psychological theories of integration also aid in uncovering the reasoning and thought-processes behind certain trends in media-framing. These ideas relate to constructivist theory in that they embody the theory of a social reality. Sociological and psychological theories of integration are vastly important aspects of focus throughout a study of cultural tensions in a European society. In Chester L. Hunt and Lewis Walkers' book, *Ethnic Dynamics*, integration is described as a method that

aims to solve ethnic conflicts through the universal adoption of a singular identity and the consequent decline of separate ethnic values and interests (1979, p. 12). Through the creation of this “common whole”, integration assumes that the issue of group conflict is resolved (Hunt and Walker, 1979, p. 12). This process of singularity can be problematic in its involvement of heavy cultural assimilation such as the promotion of one main language and the encouragement of certain values (Hunt and Walker, 1979, p. 12). Promoters of integration view drastic cultural differences as being the cause of conflict between groups and believe that they make successful integration impossible (Hunt and Walker, 1979, p. 12).

One facet of the social psychology surrounding integration involves the concept of toleration. This aspect is touched upon by Maykel Verkuyten and Kumar Yogeeswaran in their article, *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Toleration*. The scholars explain that diversity can be seen from a negative perspective as it often leads to society being categorised into “us” versus “them” groupings, which ultimately results in intergroup conflicts (Verkuyten and Yogeeswaran, 2016, p. 72). Simultaneously, however, the diversification of society is also a positive occurrence as it means that there are more opportunities for intergroup relations which decrease stereotyping and increase acceptance (Verkuyten and Yogeeswaran, 2016, p. 72). It would be valuable for further research to explore whether or not the positive aspects of diversity outweigh the negative ones in order to construct methods of successful integration.

Anna Triandafyllidou also highlights this theory of ‘the other’ in *National Identity and the “Other”*, stating that “National identity becomes meaningful only through the contrast with others” (1998, p. 593). The author explains that a nation may define itself through comparison to an immigrant group by perceiving the community as a threat due to their differences (Triandafyllidou, 1998, p. 602). This ‘us versus them’ mentality is described by Social psychologist, Henri Tajfel, through the statement “We are what we are because *they* are not what we are (Tajfel, 1978, p. 10). Thus, members of the ingroup begin to consider themselves to be superior than the rest of these other, “average” members of society (Tajfel, 1982, p. 504). Tajfel points to a major hypothesis in the field that outlines the way in which members of a particular ethnic group are considered to be more similar to one another through stereotypical traits that apply to their group, rather than through traits that are not part of their group stereotype (1981, p. 120). George de Vos discusses the origins of human conflict in Anthony de Reuck and Julie Knight’s book, *Conflict in Society*, stating that, from an

evolutionary perspective, humans have developed a feeling of unease about associating themselves with those outside of their community (1966, p. 65). Thus, humans need a means of escape from their victims and so place a degree of distance between themselves and their targets, endeavouring to find others with a similar set of values to their own as to feel justified in exploiting those who uphold different values (de Reuck and Knight, 1966, p. 65). De Vos goes on to say that societies should be studied in terms of the processes of “group inclusion and exclusion”, which involve identification with certain individuals whilst also maintaining distance from those who are different (de Reuck and Knight, 1966, p. 67).

H.D Forbes links this idea of ethnic separation to the concept of ethnocentrism, which combines loyalty towards the ingroup and hatred towards outside communities (1983, p. 22). Ethnocentrism differs to prejudice as it involves a fairly consistent sentiment surrounding alien groups, whilst prejudice usually embodies a feeling of dislike against a particular group (Forbes, 1983, p. 22). Laurent Licata and Olivier Klein provide a deeper analysis about whether or not European citizenship is responsible for xenophobic attitudes, writing that, when people are able to identify with their own community, they automatically “seek a positive social identity through favourable ingroup/outgroup comparisons” (2002, p. 325). Differentiating oneself from another outgroup by means of discrimination or prejudice may, then, meet these desires (Licata and Klein, 2002, p. 325). Although this theory does have valid components, it does not prove that European citizenship, specifically, breeds xenophobia. However, Henri Tajfel’s theories about group-specific traits would be valuable in the research as they pinpoint particular values of a cultural ingroup that can be used for comparison.

### 3.3 Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda setting theory is utilised in this research to uncover how the media reporting of the Europe irregular migrant crisis in Germany impacts global readers’ perceptions of the issue. It relates to the previous theoretical approaches as it uncovers further the thought-processes driving particular media-framing decisions. Duncan Watts states that agenda-setting theory aims to explain “the extent to which the amount of media coverage of an issue has an impact upon the public’s attention to, and interest in, that issue” (2010, p. 7). According to agenda-setting theorists, mass communication publications have the power to influence readers through the stories that they select to be the most prominent (Watts, 2010,

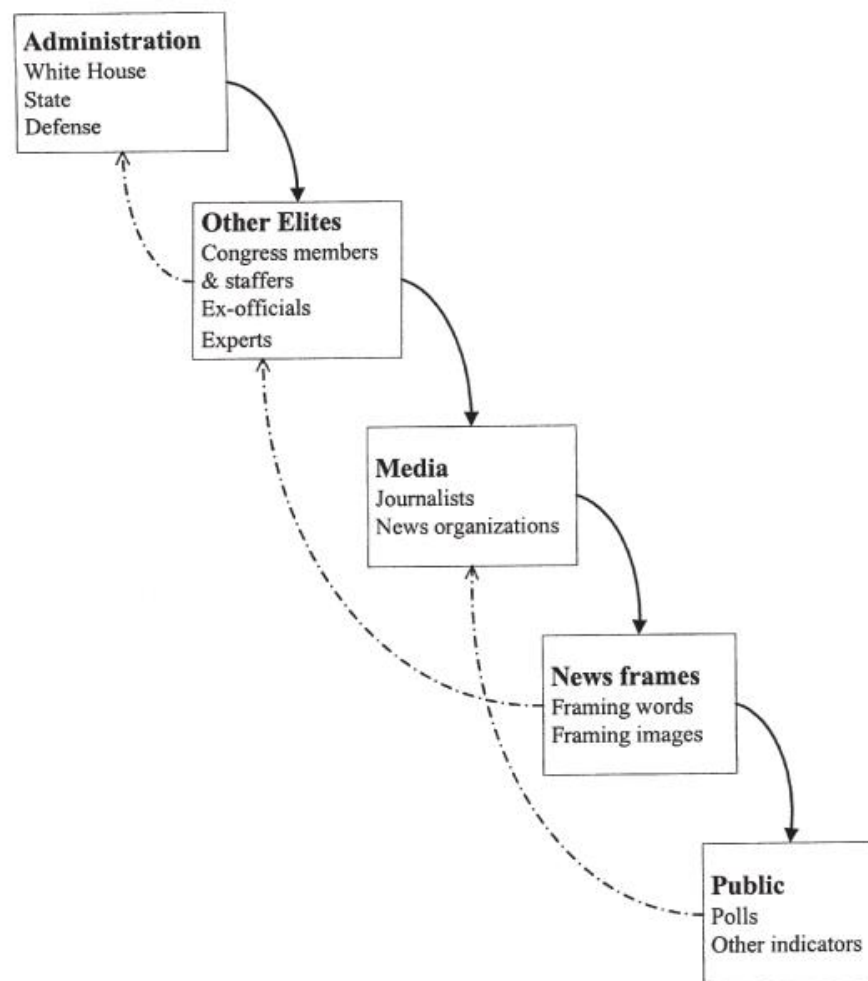
p. 7). This research will use the lens of agenda-setting theory to analyse how the media outlets involved have chosen the material that they promote to their audience, and the motivations behind these decisions. Furthermore, Watts states that the media has increasingly begun to influence the political agenda by telling readers what they should be thinking about (Watts, 2010, p. 7). This aspect of agenda setting theory is also important to the research, as there is an underlying political theme throughout the coverage of the European irregular migrant crisis. H. Denis Wu and Renita Coleman state that, for over three decades, the key idea in agenda-setting theory has been the transfer of 'issue salience' which pertains to "how media emphasis of certain issues raises their importance for the public" (Coleman & Wu, 2010, p. 776). The authors emphasise that first-level agenda setting is about the degree of coverage that a media outlet gives to a particular issue, thus implying that the media are able to select the issues that they wish to make the public aware of (Coleman & Wu, 2010, p. 776). In the second-level of agenda setting, the concept of 'attribute salience' is of key focus, which surrounds the qualities or characteristics that describe people in the media alongside the general tone of those attributes (Coleman & Wu, 2010, p. 776). In this level, the attributes are split into two dimensions being substantive and affective (Coleman & Wu, 2010, p. 776). Coleman and Wu state that the substantive dimension focuses on concepts such as personality and ideology, whilst the affective dimension pertains to the tone of the substantive attributes, and whether it is positive, negative, or neutral (Coleman & Wu, 2010, p. 776). These dimensions of second-level agenda setting are utilised in the research to firstly examine the personalities of both the perpetrator and victim in each article on a substantive level and, secondly, discern whether the tone of these personality attributes is positive, negative or neutral on an affective level.

### 3.4 Cascading Activation Framing Theory

Robert M. Entman's Cascading Activation Framing Theory is also used in this study as a theory for the research. Like agenda-setting theory, this concept is also concerned with matters such as issue salience. Entman states that the way in which the activation of thoughts spread through an individual's mind reflects the way that ideas "travel along interpersonal networks and in the spread of framing words and images across the different media" (2003, p. 418). As shown in Figure 1, the theory pertains to the "cascading flow of influence" that

joins every level of society, from administration, to non-administration elites, to news organizations, the texts that they produce, and, finally, the public sector (Entman, 2003, p. 418). As this study involves media framing and textual analysis of news articles, the research will benefit from the inclusion of Entman's theory as a mode of thought to uncover the messages that specific facets of German society, namely the administration and elite-levels, wish to portray to a global audience. However, it is acknowledged that Entman's model is used as a model of domestic cascade - from local government to their local public. This research will utilise Entman's theory beyond this, with a cascade that flows from local government to local media and then to a global audience. This is achieved by utilising English editions of German media. Through the Cascading Activation Framing Theory, this research will be able to pinpoint specific messages that the German government sector wishes to send to global readers about the local impact of the European migrant crisis. Entman's theory also enforces that the public sector is represented through both directions of the cascade, often as the dependent variable at the bottom of the hierarchy but also occasionally being fed back up to influence the elite-level via the media (Entman, 2003, p. 420). This aspect of the theory is also useful to the research, as it will be helpful in deciphering when information presented in the media is a representation of the German public sector's sentiments and ideas that are, in turn, being pumped back up the metaphorical cascade as to promote particular ideas to the global audiences (Entman, 2003, p. 420).

Figure 3.4: Visual of Cascading Activation Theory



### 3.5 Conclusions

This chapter has outlined the various theoretical models to be used in the research. All four will help towards uncovering the reasoning behind decisions made by leading German newsmakers that drive their media-framing trends. The following chapter will outline the various methodologies utilized in the research by explaining the appropriateness of the research design and the details of the research design, as a whole.

## Chapter 4: Methods

This research aims to study the way in which German media presented four dramatic events related to the migration crisis of 2015 to a global audience in an effort to discover whether or not there are any existing themes of Islamophobia, xenophobia or intolerance portrayed in German society since the crisis. This will help to assess the way in which German media outlets choose to frame narratives surrounding this issue and pinpoint any underlying messages that they are sending to the global audience.

### 4.1 Appropriateness of the Research Design

The following study positions itself within qualitative research tradition. This research approach is better suited for the chosen design of case-study analysis. However, this research also has a with a mixed methods element to it. The analysis uses descriptive statistical measures and produces graphs (considered to be one of the most powerful methods of presenting statistical findings (Salkind, 2010, p. 353).

#### **4.12 (Multiple) Case Studies**

This research utilises the multiple case-studies method as opposed to experimental research. Case studies are, according to LeAnn Grogan Putney, the preferred method for research of an “exploratory or explanatory nature” (Salkind, 2010, p. 116). Therefore, this method is well-suited to the following research, which hopes to explore how German media is framing the migrant crisis to its global audience and explain why there may or may not be changes in the levels of intolerance, namely through Islamophobia, among German societies. According to Robert K. Yin, case studies become the most suitable method “when (a) “how” or “why” questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context” (2009, p. 2).

This indicates suitability with the research goals, as the research sub-questions all follow the “how” or “why” structure (see the Introduction to the thesis). Yin’s argument pertaining to the researcher’s control over events is also relevant to this research -- all variables studied are impossible to control. To remind, the research focuses on the way in which German media presents Germany’s reaction to the migrant crisis to the global readers, and specifically on the framing of the changes in levels of Islamophobia and/or intolerance in

German society. Lastly, Yin emphasises that case studies are preferred in instances when the research focus is on modern-day phenomenon within a “real-life” setting (2009, p. 2). This requirement suits the research design as the 2015 migrant crisis occurred very recently and the fall-out of this event continues to impact German society today. The research analyses news articles surrounding four events spanning from the New Year’s Eve of 2015/ 2016 up to July of 2018 and this time-span ultimately results in a focus on very recent events. This study is also representative of real-life or everyday events, as three of Germany’s most well-known news outlets have been selected to represent the authentic experience and views of everyday German citizens. These outlets include *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*, *Spiegel*, and *Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)*. Despite acknowledging the importance and relevancy of social media for media framing analysis of the irregular migrant crisis, this facet of media is outside the scope of the project. Additionally, German newspaper articles continue to be widely-read and trusted media sources, as indicated through the fact that they are still read by 70% of the adult population (Internations.org, 2019). This statistic indicates that English editions of these newspapers are also respected among a global audience.

Four case-studies were selected for this research. All case studies pertain to events in which female German nationals were sexually-assaulted and/ or murdered by male Muslim migrants. They span chronologically over a three-year time-span, from the end of 2015 until halfway through 2018. The first of these case-studies pertains to the mass sexual-assault of multiple German women by migrant men on New Year’s Eve of 2015/ 2016 in Cologne. The second relates to the 2016 rape and murder of a 19-year-old university student in Freiburg. Lastly, two closely-aligned murders of German girls aged 14 and 15 by their migrant boyfriends have been included as case studies, one being in the town of Kandel in 2017 and the other in Mainz in 2018.

#### **4.13 Inductive Approach**

The research framework is positioned within an inductive approach to analysis. According to David R. Thomas, the inductive approach aims to: “(a) condense raw textual data into a brief, summary format; (b) establish clear links between the evaluation or research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data; and (c) develop a framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that are evident in the raw data”



(2006, p. 237). This approach is deemed appropriate for this research, as it involves the generalisation of media information and the analysis of this data as to ascertain any connections with the research questions regarding Islamophobia or the framing of the 'other'. Thomas furthers the relevancy of an inductive research approach to this study by enforcing that, as opposed to a structured and constraining deductive approach, this method allows research findings to be noticed through the strong themes that emerge in the raw data (2006, p. 238). By analysing the recurrence and prominence of the themes and frames throughout various German media articles, this analysis identifies leading messages that German media outlets aim to send to their global audience about the migrant crisis and Germany's way of dealing with it. As such, inductive approach helps to reach the research objectives.

#### ***4.14 Longitudinal Approach***

In terms of longitudinal and latitudinal research, this project utilizes the former. Elisabetta Ruspini emphasises the usefulness of longitudinal research "as a necessary tool for the study of social change" (2003, p. xv). This is the main reasoning behind the selection of this method, as an important research objective is to establish any changes that may occur in the media framing of Muslim migrants by German media outlets over time, and specifically, Islamophobic sentiments in that framing.

#### ***4.15 Media Framing Analysis***

According to Entman, framing involves the selection and emphasis of particular aspects of events before forming connections between them in order to "promote a particular interpretation" (2003, p. 417). Media framing analysis is important to this research as it allows for the identification of any noticeable patterns among the collated articles, in regard to repeated or emphasised facets of media articles surrounding the Europe migrant crisis in Germany. Entman explains that framing is more effective when it utilises more "culturally resonant" inclusions (2003, p. 417). Words and images that have more salience in the local cultural setting are those that are more comprehensible and emotionally charged, and can be discerned through their repetition and importance in the texts (Entman, 2003, p. 417). Therefore, those words, phrases and images that have the greatest magnitude in each

article will be tracked and analysed to identify the leading message(s) that German send to the global audience about the migrant crisis in Europe and Germany's response to it. Media framing analysis focuses on the coverage of the events with strong emotive charges, these include reports of four sexual assaults and/or murders of German women by migrant men. It is expected that these reports will use highly emotively-charged language and images. Finally, media framing is equally defined by what news outlets choose to omit from articles (Entman, 1993, p. 54). Hence, this research will also analyse what frames and sentiments are avoided by German media in news articles surrounding the migrant crisis and Germany's reactions to it.

## 4.2 Research Design

### 4.2.1 Sample

This analysis deals with three chosen German media outlets, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*, *Der Spiegel*, and *Suddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)*, as mentioned above. In terms of the reasoning behind selecting these particular news outlets for the research, *FAZ* is published daily with approximately 400,000 copies in circulation (The University of Chicago: Division of the Humanities, n.d.) Additionally, according to the Department of Germanic Studies at the University of Chicago, *Der Spiegel* is "Europe's biggest and Germany's most influential weekly magazine" (The University of Chicago: Division of the Humanities, n.d.). *SZ* is also a valid German online news outlet to include in the research, as it is one of the largest daily newspapers published in German (The University of Chicago: Division of the Humanities, n.d.).

The sample size for this research is 150 news articles in total. The articles pertained to the four case studies (Table 1). This sample is deemed to be representative to track media framing trends by German news outlets to international consumers and identify leading narratives projected by the newspapers.

Table 4.22: Distribution of Case Coverage<sup>1</sup>

	Case 1: New Year's Eve Cologne Attacks	Case 2: Murder of Susanna F.	Case 3: Murder of Mia V.	Case 4: Murder of Maria L.
<i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)</i>	24	0	0	0
<i>Der Spiegel</i>	6	27	14	32
<i>Suddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)</i>	5	28	11	3
<i>Total</i>	35	55	25	35

#### 4.23 Data Processing and Analysis

This analysis utilises content analysis to track media frames and resulting narratives. The content analysis was conducted according to a number of categories (see Table 2).

Table 4.24: Categories of Content Analysis<sup>2</sup>

Reference information	Time Stamp
	Reference
	Title
	Date of Event
	Summary
	Name of the news source
Visibility indicators	Actors in Title
	Centrality of Migration Topic
	Visual Support

<sup>1</sup> Created by researcher

<sup>2</sup> Created by researcher

Narrative elements	Event
	Thematic Frame
	Actors
	Description of Victim
	Description of Attacker
	Conflict and Conflict Resolution
Emotive elements	Evaluation of Actors
	Metaphors
Visual images	Source of Visual Support
	Type of Visual Support
	Impressions of Visual Support

The narrative elements of analysis deserve a special elaboration. The study focuses on how the “other” is framed in German media by analysing who the “other” is and what the aspects of their person are. As such, one important aspect observed involved the descriptions of both the victims and the attackers. Another crucial part of the narrative structure involves tracking the framing of the conflict and conflict resolution in each article. Depending on political standing of a report, proposed resolutions involved suggestions such as further integration of migrants into German society, or isolating migrants from the rest of society to avoid these occurrences from happening.

Importantly, the study conducted comparisons between the coverage of the same event by different news outlets. This allowed to highlight differences in the reporting by different leading newspapers and argue why these differences occurred.

#### **4.25 Validity**

To increase validity of this analysis, media publications spanning over three years have been gathered from three different news outlets. Articles that were “double-ups” were excluded. Additionally, some articles pertaining to the case-studies were excluded due to their style and presentation. For example, articles based on interviews that are written in a script-like format were excluded, and only report-style accounts of the events are gathered. This analysis focused on content analysis of media publications by leading newspapers – an

accessible source of data for a researcher working from overseas and a reliable indicator on the tenor of the dominant debates in the German society. Future analysis may look into the German-language editions, to detect messages that were projected to the domestic audiences. Future analysis may also consider conducting interviews with representatives of the general public and elites (these were impossible due to financial constraints for this research).

As with any research endeavour, this study had its limitations. Frames created and disseminated by three media outlets do not reflect the sentiments of every German citizen, no matter how leading and prestigious those news outlets are. This means that, ultimately, the frames and narrative tracked through the media content may not be reflective of the messages the whole of German society wishes to send to the global audiences. Additionally, the Cascading Activation Framing Theory argues for a key role of high-level elites of society in spreading and disseminating frames. Therefore, it is likely that the media articles analysed may be reflective of the positions of a relatively small segment of German society. However, importantly, the publications are relatively politically unbiased in nature.

The following chapter will build upon the methodologies by laying-out the findings of the research and making suggestions about what this evidence could mean for the research objectives.

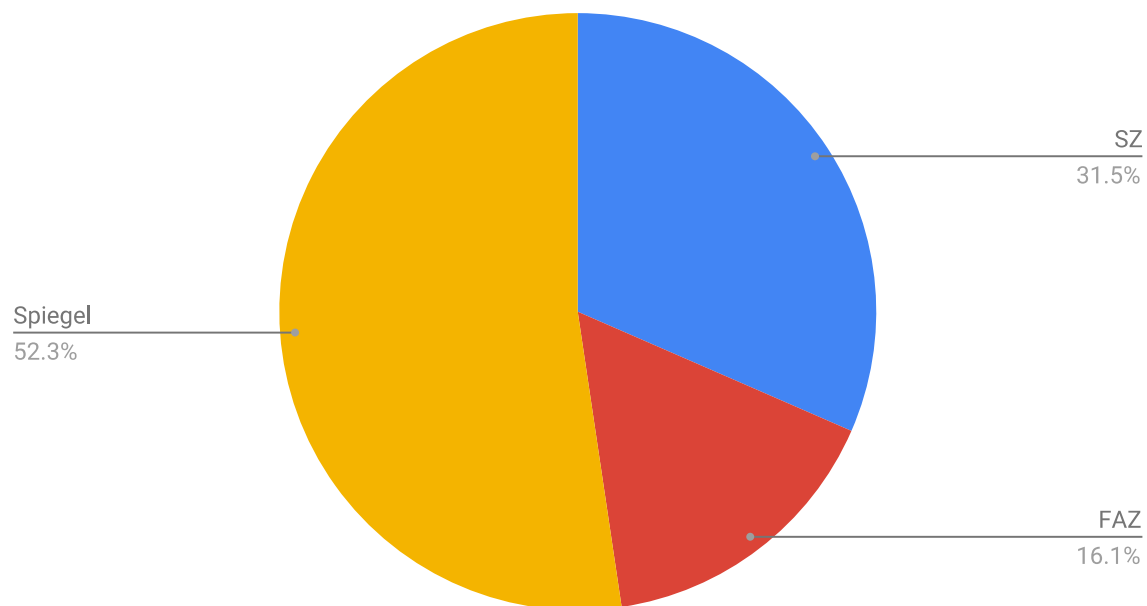
## Chapter 5: Findings

Chapter 4 outlined the methodological and research design approaches, as well as methods used to conduct this research. This Chapter will present findings of content analysis of 150 articles reporting four violent criminal events relating to the European irregular migrant crisis (as listed above). Aiming to answer the leading research question, the chapter tracks media framing of the actors involved in the events and presentation of these events in general. Respectively, the chapter will address the following meta-categories that guided the content analysis: Reference Information, Visibility Indicators, Narrative Elements, Emotive Elements and Visual Images.

## 5.1 Reference Information

Figure 5.1 shows the distribution of the sampled coverage by all three German news outlets to assess the variance in levels of coverage by each outlet.

Figure 5.1: Distribution of Coverage by Media Outlets<sup>3</sup>



*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) had the lowest coverage of the four events out of the three news outlets. In terms of its political standing, FAZ is a centre-right, liberal-conservative newspaper (Fossum *et al.*, 2007, pp. 57-89). It is published daily with approximately 400,000 copies in circulation (The University of Chicago: Division of the Humanities, n.d.). Arguably, the smaller circulation may explain the smaller coverage of events by FAZ if compared to the other two media outlets. The other two have higher circulation numbers. *Suddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) is a more liberal, centre-left news outlet in its political leaning (Fossum *et al.*, 2007, pp. 57-89). This Munich-based publication has considerable following, with a circulation of 450,000 that reaches over 1.1 million readers each day (The University of Chicago: Division of the Humanities, n.d.). Perhaps, a higher circulation and wide reach of this newspaper may explain SZ's volume of coverage almost doubling the coverage by FAZ. *Der Spiegel* is

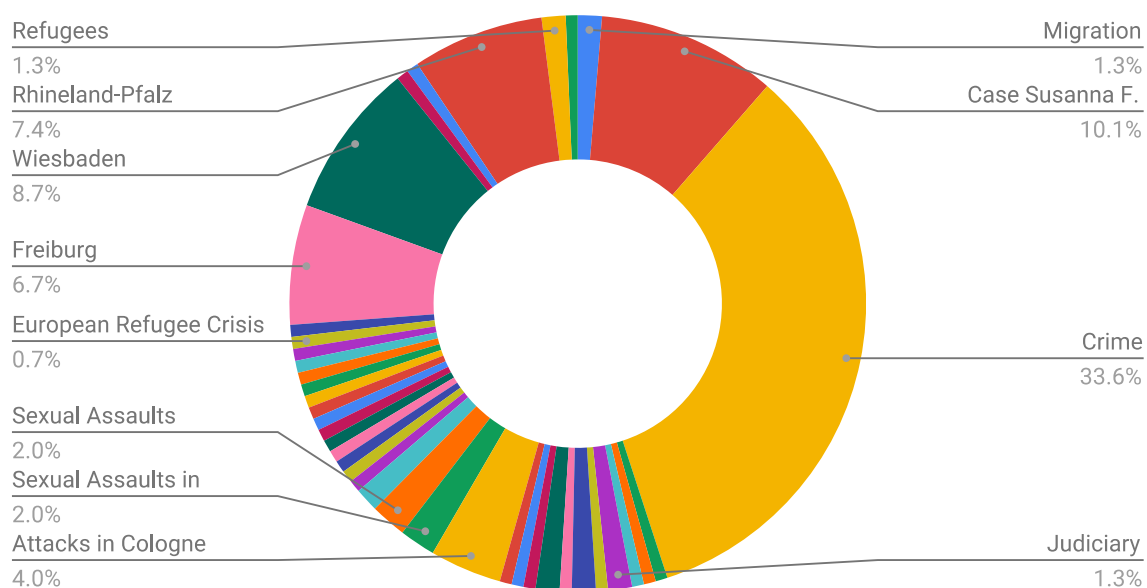
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<sup>3</sup> Created by researcher

positioned as a leftist newsprint magazine politically (Rogers, 2017). Published in Hamburg, *Der Spiegel* has a circulation of approximately 1,000,000 (The University of Chicago: Division of the Humanities, n.d.). Again, the circulation numbers in this case may be linked to higher volume of coverage of the four dramatic events. While this analysis hypothesises links between the size of circulation and volume of coverage, it has to be said that more research is needed into the explanations, potentially involving interviews with newsmakers from these newspapers - editors and journalists.

Figure 5.2 below displays the various rubric references that each article has been placed under by their respective online media outlets.

*Figure 5.2: Distribution of the Rubric References<sup>4</sup>*



The rubric with the highest percentage of articles was 'crime' (Figure 5.2). The fact that most of the articles belonged to this rubric was linked to the style of the articles -- very factual and unbiased. The second most visible rubric was 'Case Susanna F.', the name of the police case on the murder of fourteen-year-old Susanna by her migrant boyfriend in Mainz. This case was particularly prominent in terms of media coverage, and the fact that it had its own rubric emphasizes this. Arguably, Susanna's murder has gained a lot of traction as a news story due

<sup>4</sup> Created by researcher

to the fact that she was a minor at the time of her murder. The victim's young age was probably picked up by media outlets as a way to emphasise the terrible nature of the crime, and perhaps portray a vulnerable, child-like figure as the victim of Germany's refugee policy. 'Wiesbaden', 'Rhineland-Pfalz', 'Freiburg' and 'Sexual Assaults in Cologne' are the next most visible rubrics. As they name the geographical locations in Germany, they indicate where each of the four crimes took place and serve sensible references for a news outlet to group criminal news under. Ultimately, this way of referencing points to a more unbiased reporting style of issues surrounding the Europe irregular migrant crisis and its impact on Germany. The reference to Cologne has a significantly lower share of articles under this rubric, probably due to the fact that it is the only location where murder did not happen. 'Sexual Assaults' and 'Sexual Assaults in Cologne' ('Cologne' omitted in graph) each represent 2% of the sample, as three murdered girls were also sexually assaulted. The fact that the event in Cologne has its own rubric also shows the significance of this event and the importance given to it by media. In this case, the magnitude of the event might be a reason for this visibility -- dozens of victims were harassed by groups of perpetrators. The rubric 'judiciary' references the idea of authorities gaining control of each situation through the court system and law enforcement. Finally, 'Refugees', 'Migration' and 'European Refugee Crisis' were also among the most prominent references utilised. These rubrics -- that explicitly related these events to the European irregular migrant crisis -- show how media places this issue in Germany's public discourses. However, it is important to note that these were among the least frequent references analysed in the research. This may point us to the idea that German media reporting of the events is reasonably unbiased in nature and does not portray migrants or refugees in a negative way. Indeed, the coverage of each event remained quite neutral (discussed in a greater detail below) by adopting a reporting-style that states the facts as opposed to favouring any one opinion over another.

## 5.2 Visibility Indicators

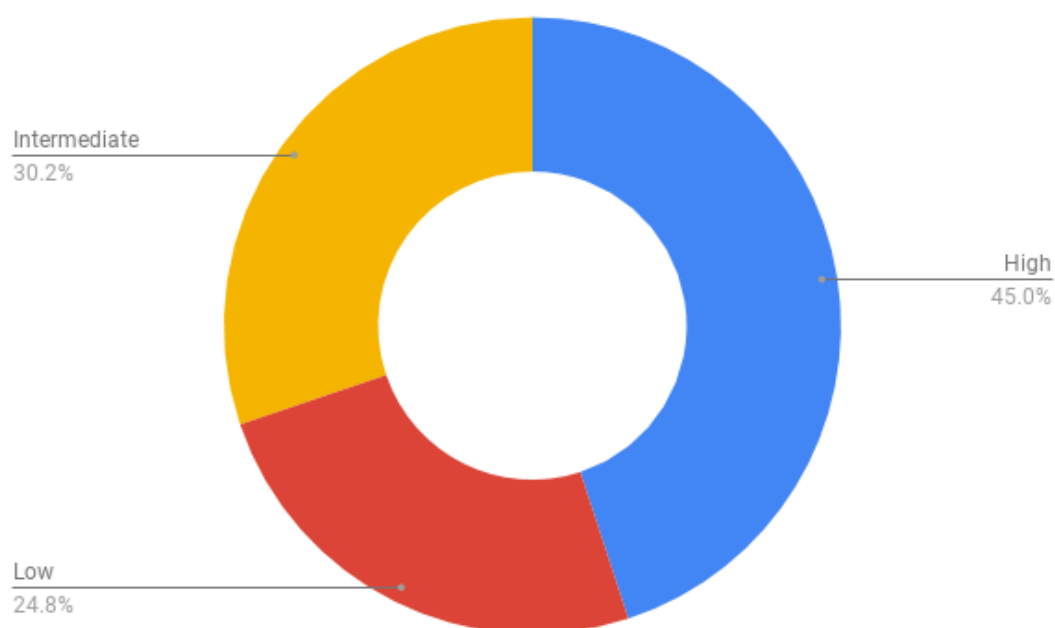
Most articles did not include the names of main actors in the title (around 61% of the articles vs. 39% with actors' names). This finding suggests that the media is not overly concerned with promoting articles or enticing readers through the inclusion of certain actors in the title. Yet, a tendency to place names in the titles of the 2/5 of the sample shows that the media outlets



under observation place some importance to this means to increase visibility and potentially attract readership. These findings may also suggest that in the eyes of newsmakers, there may be a small number of important actors involved in the events.

Another indicator of visibility is the centrality of a particular theme. This research is interested in tracking the centrality of migration theme. The centrality – or intensity – of this theme was assessed in terms of being major, secondary or minor (Figure 5.3). The assessment of the level of centrality of the migration themes in each article was made by firstly evaluating whether or not there were any direct mentions of migration or the migrant crisis. If there were no such mentions, or if it was only mentioned fleetingly, then the centrality was considered to be low. High centrality was allocated when the European migrant crisis was the main focus of the article. A secondary level was assigned if there were definite inclusions of European migrant crisis, but it was not the main scope of the article.

*Figure 5.3: Centrality of Migration Theme<sup>5</sup>*



Overall, 75.2% of the media coverage of the four events involved secondary-to-high levels of centrality, with almost half of the researched articles having a major degree of centrality of the migration theme. This suggests that the media outlets want to send a specific

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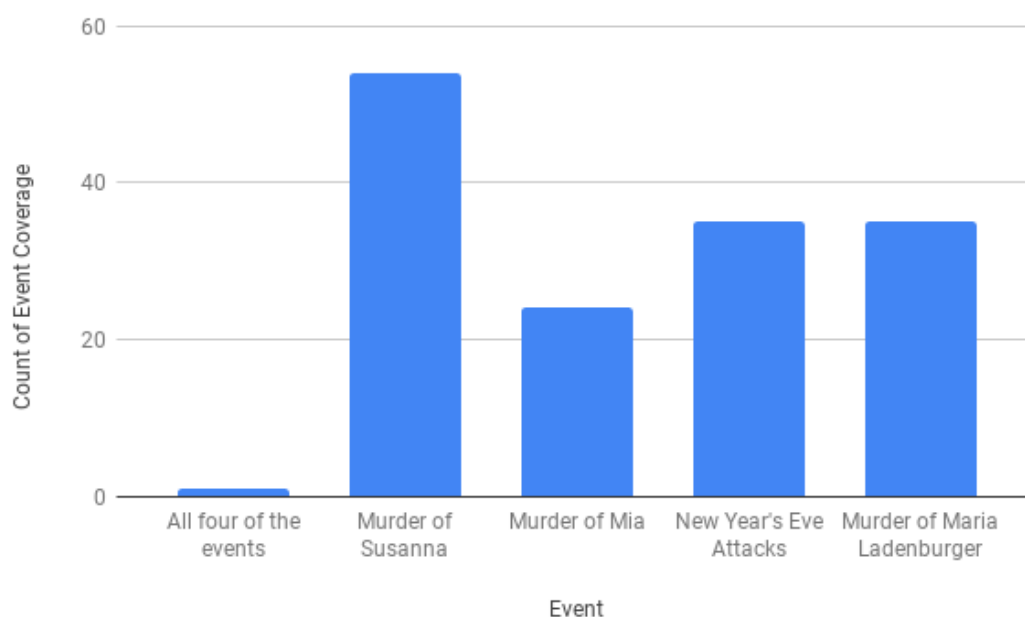
message to global readers about the migrant crisis in Germany. This is further enforced through the fact that only a quarter of the sample (24.8%) of articles contained little to no mentions of the European migrant crisis and its impact on Germany. Therefore, it could be argued that the media outlets not only reported the four events involving attacks by new migrant men on German women/girls, but utilised the means of centrality of information to promote particular ideas about the migrant crisis in Germany.

Another means to increase visibility in newspapers is to attach a visual image to the text. Importantly, most articles included some kind of visual support in the form of photographic images – 77.9% with visual support vs. 22.1% without visual support. The inclusion of images not only raises the visibility but allows for a more emotionally-charged coverage of the event (discussed below in the section on Visual Images). The selection of a particular image impacts the way in which a reader perceives the projected by media narrative. Undeniably, the coverage of the four events was emotionally heightened through inclusions of the images that can affect emotional perception. This may suggest that the media outlets aimed to send a stronger, more compelling message about these events in Germany to their global audiences. Images also allow media outlets to send more clear messages to their global readership – there are no language barriers to visual information.

### 5.3 Narrative Elements

Out of the 150 articles in the sample, only one covered all four events (Figure 5.4). By grouping all events together in one article, the journalist creates a rather somber, negative portrayal of the migrant crisis in Germany. However, the fact that this grouping featured only once in the sample suggests that the main intention of the media during the coverage of these events was not to use them as a way to critique the migrant crisis as a whole

Figure 5.4: Volume of Individual Event Coverage<sup>6</sup>



The event with the most coverage was the murder of Susanna from Mainz (more than double the amount of coverage than the Murder of Mia from Kandel). This particular event appeared to have significant coverage by all media outlets due to both the severity of the crime and the fact that Susanna was only fourteen-years-old at the time of the murder. The media tended to utilise the young age of the victim as a way to shock or anger readers, focusing on her child-like innocence and the fact that this had been stolen from her by a migrant perpetrator. Susanna's murder also gained more traction than the other events due to the fact that the coverage of the event covered a longer time-span. This was because the victim firstly went missing before her body was discovered days later. Then, the perpetrator had to be tracked down and brought back to Germany after fleeing the country. Thus, the media were able to cover three rather dramatic events within the scope of one main incident.

The attacks in Cologne and the murder of Maria in Freiburg garnered similar levels of media coverage. The New Year's Eve sexual attacks in Cologne gained a significant amount of media coverage for several possible reasons. Firstly, the attacks occurred on the New Year's Eve of 2015, shortly after the peak of the migrant crisis in Europe. This event was therefore one of the first major crimes committed by new migrants against German locals, thus much

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<sup>6</sup> Created by researcher

of media attention. Secondly, the attacks happened on a significant, internationally-recognized holiday – at the cusp of the New Year. The attacks could then be seen as ruining a cheerful, happy and exciting time in Germany. New Year's Eve could also be perceived as being a symbolic day for mass attacks on German women to be undertaken by new migrants, as if the behaviour that heralds in the New Year may indicate the foreboding nature of the following year.

The sexual assault and murder of Maria from Freiburg also garnered a significant amount of media coverage. This is mainly due to the promotion of her father's higher-up position in society and her family's pro-refugee, Catholic beliefs. Maria's own experience volunteering in refugee shelters was often reported about, creating further opportunity for media outlets to produce emotionally-charged coverage that shocks readers.

The murder of Mia from Kandel had less coverage than the other three events, despite being possibly the most shocking case of all four events. Mia was publicly stabbed by her ex-boyfriend during the day in a local drugstore, creating a stir in the small town of Kandel. However, the events lacked on some elements of a dramatic narrative – e.g. the longer time-span/suspense of Susanna's case, or Maria's higher status in society, or a large scale of the attacks in Cologne. Perhaps these three events were considered by journalists to be more dramatic – and as such more powerful -- in portraying the negative effects of the European migrant crisis to Germany.



‘Anger’ and ‘opinion’ are other key concepts found throughout the textual analysis with the help of the software (WordItOut, 2019). Arguably, these concepts were prominent due to the fact that all four events, and particularly the murders of Susanna from Mainz and Mia from Kandel, resulted in the media coverage of the subsequent protests both for and against migrant integration. The events appeared to create a ripe environment for both Liberal and Conservative protestors to advocate either for or against Germany’s intake of migrants. This difference in ideologies also resulted in the repetition of concepts such as ‘division’ and ‘divide’. For similar reasons, the concept of ‘politics’ is present in the media coverage. Many articles included mentions of Germany’s refugee policy and the status of Chancellor Angela Merkel’s popularity as the issue of migrant integration became more prevalent in Germany. The coverage of right-wing protests and the leftist protests in response to them also increased the profile of political messages in the media.

The key concepts of ‘law’ and ‘order’ were prominent through the coverage of the events from a legal perspective. This was particularly noticeable through the coverage of the court proceedings of the events and the specific coverage of legal implications involved in each case. For example, the legal issues of illegal immigration and adult migrants falsely identifying themselves as unaccompanied, underage refugees upon entry featured heavily throughout the news articles. Therefore, many articles covered the issue of identifying the true age of migrant perpetrators as to sentence them correctly.

Lastly, the concepts of ‘migration’ and ‘migrant’ were also very prominent throughout the research. This is to be expected, as all four researched events involve new migrants. However, this also suggests that media continued to link the European irregular migration crisis to these criminal events.

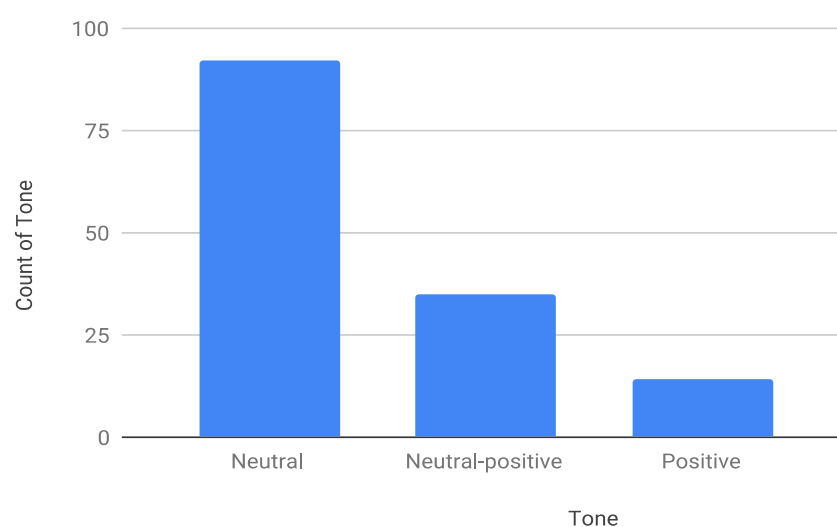


values by foreigners. These descriptors also emphasise the masculinity of the perpetrators, thus promoting the discrepancy between gender roles and values in different cultures. As stated previously, the use of the adjective 'young' emphasises the vulnerability of the victims and heightens a sense of anger or injustice in the global readership.

Descriptive words to do with nationality and location, such as from 'Mainz', from 'Cologne', from 'Kandel', from 'Freiburg' and, more significantly, 'German', were also utilised. Descriptors such as 'German' build up a notion of belonging whilst simultaneously creating a sense of division between locals and new migrants. This division could also be used to construct an 'us versus them' mentality in global readers.

The descriptions of both the victims and perpetrators were analysed in terms of the tone in which they were presented in each article. These included: 'neutral', 'neutral-negative', 'neutral-positive', 'negative', and 'positive'. As shown in Figure 5.7, most of the victims' descriptions were presented in a neutral tone, without either positive or negative connotations. This enforces the factual, unbiased reporting-style that the media outlets utilized. There is no inclusion of negative tone-usage in the description of the victims. The second-most common use of tone is neutral-positive, with many articles still maintaining a fairly neutral stance on the reporting of the victims. Reports also involved only a small number of overtly positively-charged descriptors. Finally, there are some uses of very positive descriptions, in which positively-viewed traits of the victims were reported.

*Figure 5.7: Tone of Victim Descriptions<sup>7</sup>*



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emphasises the different cultural expectations that migrant males may uphold surrounding relationship or gender dynamics. This suggests that the media could want global readers to notice the difference in values between new migrants and German citizens, thus highlighting the challenges of migrant integration in Germany.

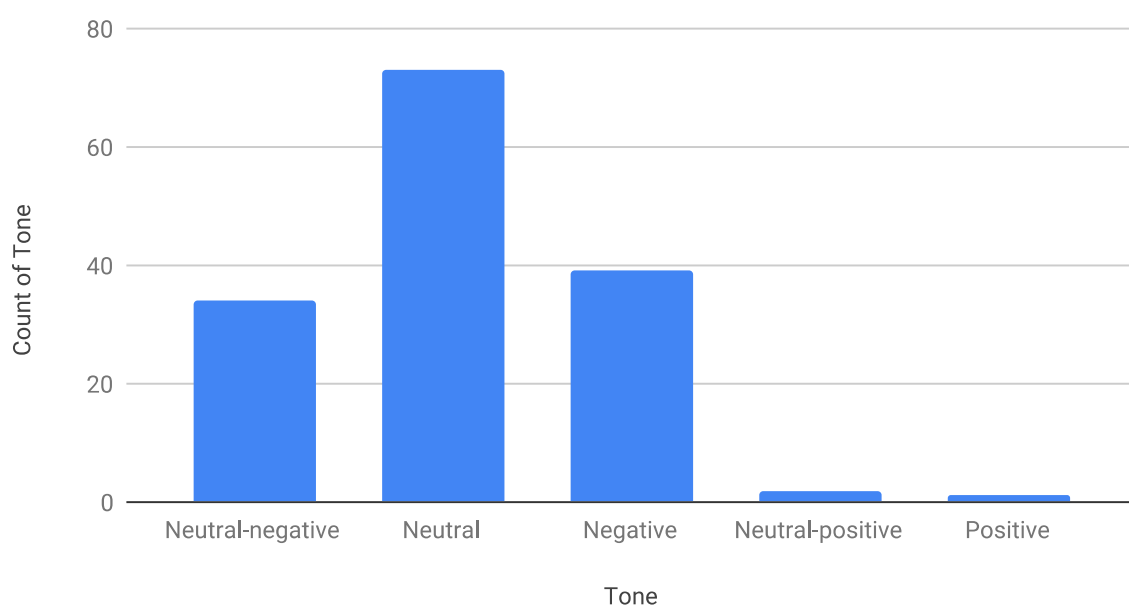
Whilst very positively-charged language was used in the descriptions of the victims, the media includes particularly negative terms to frame the perpetrators. Some of these descriptors include words such as: 'threatening', 'patriarchal', 'untreatable', 'aliens', 'aggressive', 'apathetic', 'selfish', 'insidious', 'inhuman' and 'heinous'. The usage of such emotively-charged language suggests that the German media wishes to frame new migrant criminals as being almost a completely different species. This idea is enforced through the inclusion of very detached, isolating terms such as 'alien' and 'inhuman'. These words create a narrative in which migrants are seen as being 'the other' through an emphasis of their foreignness. Furthermore, allusions to the difference in cultural values between German citizens and new migrants are included through descriptors such as 'patriarchal', 'threatening' and 'untreatable', which suggest that the perpetrators committed their crimes due to their cultural ideologies and engrained perceptions of how society should function. The utilization of these terms suggests that the media aims to construct a narrative for their global audience that highlights the division between the Western world and Middle-Eastern countries. This ultimately sends a message of doubtfulness and uncertainty to the global readership in regard to the future of migrant integration within German society. The other terms used to describe the migrant perpetrators are particularly harsh, such as 'aggressive', 'apathetic', 'selfish', 'insidious' and 'heinous'. These adjectives create framing of intense negativity, thus suggesting that the media aims to construct a narrative about the potential threat of young migrant men and anxieties for the future integration of new migrants into German society following the European irregular migrant crisis.

It is important to stress that significant share of the reports of the perpetrators was neutral (Figure 5.9). This is due to mainly unbiased, factual reporting style of German media of the events in focus. Such a tone when reporting the perpetrators may send a message to the global readership about Germany's calmness, clarity and control in these extraordinary events. By communicating the ideas of order and composure to the international audience, the German media indicate their support to the country's refugee policy and decisions surrounding migration.

Yet, the combined counts of neutral-negative and negative framing of the perpetrators outnumbered the counts of neutral framing. The negative portrayals were often linked to the reporting of the problematic cases to do with rejected asylum-seekers, undocumented migrants, illegal immigrants or past offenders. These negative representations often were used by the media to render their critique of Germany's refugee policy.

To conclude, the findings show an ambivalent message coming from the leading German media. About half of the sample promoted messages of composure through factual reporting, whilst the other half of reports sent to the international readers a more negative narrative on the influence of the European migrant crisis on German society.

*Figure 5.9: Tone of Perpetrator Description<sup>8</sup>*



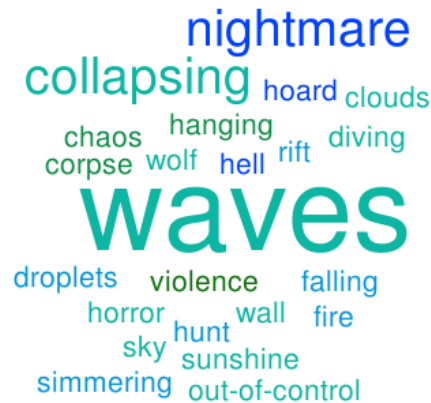
## 5.4 Emotive Elements

This analysis employed an additional indicator in its assessment of emotive charge – metaphorical descriptions. The metaphorical linguistic expressions are often used by news authors to communicate emotions in a succinct yet expressive way, with Andrew Ortony stating that they are utilised to “afford different ways of seeing the world” (1993, p. 5).

<sup>8</sup> Created by researcher

Metaphors are often used in media to explain and describe a complex phenomenon by comparing it to the everyday, simple to understand phenomena. The main concepts rendered by the metaphors are summarized in Figure 5.10.

*Figure 5.10: Concepts Rendered by Metaphors*



The most heavily used metaphors involved the concept of ‘waves’, comparing migration to waves that overflow Germany. This metaphorical categorization, when used in the context of migration, is argued to render a negative image of feeling overwhelmed. This can be seen through the metaphor about the death of Susanna beating against Germany “for days in high waves” (Der Spiegel, 2018). This idea is further enforced by an article by FAZ that describes a “particularly large wave of refugees” (Lohse, 2016). This metaphor was also utilised to describe feelings of uncertainty surrounding the age of one perpetrator, with the statement that waves of doubt “beat high” (Sueddeutsche Zeitung, 2018). This description emphasises feelings of being overwhelmed. German society was also compared to a person drowning under a huge influx of migrants and struggling to manage the challenge of migrant integration. The term ‘droplets’ also conveys the idea of water, although in a different way – as a symbol of sadness. The second most common metaphorical categorization related to the unpleasant and potentially dangerous to humans’ phenomena of ‘nightmare’ and ‘collapsing’. Both of these concepts are associated with strongly negative concepts in the context of the human wellbeing. The metaphor is also used to describe one of the perpetrators as being “the nightmare for Angela Merkel” (Smolczyk, 2018). This metaphorical linkage to Merkel shows the underlying political tensions surrounding the migrant crisis in Germany. The other metaphorical concepts employed frequently also conveyed strongly negative connotations, comparing migration to ‘hanging’, ‘chaos’, ‘violence’, ‘fire’ and ‘horror’.

The final element of the content analysis was analysis of visual images. Each visual image in the sample was coded according to the leading theme it rendered to a reader (the summary, in the form of the word cloud, is presented in Figure 5.11).

[illegible]

The next most prominent themes that came through visual images are ‘mourning’, ‘grief’, ‘darkness’ and ‘sadness’. This is due to many images of the victims’ memorials. These visuals featured objects associated with mourning such as candles, letters, cards, flowers and crosses. Often, these images were taken in the dark -- at night-time or at dusk -- creating a

more intense feeling of gloom. A global readership may perceive this kind of visual support as being especially moving and emotionally-charged. International readers may feel more involved and more connected to the victims and the society surrounding them. This could be a potential strategy by journalists to make global audiences more attentive to the issues of irregular migrant crisis in Germany.

## 5.6. Conclusions

In conclusion, this chapter has presented the main findings of the content analysis of German media articles from three leading German newspapers surrounding four tragic events. All events had to do with the European irregular migrant crisis. In general, all three media outlets adopted a fairly neutral stance in their coverage of the four events. The use of a factual reporting-style sends a message of control and unbiased opinion to the global audience. However, various aspects of the research point to a creation of the image of division between new migrants and German citizens. This idea is developed through the use of language framing migrants as ‘others’ and emphasising differences between the Western world and the Middle-East where the perpetrators are from. The visual images support and reinforce messages sent by textual means. The following chapter will discuss the main findings of the empirical analysis in-depth, with a particular focus on linking the empirical evidence to theoretical models. The discussion will address the research sub-questions and explore wider media contexts of the empirical findings.

## Chapter 6: Discussion

The following chapter will discuss the findings outlined in Chapter 5. It will focus on linking theoretical models presented in Chapter 3 (constructivism in IR, theories of integration, agenda setting theory and cascading activation framing theory) with empirical evidence. The chapter also aims to provide answers to each sub-question of the research.

### 6.1 Linking Theoretical Models and Empirical Evidence: Constructivism in IR

As discussed in Chapter 3, constructivist approach has informed this research. It proposes that international relations (IR) are not “reflective of an objective, material reality

but [instead] an intersubjective, or social, reality” (Barkin, 2003, p. 326). The irregular migration crisis in Europe inevitably posed some issues for IR actors, particularly between the states that migrants were from and those that they were entering. This research uncovered these tensions through messages projected by German reputable media when they covered the migrant crisis, thus enforcing the social reality of IR. Furthermore, Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday define intersubjectivity as being “The process and product of sharing experiences, knowledge, understandings, and expectations with others” (2016). The very process of creating communication through event coverage and media framing – the focus of this analysis -- is, then, a display of intersubjectivity. Barkin also states that the interests of IR actors are driven by “social norms... rather than by objective or material conditions” (2003, p. 326). This research studied the framing of social characterisations of migrants and how they are represented by newsmakers. Finally, Barkin introduced the idea of two strands of constructivist thought, with the first of these arguing that “an identifiable reality exists out there and can be accessed through empirical research” (2003, p. 326). This research follows this argument, endeavouring to discern a fragment of reality through empirical study. Additionally, Wendt argues that reality is cultivated through social interaction, during which “conceptions of self and interest tend to mirror the practices of significant others over time” (as cited in Guzzini & Leander, 2006, p. 96). This idea is also linked to the findings of the research, as global readers of German media coverage surrounding the European irregular migrant crisis may ‘mirror’ the views expressed by German news makers.

### ***6.12 Sociological and Psychological Theories of Integration***

Maykel Verkuyten and Kumar Yogeeswaran explained that diversity can be perceived negatively as it could lead to “us” versus “them” groupings, which subsequently create tensions in society (Verkuyten and Yogeeswaran, 2016, p. 72). This idea can be linked to the research findings, as the intensified diversity of German society through mass migration and need for integration has formed a division between members of the public in Germany. This is illustrated by Figure 5.32 (see Chapter 5) -- in it, the concepts of ‘division’, ‘divide’ and ‘anger’ are amongst the most prevalent throughout the articles studied. This is due to the fact that many articles included coverage of ongoing protests between leftist, pro-refugee groups and right-wing, anti-refugee groups in Germany. These protests were triggered by the various

events considered in this research. Thus, Verkuyten and Yogeeswaran's theory of integration was an appropriate model to understand key findings. Indeed, the research found that the mass integration of foreigners into Germany has created negatively-perceived diversification.

However, the authors also argued that the diversification of society can carry a positive impact as it creates more opportunities for intergroup relations which actually foster acceptance (Verkuyten and Yogeeswaran, 2016, p. 72). This argument from the theory was also supported by the evidence – e.g. reports on the pro-refugee groups and their fight against intolerance. Chapter 5 also engaged with Anna Triandafyllidou's theory that a nation may define itself through comparison to an immigrant group by perceiving the community as a threat due to their differences (1998, p. 602). This argument echoed a famous social psychologist Henri Tajfel who stated, "We are what we are because *they* are not what we are" (1978, p. 10). These theoretical positions were also linked to the research findings. As illustrated by Figure 5.8 the main words used to describe migrant perpetrators included 'refugee', 'Afghan' and 'Iraqi', suggesting that German media insisted on separating these immigrants from German citizens in the framing. Some other words used to describe the perpetrators included 'alien' and 'inhuman', which again form and deepen the divide between the two groups in German society. By emphasizing their foreignness, the media have 'othered' new migrants. Furthermore, differences in cultural norms between German citizens and new migrants were emphasized through descriptors such as 'patriarchal', 'threatening' and 'untreatable'. Arguably, these are identity traits that German citizens do not relate to and yet they have been assigned to migrants by news media to make them look like outsiders. By 'othering' new migrants, the German media further distinguished the local culture and values of Germany vis-à-vis migrants' cultures and values.

### **6.13 Agenda Setting Theory**

As discussed in Chapter 5, agenda-setting theorists believe that mass communication publications are able to influence readers through the stories that are chosen to be featured the most prominently (Watts, 2010, p. 7). This concept can be linked to the findings, which uncovered that each dramatic event considered in this analysis received varying degrees of media coverage. The murder of Susanna from Mainz received far more coverage than the other events, perhaps because of the shock reaction that followed this violent crime. Agenda



setting theory may help to explain how the vast coverage of this event – linked to the young age of the victim - may be instrumental in spreading feelings of shock and anger about her murder, and, in turn, the migrant crisis. As mentioned above, Susanna was declared missing and her whereabouts were unknown for days before her body was eventually discovered. The agenda-setting may also help to explain how the longer time-span of the coverage of this case may have been a means to exert more impact on readers. Arguably, a longer period of coverage extended and heighten negative framing of the migrant crisis. Susanna's murderer managed to flee the country, but he was eventually tracked down and brought back to Germany to be sentenced. To certain extent, the leading media communicated the failure of Germany's refugee policy, and this may have been another agenda-setting goal for media outlets.

The idea of 'attribute salience' features in the second level of agenda-setting theory. It highlights the concept of the characteristics that describe people in the media alongside the general tone of those attributes (Coleman & Wu, 2010, p. 776). This theory informs analysis that traced the reported traits of both the victims and perpetrators in addition to the general tone of the said characteristics. The tone of the victims' descriptions was overwhelmingly neutral, whilst the general tone of the perpetrators' descriptions was also neutral yet alongside a substantial volume of negatively-charged descriptions. This suggests that attribute salience is at play in the media coverage of these events. While the leading press endeavoured to maintain more or less unbiased descriptors in the reports of the dramatic events, the migrant perpetrators were presented with more negative salient characteristics. The salient attributes can prompt global audience a more negative view on the migrant crisis and new migrants. However, the overall neutral tone is argued to promote messages on Germany's tolerance and perhaps political correctness.

#### **6.14 Cascading Activation Framing Theory**

According to Ruud Koopmans and Barbara Pfetsch, 'framing' refers to "the contextualisation of issues" (as cited in Fossum *et al.*, 2007, p. 65). The authors state that this constructed meaning is then utilised as a basis for the collective formation of public opinion (Fossum *et al.*, 2007, p. 65). This theoretical elaboration is of special value when understanding the emotive element of metaphorical descriptions analysed in this research.

The concepts found in the metaphors that appeared in the media texts compared situation around migration to 'collapsing', 'chaos', 'hoard', 'rift' and an event 'out-of-control'. All of these concepts point to anxieties surrounding Germany's newfound tensions caused by divisions about migration issues. On a different level, these concepts may also represent fears about the collapse or failure of not only Germany's but the European Union's migration policies and cooperative frameworks.

## 6.2 Sub-Question 1: How does German public narrative utilise cognitive features to frame victims and perpetrators?

The main descriptors used to present the three murder victims related to their ages; 'fourteen', 'fifteen' and 'nineteen'. This then suggests that the youthfulness of Susanna, Mia and Maria was emphasised by media outlets in their framing of the victims as to promote their child-like vulnerability and innocence. By repeating the message about young ages of the victims, the framing of the girls' blamelessness and incorruptibility was induced. This, ultimately, may lead to the feelings of injustice and anger among the readers. The next most prevalent victim descriptor, 'student', also framed the victims based upon their virtuousness and youth. Additionally, an emphasis on gender is made by the media in their framing of the female victims, who are often described as being 'girls'. By relating the report of crimes to the themes of prejudice and gender-discrimination in all cases, this framing sends a cognitive message to global readership. In this framing, the feeling of injustice of the crimes is heightened and the victims' innocence and moral-correctness is reinforced. The descriptors also emphasised the masculinity of the perpetrators, stressing the divergence between gender roles and values among different cultures.

A common descriptor used for the victims was 'German', which may connote the messages of belonging and national pride. This framing of the victims created an image of division between Germans and new migrants along the lines 'us versus them'. Many other descriptors were used in the framing of the victims to emphasise their uprightness, such as 'innocent', 'peaceful', 'enthusiastic', 'socially-engaged', 'pretty' and 'religious'. These terms were most-likely used to render positively-charged frames of the victims for international readers. Importantly, a neutral tone was generally utilized, without any overly positive or negative connotations. There was no negative tone-usage in the description of the victims

and the second-most common use of tone was neutral-positive, with many articles providing a rather neutral stance on the reporting of victims. However, these instances also involved some positively-charged descriptors. There were also some inclusions of very positively-charged descriptions, in which positively-viewed traits of the victims were highlighted. This use of tone suggests that the media projected onto international readers a generally positive image of victims.

The perpetrators' descriptions included a very high frequency of the descriptor 'refugee'. This choice of a word sent a particular narrative to the global audience -- it emphasised the role of refugees in the context of the European migrant crisis as a whole, and in the four tragic events specifically. There is also a high frequency of terms relating to the origin of the perpetrators, such as 'Afghan' and 'Iraqi', to promote an idea of otherness and difference. The descriptor, 'ex-boyfriend', is also included frequently in perpetrators' descriptions, accentuating dissimilarities between cultural values relating to relationship or gender dynamics and the challenges of migrant integration in Germany. Many allusions are also made to the discrepancies in cultural values between German citizens and new migrants through terms such as 'patriarchal', 'threatening' and 'untreatable'. The use of such words suggests that the media aimed to construct a narrative for their global readership and this narrative emphasises the differences between Western and Middle-Eastern countries.

The general tone of the descriptions of perpetrators also tended to be neutral, utilizing the factual reporting style, even when it comes to the sensitive debates around the European migrant crisis. This analysis suggests that the prevalence of neutral tone in the media framing of perpetrators sends a message to the global readership about law and order, governance and control in Germany. The negatively-charged framing of migrant perpetrators, on the other hand, may represent the media's attempts at constructing a pessimistic narrative to its global audience about migrants, particularly those who were rejected asylum-seekers, undocumented migrants, illegal immigrants or past offenders.

### 6.3 Sub-Question 2: How does German public narrative utilise emotive features to frame victims and perpetrators?

One of the main ways in which the German public narrative utilizes emotive features to frame victims and perpetrators is through the inclusion of metaphors. The main concept

among the recorded metaphors was 'waves', thus framing new migrant perpetrators as being a facet of the seemingly overwhelming or suffocating mass migration that has affected Germany. The concept of 'droplets' also conveys this theme of water and drowning under the pressure of mass migrant integration. However, this concept also relays connotations of something occurring methodically and almost forebodingly, such as migrants trickling into Germany 'drop by drop'. Ultimately, these metaphorical concepts build up a narrative for global readers about German society struggling to manage the challenge of migrant integration. The concept of a 'nightmare' frames perpetrators as being associated with evil and malicious intentions. It could also connote ideas about migrant perpetrators being 'the worst nightmare' for Germany's then pro-refugee government. Other metaphorical concepts present in the sample also convey negative connotations, such as 'hanging', 'chaos', 'violence', 'fire' and 'horror'. These ideas consequently frame perpetrators as being violent, out-of-control individuals who create chaotic environments in Germany. The ideas of 'fire' and 'horror' also relate to inherent evil. Visual support also creates stronger emotive-charge utilised to frame victims and perpetrators. In the sample, almost all articles included visual support in the form of photographic images. The selection of a particular image impacts the way in which a reader perceives the actors. The images were separated into two camps, either pertaining to impressions of 'authority' and 'enforcement' or 'grief' and 'mourning'. These two groups subsequently represent the perpetrators and the victims, as those images surrounding 'enforcement' featured migrant perpetrators being arrested, detained or put on trial whilst those portraying 'grief' displayed scenes such as the victims' memorials and candlelit vigils in their memories. Therefore, the migrant perpetrators are framed as being dangerous individuals who must be controlled and overcome by the German authorities, whilst the victims are framed as representing tragic and saddening losses of life or wasted and corrupted potential.

#### 6.4 Sub-Question 3: To what extent do leading media project messages of Islamophobia in the narratives?

A vast majority of the media coverage involved intermediate-to-high levels of centrality, with almost half having a high degree of centrality of migration. This suggests that the media outlets aimed to send a specific message to global readers about the migrant crisis

in Germany, however it does not indicate any direct Islamophobic sentiments. It could be argued that the four events involving attacks by new migrant men on German women/ girls were not only reported about, but utilised by media outlets to promote particular ideas about the migrant crisis in Germany. Similarly, the key concepts in the media did not point to any outright Islamophobic messages. Alternatively, the main concepts tended to be neutral, unbiased examples of a more factual reporting style. Despite there being negative references to migrants based on race or culture, there were no direct references to Muslim migrants or Islam, specifically. The main anxiety conveyed by German media was not steeped in Islamophobia, but instead scepticism about new migrants integrating successfully whilst upholding differing cultural values. The perpetrator descriptions also lack outright Islamophobic sentiments, with the exception of the main descriptors, 'Muslim' and 'Muslims'. This finding points to a degree of underlying Islamophobia, however there is no major evidence of Islamophobic tendencies by leading media. This could be because of the more centre-left political leaning of the news outlets studied, which could indicate a pro-refugee stance. However, the frequent use of descriptors such as 'Moroccans', 'Middle-Eastern', 'Iranian', 'Arabic', 'Afghan', 'North-African' and 'Iraqi' places a lot of emphasis on the differing cultural backgrounds of new migrants and could be used by media outlets to connote religious differences, too. Overall, however, the level to which leading German media project messages of Islamophobia is very low. Through the research, it appears that this kind of media does not tend to publish opinionated material and instead writes from an unbiased, neutral perspective in the nature of facts-based journalism. The lack of Islamophobic messages in the leading media gives the global readership a more impressionable, respectable and upstanding view of German political affairs. However, as previously outlined, the findings were not completely void of Islamophobic narrative. Due to the use of two descriptors linking migrant perpetrators to Islam, it cannot be said that the media had no intention of constructing a narrative free from Islamophobic sentiment for consumption by a global readership.

#### 6.5 Sub-Question 4: What do the media frames mean for German society on a domestic level?

One of the main implications of the media frames for German society on an internal level includes the possibility of increased cultural tension. The spread of narratives that divide

new migrants and German citizens promote messages of intolerance and otherness, thus creating tensions between different groups in society. One form of intolerance could occur in the form of Islamophobia, which may be bred through negatively-charged coverage of the migrant crisis in Germany. A potential result of these sentiments among the German public could arise through an increase in clashes between Leftist and Right-wing protestors, an issue that has already been covered by media outlets throughout this research. A rise in tensions between pro- and anti-refugee groups is likely to have a positive correlation with the increase in negative media coverage of the migrant crisis in Germany. Furthermore, heightened conflict among the German public could also lead to general unrest and dissatisfaction in the state. This may subsequently extend to dissatisfaction with political leaders, causing loss of faith in state heads such as Chancellor Angela Merkel, who played a substantial role in Germany's refugee policy during the peak of the migration crisis. Lastly, the media frames could result in a harbouring of intolerance towards new migrants. These sentiments could then cultivate xenophobia and racism among German society.

#### 6.6 Sub-Question 5: What do the media frames mean for Germany on an external level as a part of a wider European story and as a global actor?

In terms of the implications of the media frames for Germany as a global actor, an issue could arise surrounding the lack of burden-sharing from other EU states during the peak of the European irregular migrant crisis. Whilst Germany opened their borders to migrants, this was not the case for many other EU members. A global circulation of the media frames regarding the fall-out of the migrant crisis in Germany may discourage other states from increasing their refugee quotas, whilst simultaneously accumulating frustration in locally. This tension may consequently result in a loss of trust by Germany in other EU states, in addition to the EU, itself. This lack of faith could potentially lead to Euroscepticism, during which the German public could rethink their trust in the Union, itself.

#### 6.7 Conclusions

Overall, the theoretical models included in the research provided valuable insight into the field of migration and integration, as proven through the links made between theories

and evidence. In terms of the research sub-questions, the framing of victims and perpetrators by German public narrative utilized cognitive features such as neutral tone-usage in the descriptions. The media also provided unbiased reporting of both groups, however it tended to utilize positive descriptors for victims that emphasized their youth, innocence, gender and German origins. There was also a significant percentage of negatively-charged descriptors used for the perpetrators that promoted their refugee status and Middle-Eastern origin. Emotive features were also used in the framing of both groups, mainly through the use of metaphors. These represented a very negative portrayal of the migrant crisis and the migrant perpetrators. Islamophobia was not found to be projected strongly throughout the research sample, however the usage of 'Muslim (s)' to describe the perpetrators indicates that there is a level of existing Islamophobic sentiment. The main prediction for what the media-frames could mean for Germany on a domestic level is a rise in cultural tension, thus creating division and unrest amongst society. In terms of what they mean for Germany as an external actor, Euroscepticism due to a lack of burden-sharing by other EU states could create international tensions, too.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis has explored the issues of cultural-tension and integration in the EU since the European irregular migration crisis by conducting content analysis of media-framing trends by Germany's leading media outlets. At the height of the migrant crisis in 2015, various EU states opened their borders to more than one million people escaping dismal conditions in their homelands (Quinn, 2016, p. 275). The European irregular migrant crisis subsequently raises questions about the changing dynamics of EU societies and the effect that these changes may have on ethnocentric sentiments of EU citizens. The research is a product of this line of questioning. Overall, the thesis aimed to uncover whether any sentiments related to cultural tension, such as ethnocentrism, Islamophobia and Euroscepticism, exist among EU societies in higher frequencies since the crisis.

The main research question was: *How do reputable mainstream German news sources (English editions) frame and narrate present-day cultural tensions between new Muslim migrants and German citizens since the European migration crisis of 2015 until 2018?* The sub-questions included: 1. How do German media narratives frame victims and perpetrators in

cognitive terms? 2. How do German media narratives frame victims and perpetrators in emotive terms? 3. To what extent do German leading media project messages of Islamophobia in the narratives? 4. What do the media frames mean for German society on domestic level? 5. What do the media frames mean for Germany as a part of a wider European story as well as Germany as a global actor?

The overarching research objectives were sought through the implementation of a variety of different ideas, theories, and methods. Chapter 2 provided an insight into prominent literature from leaders in the field, on the topics of media-framing of European migration, methods of integration, Islamophobia and the controversial idea of the 'death of Europe'. The inclusion of this section showed where there were gaps in the past research in the field, and that this research could contribute through providing an analysis of a very recent event in addition to a fall-out period of three years. This research also contributed to existing literature on the topic by analysing how German media frames problematic events to a global readership. Chapter 3 focused on important theoretical components such as constructivism in IR, sociological theories of integration, agenda setting theory and cascading activation framing theory. Constructivism was well-suited to this research and aided in the theoretical approach of a topic with social, intersubjective themes. Sociological and psychological theories of integration uncovered pre-existing notions about cultural tension and formed a basis of leading theories from which to build the research upon. Agenda setting theory was used to explain how the media coverage of migrant integration impacts the public's perceptions of the issue. Lastly, cascading activation framing theory was utilised to uncover key messages that German sectors wish to send to a global readership about the local impact and impressions of the migrant crisis on German society. Chapter 4 presented the methodology of the research, focusing firstly on the appropriateness of the research design and then the structure of the research design, itself. This chapter explained how the research objectives were going to be met, namely through case studies, inductive approach, longitudinal approach and media framing analysis. Chapter 5 laid-out the findings of the research, addressing the categories of: Reference Information, Visibility Indicators, Narrative Elements, Emotive Elements and Visual Images. Overall, the research found that the main use of tone when describing both victims and perpetrators was neutral, with no major indications of strong emotively-charged descriptions by German media. However, the visibility of migration was very high across the sample and the perpetrators were frequently labelled as



'refugees'. Visual images also appear to be a main outlet through which newsmakers can express more emotively-charged, negative sentiments. These findings were discussed more in-depth in Chapter 6, which assesses the reasonings behind the decisions of newsmakers in their framing of the events.

In the future, research in this field could adopt an additional methodology involving interviews with German journalists from leading media outlets. This would enable the researcher to develop a more intrinsic understanding of the reasoning media-framing decisions. A comparative analysis may even be undertaken between various journalists from different news outlets and locations in Germany or the wider EU to measure the variation in views and sentiments and then decipher why this may be so. This type of research would give greater depth of understanding as to how location and political-leaning impact media frames of events surrounding migration in the EU. It would also provide a first-hand account of the thought processes and reasoning behind decisions surrounding media-framing.

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