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### **Abstract**

This research project seeks to gain a better understanding of the U.S. media's depiction of the recent increase of refugees into Sweden and how the media's portrayal of these events has affected U.S. policy. To understand what happened in Sweden, this paper includes a qualitative analysis conducted in Sweden during January of 2018 to assess the current public opinion about refugees there. The results of these interviews were then compared to U.S. news sources to see how accurately the U.S. media depicted the events in Sweden. The rhetoric of the U.S. newspapers was understood through a word frequency count based on articles from the last four years. Understanding the framing and frequency of these articles is necessary to understand what kind of impact, if any, the coverage of this issue could have on U.S. policy. By understanding how media discusses the events in Sweden, this paper then uses the Policy-Media Interaction Model to understand the broader implications that media has on reshaping policy.

The results of this study showed that U.S. media's coverage of immigration in Sweden is both alarmist and inaccurate. Coverage simply did not focus on the issues that Swedes identified as important, but rather concentrated primarily on the challenges that have resulted from immigration. However, while the coverage of this issue was overwhelmingly negative, the coverage lacked the depth and consistency needed to strongly and negatively impact policy. While the potential impact this coverage could have on policy is low, there are several instances where the media could adversely affect refugee immigration policy in the U.S.

## Introduction

In 2015, the issue of migration came to the forefront of Western European countries. Unable to push off refugees to neighboring countries like Turkey, the EU was forced to confront the issue of migration, particularly the rising number of refugees seeking to enter Europe (Guild Costello Garlick & Moren-Lax, 2015). The saliency of this issue in Europe became incredibly apparent for countries like Sweden and Germany, which gained notoriety for their generous nature (Park, 2015). Sweden took in the largest per capita number of refugees of any country in Western Europe. In the year 2015, Sweden took in over 160,000 refugees or two percent worth of their population (Applications for asylum received, 2015). As time progressed, there seemed to be a gap between what was the historical and cultural norms of Sweden and what U.S. media was saying.

In an attempt to understand this difference, this paper includes an aggregate of interviews of Swedish experts discussing the implications of refugees in Sweden. Afterwards, US media was compared to expert Swedish opinion. Once it became apparent that the US media was not accurately representing the attitudes and situation in Sweden, I decided to critically analyze the framing by U.S. media to better understand the difference in the depiction and the reality of the situation. It seemed important to not only identify and explore the disparity; but also to understand if this difference was significant enough to impact legislation in the U.S. Thus, I have two research questions: (1) How did US media coverage diverge from the realities of Sweden; and, (2) Did US media framing of Swedish refugee experiences impact US refugee policy? My research provides a new perspective on how topics that affect both international and domestic policy are portrayed in the media and the subsequent impact of media framing on U.S. policy.

## **Background and Exploration of Media**

### **Media**

No event can be told in the exact way it occurred. There is a link between the event itself and the related representation of this event. Media is the mechanism that serves to either deconstruct or reconstruct the event (Traindafyllidou, 2017). It alters and controls the way an event is discussed, thereby influencing the content's meaning (McLuhan, 2002, Shaw, 1996). This alteration not only changes the content, but how viewers perceive the event (Soderlund, 2017; Sei-hill, Carvalho, Davis, & Mullins, 2011; Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2016; Solomon, 2006; Wright, 2010).

How the media depicts an issue is called framing. Framing works when a journalist constructs a story based off all the information about an event and chooses the salient events they wish to discuss (Entman, 1993, Iyengar, 1991). The ways in which a journalist can express a specific idea's importance is through word repetition, the placement of the article in the publication, associating aspects of the article with strong cultural symbols, and the use of specific words such as important metaphors or visual images to solidify a narrative (Entman, 1991, 1993).

The author's choice of words can conjure up different frames. For example, empathy can be produced through the journalist's vernacular. The empathy/distance frame examines how words that foster empathy, such as 'refugee', 'people', 'elderly', and 'children,' are used rather than words that build distance between the reader and the victim. Such words might include 'Muslim', 'men', 'soldier,' and 'fight.' The ability of the words to bridge divides between the reader and the story is important because creating proximity to the issue is essential for

producing empathy (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2016, Sei-hill, Carvalho, Davis, & Mullins, 2011, Robinson, 2002, Triandafyllidou, 2017, Hoijer, 2004)

It is not only words, but the use of emotive language to describe the situation of the refugees that can create empathy. Framing events such as the situation of the city of Srebrenica in Bosnia in the 1990s as a 'trail of tears' or the 'mass of wailing humanity' conjures up a sense of empathy for those affected by the crisis. These empathy descriptors seek to depict the hardship that the refugees were facing, using rhetoric to provide context (Robinson, 2002). Language is more powerful than simply affecting the reader's emotion, but it can be a catalyst for determining who is deserving of help (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2016, Triandafyllidou, 2017).

However, just as words can produce empathy, they can possess negative connotations. The word immigrants has a negative connotation, as immigrants are strongly associated with poverty and economic uncertainty. This negativity is not specific to marginalized communities but can be reflected upon organizations such as Western political policies. For example, words like 'collapsing' or 'absence of will' were used to describe the action of Western governments regarding the Srebrenica crisis; this shrouded U.S. government policy in a frame of failure and inadequacy (Robinson, 2002).

It is not only the words used, but the themes that the article focuses on that shape how events are perceived. If an article chooses to focus on the negative aspects of immigration, framing the issue of migration as a problem, rather than examining the benefits, will greatly impact the viewer's perception (Berry, Garcia-Blanco, & Moore, 2016).

The media's decision to alter content can be represented in how some media outlets have capitalized on the opportunity to portray refugees as encroaching enemies, simply waiting to invade Western countries. By depicting immigrants as infectious, terrorist, or coming to simply act as leeches on the welfare states of Western Europe, the media dehumanizes refugees. These images form the stereotypes of what a refugee is and in turn affect how the general public perceives refugee populations (Wright, 2010). Just as the public is affected by this, the government too will alter its policies and practices as a result of the media (Esses 2013; Robinson, 1999; Wright 2010).

The themes the journalists discuss are closely connected to the context which is provided about the story. When writing about certain events, the writer can omit incidences preceding the subject of their piece, thereby altering the context in which an event can be understood. By adjusting the time frame of events, it makes it hard to make an informed decision about what the story is discussing and can lead to false assumptions (Solomon, 2006).

A factor that affects how the media frames an article is whether the article is covering an international or domestic issue. When it has an international focus, journalists tend to be unified in their response and use a similar frame of patriotism and nationalism (Fahmy & Daekyung, 2008). The similarities of these articles can be found in their roots, as these narratives tend to be set by the stances of official sources. An example of this can be found in the U.S. media's single-narrative depiction of the "War on Terror." The media, particularly in the early stages, was unified in its response to the war, typically adhering to the narrative produced by the government (Dimitrova & Stromback, 2005).

Domestic issues tend to allow journalists to shift the framing of their articles at the whim of their ideology. Media outlets not only choose what topics they cover, but how the information they have been given is transmitted. Journalists do this not only by how they frame issues, but also by what they choose to omit. For example, the terms pro-choice versus pro-life are messages constructed by organizations to promote their view of the issue. However, if a news outlet chooses to use a neutral term or construct their own term to define these ideologies, they are framing the issue based on their set of beliefs, not based on what pro-life or pro-choice advocates would prefer (Terkildsen, 1998).

When the topic of immigration's impact in the U.S. was discussed, the largest influence on the frame of the article was the journalist's ideology and the location of the newspaper (Dunaway, Branton, & Abrajano, 2010). For example, conservative newspapers are more inclined to frame immigration as a threat to the U.S. economy and safety (Fryberg et al. 2011).

When seeking to understand the overall frame of an event, there are two ways to understand it. The thematic frame focuses on the larger movement, emphasizing broader ideas, and usually using statistics to describe trends. The episodic frame focuses on a single-story, telling one person's narrative regarding a larger event. The individualistic nature of episodic focus heightens the reaction of the viewer and is typically more persuasive than the thematic frame (Soderlund, 2017; Iyengar, 1991). The persuasion can sway someone in a positive or negative direction depending on the words, context, and content of the article.

The way the media discusses events can only go so far, as the individual's own belief, dispositions, and background will play a substantial role in how susceptible they are to media



framing (Soderlund, 2017; Iyengar, 1991). This is important because our perception has an impact on policy (Soderlund, 2017).

### **Frames to Understand Refugees**

When journalists discuss refugees there are two frames they tend to use: the moral frame and the threat frame. The moral frame depicts refugees as helpless victims fleeing war and conflict, and it tends to remove much of their agency. It blames the atrocities on smugglers and refugee-producing countries for provoking conflict and not protecting their citizens. It upholds Western ideologies of democracy and equality (Triandafyllidou, 2017).

The other frame, the threat frame, concentrates on all the problems associated with migrant populations. It plays into a fear of the growing number of refugees, emphasizing the strain they will place on the social welfare system and the spread of disease that may accompany them. Within this frame, the theme of “us” (host countries) versus “them” (migrants) is pervasive. This frame fosters feelings of uncertainty and divisiveness (Triandafyllidou, 2017).

When these two theories are merged, it tends to produce the rationality frame. This frame is typically employed to rationalize political decisions that go against the ideals established by Western democracies. An example of this can be found in Sweden when the “the Swedish Social Democrat party and its leaders concluded, “We are a small country and have done enormously a lot.” They used this rhetoric to demonstrate their commitment to uphold human rights, but, at the same time, limit the number of people crossing their borders (Triandafyllidou, 2017).

### **Media’s Effect on Policy**

The theoretical model used to understand the role that media affects policy was established by Pier Robinson in his 2002 book, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign*

*Policy and Intervention*. The following discussion in this paper disaggregates the book, breaking it down into what the CNN Effect is, what its counterpart, Manufactured Consent theory is, and what Robinson's own Policy-Media Interaction Model is.

### **CNN Effect**

The CNN Effect is rooted in over 25 years of research and states that when major news sources push a specific political and economic position through letting it dominate their airspace, they can in turn affect political opinions (Gilboa, 2005). The CNN Effect has been proven in a variety of cases (Bahador, 2007). It is further exacerbated by the fear that the pervasiveness of real-time news has eliminated politicians' abilities to think with clarity about events and has provoked quick and drastic responses (Robinson, 1999).

For a strong CNN Effect to occur, news coverage must be persistent, making news headlines for three to four days. The coverage must also be located on the front pages of newspapers, or be covered within the first ten minutes of a news broadcast. The frequency and depth of coverage is crucial for media to have a substantial effect (Berry, Garcia-Blanco, & Moore, 2016). This type of media coverage, together with policy uncertainty, pressure from Congress and constituents, and strong criticism from the media, gives the greatest chance of affecting policy (Robinson, 2002).

The CNN Effect can also play a role in policy without making substantial or lasting impressions. The following are ways that media can make an impact without meeting the criteria needed for the strong CNN Effect. The first is the political imperative, which states that when a politician has a personal connection to a topic, the media can serve to validate their desire to act. Next is the accelerant effect. In this instance, because the media does not change existing policy,

it simply acts as a catalyst, facilitating policy to be produced more quickly. Policy-makers already had the intention of acting upon a specific issues, but the media simply accelerated the process. This differs from the impediment effect, where politicians are hesitant to act on a specific issue out of fear that the media already has promoted an existing opinion. An example of this is the media discussing the potential to lose American lives by entering a conflict. The potential CNN Effect is where politicians create policy with the intent of affecting future media coverage. This can work two ways. Whether it is pursuing specific policy with the hopes of having positive media coverage or choosing to not delve into a specific issue out of fear of negative press, politicians take into account the assumed consequences of their actions. Finally, the enabling effect works by the media reshaping minds of the constituents, garnering enough support with constituents that politicians are forced to support the given issue (Robinson, 2002).

### **Manufactured Consent**

Manufactured Consent is a theory that stands in stark contrast to the CNN Effect. This came as response to the many cases that disproved the power of the CNN Effect (Livingston & Eachus, 1995, 2010; Jakobsen, 2000). Herman and Chomsky (1988) created this theory stating that policy is rarely swayed by the media's agenda, and media is simply the government's agenda restated. This theory has been validated by several empirical studies, which show that media rarely escapes the norms produced by Washington, and diverges only when political elites have already done so (Mermin, 1999; Zaller & Chui, 1996). This theory has two versions of how politics is the one shaping media: the executive version and the elite version (Robinson, 2002).

The executive version simply states that the media conforms to the agenda set by the government. The elite version acknowledges that when news coverage does stray away from the

position of Washington, it only does so when several political elites have diverged from Washington's stance. A prime example of this is the Vietnam War, which was heavily criticized in the media, but this critique did not occur until political elites began to switch their stance regarding the war (Robinson, 2002).

The problems with this theory is that it ignores the notion that media coverage could have any effect on policy. By completely negating any possibility of this, the theory ignores a very possible reality. The theory also suggest that journalist, have no autonomy over their thoughts, acting simply as bodies to provide the information the government wants. To assume all journalists are devoid of the ability to think independently is a great injustice to their sovereignty (Robinson, 2002).

#### **Policy-Media Interaction Model**

This theory takes into account both the role the government plays in affecting the media and the reciprocal role that the media plays in affecting the government. The idea that a binary exists in which the media acts in accordance with the CNN Effect or is completely at the whim of the government is simply not true (Gilboa, 2003). The Policy-Media Interaction Model examines the relationship between policy and media and establishes the necessary criteria for media to shape policy.

The criteria start by stating if the media wants to have any effect, Washington cannot be predominantly in agreement on a given issue. When there is unity within the government, they simply use their prestige and power to not only dictate the policy, but also to assert the media's agenda. In this instance, if the media decides to criticize the government, the politicians are able to absorb the criticism and continue to promote their ideology because of the existing cohesion.

This falls closely in line with the Manufactured Consent theory. However, when there is a fracturing of opinions then the media has a chance to influence policy. As the media increases pressure and continues to criticise, the politicians may fold on their stance, especially when this pressure is accompanied by public or congressional support. When there is no existing policy, policy-makers are also more susceptible to the will of the media, as they can feel pressure to respond, particularly in instances of growing crisis (Robinson, 2002).

The media can also work in line with a political elite who have broken off from the established ideology regarding one issue, stepping in to support this person, acting as a promoter of their policy preference. The pressure on the policy-makers to act is further intensified by the frames in which specific issues are represented. When an empathetic frame is employed, viewers may increase their pressure on policy-makers to undertake a given issue. Essentially this model explains the conditions necessary for news coverage to shape policy. It does not go as far as the CNN Effect, which states that news always plays a role in shaping policy, but it provides the news more autonomy than the Manufactured Consent model, saying there are instances where the media can have an impact (Robinson, 2002).

### **Bringing This Model Up to Date**

Other traditional and non-traditional forms of media have become increasingly global, allowing for their stories to be disseminated around the world. This globalizing has been helped by new forms of communication, such as digital cameras built into cell phones, which provide greater transparency and allow for events transpiring to become instantly global. Governments have increasingly lost control of the media, as exemplified in situations like the Arab Spring, where social media was pivotal in the uprising (Robinson, 2013).

As the plurality and accessibility of media have increased, it would seem that media influence would consequently expand. However, with the growing size of the media there are more contrasting voices at play, creating less of an opportunity for media to mobilize as a cohesive idea and enact any type of influence. Also, with the continual inundation of the next “big story” and weekly reports of crisis, stories cannot sustain the longevity they need to influence policy (Robinson, 2013).

The use of ideological narratives regarding policy has also increased. As policy-makers establish a way of discussing an issue, many times the media is simply a conduit for passing on the government’s own agenda, thereby reinforcing the government’s viewpoint rather than establishing their own. An example of this is the War on Terror. Framed as a fight for Western tenets of democracy and equality, the media discussed these events by using the government’s label. This simply promoted the government’s stance, rather than investigating other facets of the war such as the likelihood that the war was rooted in the U.S. attempt to exert control in a oil-rich state, strategically located in the Middle East (Robinson, 2013).

The government has not shied away from the expansion of media, but has used technology as a means for disseminating propaganda-like information regarding policies and practices. Quantified by governments as perception management, strategic communication, global engagement, or public diplomacy, these policies use PR campaigns to take advantage of many resources for providing information, in hopes of promoting their specific agenda. While the new forms of media offer opportunities for less-dominant groups to have their voices heard, most governments still have a say over what is published and said within the discourse of the media (Robinson, 2013).

## **Methodology**

### **Purpose of Research**

This research project seeks to gain a better understanding of the effect of the recent wave of refugees entering Sweden, how the U.S. media has depicted these events, and if there are any implications for this on U.S. policy. The analysis of Sweden is pieced together through an aggregate of interviews with subject experts in Sweden. These interviews were assessed through a qualitative analysis done by the PI and faculty advisor. The conclusions of these semi-structured interviews were then compared to the rhetoric about these events in the two largest U.S. newspapers. The rhetoric was examined by looking at the framing and the word frequency of articles from January 1, 2014, to January 1, 2018. Understanding the word frequency provides context to how the media frames the issue, and, in turn, how this frame can affect U.S. policy, a concept explored through the Policy-Interaction Model created by Pierre Robinson.

### **Sampling**

The samples for each section were based on various criteria.

**Interview Sampling.** Those selected to interview about the situation in Sweden were a mixture of political leaders, government officials, non-government organization employees who work with refugees, and professors who research this issue. All were picked because they are subject experts on immigration in Sweden and have extensive knowledge, through experiences and research, to speak with authority on the impact of refugees. These experts were recruited via email, which requested their voluntary participation in semi-structured interviews for no compensation.

These interviews were conducted under semi-structured protocol. The questions asked about the individual's expert opinion on the impact of refugees in their society. It follows that while I had a list of anticipated questions, these questions were subject to change throughout the interview process based upon goals and suggestions from the involved stakeholders. As this study only interviewed experts in the field and not individuals on their lived experiences, it was granted an exemption from the IRB process. No compensation was given for the interviews, and no penalties were given if the participant chose to stop at any time.

**Newspaper population.** The section of this paper that looked at news coverage in the United States used the two largest newspapers in the U.S. as the sample (Barthel, 2017). They were selected on a combination of their high readership, their slightly differing political views, and because they are considered authoritative papers in international reporting, making them the main press sources for U.S. foreign policy decision makers (Fahmy and Daekyung, 2008; Bloch-Elkon, 2007). *The New York Times* is considered politically left (Fahmy and Daekyung, 2008), while the *Wall Street Journal* is seen as middle-ground to moderately right-leaning. Every news article from January 1, 2014, to January 1, 2018, that discussed immigration in Sweden was collected. These dates were chosen to understand what coverage looked like prior to the massive uptick of refugees in 2015 and to look at any shifts that may have occurred in the wake of 2015.

The news articles were collected from several databases:

- LexisNexus
- Proquest
- Individual newspapers' websites



Several databases were used to ensure all articles were represented. Each article was manually checked with existing articles pulled from other databases to make sure there were no repeats. Each article was also manually checked to ensure they fit the following criteria:

- All stories regarding migrants, immigrants, and refugees coming to or currently in Sweden
- All stories regarding policy surrounding migration
- All stories surrounding migrant communities currently living in Sweden

Those stories not included in the analysis include

- Stories about refugee crisis in Europe as a whole
- Stories where Sweden was not the main focus

The searches used in each database to gather this information included *migra\** OR *immigra\** OR *emigra\** OR *refugee\** OR *Swed\**.

The total number of stories collected from *The New York Times* was 28, and the total number from the *Wall Street Journal* was 40. In total, 68 articles were covered by both newspapers.

### **Coding and Word Frequency**

The population was analyzed on a word frequency count. The word frequency sought to capture

- The way the articles identified migrants
- Common themes
- The use of positive and negative rhetoric

Aside from utilizing the word count, the two newspapers were also manually analyzed under a code framework which sought to understand

- General themes of each article
- Major points and topics covered
- Connotation of the article

Through reading each article, I assessed whether the article was positive or negative based on what aspect of migration it focused on. If the articles looked at the benefits, success stories, or the realistic implications of migration in a positive light (i.e., there are issues, but Sweden is actively working to combat these problems) it was considered positive. If an article looked at the negative aspects of migration (i.e., terrorism or strain on welfare system) it was marked as negative. A few articles were marked as neutral as they offered an even look at both positive and negative aspects of immigration.

Within each category, I looked for distinct themes:

- Shifting of policy (border control, change in domestic policy)
- Violence (increase in violence, rape, anti-Semitism, riots, terrorism)
- Anti-immigration (violence towards migrants, change in public sentiment)
- Economic impact (welfare system, jobs)

### **Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis**

My research uses a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

**Qualitative Analysis.** With the information I obtained from the interviews, I used qualitative analysis to sort through the data. The qualitative methods were guided by Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR; Hill et al., 2005; Hill, Thompson & Williams, 1997) as it facilitated

the methodology, collection of data, and subsequent analyses. CQR is a constructivist approach, which draws from phenomenological, grounded theory, and comprehensive process analysis procedures. It utilizes open-ended, semi-structured interviews to gather information. As previously stated, this type of interview allowed participants to guide the direction of the interview and provided a comprehensive perspective through their analysis. I reviewed the data and identified themes to derive meaning from the interviews. This inductive method sees the benefit of words over number and the value of integrating a variety of viewpoints. Most importantly, this type of analysis uses the rich descriptions provided by the interviewees to understand the experiences and attitudes of Sweden as a whole.

**Quantitative Analysis.** To understand the rhetoric of the media in the United States, I provided a quantitative analysis based on coding. I drew conclusions based on the word frequency of the various news sources' depiction of the the events in Sweden. Once the word frequency was collected, I compared it with the themes of framing discussed in the literature review to understand possible implications of the news media's coverage on U.S. policy.

## **Findings and Implications**

### **Analysis of Sweden**

The subsequent analysis is the result of an aggregate of interviews conducted in January 2018 in Malmo, Stockholm, and Uppsala, Sweden. Those interviewed are all considered experts on the topic of immigration and include researchers on the issue of immigration in Sweden, those who work with immigrants through NGOs, representatives of political parties in Sweden, and government workers who facilitate programming with refugees. Their responses have been augmented by government reports and peer-reviewed research.

Historically, Sweden has been praised for its tolerance and egalitarian stance on many issues. Since WWII, they have played an active role in providing humanitarian aid abroad, while also taking in large numbers of refugees (Krzyanowski, 2017). However, for some, this perception of Sweden as an example for the world has changed as a result of the recent migration (Schierup & Ålund, 2011). The 2015 refugee crisis was not confined to the borders of Sweden but was prevalent all across Europe as hundreds of thousands of refugees fled to the European Union that year (Damoc, 2016). While most countries did not evade this mass arrival of people, primarily from non-Western countries like Afghanistan, Iran, and Syria, Sweden took in the highest number per capita of refugees in all of Europe, giving them the title of the “most generous nation on Earth” (Traub, 2017; Applications for asylum received, 2015).

This crisis hit its climax in Sweden during the Fall of 2015 when 70 percent of the 162,000 immigrants that arrived that year, came between August and December, overwhelming many government institutions (Applications for asylum received, 2015). It took a toll on the Swedish welfare system, making provisions of the necessary resources like housing increasingly difficult (“Sweden and migration”). However, where the government faltered, the civil society stepped up, helping to mitigate the problems that inevitably arose when taking in this many people at once. The civil society rallied together, bringing aid and high spirits to central stations throughout Sweden as refugees emerged from trains. They provided their time, donations, and energy, stepping in to help fill in where the government could not. It is also the will of the civil society that has been instrumental, in the aftermath of 2015, working to help with the integration of refugees (Herrmansson, personal communication, January 9, 2018; Berg, personal communication, January 10, 2018; Strandqvist, personal communication, January 11, 2018).

### **Sweden's Political and Policy Response**

This is not the first time Sweden has seen a massive influx of refugees entering the country. In the 1990s, a massive increase in refugees pushed the government to centralize the handling of immigration. This change has caused the process to become increasingly bureaucratic, many times hindering refugees' ability to integrate, as communities are forced to follow a prescribed structure rather than integrate refugees in the context of their culture (Rosenburg, 1995). Sweden's refugee policy has changed since then. While the central government still oversees the migration process, the government has decentralized many of its initiatives to facilitate integration by allocating money to NGOs with the purpose of promoting integration. The only centralized program Sweden has to help with integration is the Establishment Program. This is a two-year-long program that provides Swedish lessons, job training, and education to those granted asylum in Sweden (Emilsson, personal communication, January 8, 2018; Zinkl, 2018). While Sweden maintained some aspects of their immigration policy, the events that unfolded in 2015 resulted in the adoption of several new laws. On November 12, 2015, border checks were reintroduced, and two weeks later on November 24, the law surrounding the granting of residence permits changed (Hofverberg, 2016).

These new laws make it nearly impossible to receive a permanent residency permit in Sweden, a large departure from their historically open stance towards refugees. Now, when asylum seekers come to Sweden, they apply for asylum to Migrationsverket, the Swedish migration agency. If they are granted refugee status, they are given a temporary three-year resident permit. For those granted subsidiary protection status--the status assigned to those fleeing generalized violence rather than a personal threat--they receive a temporary residency

permit that last for only 13 months. For those given subsidiary protection status, family reunification is almost impossible, as this is a privilege saved for those with refugee status (Johnansson, 2007).

This new legislation was accompanied by a new ID check at the border of Denmark and Sweden. This ID check, a complete withdrawal from the country's once open border policy, was representative of Sweden's desire to appear less welcoming to refugees in hopes of stemming the waves of asylum seekers entering their borders (Spång, personal communication, January 9th, 2018).

The political landscape in Sweden shifted in 2010 when many Swedes were surprised to find the far-right political group, the Sweden Democrats, had taken 5.7 percent of the vote in the general election, allowing them to claim seats in Parliament (Knapp & Hinnfors, 2013). A major component of the Sweden Democrats' platform was a strong anti-immigration stance. The Sweden Democrats see Sweden's migration policy as detrimental to their national identity and culture. This anti-immigration, right-wing populism, a shift found throughout Europe, is the result of not only immigration, but also a desire to maintain a strong national identity. This shift in public support did not drastically change the Sweden Democrats' power. They acquired several seats in Parliament, but they still remained politically isolated as the other seven parties continued to ostracize them. However, their increase in political capital represents the emerging divide in Sweden over the issue of immigration (Dingwell, 2014).

Sweden was once considered special for not having a mainstream far-right party; however, the Sweden Democrats' dramatic rise to becoming one of the eight major parties has since altered the political landscape. The Sweden Democrats are not a new party, yet historically,

their notorious association with extremist right-wing ideology has kept them from entering the political arena. Yet over the last ten years, as the immigration issue became more salient, the Sweden Democrats were the only party to speak out against immigration, while the other seven parties maintained an almost identical, passive stance. With increasing levels of uncertainty regarding immigration amongst voters, many turned to the Sweden Democrats as they were seen as the only party that would assert control over this issue. This switch in partisanship was not necessarily rooted in racism, a tenet strongly associated with the Sweden Democrats, but in concerns about how Sweden, a relatively small nation with an advanced social welfare system, would be able to absorb this many migrants without adversely affecting their quality of life. (Hellstrom, personal communication, January 11, 2018; Duthu, personal communication, January 9, 2018).

As a result, other parties have broken off from the once united pro-immigration stance and begun to create new policy to deal with the issue of immigration. Political parties stated this change came as a result of economic pressures and a need for greater unity amongst all of Europe, as Sweden's prime minister stated, "We simply can't do any more." Consequently, the emergence of the Sweden Democrats, while they do not have the majority in Parliament, has meant they have become incredibly influential at setting the agenda surrounding immigration, and they have served as a catalyst for producing a much more conservative migration policy (Herrmansson, personal communication, January 9, 2018).

## **Housing**

Every interviewee emphasized that the largest challenge resulting from the refugee crisis is the strain on the housing market. It is not only the lack of affordable housing that has been

problematic, but also the formation of neighborhoods that have become either completely migrant or completely native-Swedes (Mangrio, personal communication, January 9, 2018).

The reason affordable housing is difficult to find is a result of how the housing market is set up in Sweden. Within the market there is a private and a public sector. In the private sector, the shortage in housing has caused prices to skyrocket. The cost tends to limit the options available to refugees, pushing them into segregated neighborhoods. This, accompanied by some covert racism, serves to further limit the selection of apartments refugees have access to in the private sector (Eriksson, personal communication, January 6, 2018). The public housing is void of racism as it gives everyone an equal chance of getting a housing contract; however, to get housing through the public market, one has to wait in a queue that can take eight to ten years to actualize into an apartment. Most refugees do not have the longevity to get their first contract. Sweden is also not building affordable housing, making many of the houses in the public market unattainable (Eriksson, personal communication, January 6, 2018; Popoola, personal communication, January 9, 2018). Because of the lack of affordable housing, many refugees are segregated from native Swedes as the only housing they can afford is in immigrant-heavy suburbs (Tucker, personal communication, January 7, 2018). The communities that refugees live in are also shrouded in negative rhetoric depicting them as dangerous and filled with crime (Ahmed, 2012). While Sweden is experiencing segregation in their housing, this is a problem not specific to Sweden, but common amongst virtually all refugee-receiving communities in Western cultures. In every country, modern day refugee settlement typically has pockets of immigrants scattered throughout areas that are predominantly native-born citizens. Studies have shown that



this segregation is a result of economic marginalization, discrimination, and choosing to self-segregate (Valenta & Bunar, 2010).

### **Jobs**

Aside from housing, the next biggest issue that Sweden faces as a result of the increase in its refugee population is their integration into the job market. Housing and the job market are closely related as one must have a job in order to buy a house, forcing almost all refugees to rent their apartments, the more expensive option (Popoola, personal communication, January 9, 2018). While not having a job adversely affects a refugee's ability to purchase a house, unemployment negatively affects almost all aspects of their life, isolating them from society and hindering their ability to integrate.

One of the greatest challenges for entering the job market is convincing employers to invest in refugees. Hiring someone in Sweden is a substantial investment, and employers are not inclined to hire someone who may be deported within 13 months (Tucker, personal communication, January 7, 2018). This concern, coupled with the nepotism that is largely a part of the hiring culture in Sweden, make entering the job market one of the greatest challenges for refugees (Nowroozi, personal communication, January 3, 2018). The jobs that are available tend to be high-skilled jobs, which refugees either don't have the training for or their prior education is not formally recognized within Sweden, forcing them to relearn their trade. Much of the low-skilled labor is available through a system called "black money," an exploitative system where low-skilled labor is hired for meager wages, works under poor conditions, and is paid "under the table" to evade taxes, a system that runs counter to Swedish labor culture (Mangrio, personal communication, January 9, 2018; Tucker, personal communication, January 7, 2018).

Many refugees' desperation to work forces them to take jobs well below their capabilities and pay-grade, simply exacerbating the existing wage gap between native Swedes and immigrants and representing the unequal access to social capital between refugees and native Swedes (Behtoui & Neergaard, 2010).

Finally, while not as prevalent, but nonetheless an integral part of the Swedish hiring system, is a level of racism in the hiring process. Racism is typically not overt, but comes in the form of not hiring refugees out of a belief that they lack the necessary understanding of cultural norms and language acquisition (Tucker, personal communication, January 7, 2018; Nowroozi, 2018; Ahmed, 2012). This discrimination is not confined to refugees, but all immigrants who don't speak Swedish have trouble finding jobs, as this is a form of protectionism, a way to ensure native populations are not adversely affected by immigration. However, just as was the case with housing, Sweden is not alone in having discrimination in the job market when it comes to migrant communities. Migrants in all countries have experienced trouble with economic integration as a result of discriminatory employment practices, both overt and covert (Valenta & Bunar, 2010; Craig, 2007; Ahmed, 2012).

There are NGOs as well as government organizations working to change the omnipresent challenges of the job market. Kaveh Nowroozi works for an NGO that focuses on creating relationships between newcomers to Sweden and native Swedes in an attempt to bridge the pervasive bias throughout Swedish society. The government has also attempted to mitigate the issues in the job market through their Establishment Program, in which they provide internships and job training (Yildirim, 2018).

### **Integration**

Employment is vital for the integration of refugee populations, as it provides knowledge of the culture and language (Lundborg, 2013). While integration levels are stratified amongst refugee population, all refugees have experienced difficulties entering the labor market, severely limiting their contact with native-Swede communities and exposure to the Swedish language, thereby hindering their integration (Eriksson, personal communication, January 6, 2018). The Establishment Program exist to assuage these issues by teaching the Swedish language, but nothing can compete with complete immersion. Regardless of this program, this segregation from native-Swedes has crippled their ability to integrate (Zinkl, 2018; Emilsson, personal communication, January 8, 2018).

The greatest obstacle to integration is a result of the new laws which limit refugees' access to permanent residency. Without a definite answer of whether they can even stay in Sweden, many have no desire to integrate, as they see no point in learning Swedish and working to integrate if they are going to be deported in a year. (Eriksson, personal communication, January 6, 2018; Mangrio, personal communication, January 9, 2018). Psychologically they know their time in Sweden is temporary, so not only is their ability to integrate hindered, but this uncertainty cultivates a continuous fear of deportation (Spång, personal communication, January 9th, 2018). The stress associated with this loss of certainty is prevalent in all age groups, demonstrated even in young children as their apathy in school can be a result of the lack of consistency they feel (Berg, personal communication, January 10, 2018). Many refugees' mental health is further diminished by the removal of family reunification (Mangrio, personal communication, January 9, 2018; Eriksson, personal communication, January 6, 2018; Popoola, personal communication, January 9, 2018; Hollander, 2013).

### **Sweden: An Assessment**

None of those interviewed in Sweden claimed that Sweden had handled the situation in 2015 perfectly, and in the aftermath everyone acknowledged that there were areas that Sweden could improve. Segregation is still common in Sweden as schools, housing, and the job market still have gaps between native Swedes and migrants. For some second-generation immigrants, this segregation, or as they describe it, a sense of otherness, can still be found in Swedish culture, most obviously depicted in the prevalence of the question they often receive, “Where are you from?” (Duthu, personal communication, January 9, 2018). The fear that refugees are burdening the welfare system, draining the benefits, and not contributing is not an uncommon remark, in Sweden, as it can be found in all countries that receive migrants (Eriksson, personal communication, January 6, 2018; Duthu, personal communication, January 9, 2018).

However, the resounding notion in every interview was that Sweden had not failed. Many noted that Sweden simply did what they were supposed to do (Tucker, personal communication, January 7, 2018). While many outside Sweden viewed some of the new laws as anti-immigrant, these measures were needed as Sweden could not handle the vast number of refugees pouring in.

The external perception that Sweden has seen a huge uptick in crime as a direct result of refugees was also debunked within the context of these interviews. The number of lethal crimes in Sweden has decreased over the past 25 years, with an increase in 2015. However, the number of murders per capita is 0.7 out of 100,000, giving it one of the lowest murder rates in the world. Similar to the idea that Sweden has seen an increase in violence, there is an external perception that Sweden has experienced an uptick in rape. While the number of reported rapes has

increased, the expanded definition of what constitutes rape, as well as victims' willingness to come forward, have both increased. Consequently, this plays a major role in the uptick of reported rapes. Sweden classifies each rape as an individual case, so if a victim was raped every day for the past year, that would constitute 365 accounts of rape. Statistically, crime has gone up; however, the biggest indicator of someone's chance of committing a crime is not based on their country of origin, but on their socio-economic status ("Facts about migration, integration and crime in Sweden").

To say Sweden has failed is simply inaccurate. This crisis exposed vulnerabilities in Sweden's system, yet Sweden showed resilience. They are now repairing their system, deciding what worked and what didn't, figuring out how to best move forward (Berg, personal communication, January 10, 2018). It has only been three years since the majority of these refugees entered Sweden; it is simply too early to tell if Sweden has been successful or not (Spång, personal communication, January 9th, 2018). However, with Sweden's strong economy, declining levels of unemployment, and a civil society dedicated to helping some of the world's most vulnerable populations, Sweden is far from the distasteful rhetoric it has been shrouded in ("Facts about migration, integration and crime in Sweden").

### **Analysis of the *Wall Street Journal***

In a very general sense, the articles about immigration in Sweden in the *Wall Street Journal* were substantially more negative than positive. Of the 40 articles published, 33 were negatively framed while only seven used a positive frame. Articles that were negative focused mainly on the negative consequences of immigration to Sweden, whereas the positively framed articles acknowledge the existing challenges in Sweden, but addressed these issues in a positive

manner, without placing migrants at the center of the problem.

Within the negative articles, there were several common themes found throughout. The rise of anti-immigrant sentiment was a common theme, found in about a fourth of the articles. These articles also heavily address the rise of the Sweden Democrats. The frequency of the term *border control*, a common theme in these articles, is incredibly prevalent as the word *control* appeared 25 times and the term *border* appeared 93 times. The rise of the Sweden Democrats and the topic of border control were typically discussed in tandem when articles focused on the transition of Sweden from a once-open society, to a now-closed-off country.

Aside from themes that are prevalent throughout many of the articles, the word choice of the authors tended to have a negative connotation. Words like *terrorism* (used 10 times), *violence* (10), *security* (27), *anti-Semitic* (4), and *crime* (14), were found throughout these articles. While these words cover different concepts, they all possess the same adverse connotation, and work to negatively depict the situation in Sweden. Other words in these articles that serve to further adversely influence the perception of refugees are words like *attack* (93) and *crisis* (48), which are both negative and used frequently. The use of dehumanizing language was also ubiquitous as the terms used to describe the refugees' entry like *arrive* (61), *coming* (38), and *flow* (20) were much more common than words like *flee* (13). *Flee* serves to humanize the plight of the refugees, conjuring up feelings of empathy in the reader, rather than words like *arrive* which could be applicable to all migrants, not just refugees fleeing oppression.

The *Wall Street Journal* also had a noticeable shift in its rhetoric. Five of the seven positive articles preceded the large increase of refugees that came in 2015. The two positive articles that followed 2015 were in response to Trump's comment about Sweden. While these

articles defended Sweden's immigration system, they seemed equally focused on attacking Trump. The shift in the rhetoric seems to parallel the change in policy that occurred in Sweden. Following the large influx of refugees in the second half of 2015, Sweden's open-door policy changed as they installed border checks and a stricter policy regarding asylum. However, as noted in the literature review, this change in policy in Sweden was not matched by a universal change of heart in Sweden. While some Swedes saw the need to limit refugees, many maintained their welcoming disposition. Neither perspective currently held by the majority of Swedes matches the strong negative rhetoric used by the U.S. media to describe their situation.

### **Analysis of *The New York Times***

*The New York Times* articles regarding the situation in Sweden had a slight negative overtone in their articles, yet still possessed more of a balance than the *Wall Street Journal*. Of the twenty-eight articles, fifteen had a negative connotation, ten were deemed positive, and three were considered neutral. Articles were considered neutral when the information given was an even split between the positive aspects of immigration and the negative.

Regarding the positive articles, it is important to note that they still discussed challenges that are partially a result of immigration. However, instead of depicting these situations as hopeless, they acknowledge the problems as an inevitable consequence of taking in such a large group of people, and they discuss how Sweden is still working to mitigate these issues. Also, specific to the positive articles, about a third of them cited experts on immigration in Sweden, compared to negative articles that did not directly cite experts.

The negative articles in *The New York Times* had two main focuses: attacks by anti-immigrant nationalists and the rise of the Sweden Democrats. Almost half of the articles

focused on attacks on mosques or the spread of anti-immigration sentiment in Sweden, and while this does not shed a positive light on Sweden, it does not however adversely depict refugees.

When these articles discuss the increasing popularity of the Sweden Democrats, instead of focusing on negative policy implementations like border control, the articles focused more on a general shift in policy. This is illustrated in the frequency of words like *policy* (37), which were twice as common when compared to the negative rhetoric of words like *border* (19) and *security* (16). The negative articles for *The New York Times* also rarely discussed sensationalized topics, touching on rape only four times.

Overall, the framing of the articles in *The New York Times* was more negative than positive; however, there was still a substantial amount of positive coverage. Words with negative undertones like *attack* (39), or the use of the word *problem* (29) rather than saying *challenge* (11), were prevalent in these articles. However, words like *open* (35) and *welcoming* (15), both positive words, were also found in these articles. While there was somewhat of a balance between the different articles in *The New York Times*, there was still more use of alarmist rhetoric.

## **Discussion**

### **Comparison of *The New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal***

*The New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* had both similarities and differences in how they discussed the events that happened in Sweden. Both newspapers used more of an alarmist rhetoric than what actually occurred in Sweden. This typically more pessimistic and anti-immigrant rhetoric found in both U.S. newspapers seems to parallel the policy of the U.S. government. Compared to Sweden, U.S. migration policy is substantially more anti-immigrant



and anti-refugee than Sweden's: in the year 2015 Sweden took in 162,000 refugees, and the United States took in 70,000 (Alpert 2017). Not only did Sweden take in more than double the number of refugees than the United States, but Sweden took in 2 percent worth of their own population. If the United States were to have taken in 2 percent worth of their population, they would have had to take in close to 6.5 million refugees. So, the disparity between the U.S. media's depiction of the crisis and what has actually happened in Sweden, parallels the differences that exist between the United States' and Sweden's openness to immigration.

Both newspapers almost exclusively focused on the events that transpired in Sweden, refusing to look at the root causes for the refugees' flight. Almost none of the articles, except in a few excerpts and quotes scattered throughout, discussed push factors like war, which forced the refugees to flee. This lack of context as to why these refugees were fleeing, coupled with the *Wall Street Journal's* heavy use of the word *migrants*, does not provide a clear picture of who is migrating to Sweden or why. This ambiguity about who and why people are moving to Sweden, lacks the empathy typically given when refugees are the clear beneficiaries of migration.

The two different newspapers' articles had common themes. The most prevalent subject was the rise of the Sweden Democrats. However, the overlap with regard to negative articles was not that common, as the *Wall Street Journal* tended to focus on more sensationalized issues such as rape and the uptick in crime, framing consistent with what is known as the threat frame. As noted in the literature review, the threat frame is employed to exacerbate the feelings of us versus them by noting various problems and fears that accompany migrant populations. *The New York Times* tended to employ the rationality frame, as they focused on the need for restrictions as a result of Sweden's inability to handle this many refugees. This framing is a mixture of the threat

frame and the moral frame (the framework used to validate action on the premise of upholding ideas like democracy and Western values).

The most noticeable difference between these two newspapers is the substantially negative focus of the *Wall Street Journal* compared to the more balanced representation in *The New York Times*. Of all the articles in the *Wall Street Journal*, 82 percent were negative versus *The New York Times*, where only 53 percent of the articles were negative. The more conservative approach by the *Wall Street Journal* is in line with its reputation as a conservative paper, just as the more liberal approach by *The New York Times* aligns with their stereotypical liberal bias.

The word choice of each newspaper also differs. When discussing refugees, *The New York Times* used the word *refugee* 80 times, and the *Wall Street Journal* used the word 112 times. However, while the word *refugee* creates a sense of empathy with its audience, words like *immigrant* and *migrant* do not. Each newspaper used the word *immigrant* at about the same frequency *The New York Times* (10) and the *Wall Street Journal* (7); however, the *Wall Street Journal* used the word *migrant* 164 times, making it the third most common word in all the articles. *The New York Times* used the word *migrant* only 36 times, again representing the newspaper's more compassionate framing of the refugees.

The majority of articles in both newspapers used thematic, big-picture, less personal, and more factual narratives to discuss immigration in Sweden. However, *The New York Times* did not strictly use that type of framing. They employed episodic framing when the paper discussed Ebba Akerman, a woman who sought to open her doors to refugees to break down barriers between Swedes and new arrivals, or Hiba Abou Alhassane, a recently arrived refugee. These episodic frames serve to humanize the narratives, and typically are more effective at swaying

readers. As these were both positive narratives, they had a better chance of depicting Sweden in a more positive light. The *Wall Street Journal* had one piece that used an episodic frame to discuss the situation of Johnny Palm. As Palm was criticizing the impact refugees have had on his small community, this piece pushed readers to see refugees as a bad thing.

It is important to note that there were many articles not included in this study that mentioned Sweden and immigration. As this research only used articles that focused specifically on immigration in Sweden, many that briefly mentioned migration to Sweden were excluded. However, these articles typically said one of three things: they either noted Sweden's generosity to migrants, Sweden being a destination for migrants, or Sweden's border control.

### **Comparison of U.S. News Coverage to the Situation in Sweden**

The most apparent differences between Sweden and its representation in U.S. media is the substantially more negative depiction of the events in Sweden. Both *The New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* tended to focus on the problems that occurred in Sweden, never mentioning the resilience with which Sweden handled these issues.

There was a gap between the issues that Swedes identified as salient and the focus of these articles. The *Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* focused heavily on the rise of the Sweden Democrats and the recent change in immigration policy. The lack of affordable housing and the difficulty non-native Swedes face with job and societal integration are both conspicuous issues that were almost never addressed in U.S. media.

Finally, the way the Swedes and U.S. media discussed these issues differed greatly. While those in Sweden almost exclusively properly referred to refugees as refugees, many times the U.S. media did not. As stated previously the use of the word *refugee* was common in the

articles; however, the word *migrant* was used more heavily. This highlights the consistently more negative rhetoric of the U.S. media when compared to Sweden.

While there were numerous differences between Sweden and the U.S. media, there were some similarities. The positive articles in *The New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* reflected the way that many Swedes discussed immigration in their country. Just as the Swedes recognized the challenges their country faced, these articles addressed the challenges, while also noting ways Sweden is actively working to mitigate them. Both the articles and the Swedes focused on the rise of the Sweden Democrats. However, when the Swedes discussed this, they emphasized that the novel popularity of the Sweden Democrats was not born out of anti-immigrant or racist sentiment, but the belief that the Sweden Democrats were the only party willing to act in any way to reduce the number of refugees fleeing to Sweden. In U.S. media, the rise of the Sweden Democrats was seen as a direct consequence of increasing anti-immigrant feelings in Sweden.

While the U.S. media did not lie in their article, they framed topics in a way that did not accurately represent what is happening in Sweden. The inaccuracy can be found in the use of words with negative and less sympathetic undertones and the lack of holistic representation of both the challenges and successes of immigration in Sweden. Consequently, it is fair to say that the U.S. media not only inaccurately depicts what is occurring in Sweden, but also does so in an alarmist and negative way.

### **Impact of News on U.S. Legislation**

For the newspapers' coverage of Sweden to have any direct impact on U.S. policy, the coverage would have to be both in-depth and frequent. As made apparent by the sheer quantity

of articles (between the two newspapers only 68 articles were published specifically about Sweden over the last four years) there is simply not the volume needed to make a substantial impact. The media also lacked unity within their response to this issue. While each newspaper possessed more negative rather than positive coverage of these events, the response was not unanimous in either news source, nor were they critical of the role the U.S. government was playing.

As a result, the chances of a strong CNN Effect occurring are null; however, there are still ways this coverage can create a weak CNN Effect. Under the Political Imperative Model, a politician can use personal connection to either immigration or Sweden as a means to affect policy. The result of this change could either benefit or hurt migration depending on the personal connection of the politician. If the politician was from Sweden and chose to focus on the negatives, saying, "Look what has happened in my country, we cannot let this happen here," the impact would differ from a politician from Sweden who chose to focus on the positives and said, "Look at all Sweden has done, we must do more."

These stories could also work under the Accelerant Effect. If a politician was looking for an excuse to reduce migration, she could say, "Look at what is happening in Sweden, we must protect our borders, so this does not happen here." This politician would have sought to enact anti-immigrant legislation regardless of what has happened in Sweden, but the stories of Sweden serve as a catalyst for her legislative initiative.

The last way these stories could impact policy is by first impacting constituents. By shaping constituents' opinions, pushing them to want to be more or less like Sweden depending on the articles they subscribe to, they will in turn pressure their representatives to reshape policy

to match their beliefs.

### ***The New York Times and Wall Street Journal Examined Under the Policy-Media Interaction***

#### **Model**

The way the Policy-Media Interaction Model has affected Sweden is subtle. As most of these articles lack criticism of the U.S. government and maintained focus on the events occurring in Sweden, there was little pressure placed on the government to enact change. The only time the U.S. was mentioned was in articles that responded to Trump's tweet and comments in a speech about the events unfolding in Sweden. In a speech in February 2017, Trump said, "You look at what's happening last night in Sweden. Sweden! Who would believe this? Sweden. They took in large numbers. They're having problems like they never thought possible" (Timm 2018). He later clarified that he made this statement as the result of information he received from a news broadcast. This clearly indicates that on some level media has influenced his perception. This in turn allowed Sweden to act as an accelerant for Trump's response towards migration. Trump's anti-immigration stance is nothing new, a ubiquitous theme throughout his campaign tour; however, the (non-existent) events in Sweden gave Trump the ammunition to call for greater regulation.

The use of Sweden as a case study of why or why not the United States should act is the most substantial way the media has sought to affect policy in the U.S. as a result of Sweden's situation. With the current political uncertainty about how to deal with refugees and migrants, Sweden could play a serious role in crafting this debate, and as was made apparent by Trump's comments, it has already begun to do so.

## Conclusion

This paper looks at the coverage of the Swedish refugee crisis in U.S. media from January 1st, 2014, to January 1st, 2018. This paper seeks to understand the framing of these articles depicting the events in Sweden, and in turn to deduce what kind of impact, if any, the events in Sweden have had on U.S. policy. This paper examines the two largest newspapers in the U.S., *The New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, and how they covered these events.

Overall, both newspapers discussed the events that transpired in Sweden in a more negative than positive light. This was a result of the article's focus on the negative impact of migration and the use of rhetoric that created less humanizing depictions of the migrants. While these newspapers' representation of these events was more alarmist than what has actually transpired in Sweden, the *Wall Street Journal* was substantially more negative than *The New York Times*. This more negative and anti-migrant stance falls in line with the newspaper's historical tendency to produce conservative news, just as *The New York Times* tends to have a liberal bias.

While the media did tend to focus on the negative effects of migration, the frequency, depth, and criticism of U.S. policy regarding migration were simply not substantial enough to create a strong CNN Effect, directly and clearly affecting policy. However, in an age of partisan media and partisan political reactions the implications of this study are numerous. We are living in a time where a plurality of news sources have allowed the permeation of ideology into our news. With the emergence of “fake news” and the domination of networks like Fox and MSNBC, access to media void of biased rhetoric is further exemplified in this study's coding of *The New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. And with the multiplication of news outlets,

we are no longer required to listen to any new source that contradicts our opinions. As we have entered an era of information overload, we can be selective about where we choose to gather our information.

What is even more alarming about this is the U.S. now has a president who bases his decisions off the whim of “Fox and Friends.” As we saw with Trump’s comments in February 2017 about the horrible things happening in Sweden, he later tweeted that his comment "was in reference to a story that was broadcast on @FoxNews concerning immigrants & Sweden" (Morin, 2017). When the president of the United States uses skewed media as the premise of his decisions the threat this could pose for our democracy is substantial.

Although this study is limited in that it only examines two news sources, it has implications for further research and investigation into the polarization of media and the effect this has on policy. This study creates room for further research through exploration of the effect news coverage has on President Trump’s decisions. Through looking at Trump’s rhetoric in juxtaposition to the rhetoric of Fox News, it would be interesting to see what parallels, if any, exist. While this is simply one way to expand upon this research, our ever-expanding news outlets will only increase the need and avenues for further study.



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