

# Who Says What or Nothing at All? Speakers, Frames, and Frameless Quotes in Unauthorized Immigration News in the United States, Norway, and France

American Behavioral Scientist  
2015, Vol. 59(7) 802–821  
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sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/0002764215573257  
abs.sagepub.com



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## Abstract

Determining the speakers and arguments that dominate the news has long been a core task of media sociology. Yet systematic evidence linking the two—who says what or nothing at all—is lacking in news analysis, especially on the important issue of immigration. In this article, we analyze quoted sources and issue frames in U.S., French, and Norwegian news coverage of unauthorized immigration during 2011 and 2012. Supporting claims of transnational media homogenization, we find most quotes are “frameless,” that is, do not contain any substantial arguments addressing the problems, causes, or solutions associated with immigration. Of those quotes that do offer frames, problem frames are far more common than causes and solutions. Across nations and media types, government sources dominate the news, focusing on problems for society, while pro-immigration associations and unaffiliated individuals help account for overall greater attention to problems for immigrants. On the other hand, providing limited support for structural variation, less narrative-driven French media featured fewer frameless quotes and also tended to offer more cause and solution frames than U.S. or Norwegian media; dominant frames varied notably across nations; and elite right newspapers were more likely to quote anti-immigration speakers and emphasize problems for society than other types of outlets. We also find that the mediated immigration “debate” is often only a series of opposed monologues; even ideologically diverse groups

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such as unaffiliated citizens tend to be linked to a small range of frames, suggesting that “who says what” is not a reflection of society, but rather the outcome of journalistic practices and sources’ rhetorical tactics.

### **Keywords**

sources, frames, immigration, journalism, media systems

Voice is a central concern for democratic theory and media critique. Journalism plays a key role in setting the public agenda (McCombs, 2004), so the ability to speak in the news is important for influencing the terms of broader social and political contestation. This is especially true for the issue of immigration, a mediated debate in which communicative resources are very unequally distributed. Governments, for instance, can impart their positions to the public with relative ease, whereas many of those involved in immigration, especially undocumented immigrants, are presented with fewer opportunities and higher risks for telling their side of the story (Tyler & Marciniak, 2013). It is precisely in cases of such power discrepancies that journalism can contribute to the vibrancy of a democracy by offering multiperspectival news that captures the full range of civic debate (Gans, 2003). One indicator of such breadth is the diversity of quoted voices in the news.

What if it turns out, however, that those who “speak” in the media do not make arguments, or rather, that they are not represented by the media to be making arguments? In an era when storytelling has become the most lauded function of journalism it is likely that quotes will fulfil varied narrative purposes, not always acting as conduits for arguments. The question arises: To what extent do quoted sources in immigration news actually contribute to the framing of the issue?

In this article, we concretize this line of inquiry through a framing analysis of U.S., Norwegian, and French news coverage of unauthorized immigration during 2011 and 2012. These countries have all experienced significant immigration flows in recent years, while each representing media systems—liberal, democratic corporatist, and polarized pluralist, respectively—that might be expected to vary in their journalistic sourcing practices (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Using data linking the most prominent sources and issue frames in a cross-section of media outlets in each country, we provide a fine-tuned examination of speakers and the problem, cause, and solution frames they utter (or do not utter) on this controversial issue in three countries where unauthorized immigration has prompted increasingly heated debate.

Our analysis examines which ideas and actors are most common in immigration news; moreover, it builds on this foundation to explore the ways journalism shapes the very contours of public debate. Are some sources typecast in the news, always offering similar frames? Do sources simply reiterate their own talking points, or do they engage with the arguments of opponents? Understanding how the answers to these questions differ across nations and media types is a step toward an empirically

grounded account of how news texts are influenced by the structural and narrative demands of journalism. We aim for this study of immigration news to contribute toward this larger discussion.

## **Reframing Framing Research: Linking Speakers, Issue Statements, and Nonissue Statements**

In Robert Entman's (1993, p. 52) well-known definition, framing involves "select[ing] some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text." For any given contested social phenomenon, such as unauthorized immigration, issue frames offer diverse definitions of the problems, causes, and solutions. Most framing studies measure the frequency with which various frames appear in news coverage, using the article or news item as the unit of analysis (e.g., Benson & Saguy, 2005; Entman, 2004; Kim, Carvalho, Davis, & Mullins, 2011; Norris, 1995; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). While such studies elucidate important patterns in coverage, they cannot offer systematic and reliable analysis of the relationship between frames and speakers. Are certain frames dominant because they are repeated ad nauseam by a single source? Or are they pushed forward by a disparate coalition of voices? Which sources are most likely to present alternative frames that help broaden the public debate? Most framing studies leave these questions unanswered.

A notable exception is Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, and Rucht's (2002) study of abortion news in Germany and the United States, which analyzed frames at the quotation as well as article level. However, Ferree et al. (2002) reported only findings on quotes with issue-specific frames; speakers remarking on political gamesmanship, the morale of actors, or offering no substantive comment at all were dropped from their analysis, discounted from calculations involving the relative frequency of frames.

Filling this gap left by Ferree et al. (2002), we analyze a complete set of source quotations, both those that include substantive issue frames and those that do not. We take "frameless" statements—quotes that contain no immigration issue-specific problem, cause, or solution frames—to be just as politically salient and just as revealing of news processes as utterances that do contain issue frames. Ideologies are often expressed in silences; it is important to know if some speakers are less likely to present substantive issue frames than others and if such differences in speaker-frame combinations vary across national journalistic fields or types of media. This matter is especially pressing if those presenting frameless quotes are issue advocates such as activists, whose aim in garnering news coverage is to redirect public debate.

Our approach to framing recognizes that quotes are never neutral representations of a source's words (Ekström, 2006). They do not necessarily offer verbatim accounts of an interviewee's speech, but are reconfigured to meet the demands of reporters and news formats (Killenberg & Anderson, 1993). Conversely, sources may also carefully craft their words to meet the needs of news production, needs that extend beyond the demand for issue frames. Quotes are often included in news items as much for the legitimacy or authenticity they lend to reporters' accounts as for their substantive

content (Zelizer, 1995). Citations of outside sources allow journalists to borrow from the credibility of others and to demonstrate they have done their due diligence in seeking out relevant interviewees, even if those speakers turn out to have very little to say. Quotations may also enable reporters to maintain a posture of objectivity or neutrality by presenting polemical positions through the mouths of outside sources, thus distancing the journalist from accusations of ideological bias when giving attention to marginal viewpoints (Kroon Lundell & Ekström, 2010). In short, quotes are not mere conduits for frames, but serve varying purposes for journalists and sources alike.

It is crucial to stress that just as “frameless” quotes are not merely empty words, a source offering frameless quotes in the news may still contribute to framing; their arguments may be paraphrased through the journalistic voice, or might subtly shape the themes, frames, or word choice of reporters. In other words, quotes are the most public face of source influence, but they are only one part of news framing. In the context of our study, however, we found no substantial difference between frames presented in prominent quotes and frames presented elsewhere in the article (see methodology section).

Our study addresses a series of related research questions to empirically establish how quotes contribute to the framing of immigration news: Who is quoted in immigration coverage? Do their quotes contain frames? And finally, what frames are most common in reportage and which sources utter them? We measure the answers to these questions in relation to four variables: national media system, the political leanings of news outlets, the elite versus mass character of news audiences, and the commercial versus noncommercial character of news organizations. Our aim is to determine exactly how these variables correlate to patterns in quoting and framing across media. Below is a brief summary of our hypothesized findings in relation to each of our core research questions.

### *Who is Quoted in Immigration Coverage?*

Previous research has suggested that news coverage often follows the lead of government sources (Cook, 2005; Hallin, 1989). Reporters are likely to index their coverage to the range of government debate, a tendency that is especially prevalent among elite, agenda-setting newspapers (Bennett, 1990).<sup>1</sup> Law and policy are key stakes in immigration advocacy, increasing the likelihood that government sources will receive media attention. We expect that government will be the most frequently quoted sources in immigration news across our sample, but especially in elite publications.

When coverage does extend beyond governmental discussions, it is often the communications work of activists that expands debate. Past studies have shown that pro-immigration associations are routinely cited in news, whereas anti-immigration activists tend to be quoted much less often (Benson, 2013; Figenschou & Beyer, 2014). We expect our findings to show a similar ideological divide between who is considered a legitimate source for news.

While immigration reportage has been criticized for obscuring the voices of immigrants (e.g., Tyler & Marciniak, 2013), Figenschou and Thorbjørnsrud (2015) demonstrate that the perspectives of immigrants are increasingly important in Norwegian

coverage. At the same time, populist unrest is a key element of immigration politics in the United States, Norway, and France, with mounting evidence indicating that a large portion of citizens in these immigrant-receiving countries support stronger limits on immigration (Facchini & Mayda, 2008). These factors are likely to drive news to include quotes from unaffiliated individuals, both immigrants sharing vignettes from their own lives and everyday citizens voicing concerns about the ostensibly disruptive consequences of immigration. We would expect this tendency to be consistent across all news media but perhaps to be most pronounced for outlets with more mass or “popular” audiences (Benson, 2013).

### *Do Quotes Contain Frames?*

Few studies have measured the frequency of frameless quotes in the news, thus there is a dearth of empirical data on which to base hypotheses. However, a style of journalism privileging storytelling, in which sources provide anecdotes and slices of life rather than advocating specific frames, seems intuitively to call for more frameless quotes. Wahl-Jorgensen (2013) has shown that emotional storytelling has become a central feature of award winning news in the U.S. journalistic field, suggesting frameless quotes might be particularly prevalent in the United States even among elite news outlets. In Norway, the “featurization” of hard news has likely led to similar narrative tendencies (Steensen, 2011, p. 56). The French “debate ensemble” format of thematically linked articles tends to produce coverage that, while sometimes polemical or sensationalistic, confronts macro-level contextual issues undergirding specific breaking stories (Benson, 2013). We would thus expect French coverage to contain fewer frameless quotes than U.S. or Norwegian news.

### *Which Frames Are Most Common in Reportage and Which Sources Promote Them?*

Previous research indicates cross-national similarities in immigration coverage between France, the United States, and Norway, as certain aspects of immigration are highlighted both for their substantive and dramatic appeal (see Table 1 for a listing of the problem, cause, and solution frames analyzed in this study). Benson (2013), in a content analysis of immigration coverage in France and the United States from the early 1970s until 2006, found that public order “threat” and humanitarian “victim” frames have consistently dominated the news in both nations; Eide (2011) has derived similar findings for Norway. We expect a consistent focus on these immigration “problems” in our own data, with a possible greater emphasis on immigration’s supposedly disruptive social effects in right-leaning news outlets. Ostensibly open to more complex accounts, elite or public service media may be more likely to quote sources mentioning cause and solution frames than other media.

Immigration politics is full of “strange bedfellows” allegiances—pro-immigration advocacy brings together business and human rights groups while anti-immigration coalitions unite cultural conservatives with some labor unions and environmentalist

**Table 1.** Problem, Cause, and Solution Frames Related to Undocumented Immigration.

Frame	Description
Problems for authorities	Politicians are under attack for their stances on immigration; the immigration system produces unintended negative consequences; immigration is undermining diplomatic relations; undocumented immigration unfairly threatens the legal immigration system.
Problems for society	Too many immigrants have entered the country; immigration threatens safety, security, or culture; immigration strains social services.
Problems for immigrants	Immigrants face potential violence, racism, human rights violations, or inhumane treatment; immigrants are likely to be exploited, or encounter unsafe work conditions.
No problem	Immigration (including unauthorized immigration) contributes to society and does not represent a problem—for example, immigrants are good workers and do work others do not want to do; immigrants contribute to local economies; immigrants contribute to cultural diversity; and so on.
Cause pull factors	Immigrants come to take advantage of health or social benefits; economic interests require low-wage employees, which motivates immigration.
Cause push factors	Economic crisis, violence, or political persecution drive emigration; colonial histories have resulted in linguistic and political ties that drive immigration to former colonial powers.
Cause system (pro-immigration)	The immigration system is unnecessarily restrictive, bureaucratic, or time consuming; government is too strict or brutal in enforcing immigration.
Cause system (anti-immigration)	Lack of resources or will have led to weak border control; current regional/international regulations are inadequate to manage immigration.
Solution enforcement	Enhanced punishment for violations of immigration law, or for hiring, housing, or abetting undocumented immigrants; more resources to strengthen border control and enforcement; more police to combat immigration-related crime; deny immigrants opportunities for work, health care, education, or services so they will self-deport.
Solution external	Foreign investment and development aid will ease immigration problems; strengthened diplomatic ties will help states resolve their conflicting needs; solving political and military conflicts in other nations will address immigration problems.
Solution reform system	The immigration system should be made less complicated and time consuming; more temporary and permanent immigration should be allowed; conditional permanent resident status should be granted to children brought illegally into the country, or to those whose safety will be threatened if they are returned to their country of origin.
Solution campaign	Attitude/information campaigns aimed at undocumented immigrants, the public, or authorities will help address immigration problems.

groups—that make classic ideological divisions difficult to sustain (Zolberg, 2006). We would thus expect any dominant frames in the news to be readily articulated by a broad range of actors. The exact chorus of voices will likely vary somewhat across nations and according to the political leanings of newspapers, but it seems any common frame would require the support of multiple groups.

## Methodology

Our study consists of a content analysis of news in the United States, Norway, and France, three nations in which immigration has become a major stake in cultural and political debates. While the empirical realities of immigration vary somewhat between these countries (see this issue's introduction by Thorbjørnsrud, 2015), news outlets in each nation have devoted significant and ongoing attention to the issue, and call on similar sets of actors from politics, civil society, and the state as sources for immigration news. These cross-national similarities make immigration an ideal test case for exploring the connections between speakers and frames in the news.

Cross-national differences are also necessary for our study. As noted, the United States, Norway, and France provide particularly fruitful sites for comparison because they represent three distinct western media systems: the liberal, democratic corporatist, and polarized pluralist, respectively (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Among other differences, the U.S. media system is heavily commercialized, the Norwegian system has both a strong public service broadcasting tradition and maintains one of the highest per capita newspaper circulations in the world, and the French system relies on substantial state subsidies to support journalism's civic mission. Depending on a news outlet's national media system, funding, overt political orientation (if any), audience composition, and medium, coverage may vary substantially. Our cross-national sampling of a range of types of media organizations allows us to test the extent to which these kinds of structural differences do in fact make a difference in coverage, or if, on the contrary, a uniform "liberal" media logic has now come to characterize all types of mainstream news media in three Western democracies. Moreover, rather than asking such questions in all-or-nothing terms, we seek to determine which sourcing and framing practices are widely shared and which diverge depending on the national location or type of media organization.

Our content analysis focuses on five outlets from each country, selected to represent five "types" of news media: elite-left<sup>2</sup> press (*Dagsavisen*, *The New York Times*, and *Le Monde*), elite-right press (*Aftenposten*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Le Figaro*), popular press (*VG*, *USA Today*<sup>3</sup>, and *Le Parisien*), online text versions of public service TV and radio (nrk.no, npr.org, and francetelevisions.fr), and online text versions of commercial television (TV2.no, cnn.com, and tf1.fr). Selecting outlets based on such types assures both the comparability of national samples and the variation needed to test hypotheses about the effects of structural factors on news outcomes.

Focusing on coverage between January 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012—a period of time when unauthorized immigration was much in the news in all three countries—we compiled news items for our content analysis using a keyword search of media

databases in Norway (Retriever), the United States and France (LexisNexis), as well as searches of individual news outlet websites.<sup>4</sup> We collected articles from the print editions of the newspapers in our study and news items published on the websites of public and commercial audiovisual outlets. Once we gathered all news items and vetted them for relevance, we compiled smaller samples of approximately 100 news items for each news outlet,<sup>5</sup> proportionally representative of the increases and decreases in coverage over time across our sample. We coded these for the presence or absence of 23 preidentified immigration frames based on our own inductive readings of news texts and a synthesis of previous literature on immigration news (especially, Benson, 2013 and Kim et al., 2011). We later arranged these frame categories into broader summative indices containing twelve frames (see Table 1): four “problem” frames (problems for authorities, problems for society, problems for immigrants, and claims that immigration poses no problems); four “causal” frames (domestic immigration pull factors, international emigration push factors, cause system pro-immigration, and cause system anti-immigration); and four “solution” frames (enforcement, external [i.e., nondomestic solutions], reform to open up and streamline immigration system, and campaigns to better educate stakeholders about the issue).

A team of four coders (all fluent or native speakers) coded the articles and tested intercoder reliability on a 10% subsample. For the 12 issue-specific frame variables the Holsti reliability scores ranged from .78 to 1.0, with an average of .87, and Cohen’s kappa scores ranged from .49 to 1.0, with an average of .63. Because kappa is sensitive to skewed variables (i.e., variables that are rarely present in the sample, as was the case for many of the frames), Holsti’s measure of simple agreement is often regarded as the more appropriate measure of reliability for framing samples such as ours. For the source variable, the Cohen’s kappa reliability score was .84.

In this article, we analyze “prominent” quotes, defined as the first five direct quotes in a news item. This approach prevents longer news items containing large numbers of quotes from dominating our results. All news items were also coded at the article and headline/lead paragraph levels for the presence or absence of each of our frame categories. This analysis showed that virtually all frames appeared more often in news articles than would be indicated by the first five quotes, either via quotes later in the text or via nonsourced factual or analytical statements in the journalistic authorial voice. In terms of the relative frequency of frames, however, no substantial differences were found between the corpus of quotes and the articles in their entirety.

Our sample was of course shaped by real-world events occurring in 2011 and 2012. In the United States, for instance, the Republican party focused on immigration policy as a key component of their platform leading up to the 2012 presidential election, perhaps resulting in more news focus on right wing politicians and their oft-used frames than might occur at other time periods. France was similarly in the midst of a national election campaign during our sampling period, which likely cast the media spotlight more prominently on politicians than would be the case in a nonelection year. In Norway, the single 2011 deportation case of Maria Amelie, also known by her given name of Madina Salamova, became a national media event, perhaps inflating the voice of individual immigrants in the news. Center-left national administrations were in



power during all of our sampling period in both Norway and the United States; a center-right administration was in power in France, except for a 2-month period in our sample after the election of François Hollande to the presidency in April 2012. These factors will be taken into account when analyzing our findings; however, it should also be stressed that in all three countries, news coverage was constituted by a wide range of events and our sampling method assured that no single event would dominate the final corpus of texts.

## Findings

### *Who is Quoted in Immigration Coverage?*

In all three countries in our study, dominant political parties and elected officials were the foremost source for immigration news. In the United States and France, officials linked to the mainstream right or left parties constituted more than one third of quoted speakers; in Norway, they made up just under one fourth (see Table 2, sum of first two categories). We did not find that the party holding national executive power necessarily dominated coverage. While the parties holding national executive power led coverage in Norway (left) and France (right), this was not the case in the United States, where the left held executive power yet right political speakers provided 23% of quotes in the news, compared with the left's 11%. This finding reflects the divided character of U.S. national legislative power at this time, with the Senate in Democratic hands and the House of Representatives under Republican control; even so, the dominance of the U.S. mediated debate by the opposition party is striking.

Police, judges, and government bureaucrats were also key components of a nation's immigration apparatus and tended to be front and center in the news. Altogether, these three groups made up 10% to 12% of sources in each country in our study. When combined with the aforementioned party-affiliated officials, government conceived broadly accounted for 45% of quotes in the United States, 49% in France, and 34% in Norway. The state was without question the dominant source of quotes in the mediated immigration debate.

The preponderance of political sources, as predicted, was more marked at elite papers (35%) than their popular counterparts (17%) across our national samples (figures not shown in tables).<sup>6</sup> An outlet's degree of commercialization also seemed to influence whether news included government voices, with online commercial broadcasting outlets turning to mainstream politicians for 44% of quotes versus only 26% for the online reportage of public service broadcasters (PSBs).

Consistent with predictions that contemporary immigration coverage would tend to focus on everyday people, unaffiliated individuals were also common in immigration news. These sources—the proverbial man or woman on the street—were most notable in Norway, where they comprised nearly a quarter of all speakers, although they were recurring sources in U.S. (13%) and French (11%) coverage as well. In Norway, unauthorized immigrants made up about three-fifths of unaffiliated individuals quoted (15% of the total sample), while in the United States and France, they accounted for half or less

**Table 2.** Percentages of Quotes Attributed to Sources by Nation-State.

	Country/type of source ( <i>N</i> total quotations)		
	United States (1,314)	Norway (833)	France (686)
Elected and party officials: mainstream right	23.4 (307)	5.6 (47)	28.3 (194)
Elected and party officials: mainstream left	11.3 (148)	18.0 (150)	9.0 (62)
Police, judges, and civil servants	10.8 (142)	10.7 (89)	12.0 (82)
<i>Total government</i>	45.4 (597)	34.3 (286)	49.3 (338)
Unaffiliated individuals: unauthorized immigrants	5.0 (66)	15.2 (127)	5.4 (37)
Unaffiliated individuals: authorized immigrants/citizens	7.6 (100)	9.1 (76)	6.0 (41)
<i>Total unaffiliated individuals</i>	12.6 (166)	24.4 (203)	11.4 (78)
Pro-immigration associations and far left parties	9.5 (125)	10.3 (86)	14.1 (97)
Anti-immigration associations and far right parties	4.0 (53)	2.9 (24)	3.9 (27)
Trade unions	0.2 (2)	0.7 (6)	1.9 (13)
Religious	1.2 (16)	2.9 (24)	0.1 (1)
Academics	5.2 (68)	2.8 (23)	1.9 (13)
Other experts	4.7 (62)	1.0 (8)	0.0 (0)
Business	4.0 (53)	0.7 (6)	0.9 (6)
International	2.8 (37)	2.2 (18)	7.7 (53)
Other <sup>a</sup>	10.3 (135)	17.9 (149)	8.7 (60)

<sup>a</sup>The category of “other” includes educators, celebrities, historical figures, politically neutral associations, quotes from other news media coverage, and any speakers who did not fit into the main categories presented here. Each of these speaker types made up a relatively small percentage of our total sample.

of unaffiliated individuals (about 5% of all quotes in both cases; for more on the granting of voice to unauthorized immigrants, see Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015). Popular newspapers, as predicted, highlighted unaffiliated individuals (19% of their quotes), but were virtually indistinguishable in this regard from PSB online media (18%) and elite-left newspapers (17%); even elite-right newspapers (12%) and commercial online TV outlets (13%) emphasized individual voices (figures not shown in tables).

The other major quoted sources in all countries were pro-immigration associations. When combined with other left advocacy groups engaged with the immigration issue, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, and far left political parties, pro-immigration groups made up 14% of sources in France and about 10% in both Norway and the United States.

Businesses, both large and small as well as trade associations—an elite group with a high stake in immigration policy—were almost totally absent from immigration coverage. They made up 4% of quotes in the United States and fewer than 1% in both Norway and France.

Anti-immigration groups were also relatively scarce in the news. In France and Norway far right-wing political parties played a structural role akin to that filled by anti-immigration associations in the United States, providing marginal viewpoints not generally articulated by other groups (Benson, 2013). When anti-immigration groups, right-wing advocacy organizations, and far right parties were combined, they made up just 3% to 4% of sources in all three countries.

Journalists' tendency to quote pro-immigration advocates more often than anti-immigration advocates was consistent across all types of media, with the exception of elite-right newspapers. It was strongest at popular (18% vs. 4%, respectively; figures not shown in tables) and elite-left (13% vs. 4%) newspapers, followed slightly by online public service media (11% vs. 4%) and online commercial TV (10% vs. 4%). Elite-right newspapers were distinct in that they gave both groups approximately equal and minimal attention (5% for pro-immigration groups vs. 3% for anti-immigration groups; difference not statistically significant).

Academic researchers were not particularly prominent sources in any of the countries in our study, but were quoted slightly more often in the United States (5%) than in Norway (3%) and France (2%). Nonuniversity experts such as think-tank professionals, however, made up an additional 5% of quotes in the United States, versus just 1% in Norway and 0% in France. International voices (foreign governments, international governmental bodies such as the UN and WTO, and international NGOs) were also not major sources in any country, though they did appear in news coverage substantially more often in France (8%) than in the United States (3%) or Norway (2%).

### *Do Quotes Contain Issue Frames?*

We found that on average, a majority of quotes in the news did not refer to any of our immigration-specific issue frames (see Table 3). Within this overall context of a remarkably high use of frameless quotes, there were nevertheless substantial cross-national differences. Frameless quotes appeared much less frequently in France (44%) than in Norway (58%) and especially the United States (65%). These cross-national differences were not based on a few speakers dominating the news in one or the other countries, but on pervasive patterns across all types of quoted sources: U.S. politicians, activists, civil servants, university experts, and unaffiliated individuals all were more likely to provide frameless quotes in the news than their French or Norwegian counterparts (see online appendix for national tables linking speakers and frames; all online appendices are available at <http://abs.sagepub.com/content/by/supplemental-data>).

Right-leaning papers clearly used more frameless quotes than left-leaning outlets in Norway, but the differences were not statistically significant in France or the United States. Audience cultural capital (shown in our variables "elite press" vs. "popular press") did not exert a consistent effect on the rate of frameless quotes. Surprisingly, PSB online outlets used frameless quotes at about the same rate as their online commercial counterparts, 60% versus 55% respectively (difference not statistically significant).

The same groups tended to offer the highest proportion of frameless quotes in Norway, the United States, and France (see online appendix tables). In all three countries, state functionaries such as judges, police officers, and civil service workers

**Table 3.** Percentages of Quotes Without Frames by Nation-State and Type of Media.

Country (N)	Media type (N)						
	All media types (2,833)	Elite-left press (606)	Elite-right press (545)	Total elite press (1,151)	Popular press (405)	Public service broadcaster online text (675)	Commercial TV online text (602)
Total sample (2,833)	57.5	51.8	60.4	55.9	61.5	60.0	55.3
Norway (833)	57.7	37.2	63.3	50.0	59.3	65.9	58.9
France (686)	43.6	37.7	45.4	41.3	55.0	44.4	37.4
United States (1,314)	64.7	70.6	71.2	70.9	67.2	59.1	59.9

delivered frameless quotes at rates far exceeding their respective national averages. This finding can likely be attributed to the occupational ideologies and codes of conduct that govern these professions (Ihlen, Figenschou, & Larsen, 2015). When state officials speak in news, they tend to clarify bureaucratic procedures, provide facts on immigration cases, or describe their own role in the larger immigration system, rather than frame immigration in more thematic terms.

Perhaps surprisingly, many issue advocates and experts also regularly offered frameless quotes in immigration news. While one might expect pro-immigration advocates in the United States, for example, to vociferously champion specific frames, three fifths of their quotes were frameless, a rate nearing the U.S. national average. Similarly, university experts offered a high percentage of frameless quotes in Norway (61%) and the United States (71%), in both cases exceeding the average national rate.<sup>7</sup> Conversely, pro-immigration and anti-immigration advocates in Norway and France, driven by the issue-based argumentation of marginal political parties, were among the few sources to focus consistently on issue frames, offering frameless quotes at a rate far below their respective national averages.

### *Which Frames Are Most Common in Reportage and Which Sources Promote Them?*

The problems that immigration poses for authorities, society, and immigrants were given ample play by speakers in the media, but quoted sources offered far fewer thoughts about causes or solutions (see Table 4). French news outlets were highest in all three broad frame categories.<sup>8</sup> Elite-left papers focused more on problems than other types of media outlets. Elite newspapers as a whole were more likely to present solution frames (14% of quotes) than popular newspapers (8%).

### *Specific Frames: Problems, Causes, Solutions*

If immigration news focused on problems, exactly which problem frames were given emphasis by speakers? We found substantial cross-national variations. While U.S. coverage was not clearly dominated by any single problem frame, Norwegian news

**Table 4.** Percentage of Quotes Containing Any Problem, Cause, and Solution Frames by Nation–State and Media Type.

	Country/media type (N quotes)								
	United States (1,314)	Norway (833)	France (686)	Elite-left press (606)	Elite-right press (545)	Total elite press (1,151)	Popular press (405)	Public service broadcaster online text (675)	Commercial TV online text (602)
Problem	22.9	30.4	37.5	33.5	25.1	29.5	27.4	27.0	29.6
Cause	6.9	6.6	8.7	7.4	6.6	7.0	7.2	7.6	7.5
Solution	9.8	13.9	18.8	15.2	13.4	14.3	7.9	12.6	15.3

was most likely to underscore problems for immigrants, a frame that appeared in 21% of quotes (see Table 5); French news emphasized problems for authorities (20%). Elite-left and popular newspapers were more than twice as likely to emphasize problems for immigrants (16% and 17%, respectively) than elite-right newspapers (7%). Across all types of media, problems for society (negative problems associated with immigration) tended to trail problems for immigrants; the one exception was elite-right newspapers, where the two frames were equal, occurring in about 7% of quotes. PSB and commercial online news differed little across any of the problem (as well as cause and solution) frames.

Quoted speakers rarely made causal arguments, but when they did, they generally laid blame on the immigration system itself. Systemic failings (combined cause-system pro and cause-system anti) were identified as a cause of strife at similar rates in the United States (5%), Norway (5%), and France (4%), although the political overtones of these claims varied. In the United States, the system was most often blamed for being weak and ineffective in controlling immigration (cause-system anti); in Norway and France, the system was most often blamed for being unnecessarily restrictive or inhumane (cause-system pro). French media tended to emphasize causal “push” factors more than media in Norway and the United States ( $p < .001$ ), while “pull” factors were rarely mentioned by any news media (1% or less; not shown in table).

As for solution frames, tougher enforcement was the most frequently mentioned in France (12% of quotes) and the United States (6%); in Norway, references to (pro-immigration) reform and enforcement both showed up in 7% of quotes. Across the three countries, elite-left newspapers tended to emphasize reform more than their right-leaning counterparts (6% vs. 3%;  $p < .005$ ). Against this emphasis on domestic policy responses, neither information campaigns (designed to educate or sway various publics) nor international “external” solutions gained much traction, with both appearing in less than 1% of quotes in all countries (not shown in tables).

### Matching Frames with Speakers

Who, then, drove the dominant frames in immigration news? Problems for authorities, the top problem frame for the United States and France, were most commonly spoken

**Table 5. Percentage of Quotes Containing Specific Problem, Cause, and Solution Frames by Nation-State and Type of Media<sup>a</sup>.**

Frames	Country/media type (N total quotes)								
	United States (1,314)	Norway (833)	France (686)	Elite-left press (606)	Elite-right press (545)	Total elite press (1,151)	Popular press (405)	Public service broadcaster online text (675)	Commercial TV online text (602)
Problems for authorities	8.4 (110)	1.6 (13)	20.4 (140)	10.1 (61)	9.9 (54)	10.0 (115)	5.7 (23)	9.6 (65)	10.0 (60)
Problems for society	5.0 (66)	7.7 (64)	8.6 (59)	7.4 (45)	7.3 (40)	7.4 (85)	4.9 (20)	6.1 (41)	7.1 (43)
Problems for immigrants	7.1 (93)	20.9 (174)	9.6 (66)	15.5 (94)	6.8 (37)	11.4 (131)	16.5 (67)	10.2 (69)	11.0 (66)
No problem	3.1 (41)	0.8 (7)	1.5 (10)	1.5 (9)	1.5 (8)	1.5 (17)	1.2 (5)	2.4 (16)	3.3 (20)
Cause-push factors	0.5 (7)	1.6 (13)	3.6 (25)	2.5 (15)	2.6 (14)	2.5 (29)	1.2 (5)	0.9 (6)	0.8 (5)
Cause-system pro-immigration	1.9 (25)	4.6 (38)	3.6 (25)	3.1 (19)	2.0 (11)	2.6 (30)	4.4 (18)	4.0 (27)	2.2 (13)
Cause-system anti-immigration	3.3 (44)	0.7 (6)	0.6 (4)	1.3 (8)	1.1 (6)	1.2 (14)	0.7 (3)	2.1 (14)	3.8 (23)
Solution enforcement	5.9 (78)	6.7 (56)	11.8 (81)	6.9 (42)	8.6 (47)	7.7 (89)	3.2 (13)	8.4 (57)	9.3 (56)
Solution reform	3.7 (48)	6.8 (57)	2.9 (20)	6.1 (37)	2.6 (14)	4.4 (51)	4.0 (16)	4.9 (33)	4.2 (25)

<sup>a</sup>Due to the inclusion of frameless quotes in our statistical analysis, issue frame totals for any given nation or media type will not add up to 100%. Cause-Pull, Solution-External and Solution Campaign, each of which appeared in 1% or less of quotes across all media categories, are not shown in tables.

by a slightly different mix of speakers in the two countries (see online appendix tables for all national frame/source data). In the United States, national mainstream right political officials accounted for 22% of the quotes using this frame, while pro-immigration activists made up 15%; for differing reasons both of these groups called attention to the political problems posed by immigration, such as the risk of losing Hispanic electoral support.<sup>9</sup> In France, the frame seemed to arise as a debate between the right-wing governing coalition in power, which accounted for 24% of quotes using this frame, and mainstream left political officials (11%), supplemented by pro-immigration associations and parties (19%).

The problems for immigrants frame, the most common frame in Norway, was clearly driven in that country by nongovernmental sources, in particular unaffiliated individuals (35% of quotes) and pro-immigration advocacy groups (19% of quotes). Although appearing less often overall in France, the same groups in reverse order, pro-immigration associations and parties (32% of quotes) and unaffiliated individuals (24% of quotes), were also the primary promoters of this frame. In the United States, in addition to these speaker categories, the frame got a boost from the national executive branch, which provided 11% of quotes using this frame. Even more notable in the U.S. case was who was *not* voicing this frame: None of the quotes with problems for immigrants frames could be attributed to right-wing politicians or anti-immigration groups (similar tendencies were at work in Norway and France, but they fell short of the total blackout observable in the United States).

Problems for society, a subordinate frame in all three countries, was promoted in Norway and France by their respective center-left and center-right executive branches of the governments in power (accounting for 47% and 46%, respectively, of all quotes using this frame in each country), and in the United States by mainstream right legislative and party officials (30% of problems for society quotes), followed by anti-immigration associations and far right parties at some distance in all three countries (11%-13%). In France, perhaps linked to pronouncements from neighboring countries or the European Union, international organizational speakers brought attention to problems for society, accounting for 14% of quotes with this frame; in the United States, unaffiliated individuals, mostly citizens or authorized residents, accounted for an additional 18% of problems for society quotes.

As noted, causal frames were rarely raised by quoted sources, but when they were nongovernmental speakers played an important role in bringing attention to them. In the United States, academic and other experts accounted for more than one quarter of all quotes mentioning the cause-pull and cause-push frames; in France, experts accounted for 12% of the cause-push frame quotes, trailing unaffiliated individuals (24%) and international officials (20%). In all three countries, the problem of an overly harsh immigration system (cause-system pro) was most likely to arise because of quotes attributed to pro-immigration associations and parties. Explaining the problem as a symptom of an overly lax immigration system (cause-system anti) only appeared with any frequency in the United States, and when it did, it was because of mainstream right officials at either the local or national levels, accounting for, respectively, 39% and 36% of quotes with the frame.

Enforcement was the dominant solution frame and was promoted most strongly by government and anti-immigration parties and associations, although the particular mix differed across the countries. In Norway and France, the national executive branch of the government in power was the dominant source, (accounting for 34% and 56% of quotes using the frame in the two countries, respectively) followed at some distance by far right parties and police. In the United States, the dominant promoters of enforcement were mainstream right party officials and legislators, who accounted for 35% of quotes using the frame, trailed by the mainstream left executive branch (14%), anti-immigration associations (10%), and police (9%).

## Conclusion

Supporting claims of transnational media homogenization, important similarities pervaded immigration news in the United States, Norway, and France. In each country, and across all types of media, frameless quotes were extremely prevalent, immigration problems were discussed far more often than causes or solutions, and government and political officials, followed by unaffiliated individuals and pro-immigration associations, were the dominant sources of news. These broad patterns suggest that journalists throughout the three countries in our study adopted some similar approaches to covering immigration.

Predictions that sourcing and framing patterns would tend to differ along national lines or types of media (partisan orientation, cultural capital of audiences, and commercial vs. public service orientation) were only partially upheld. Matching our prediction, frameless quotes were substantially less common in France than in the United States or Norway, confirming that the “debate ensemble” format more common in France promotes argumentation over narrative storytelling. Likewise, as predicted, elite-right newspapers were different from other media in not substantially privileging pro-immigration over anti-immigration sources and frames. However, unaffiliated individuals appeared almost equally in popular, elite-left, and PSB online media, so cultural capital of audience does not seem to be the key distinguishing factor.

Contrary to expectations, elite newspapers and online PSB did not emphasize cause frames more than other media; likewise, against predictions, the specific dominant problem frames differed substantially across media systems, with Norway emphasizing problems for immigrants, and the United States and especially France highlighting problems for authorities. Again, elite-right newspapers were different from other media in not privileging problems for immigrants over problems for society.

Thus, in our overall analysis of both speakers and frames, we did find some evidence of national media system differences, but there was a less than entirely consistent continuum between the United States on one end, France on the other, with Norway in the middle as is sometimes implied by media systems theory. This study thus echoes previous research showing that democratic corporatist media are more akin to media in the “liberal” United States than to those in the polarized pluralist countries, while at the same time also carving out their own unique territory (see, e.g.,



Benson, Blach-Orsten, Powers, Willig, & Vera Zambrano, 2012). Partisanship was the only characteristic of individual news outlets that seemed to consistently shape coverage as predicted.

As for patterns of frames linked to particular speakers, we found that while government and political officials were major drivers of the discourse, many nongovernmental sources also actively participated in framing. However, rather than a broad and even dispersion, only a handful of actors outside government—unaffiliated individuals, pro-immigration and to a much lesser extent anti-immigration associations, marginal parties (in Norway and France), and some experts—tended to be robust voices.

Cross-national consistencies in frames linked to unaffiliated individuals stand out as particularly unexpected findings in our study. There seems to be no compelling reason why unaffiliated individuals—by definition an extremely diverse set of people—would so regularly advance the “problems for immigrants” frame cross-nationally. This is especially true given that public opinion in Norway, the United States, and France tends to favor more restrictive immigration measures, or is at least closely divided on the issue. The univocality of unaffiliated sources is most plausibly explained as the outcome of journalistic choices. Ordinary people across the three nations in our study, it seems, are typecast in immigration news, brought out as foils to systemic actors rather than as exemplars of the diversity of public views on immigration.

Our study also showed that in news accounts, competing advocates rarely addressed the arguments of their opponents, even to counter them: for instance, in the United States and France, anti-immigration groups *never* mentioned problems for immigrants, and pro-immigration groups *never* mentioned problems for society. In Norway, these dominant patterns held, with anti-immigration groups mentioning problems for immigrants in less than 1% of their quotes, and pro-immigration advocates discussing problems for society only 5% of the time (see online appendix tables).

These patterns in framing cannot simply be attributed to the power of journalists; they also seem to be an outcome of strategic choices by speakers. Political parties and government bureaus have highly coordinated communications apparatuses that ensure their representatives stay “on message” when discussing immigration in the news; immigration activism is increasingly professionalized and internationally coordinated, so that groups may present a united front in the media (Ihlen et al., 2015). These factors, combined with the media’s tendency to assign recurring narrative roles to actors, mean that many groups in the news end up reiterating their own preferred frames, ignoring others.

The result of strategic communications and journalistic demands is an “immigration debate” that is less a back-and-forth negotiation of competing ideas than a series of stand-alone statements repeated by fundamentally opposed actors. Rather than offering rebuttals of rival narratives, advocates, officials, and experts alike generally restated their own understandings of the immigration issue. This tendency was mitigated somewhat by dominant frames that acted as lightning rods for political discourse in each nation, provoking ideological opponents to address similar frames. However, while somewhat multiperspectival, immigration news in all three countries seemed to

lack a sustained dialogue between opposing advocate viewpoints—especially those of marginal actors—offering a shouting match rather than a developing debate.

To extend the generalizability of our findings, future research should examine other national media systems, types of media, and issues. Are frameless quotes, government sources, and problem frames so omnipresent in other nations' reportage? Do actors stick to their own frames, or are they generally willing to address opposing viewpoints? Are certain sources typecast in the news? Most importantly, what specific structural variables account for sourcing and framing differences across outlets and nations? Fully answering these questions entails not only additional content analyses dealing with diverse issues and time periods, but ethnographic accounts of exactly how journalists in various nations and at various types of media outlets engage with sources and select quotes for the news. Such research is necessary for identifying transnational patterns in news framing, and more crucially for bringing to light the factors that make journalism capable of presenting robust, ideologically diverse debate attuned not only to elite but also popular debate, not only to social problems but causes and solutions as well.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Research Council of Norway.

### Notes

1. For our purposes, “elite” denotes the high cultural and economic capital of an outlet’s audience, as well as its role as an agenda-setting news source, whereas “popular” outlets are distinguished by large audiences with comparatively lower amounts of capital.
2. Political orientation is approximate based on our assessment of data on newspapers’ ownership, overt editorial positions, and audience composition. It is in all cases mitigated by professional aspirations for balance in news coverage and varies in its particular character depending on national political context.
3. *USA Today*’s audience is more “up-market” than its Norwegian and French counterparts, but its audience is substantially less educated than those of the *New York Times* or *Wall Street Journal* (see Benson, 2013).
4. The authors participated in the selection and collection of data sponsored by the University of Oslo “Mediation of Migration Project” and the Research Council of Norway.
5. Samples from some news outlets contained fewer than 100 news items after our initial search. In these cases, all news items were coded in our study. Specifically, our final sample contained 99 items from nrk.no, 91 from Le Figaro, 62 from VG, 51 from francetelevisions.fr, and 49 from tf1.fr.
6. Any cross-national or cross-media type differences highlighted in this study were statistically significant using *t* tests at the .05—and often at the .005—level, unless indicated otherwise.

7. The percentage of frameless quotes offered by university experts in the French media was very low (8%), although the sample size of only 12 quotes made this a relatively unreliable figure.
8. Using *t* tests, French–U.S. and French–Norway differences were statistically significant at the .005 level for problems and .01 for solutions, but were not statistically significant for causes.
9. Figures indicate the percentage of quotes within each frame category attributable to a given type of speaker. For example, of all U.S. quotes featuring the problems for authorities frame ( $n = 110$ ), 22% came from mainstream right political officials. All frame/speaker relationships in this section are expressed in a similar manner. *N*s for quotes mentioning each frame by country are listed in Table 5. For additional data regarding how frequently each source utters each particular frame, see online appendix tables.

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