

**Framing Ukrainian refugees in the Australian News media:
Final Research Report**

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Research Question: Which frames are salient in Australian news coverage of Ukrainian refugees?

I. Introduction

The news media frame the reported events and their associated perspectives, phenomena, images, and depictions of the written topics so that the public can influence their attitudes toward the events through interpretations or understandings of the issues (Cooper et al., 2016). Meanwhile, the public is generally inclined to get information about refugees and their situation from events obtained from the news media in their regions. However, refugees are mainly framed negatively in the Australian media, and the biases from the Australian public were grown over a long history (McKay et al., 2011). Many previous studies have discovered that refugees from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East have long been portrayed in the news media, often using biased frames and discriminatory language, only rarely focused on refugees from Europe countries, such as Ukrainian refugees (Larsen, 2022). Furthermore, several vital frames exist for media representation of refugees as victims, invaders, and threats to national interests in countries with different political ideologies. (Liu, 2023).

In Australia, news media frames of refugees include economic impacts, national security, and social threats, often by dehumanizing refugees and asylum seekers through negative discourses (Cooper et al., 2016; Laughland-Booÿ et al., 2014). Some

research has investigated the use of terms including "threat," "terrorism," "water," "outsider," and "illegal immigrant" in the Australian news media for groups of refugees, such as African refugees from Sudan, as well as asylum seekers." (Davis, 2021; Lippi et al., 2020; McKay et al., 2011). Besides, the more neutral and balanced Australian media coverage uses expert opinions and personal stories in the news articles (Cooper et al., 2016; McKay et al., 2011).

II. Review of methodology

Quantitative content analysis was employed in this study to analyze news articles about Ukrainian refugees in the Australian news coverage between February 24, 2022, and April 24, 2023. Through retrieving the Factiva database, the search results in the study text included 152 news articles from all Australian news media. The sample involved 50 Australian news articles about Ukrainian refugees randomly selected and generated for the research question. The coding sheet contained seven basic frames and a "N/A" frame to ensure the objective.

III. Findings

Previous relevant academic research inspired this study's seven frames: Human Interest frame, Responsibility frame (Roman et al., 2021), Refugee camps frame, Welfare frame (Heidenreich et al., 2019), Economic impact frame, Security frame, and Migration statistics frame (Corbu et al., 2017). If a frame was present in the text, it was coded as "Yes-1"; if it was not mentioned in the text, it was coded as "No-0" (see Appendix). The headings and main paragraphs of the selected sample news articles were analyzed after understanding coding frames.

Quantitative Content Analysis Results

According to the analysis process, the charts below show the counted number and the proportion of the coding frames of news articles on the Factiva database about Ukrainian refugees in the Australian news media in the study.

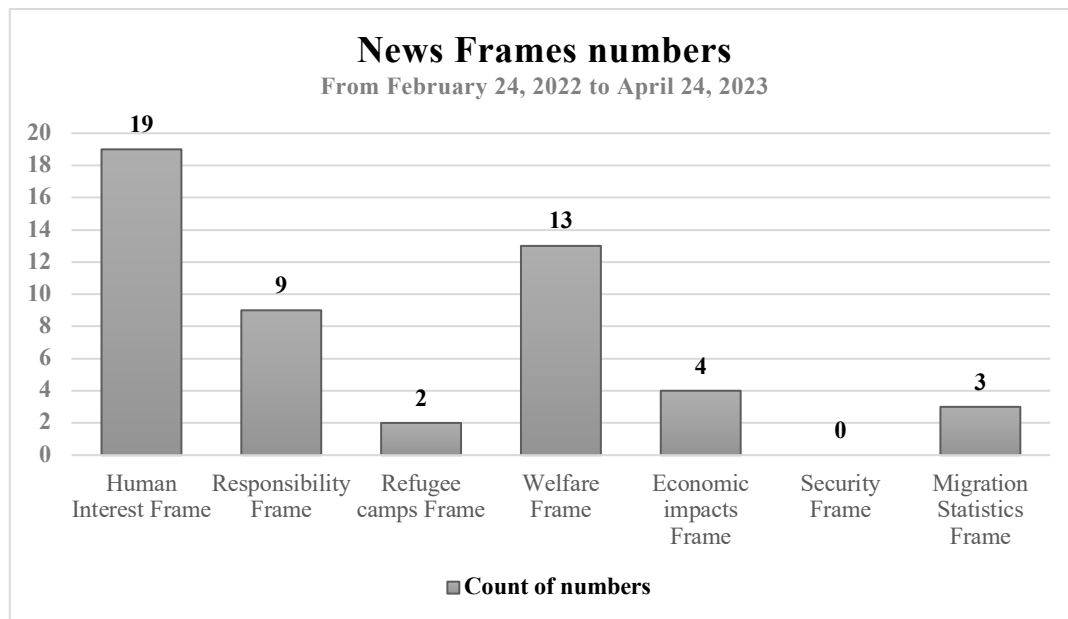


Chart 1. The numbers of the selected news samples

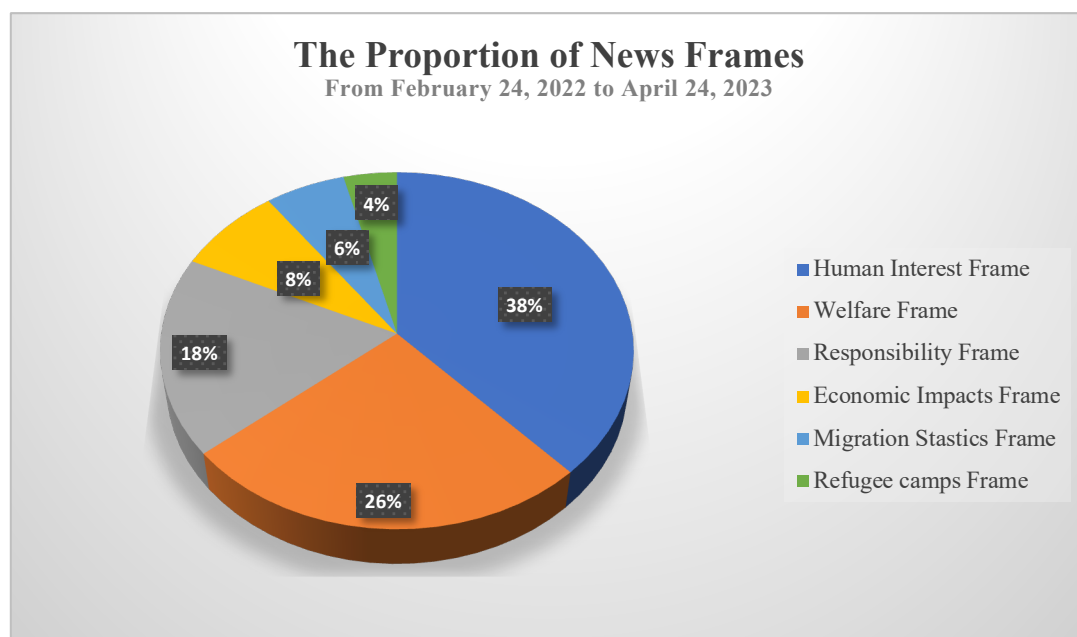


Chart 2. The proportion of the selected news samples

Overall, With the above quantitative content statistical analysis, as seen through Chart 1 and Chart 2, the Human Interest frame is the most frequent news frame in the Australian news media coverage of Ukrainian refugees, appearing 19 times and accounting for 38% of the total sample. Next, the Welfare and Responsibility frames dominate a relatively large portion of the sample, accounting for 13 times (26%) and 9 times (18%) of the total sample, respectively. Followed by fewer types of frames are the Economic Impacts frame (8%), Refugee Camps frame (4%), and Migration Statistics frame (6%). However, it is highly significant that no Security frames and no other than the seven main coding frames were identified in the sample in the Australian news media coverage of Ukrainian refugees.

The most concerned: Human Interest Frame

From the above statistical analysis of the sample news, it is apparent that the answer to this study's research question is that the Human Interest frame is most salient in the news coverage of Ukrainian refugees by the Australian news media in this research, which talks about the life of Ukrainian refugees in Australia and their war experiences in Ukraine. Through the investigation of the selected news content and headlines, these stories utilized Ukrainian refugees' instances facing the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Russian military and how they felt and reacted to the miserable and hardship days.

Therefore, these news articles use the Human Interest frame to provide humanity concerns of the Australian perspective to the Ukrainian refugees and lead to compassion

for these refugees as well as denunciation toward Russia. For example, in the selected samples, the terms that appeared in the headings and main paragraphs, like "apocalypse" and "bittersweet," "new life," and "so lucky," to report their feelings toward the conflict or their reactions about experiences of escape the war and flee to Australia. Also, nearly 14 news articles used a simple sentence to describe and summarize Ukraine refugees' miserable experiences and paraphrase or quote the Ukraine refugees' storytelling of their stories connected to the war. Such as "They just killed him," "A lot of his friends died," "Rockets started coming," and "Ukraine conflict hits home for Bega women" to introduce the Ukraine refugees' personal stories of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Through the application of the Human Interest frame, the Australian news media could demonstrate a humanistic approach and suggest ideological support for Ukrainian refugees.

Offer Helps and Take Responsibility: Framing in Welfare and Responsibility

Followed by the Welfare frame and the Responsibility frame are less represented in this study compared to the Human interest frame but more represented than the remaining four frames. Firstly, the news articles using the Welfare frame contain an elaboration of the stories of the support and help from the local Australian organization or the other Philanthropists in the aspects of the settlement, financial aid, housing, and so on. The Australian news media applied the terms "get help," "support," "raise money or fund," "host," "free," and "supplies" in nearly eight news articles to describe the welfare measures provided by Australian national or regional government personnel to

refugees from Ukraine and the assistance and support provided by the kind-hearted Australian public to Ukrainian refugees in the headlines. Also, in these news contents, the numbers of already hosted Ukrainian refugees and the raised money existed and connected to the applied welfare measures to present the progress and further application of the human settlement of the Ukraine refugees.

Although the Responsibility frame is also associated with the Australian national or regional government, it places more emphasis on the perspective of different levels and regions of government sectors or political decision-makers in Australia who need to be responsible for relevant policies and support to address the issue of resettlement and assistance for Ukrainian refugees. For example, nearly 6 of the headlines of the Responsibility frame of these stories used the terms such as "call for," "criticize the government," "should," "must," "need to," "ready to," and other similar auxiliary verbs to identify the problem-solving departments of the government and their responsibility and decision making to help the Ukraine refugees.

Less focus on Framing Economic impact, Refugee camps, and Migration statistics

After analysis through the sample content of news stories, the frames of Economic Impact, refugee camps, and migration statistics news stories are not prominent in this study. In these news content of economic impact frames, half of these four reports were found to be about Ukrainian refugees finding jobs in Australia, and the other half reported that the arrival of Ukrainian refugees could supplement the labor market shortage in Australia. All four new articles applied the verbs "fill," "supplement," and

"plug," as well as combined with the term "labor crisis," "labor shortage," and "tech skills crisis" to describe the lack of labor market in Australia. Therefore, using these repeated words to frame this type of news report allows for describing and demonstrating the positive impact of Ukrainian refugees on the Australian economy. To sum up, the overall tone of these four news reports is positive, and there is no portrayal of Ukrainian refugees as having a negative impact or as a burden on the Australian economy in the Economic impact frame.

The only two refugee camp frames news articles in the sample contained a clear headline that uses "refugee camps" to summarize the topic of the article, and the analysis indicated that the coverage focus on Ukrainian refugees who fled the war to refugee camps and then came to live in Australia through asylum. All the news articles in the Migration statistics frame included figures and data in the headline, and the content is about objective interpretations and analysis of the statistics of Ukrainian refugees who have moved to countries during the military conflict and the number of asylum seekers.

Disappearing of the Security frame

The security frame is a negative frame that focuses on the threat to national security posed by the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in Australia, often using negative terms such as "threat" and "crime." However, examining the sample in this study revealed that the security frame and other negative frames were not used in the news framing of Ukrainian refugee coverage in the Australian news media.

IV. Discussion

According to the quantitative content analysis results in the seven basic frames, the Human Interest frame is used most frequently to narrate the lives of Ukrainian refugees in Australia and their harrowing experiences in Ukraine, and the Security frame does not exist when reporting about Ukrainian refugees by Australia News Media.

These pieces of evidence appear that the Australian news media avoid employing negative and racially biased news frames for Ukrainian refugees, in contrast to the previous studies showing the continued use of biased frames which apply discriminative and racial language and negative attitudes toward refugee groups such as African and Afghanistan refugees, and asylum seekers, boat people, as well as the utilization of security frames in the Australian news media (Cooper et al., 2016; McKay et al., 2011).

The findings of this study can be related and interpreted concerning the historical development of Australian society and Australian political ideology. From a historical developmental perspective, since the beginning of the colonial period, Australia has distinguished between "white" ethnicity and other racial groups with the terms "we" and "they" (Poynting & Noble, 2003; Rodan & Lange, 2008). In the twentieth century, Australian media coverage, influenced by political partisanship, tended to portray other racial groups negatively in the past to gain electoral votes (Kampmark, 2022). In the 21st century, Australia has become a multiracial, international country based on immigration and humanitarian policies due to its societal growth and open acceptance (Kampmark, 2022; Lange et al., 2007; Rodan & Lange, 2008). However, according to

previous research, Australia has much preferential treatment for white races regarding social welfare, whether immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers (Kampmark, 2022; McKay et al., 2011; Poynting & Noble, 2003). At the same time, the concept of 'core culture,' which constitutes Australian culture and values, has received much attention in the Australian news media. It continues the Australian tradition of referring to Anglo-Australian or Australian culture, which has shaped the structural distribution of power between white and other racial groups in Australian society due to Australian ideology (Rodan & Lange, 2008).

Moreover, according to Australian political ideology and political advocacy, like many Western countries, for example, the United States and the United Kingdom, Australia joined the sanctions against Russia in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine conflict while providing various kinds of support to Ukraine (Hartley et al., 2018). Thus, when Ukrainian refugees of similar appearance, ethnicity, dress, and cultural background to the white community in Australia need to seek asylum, not only does the Australian government grant leniency in accepting Ukrainian refugees, but the Australian news media also tends to portray Ukrainian refugees as victims of the Russian-initiated military conflict rather than as framed in the same way as the "refugees" studied in the past (Kampmark, 2022; Lawlor & Tolley, 2017; Zawadzka-Paluckta, 2022). This has led the Australian news media to frame the Ukrainian refugees most prominently in terms of human interest by reporting personal stories that support the public awareness of Ukrainian refugees in Australian society.

In contrast, the Australian news media has been using negative news frames for refugees from non-white ethnic groups, and Afghanistan refugees are a powerful case for comparison with the results of this study. The political turmoil in Afghanistan in the 1990s resulted in a lot of Afghan refugees being forced to arrive in Australia by boat from Afghanistan through human traffickers in the early 21st century (Poynting & Noble, 2003; Lange et al., 2007; Rodan & Lange, 2008). As they did not have official visas and documents, the government defined them as "unauthorized." This has led to a massive public debate about refugees in Australia through the media, for example, newspapers (Lange et al., 2007; Poynting & Noble, 2003).

According to Rodan and Lange (2008), asylum seekers, especially Afghan refugees, were described as "others" by highlighting the use of "illegal," "legal," or "illicit," "unworthy," "threatening," "volatile" and other terms to report on the use of the security frame for Afghan refugees. During this period, newspaper coverage tended to dehumanize these Afghan refugees. The coverage focused on the illegal ways they used to arrive in Australia and the social destabilization of the country they caused rather than describing their personal life stories and the reasons they had to flee (Lange et al., 2007; Poynting, 2002; Poynting & Noble, 2003; Rodan & Lange, 2008). Instead, from the interpretation of political ideology, when the concentration is on exploring the causes and personal stories of refugees fleeing Afghanistan, this focuses on the humanity of the refugee community and is seen as an inclusive attitude (Hage, 2000; Rodan & Lange, 2008). Although the use of negative frames in Australian media coverage of Afghan refugees has gradually decreased as society has evolved, qualitative

discourse research has found that negative descriptions such as "boat people," "queue jumpers," and "unauthorized" persist today (Laughland-Booÿ et al., 2014; McKay et al., 2011).

From the above explanation, it is obvious to observe that the salient frame of refugees from Ukraine is distinct in the Australian news media, both in the last century, when the society was still progressive, and today, in the era of civilization and openness, comparing to refugees from other ethnic groups such as Afghan refugees.

V. Conclusion

By examining the salient frames of the Australian news media coverage of Ukrainian refugees using content analysis, this study indicates that the Human Interest frame is the most salient, followed by the welfare and responsibility frames, showing the Australian humanistic concern for Ukrainian refugees. Surprisingly, no security frames appeared in this sample. Therefore, the quantitative content analysis reveals from this study that the Australian news media prefer to use different frames when reporting on refugees of different nationalities. When reporting the refugees are white ethnicity or come from Europe, they tend to use the Human Interest frame to care about the personal stories of the refugees to demonstrate their acceptance and tolerance of Ukrainian refugees. However, other refugees from different ethnic groups are often used in negative frames, such as the Security frame by Australian news media.

VI. Limitations and further research

Although much of this study confirms that the Australian media uses more inclusive Human interest frames for refugees of European ethnicity than the security

frames in past coverage of African and Middle Eastern refugees, Australia is not the largest recipient of Ukrainian refugees and therefore has limitations. Therefore, I believe that future research could compare the news framing of Ukrainian refugees in Poland, the largest recipient country of Ukrainian refugees, as well as in Russia and China, with that of Australia and observe the differences in the coverage of Ukrainian refugees in countries with different political ideologies. Also, a simultaneous quantitative content analysis and qualitative discourse analysis of the Australian news media on Ukrainian refugees and refugees of other ethnicities, such as those from Sudan and Afghanistan during the same period, would provide a better insight into the differences in the use of news frames for different groups in the Australian news media.

Word Count: 2679

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Appendix: Code Book

Categories	Descriptions	Items
Human interest Frames	The story provides a personal example or tells the story of the individual's reaction and feelings to the problem, providing a human side to the theme by using or suggesting adjectives of pain, hardship, humility, and compassion.	1
Refugee camps Frames	Coverage mentions refugees' experiences related to keywords such as camp, jungle, boat, and detention.	2
Responsibility Frames	News coverage mentioned that some level of the government sector or political decision-makers (national or regional) are responsible for the policymaking or the solution to the refugees' problems.	3
Welfare Frames	Articles contain about the health conditions, housing, settlement, aid, education, and other support for the Ukrainian refugees.	4
Economic impacts Frames	Articles mention displaced people or refugees of Ukraine finding jobs or setting up businesses and other economic consequences in their new destinations.	5
Security Frames	The article contains content about the threats and crimes posed by Ukrainian refugees in their new destinations.	6
Migrant Frames	Articles that mention statistics and numbers about the Ukrainian displaced individuals	7
N/A	If the news article does not contain any of the frame's appeals above.	8