

A Crisis of People or Politics?

**Revisiting the Impact of Narrative
Framing of Immigration in German
Newspapers in 2018**

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Introduction

While much of Germany's history after 1945 has been tied up with concerns of immigration and multiculturalism, the global refugee crisis and the arrival of over a million refugees to German borders escalated the salience of the discussion. Decisions on immigration have fueled a schism between the governing parties, intensified debate about Germany's role in the European Union, and strained the already-tense negotiations Germany faces internally as it becomes a more multicultural state. Studies commissioned by the EU have provided insight on how those arriving at the height of the crisis were portrayed within print media in 2015. Still, a few years after the height of the refugee, the role of the press merits a follow-up survey. How has print media shifted its narrative on immigrants, particularly on new refugees, since the height of the migrant crisis? Has it opened up space for immigrants to voice their interests, and how does it emphasize the influx of anti-immigrant sentiment that has bled into parliamentary politics?

In the year 2018, immigration has become a way to attract readers to stories about parliamentary debates and German society while paying little mind to the stories of immigrants themselves. My study traces the stories written about immigration in three newspapers across 2018. Departing from past expectations, which tend to suggest that news media provides a negative outlook on immigrants, I find a mostly neutral press outlook. Furthermore, immigrants are still more often consulted in media reports than explicitly anti-immigrant groups (AIGs), but they remain secondary to political officials and decisions. According to reports on 2015's news media, coverage fixated on refugees "either as vulnerable outsiders or as dangerous outsiders," (Georgiou & Zaborowski 2017, 2). At first, the narrative spoke of migration as an international problem, a humanitarian crisis; it then shifted to view migration as an issue of national security. In the two years since, the focus of news stories has shifted yet again, now to politics. The focal

point of this year's news articles is not the actions of immigrants, but "immigration" as an issue - a conglomeration that starts with border policy and asylum procedures but balloons into civic education, labor relations, parliamentary order, and social harmony. While being implicated as the perpetrators of political turmoil, immigrants are not directly spoken of; they are instead written out of the story.

Studying the way in which media covers immigrants provides context that may explain public attitudes, political perceptions, or the status of immigrants in German society. My findings contribute to a broader discussion of the role of newspapers in framing political issues. In addition, this analysis of print media raises an alarm about the place of immigrants in public discussion. As newspapers turn terms such as "immigration," "asylum policy," and "refugee crisis" into buzzwords to attract interest to a wider range of political issues, they attach political and societal commentary to individual immigrants, and in doing so homogenize their experiences and erase their individual stories. Immigrants as shown in these newspapers have largely become a political tool instead of a population composed of individuals of different cultural backgrounds, professions, religions, and nationalities.

Theoretical Review

Immigration is a salient issue across the world, in part for its impact on evoking fear among host communities. Past studies have shown a perceived difference between reactions to immigrants based on the sort of threat – either economic or symbolic/cultural – that members of the host society feel (Bloom et. Al 2015). While economic threat matters and is present throughout political rhetoric, symbolic-cultural threat is perhaps more visible and thus easier for anti-immigration advocates and media to utilize. Creating symbolic-cultural threat requires the

development and group consciousness of an “us” and “them.” Historically, the typical German refers to a white, Christian (likely Protestant), and European-performing person. Countries expect that immigrants will take on a “deep cultural understanding of the pre-conditions for [civic] participation,” meaning that they will internalize the history and ideology behind the host country’s norms – western liberalism, in the German case (Simon & Beaujeu 2018, 31).

Economically, the end goal of immigration is to attract and retain new workers who have social capital and can contribute to a growing middle class (Elrick & Winter 2018). Immigrants can utilize these hopes of their host country to fit a paradigm of a “good immigrant.”

Just as easily, however, immigrants can quickly be categorized into the paradigm of the “bad immigrant.” Many immigrants, particularly those arriving from turmoil in the Middle East, differ from the cultural, ethnic, and economic hopes of Germany’s status quo. These individuals have an automatic disadvantage, particularly in the German context. Civic education classes structurally exclude low-skilled immigrant families (Joppke 2007). Migrants excluded from the system of civic integration are blatantly understood to come from “less developed, mostly Muslim countries” (Joppke 2017, 1155). They also often have limited linguistic ability, show difficulty finding employment, and have strong connections with other immigrants (Brubaker 1992; Goodman 2011; Polakow-Suransky 2017; Espinoza-Herold & Contini 2017; Joppke 2017).

These images of good and bad immigrants exist in the public consciousness but can be utilized through media and evoked through media framing. Most studies find that news reports can confirm or intensify existing viewpoints but are divided on whether or not news reports can *change* viewpoints (Levundusky 2013; Prior 2009). Newspapers in particular are an important site of ideological influence, even as most people turn to television, online papers, or social

media to get their news. Gerber et. al (2009) demonstrate that though newspaper exposure is not enough to directly change opinions, it may increase political interest through mere exposure.

When it comes to immigration, some studies find that newspapers raise tensions and worry about symbolic-cultural threat through a similar process. Schmuck & Matthes (2017) for instance find that text-and-visual advertisements together that reference immigrants as poor and Muslim have a strong effect in expanding intergroup anxiety. Emphasizing the cost of hosting “bad” immigrants raises the threat felt and anxiety experienced by members of the host society (Brader et. al 2008). All of these impacts are especially present within newspapers, which have a level of legitimacy to their framing, writing, and use of visuals.

Two major effects are at play here: repetition and affective targeting. Newspapers disseminate and spread ideas, often over the course of multiple days or even weeks. Repeated negative messaging about a group or event, for instance, will make those negative messages seem more salient and factual. Reporting and media overall works through affect, meaning that it produces stories that will raise emotions (Seate & Mastro 2016). Brader (2005) finds that media campaigns often rely on emotional cues of either enthusiasm or fear, and fear-based cues may be strong enough to alter a person’s opinion of political candidates or campaigns. Advertisements in print media, particularly those that connect images to text, do increase intergroup anxiety (Schmuck & Matthes 2017). Importantly, these studies point out that typically, media that portrays immigrants negatively relies on symbolic expectations of “dangerous others” (Schmuck & Matthes 2017, 609). All of these studies suggest that newspapers are aware of the expectations facing immigrants and are quick to draw on images of the “bad immigrant.”

The interaction between immigrants and their frame in the media can change the possibilities available for integration. Though integration policies imply that immigrants and host

societies will both change, this process is asymmetrical, with the burden on immigrants. While an immigrant may feel their belonging to the political community and stake their claim on this belonging, often enforcement of political boundaries relies on ethnic or other visible cues (Brubaker 1992, 30). With broad-sweeping categories of people that are expected to fit into certain stereotypes of “good” or “bad” immigrants, if a single member of the group fails, the entire group bears the blame (Polakow-Suransky 2017). Therefore, the coverage of newspapers on negative images of migrants can reflect badly across an entire population. Host society members who experience intergroup threat pin the blame on uneasy acculturation in immigrant groups (Croucher 2013). Petak (2018) points out that integration is psychologically important; understanding the host country’s language, finding ease in navigating cultural differences, and an accepting environment ease the difficult transition (104). Without these factors, immigrants find it much more difficult to adapt – and thus contribute in a positive way to their new host society. Therefore, media framing has real effects both on relations in society and on immigrants themselves.

In sum, simply exposure to anti-immigrant stereotypes can increase inter-group anxiety, which means that if the media reports its news according to these stereotypes, it has negative impact on integration. Ivarsflaten (2005) argues that support of restrictive immigration and asylum policies can be raised through the repeated assertions of a visible political actor (25). Print media presents the opinions of political elites and public figures, and if there is increased coverage of anti-immigrant groups and their leaders, anti-immigrant ideas more easily spread. Right wing populist parties that favor immigration restriction have been found to be more successful when they are able to broadcast their views to a larger audience (Sheets et. al 2016). If newspapers report increasingly on anti-immigrant groups and populist parties, they grant these

groups a platform from which to spread their views. The media can play a role in blowing up negative issues and frame the stereotypes and potential social costs of immigration. In doing so, news media can have a large effect on the intergroup anxiety felt by a population, and as a result, how they may treat immigrants in their ordinary interactions.

Theory & Hypotheses

The results of media studies conducted about immigration in 2015 find two general trends. First, portrayal of migrants turned from positive to negative over the course of the year. During the summer of 2015, the press coverage of immigrants was in-line with Chancellor Angela Merkel's overall message, the well-known "wir schaffen das" message (translating to, "we'll manage it" or "we can do it"). According to a report done by the Ethical Journalism Network, German press spent the summer praising, listening to, and celebrating migrant perspectives. However, in the fall and throughout 2016, the focus shifted. Negative sentiment took over the press narrative following the terrorist attacks in Paris in November, 2015 and has not turned back to its optimistic tone since (Ethical Journalism Network 2017, 30). In their survey of articles in Western Europe, Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017) find that about 66% of articles discussing immigrants pointed out negative consequences of immigrant arrivals and 59% made no mention of positive consequences (9).

Second, the narrative around immigration shifted from an international issue or humanitarian call-to-action in the first half of the year to a domestic issue of crime and national security in the latter half of the year. Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017) summarize three phases: "careful tolerance" in the summer, characterized by a hope to help refugees paired with nervousness about negative consequences; "ecstatic humanitarianism" in the late summer and

early fall, characterized by refugee stories and pleas for aid; and finally, “fear and securitization” in the fall, characterized by negative warnings about refugees and an elimination of their personal stories (8). Specific to Germany, the press provided commentary much more frequently than other countries on actions that should be taken to protect against the harms of immigration (Georgiou and Zaborowski 2017, 12). As issues came up, “domestic security and refugees were regularly discussed as two sides of the same coin, even when there was no connection” (Ethical Journalism Network 2017, 31). On the whole, refugees were associated directly with an existential and personal, instead of economic or cultural, threat.

However, conditions have changed since the height of the refugee crisis. In the past few years, immigration has remained a salient issue. In German politics, criticisms have been leveled against Chancellor Angela Merkel and her party, specifically for immigration policies. New populist and anti-immigrant groups, chief among them the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) have gained traction and recognition in the eyes of the public. A new set of issues – to do with employment, education, and integration generally -- is on the table for discussion. It bears revisiting newspapers, therefore, to determine which messages now circulate. Newspapers are composed of stories, and a political issue is composed of stances and dilemmas. All of these aspects are difficult to fully capture in a quantitative format, thus my main research question is largely exploratory:

RQ1: How does the print media coverage of German immigration change throughout 2018?

My hypotheses derive from aspects of the immigration debate that have changed since 2015. The media narrative on immigration no longer simply focuses on immigrants, but also encompasses the growing pressure from AIGs. In particular, the increased relevance of the far-

right AfD, which has an explicitly anti-immigrant platform, brings immigration and its opponents straight to the center of public. In other words, while the coverage in 2015 largely focused on the migrants themselves as the main crux of the “immigration issue,” in 2018, the “immigration issue” encompasses many more voices and threats. Thus, I reach my first hypothesis.

H1: News stories in 2018 about immigrants more commonly cover anti-immigrant groups (AIGs) than immigrants themselves.

Secondly, though there is a rise in the importance of AIGs, which are being discussed in both a positive and negative light, the actual coverage of immigrants most likely has not changed. The narrative of AIGs targets immigrants based on established stereotypes about the threats they pose: economic competition, refusal to socially integrate, and criminality or terrorism. As AIGs are given space within newspapers to voice their opinions, they can reach a larger audience or provide more legitimacy to their claims. These declarations remain relatively in-line with findings of news studies from 2015 and lead me to my second suggested hypothesis.

H2: News stories in 2018 about immigrants are still more commonly negative and focused on national security as the dominant frame for understanding immigration.

This hypothesis must be tested in a variety of ways. First, though the complete breakdown of positive and negative portrayal is not something that Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017) give in their report, they describe a situation that is largely negative. Their focus is on narrative, and thus I also look for trends on how immigration is handled: whether it is most often seen as a humanitarian, national security, social-economic, or political issue. I look for patterns in positive and negative portrayal of immigrants according to these categories. Lastly, it matters how newspapers portray immigrants as individuals to evaluate how newspapers are reinforcing

images of “good/bad immigrants,” according to nationality, community affiliation, professional status, religion, appearance generally, or individual acts.

Finally, I return to one of the major claims made by Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017), which rests on the lack of immigrant voices in news articles that cover them. Their major claim is that immigrants rarely actually get used as interview subjects, particularly when they are women (3). Furthermore, immigrants become treated as "an anonymous, unskilled group...without individual characteristics...implied to be of little use for European countries...and raising suspicion" (Georgiou & Zaborowski 2017, 10). Staying in-line with my previous hypotheses, I predict that little has actually changed to counter this point, and that immigrant voices become less valued than the voices of others. In precise terms:

H3: News stories about immigrants offer unaffiliated witnesses and anti-immigrant speakers more direct speaking time (interview time, quotes, etc.) than they do immigrants.

Research Design

In order to test these hypotheses and answer my research question about the portrayal of immigrants, I conducted a direct study of three German newspapers: *die Tageszeitung (taz)*, a left-wing paper, *die Welt*, a right-wing paper, and *die Zeit*, described as having “cultivated links with the establishment” of politics and appealing to intellectuals (Pfanner 2013). For *taz* and *die Welt*, I read every edition published on the first available day of the week (Monday or Tuesday respectively) and Thursday. I additionally read every edition of *die Zeit*, which is published weekly on Thursdays. I read each available paper for every week through 2018, collecting articles that discussed or focused on immigration. Between these newspapers, I found a total of 457 articles relating to immigration in Germany. Most of these articles address German policy,

though there are a few that handle an international context and use Germany as a point of comparison. The articles found can be broken down by newspaper as follows: 148 came from *taz*, 227 were from *die Welt*, and the remaining 82 were from *die Zeit*. A breakdown of the (negligible) impact of newspaper bias can be found in Appendix 2.

For my broad level of analysis, I made notes on headlines, placement of articles within the newspaper, and general slant of each article – how it presents immigration as an issue and how it presents immigrants and AIGs. The full codebook used for my analysis can be found in Appendix 3. For the sake of a deeper level of study, I used seven major events as guideposts to collect information on a smaller sample. I read more deeply across a three-week period around each event and collected information about interviews and images. These major events include:

1. March 3, 2018: one instance of AfD-led anti-immigrant demonstrations in Kandel, Germany
2. March 14, 2018: Formation of 2018 Bundestag government, the CDU/CSU and SPD Grand Coalition.
3. May 27, 2018: major AfD march in Berlin (and its outnumbering by opponents).
4. July 13, 2018: settling of the terms of the UN Global Migration Compact
5. August 26, 2018: start of Chemnitz protests
6. October 2, 2018: agreements reached on new immigration policy in Germany
7. October 28, 2018: elections in Hesse, which grant AfD seats in every one of the German *Länder*

Each of these dates represents a different moment in the discussion for immigration this year but are loosely indicative of overall trends in the news cycle. Demonstrations within Kandel, Berlin, and Chemnitz attracted worldwide attention and introduced immigration as the

centerpiece of an ongoing discussion about multiculturalism and the stereotype of immigrants as violent. Immigration was at the heart of electoral politics, hence my selection to include the formation of the government and the Hesse elections. Finally, major policy initiatives at the domestic and international level provide the stage for discussion. Each of these events is not meant to be a focal point for my study, rather a place where I expected more articles relating to immigration would be clustered. I chose to use these dates only to collect a sample of data, not to use them as an additional variable.

Results: Topics and Portrayal of Issues

To test my main hypotheses, I made two categories to interpret each article: “article topic” and “issue portrayal,” tracks the way the newspaper portrays immigration as an issue. An article’s topic can be about politics, for instance, but the article can portray immigration as an issue of national security instead of as an issue of politics. I suggest five different article topic categories: General Trends, Stories about Immigrants, Stories about AIGs, Policy/Electoral Politics, and Other. General Trends refers to stories that cover trends in immigrant arrival rates or a survey of immigrant attitudes. The next two categories include stories that speak about specific immigrants or AIGs. The Policy/Electoral Politics category includes articles that cover policy issues or detail different positions of politicians. For issue framing, I ask the question: is immigration being portrayed as an issue of humanitarian, national security, social/economic integration, or political/public discourse? While article topic is a nice way to break down and interpret what topics are of interest to news outlets, issue portrayal more clearly categorizes the

framing; i.e., how the article treats immigration as a narrative. Figures 1-2 show the breakdown of articles by these two categories.

Breakdown of Article Topics

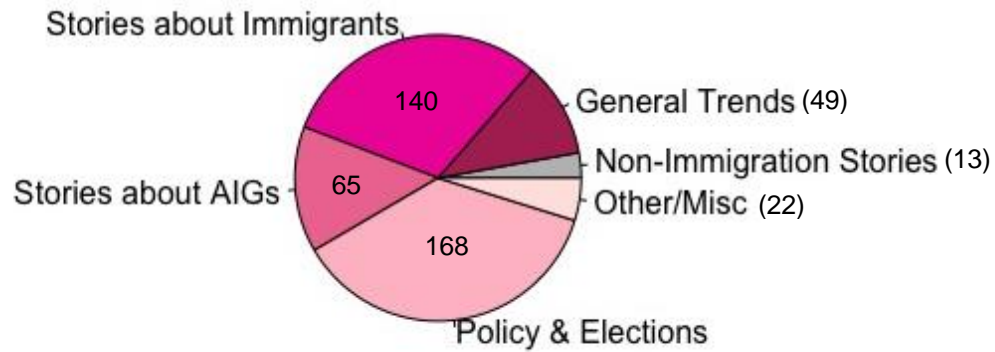


Figure 1: Distribution of Article Topics (n=457)

Breakdown of Issue Portrayal

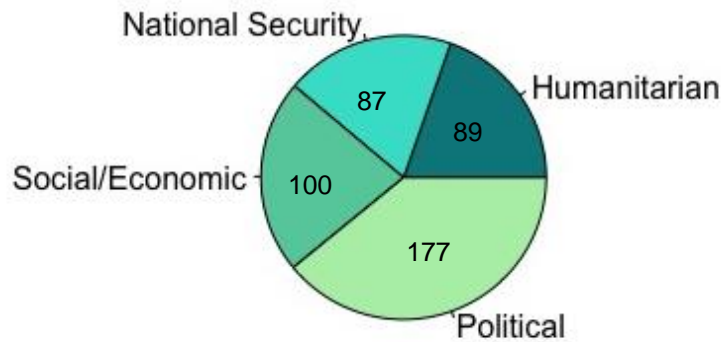


Figure 2: Distribution of Issue Portrayal (n=453)

By and large, I found that my first hypothesis – that AIGs would be the focus of news stories more frequently than immigrants – can be disproven. As shown in Figure 1, stories about immigrants – stories that focused on individual immigrants, their communities, and their lives generally – do outnumber stories about AIGs and their events. Overall, however, the largest category is policy. The same can be said for issue portrayal. The categories I drew from

Georgiou & Zaborowski (2017) – humanitarian relief and national security threat – are largely dwarfed by the social-economic and political frames. Clearly the focus on immigration has changed over the course of the last few years, with a renewed interest in politics.

2018 In Review

The discussion of immigration in the year 2018 involved every sector of the population and was pushed into the spotlight for debate. Immigration did not spike in relevance at any particular moments, though there were more articles published during the summer months – 54 in June, 66 in July, and 56 in August – and fewer in February (12 articles total) and April (24 articles total). A total distribution can be seen in Figure 3 below.

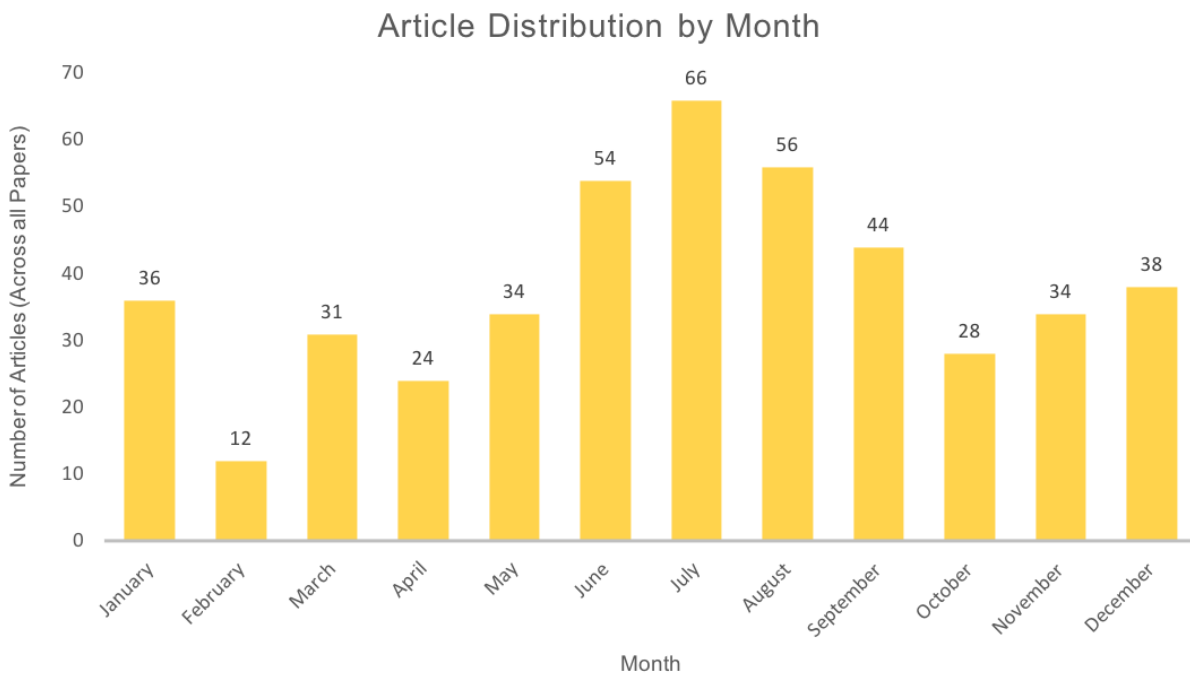


Figure 3: Distribution of articles by month (n=457)

The first weekend in March saw the beginning of protests in Kandel, starting this year's trends of demonstrations, both opposing immigrants and opposing AIGs. Led by the AfD and

anti-immigrant supporters, several thousand demonstrators gathered in the small southwestern town of Kandel in protest of immigration policy and in mourning for a 15-year old girl, who was killed in late 2017 by her ex-boyfriend, an Afghan refugee. Similar protests continued throughout the year in Kandel and other cities. In late May, the AfD gathered 5,000 protestors in Berlin for a march, though these individuals were quickly outnumbered by 20,000 counter-protestors. In Chemnitz, Saxony, protests started after a German man was killed, supposedly by two immigrants, in a street fight on August 26. That night and the following day, protesters from various far-right and anti-immigrant groups marched through the streets, escalating to violence. The protests only lasted in their full intensity until September 1, but demonstrators returned on a weekly basis to continue voicing their complaints. These three examples are only the most-discussed individual protests. On the whole, immigration and far-right nationalism was brought to a much more public setting through demonstrations.

Additionally, parliamentary politics became a major point of tension, especially where the AfD was concerned. The AfD's platform is so based in its anti-immigrant stance that immigration often is brought into any discussion of the party. For this reason, it is the main link between political order and news stories that discuss AIGs or immigration policy. After the Bundestag elections in 2017, a grand coalition between the Union parties (the Christian Democratic Union and the Christian Social Union) and the Social Democrats (SPD) formed in mid-March, leaving the AfD as the largest sector of parliamentary opposition. Since then, the AfD's influence has grown, particularly at the regional level. In the elections in Hesse in late October, the AfD placed fourth and gained 13.1% of the vote, or 19 seats. This election marks a turning point for the AfD; with Hesse, they now have representation in the governments of each of the German *Länder* (states). The electoral landscape of Germany reflects growing interest in

the AfD's viewpoints and growing dissatisfaction with Chancellor Angela Merkel's policy decisions, particularly in regard to migration.

Pressure on the government really mounted when it was uncovered that BAMF, the government agency handling migration, had improperly accepted thousands of non-eligible or non-applicable asylum seekers. The BAMF-scandal resulted in staff turnover and increased pressure on the government, especially Minister of the Interior, Horst Seehofer, and peaked in relevance throughout the summer. It also provoked questions on the efficacy of the process of asylum-seeking in Germany. Pressure from all sides led to the formation of revised immigration policy in October, which re-stated the country's preference to accept skilled workers over unskilled workers. This new policy proposal also addressed a vulnerable population, those whose applications for asylum had been rejected but who had not been deported. Many people within this category were given permission to stay, so long as they demonstrated sufficient progress towards integration.

On an international scale, migration continues to be one of the most important topics to access the ongoing discussion about conflicts between nations and international bodies of law. The UN met in July to develop and announce the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, which was signed in December. The compact sets out broad terms for how to handle the demands of immigration as a world community and focuses on broad policy aims to accept migrants and to allow them to have a stable livelihood in host societies. Soon after the terms of the compact were agreed upon, several countries, led by the United States, signaled their intent to opt out of the compact, even though it has no binding status on any member country. Immigration was a hot-button issue around the world, and the German news noted this, highlighting international relief organizations that rescued boats of immigrants in the Mediterranean after

Italy began refusing these ships. Many of the issues of other countries – for instance, the issue of the “migrant caravan” on the US southern border – did not make it into the scope of my study, since it remains focused on Germans and Germany. However, it should be noted that commentary on other countries’ struggles with migration did occur in Germany as well.

On the whole, there seems to be no definite trend in terms of how immigration was portrayed across time. This finding suggests that 2018, while a year with many events, treated immigration in a relatively stable way throughout. Figures 4-5 show the breakdown of article topics and issue portrayal across the year.

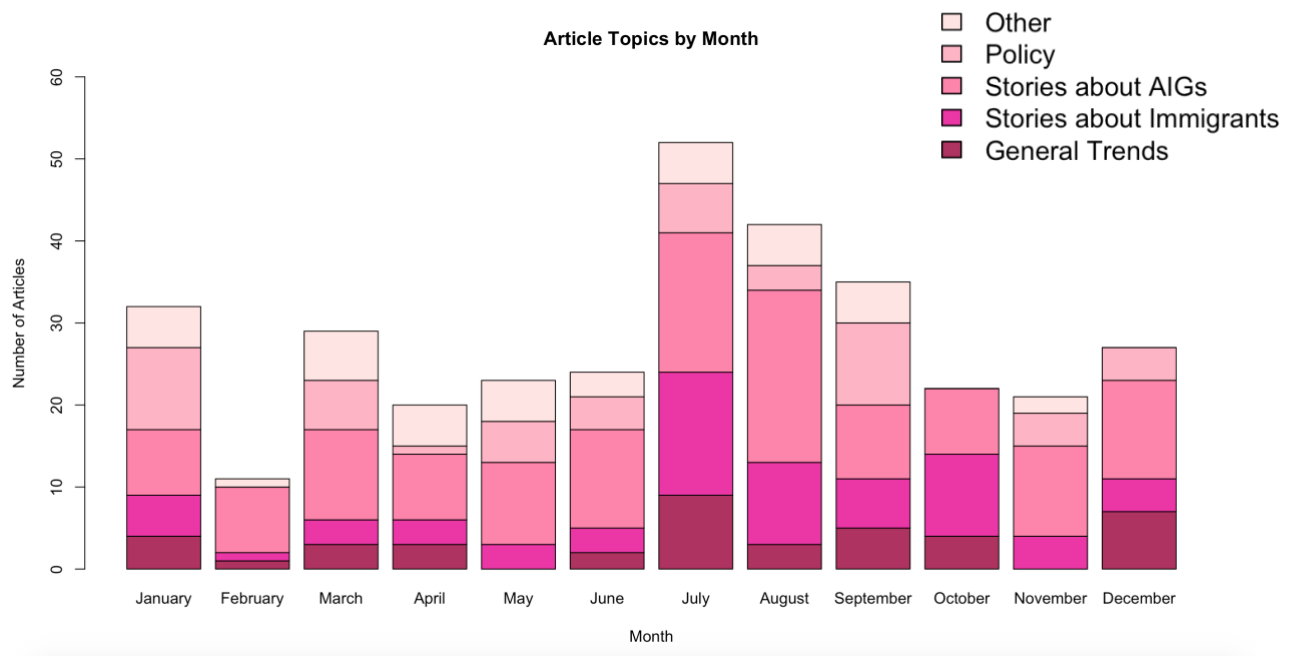


Figure 4: Article Topics distributed by month (n=457)

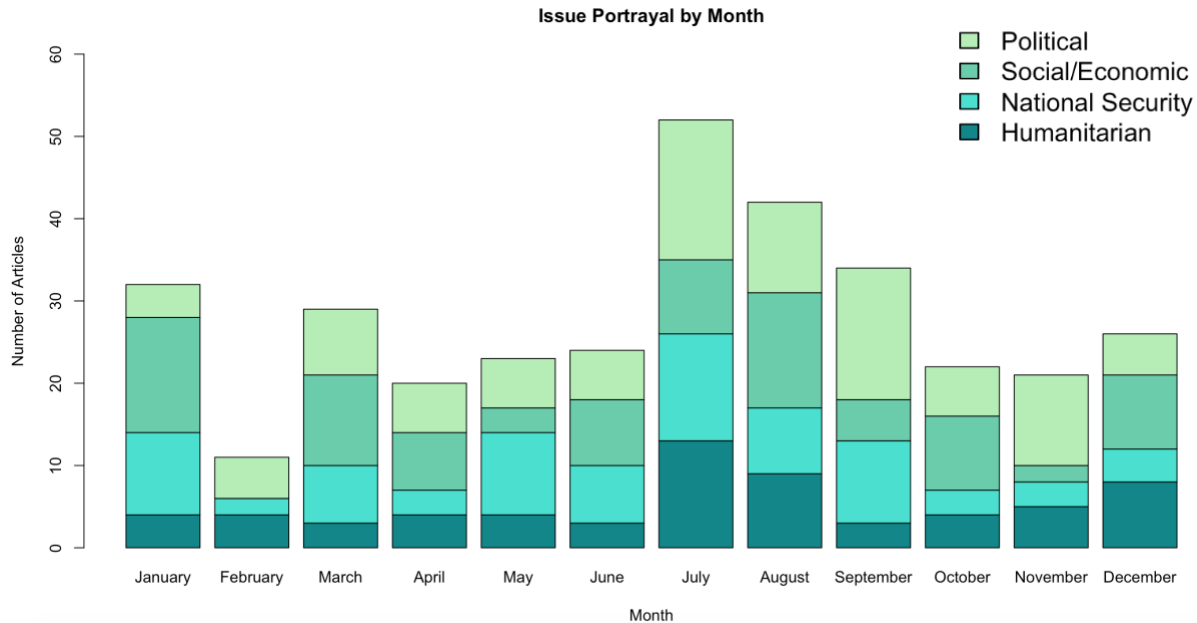


Figure 5: Issue Portrayal by month (n=453)

Results: Portrayal of Immigrants and AIGs

Another way to determine newspaper narrative is to look directly at “immigrant portrayal,” which measures how an article assigns positive or negative value statements to immigrants. An article that makes an explicit value statement, either positive or negative, would be categorized as “very positive” or “very negative.” An article that does not make an explicit statement but does support or condemn immigrants otherwise would be categorized as “positive” or “negative” depending on the article’s tone. There is also an option for neutrality or objectivity, if the article does not provide a clear framing of immigrants. If immigrants – separate from “immigration” as an issue – are not mentioned, I code the article as having given *no* real portrayal of immigrants. This same scale is also used in my categorization of “AIG portrayal.”

Across all topics, 119 articles did not describe immigrants directly enough to give a clear portrayal. In looking at the breakdown of topics and the inclusion of immigrants and AIGs in stories, there appears to be a shift away from direct discussion of the actors involved. Instead, immigration-related stories connect more and more to policy and parliamentary politics than to immigrants themselves. When it comes to portrayal of immigrants and AIGs, the coverage is remarkably neutral. Figure 6 shows an overall breakdown of immigrant portrayal, while Figures 7 and 8 show this breakdown sorted by article topic and on issue portrayal.

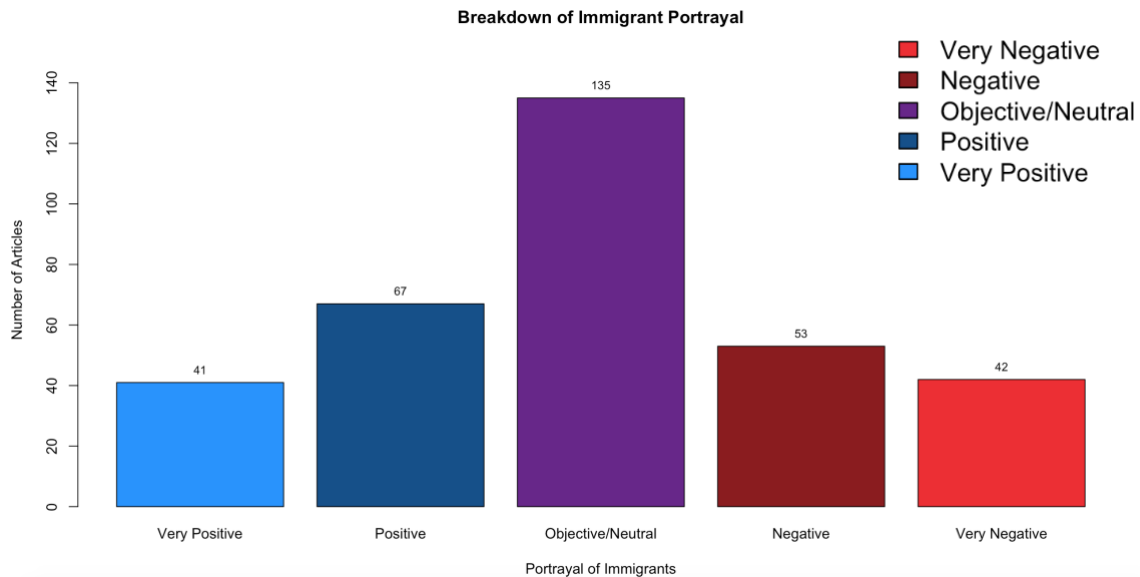


Figure 6: Immigrant Portrayal (n=338)

For the most part, portrayal of immigrants is rather evenly distributed, with the bulk of articles treating immigrants in an entirely neutral way. There are slightly more positive-leaning articles than negative-leaning articles. Most frequently, articles that portrayed immigrants positively were stories actually about immigrants. Furthermore, immigrants were most likely to be portrayed “very positively” in articles that framed immigration as a social or economic issue. For the most part, I found articles in this category to be discussions of the ways in which

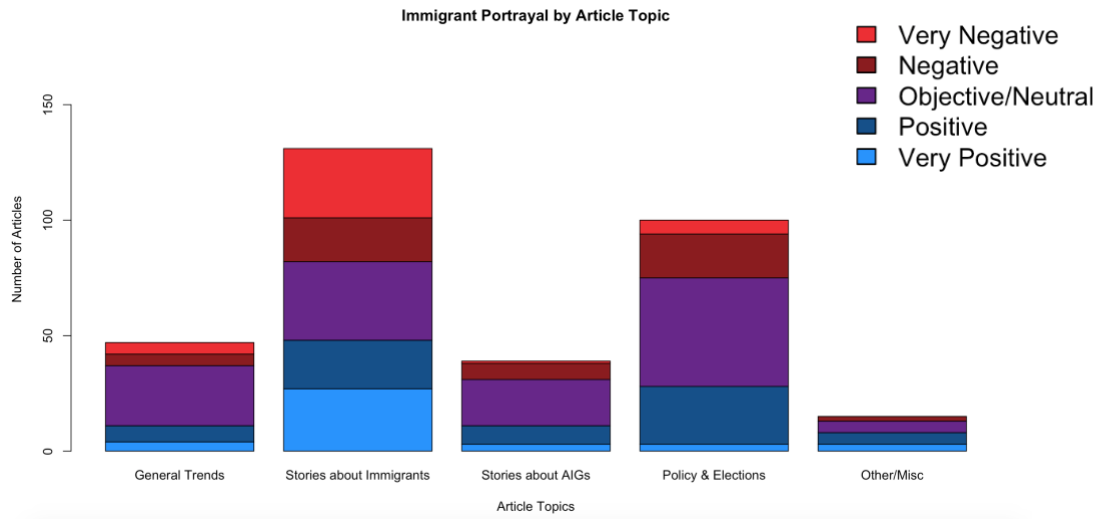


Figure 7: Immigrant Portrayal sorted by Article Topic (n=332)

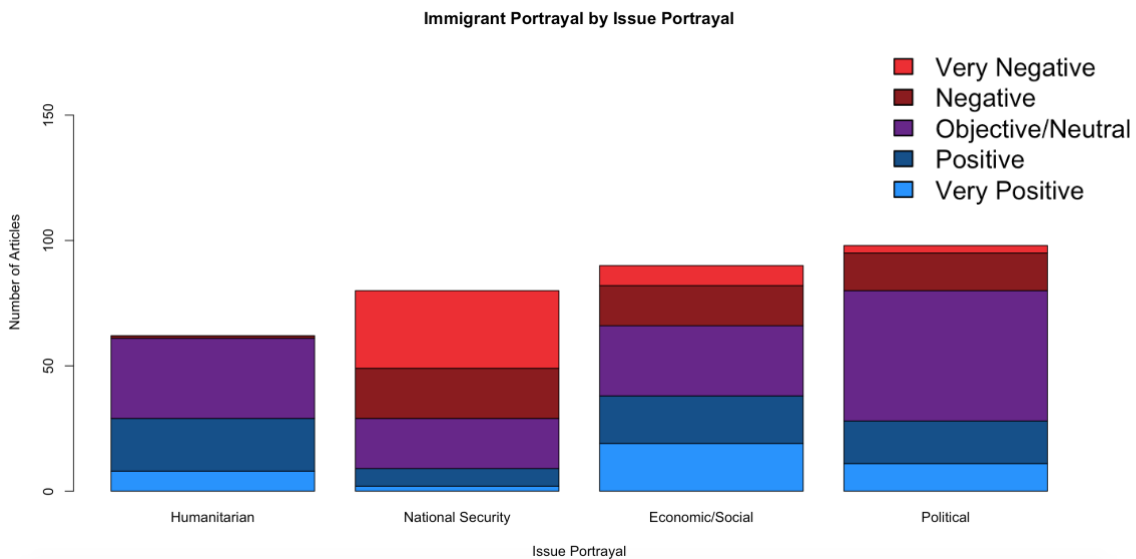


Figure 8: Immigrant Portrayal sorted by Issue Portrayal (n=330)

immigrants could be taken into society or contribute in some way. These were articles stressing the importance of welcoming immigrants to Germany and the ways they could contribute both labor and cultural richness. They bore titles like “Well-arrived” and “Here, everyone celebrates everything” in reference to various holiday traditions (Slevogt 2018; Jakob 2018)¹. Notably, articles coded “very negatively” appeared most often when immigration was portrayed as a

¹ All translations of newspaper articles are my own, unless otherwise specified.

national security issue. These articles often examined particular immigrants that had participated in criminal activity. Especially around events like Chemnitz, which started after a pair of suspected immigrants were involved in a stabbing, coverage of immigrants as a risk to national security increased. Some were open portrayals of immigrants generally, but many had a particular story of a particular immigrant in mind.

299 articles, nearly half the dataset, did not give a clear portrayal of AIGs. In part, however, this is because as some anti-immigrant groups grow, they incorporate new ideas into their platform and enter the public discourse in new ways. Many more stories about, for instance, the AfD appeared in newspapers that did not factor into my survey. As it grows more normalized as a party in German politics, fewer stories about the AfD address immigration. As the year went on, therefore, I found it less and less likely that immigration would be mentioned in a story about the AfD. Further disproving my hypothesis, news stories were more likely to pass value judgments on immigrants than on AIGs. Figure 9 shows overall AIG Portrayal, and Figures 10-11 provide a breakdown of this portrayal sorted by article topic and issue portrayal.

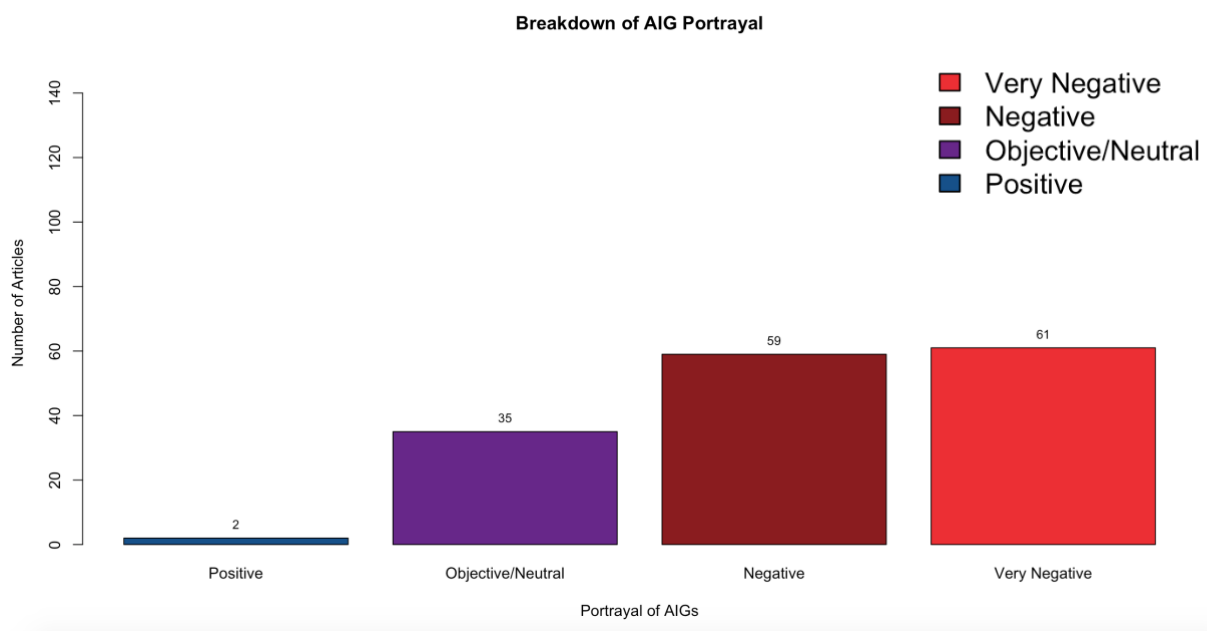


Figure 7: Anti-Immigrant Group Portrayal (n=157)

Notably, there were no articles at all that portrayed an AIG in an explicitly positive light. Some articles alluded to these AIGs as a potentially positive force, but even these positive portrayals were extremely rare. Articles that covered AIGs as the main topic were often explicitly hostile. Additionally, articles that understood immigration as an issue predominantly of national security portrayed AIGs in a negative way. These articles often addressed AIGs in the context of clashes between immigrants and AIGs – in Chemnitz or Kandel for instance. At times, AIGs were portrayed as a disruptive, possibly violent force that in itself was a threat to national security.

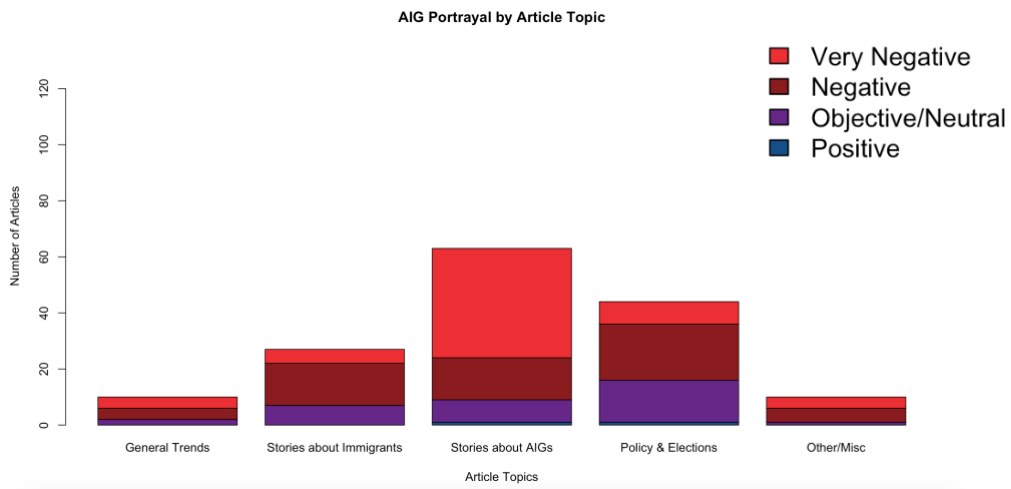


Figure 10: Anti-Immigrant Group Portrayal sorted by Article Topic (n=154)

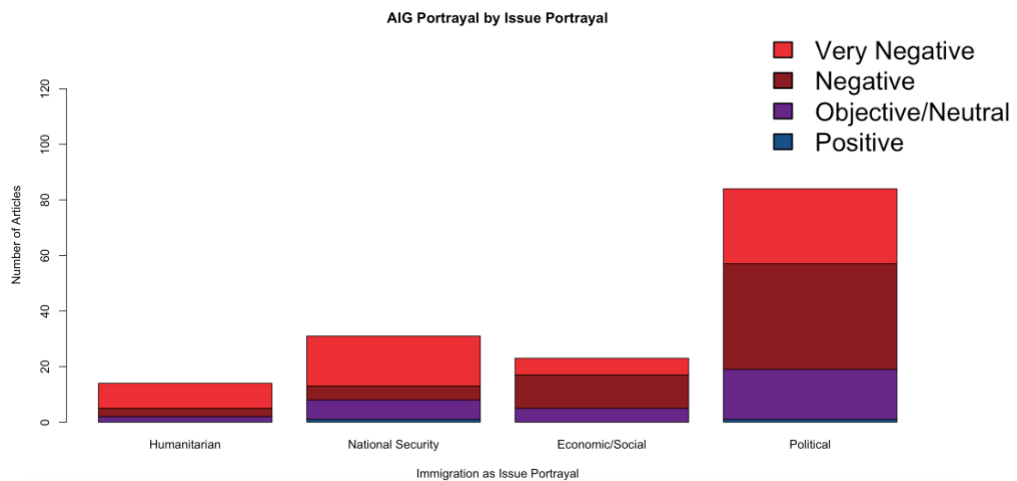


Figure 11: Anti-Immigrant Group Portrayal sorted by Issue Portrayal (n=152)

Dominantly, these results show that my first two hypotheses cannot be confirmed. I anticipated finding a greater influx of AIGs in the bulk of stories about immigration. Instead, my results point to a shift to articles written about policy and to a greater portrayal of immigration as an issue of politics. Both in terms of article topic and issue portrayal, politics dominated my categorizations. To be sure, the topic of “politics” is a broad category that includes politicians’ stances on immigration, the summer BAMF-scandal, subsequent criticism of government politics, and public debates over who is a “member” of German society. This shift in discussion does have a major impact on the portrayal of immigrants and AIGs. Consider Figures 12 and 13, which shows how immigrants and AIGs are viewed in those articles that portray the issue of immigration as political.

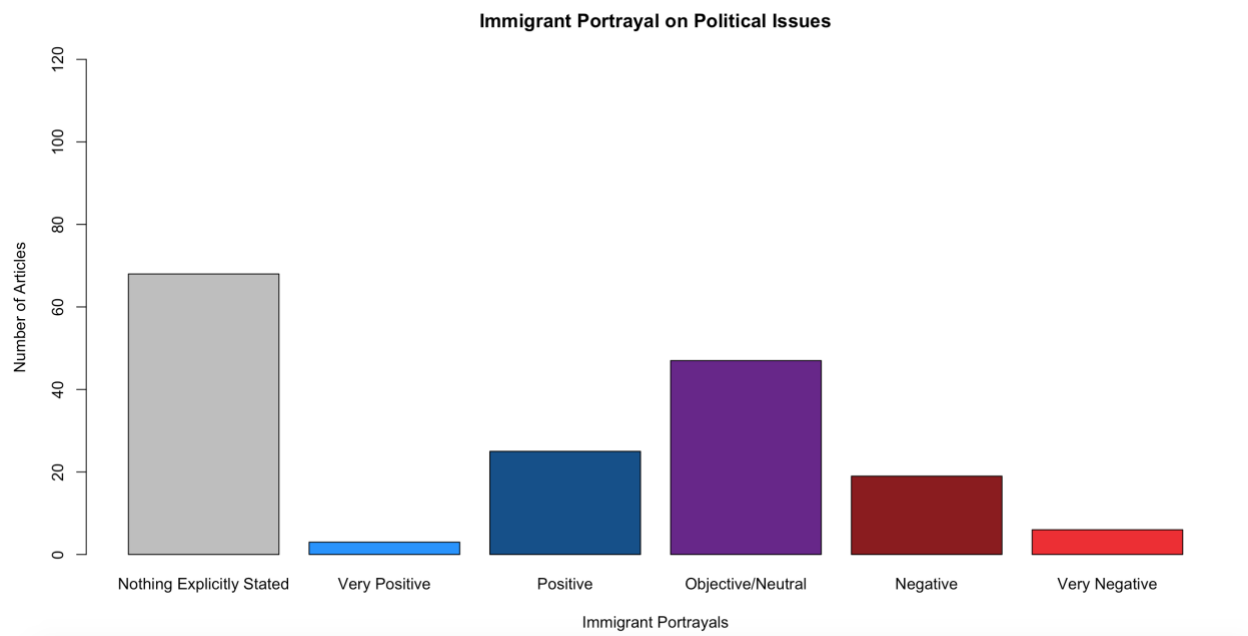


Figure 12: Immigrant Portrayal for articles where the Issue Portrayal is political (n=168)

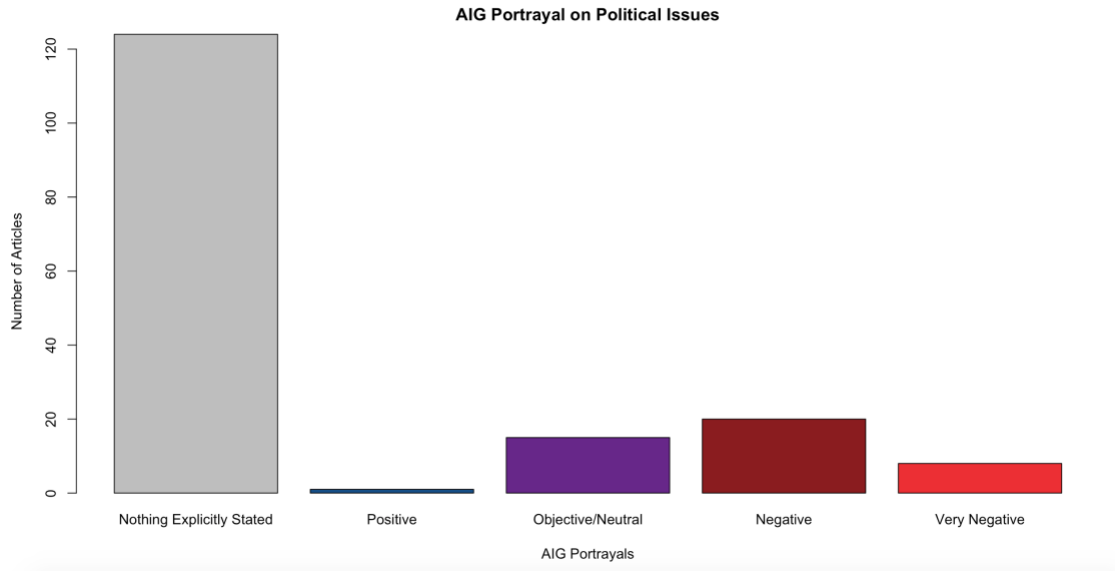


Figure 13: Anti-Immigrant Group Portrayal for articles where the Issue Portrayal is political (n=168)

One vital observation to make is the sheer number of articles that did not make explicit value statements about immigrants (68 stories) or AIGs (124 stories). Many of the articles that *did* explicitly mention immigrants maintained a neutral stance towards them. Mentions of AIGs were similar, usually limited to statement of their positions. Often, articles that dealt with immigration policy without mentioning immigrants would reference immigration in its tagline without discussing it in the body of the article. This pattern emphasizes the ways in which immigrants are increasingly being used as an attention-grabber but not a real population with a stake in politics.

Results: Interviews and Images

Turning to the sample of my study that looked at interviews and images, I find that for the most part, interviews were not given to AIG members more often than to immigrants. Most quotes are given to government officials and experts. The complete breakdown of interviews given can be shown in Figure 14. Even when the topic of an article is about immigrants

themselves, they are consulted less frequently than are experts and government officials. Figure 15 shows the breakdown of who was consulted for an interview solely for those articles that were categorized with an article topic of “stories about immigrants.” Only 83 interviews I examined were from articles about immigrants, and of those, immigrants were interviewed 18 times, “experts” 17 times, government officials 29 times, and allies – people who have begun initiatives helping migrants – were interviewed 16 times. Though taken from a relatively small sample size, these results still show that for the most part, immigrants do not speak very frequently in interviews, even when the news stories cover their lives.

Interviews by function

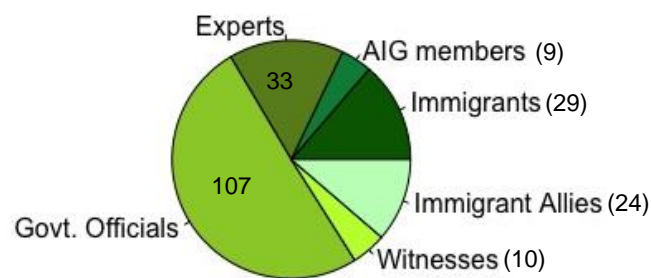


Figure 14: Distribution of Interview Function (n=212)

Interviews by Function (Stories About Immigrants)

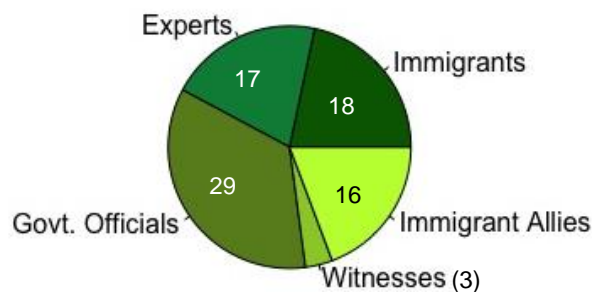


Figure 15: Interviews by Function, selected for articles with the Topic of Stories about Immigrants (n=91)

Images, in addition, should be taken into consideration. Though much of a newspaper's work is accomplished in the text, photos and graphics frame articles and convey their own intentions, sometimes changing the meaning of the accompanying text. In the detailed level of analysis done, I looked at the images attached to an article as a whole, categorizing them as: photos of immigrants, photos of AIG members or events, coverage of the events described in the article, photos of government officials or politicians, statistical information, or something not listed. The breakdown of images I tracked is shown in Figure 16. For the most part, images corresponded to the events they covered, though they showed immigrants more often than they did AIG members.

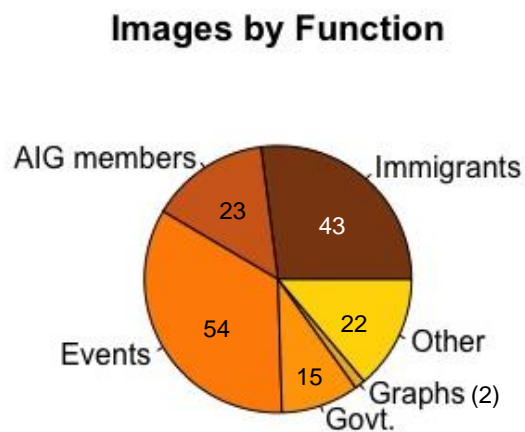


Figure 16: Distribution of Image Functions (n=159)

These findings support an overall privileging of immigrants as interest-grabbers but not tellers of their own stories. However, the interviews and images pulled represent only a sample of my sample and are thus relatively few in number. These results do concur with what Georgiou & Zaborowski (2017) found in 2015: that immigrants are still largely kept out of their own narrative, more often the subject of pictures than quotes, and are overshadowed by the presence of politicians and policy experts. The media narrative of 2018 has shifted, but not necessarily in the direction I expected. Instead, the media narrative of 2018 was largely one focused on policy

and policy-makers, with immigrants used as a tool to attract interest and mobilize passionate groups.

Discussion: The Political Narrative of Immigrants

Considering these quantitative results, I now return to my research question: *How does the print media coverage of German immigration change throughout 2018?* Three major narrative threads stand out. First, there is the major narrative of immigration as a political issue subject to discussion in parliament instead of at the level of individuals. The trend, qualifying immigration as a political issue without providing any frame for immigrants writes immigrants *out* of the story and reiterates their outsider status. Within and adjacent to this tendency are two narratives about immigrants themselves: the recurrence of familiar images of “good/bad immigrants,” and the flattening of immigrants into either numbers or victims within a political moment. As discussed in my quantitative results, positive images of immigrants are often paired directly with portrayals of immigration as a social or economic issue. I further the idea that “good” immigrants are those that are shown as contributing in a positive way to the economy. This image is furthered both in the country’s official policy shifts in 2018 and in the way that certain migrants are portrayed in print media.

As previously discussed, my findings show that immigration is most commonly a “political” issue. This wide categorical label encompasses many types of stories, as has already been discussed. A relevant example issue is the July 3 edition of *die Welt*, which includes five articles on immigration, four of which treat immigration as a political issue. The headline story follows the divide between the CDU and the CSU, its Bavarian counterpart, as a result of asylum policy. The headline translates to “Union-parties between unity and mutiny,” and makes

references within its description to “Asylstreit,” the conflict of asylum policy. The article itself deviates from this description; while it is technically an article covering immigration, it only briefly explains the options for asylum policy in Germany. Instead, it focuses directly on party compromise and Germany’s placement in the European Union (Krauel 2018). The second article in this issue *does* discuss immigration to a larger degree, explaining briefly the large increase in migration during the last few years. However, the article is titled “Thus it tears apart (*zerreißt*) the Union,” and takes as its main concerns the division among parliamentary parties (Graw 2018). The third article, an interview with the leader of Germany’s liberal party, the FDP, criticizes immigration policy, but again, in a fairly impersonal way that does not bring individual immigrants into the picture whatsoever (Klug 2018).

These types of articles are constantly in the center of newspapers, not just *die Welt*. The treatment of immigration as a political issue constantly brings immigrants to the forefront of readers’ minds, but without a humanizing element to the articles. As an article in *die Zeit* actually explicitly puts it, “Refugees had become like a synonym for politics, and the million projects of the federal government only notes in the margins” (Pausch 2018). All this constant political discussion around refugees keeps the public eye trained on immigrants as a source of instability for the country. Furthermore, since it rarely offers real positions or places for immigrants to insert themselves into the narrative, there is little opportunity for nuance. The media strategy of leveraging the salience of immigration to discuss political issues marginalizes immigrants just as it marginalizes government projects.

Additionally, print media shows a developed image of what the 2018 “good” and “bad” immigrants look like. Positive portrayals of immigrants and, in particular, stories featuring immigrants telling their stories, have some things in common. Articles across newspapers praised

highly skilled immigrants who took advantage of German education to find jobs as skilled laborers and produce new technology. In mid-July, for instance, the headline of an edition of *taz* was “Die schaffen das,” a play on Merkel’s now-famous statement “Wir schaffen das.” The article asserts that *immigrants* will handle the situation, in this case by learning technical skills and contributing to the economy (*taz* 2018). It was shown in the earlier figures that when immigration is portrayed as a social or economic issue, immigrants are more likely to be viewed in a positive way (see Figure 6). Positive portrayals of immigrants are lent to those who *make* immigration a social or economic issue, by integrating in the expected way. These immigrants who are given positive portrayals are those who would fit the ideal of growing the middle class (Elrick & Winter 2018). In other words, the “good immigrant” is still very much promoted as a coherent image to which all immigrants should strive.

Occasionally, articles do offer coverage of different immigrants’ personal stories. Towards the end of the year, for instance, *die Zeit* highlighted seven people who had come to Germany from different countries and different careers. Despite their differences, they do have some elements in common: they all are employed, speak to their hard work in Germany to get to their current positions, and speak German well enough to write a paragraph about their experiences. Additionally, these seven people have all lived more than half their lives in Germany and speak to experiences distinct from refugees who moved to Germany during the refugee crisis (Stahr 2018). Providing those of migrant backgrounds to share their personal experiences is an essential way to broadcast the heterogeneity of immigrants in Germany and monitor how integration is working. However, the stories that are generous in providing page space and interest in immigrant stories often still select those who fit the model of the “good immigrant” – the middle-class, and often white Christian, immigrant.

Meanwhile, “bad” immigrants are those portrayed in the stories that treat immigration as an issue of national security; they are the immigrants who do not adhere to the standards expected of the “good immigrant.” For the most part, immigrants who were portrayed in a negative light were treated as individuals and were covered based on their violent actions, which is likely the best option for immigrants generally. Yet, a single individual’s negative portrayal reflects on the entire group (Polakow-Suransky 2017). Those immigrants who are placed in the news in a negative way typically are those who adapt to stereotypes of the “bad immigrant,” meaning they are typically from Muslim-majority countries and came to Germany at the height of the migrant crisis.

A dangerous trend I also noted is the tendency either to paint immigrants as helpless victims or merely as numbers. As shown previously, most articles are not handling immigrants as individuals or even passing judgment on them. They are numbers that have little impact: the numbers in boats crossing the Mediterranean, the numbers pleading asylum between years, the numbers who have received help from job agencies to find employment. Many stories that treat immigration as a humanitarian issue focus on international problems, such as the migrant ships stranded in the Mediterranean after being refused from Italy. These stories paint the refugees as victims to be saved by NGOs and European heroes. Both of these tendencies -- to victimize and to enumerate immigrants -- support the bottom-line finding of this research project: that immigrants are being invoked as an attention-grabbing group but are rarely treated like autonomous individuals seeking new lives and political entry.

Finally, the diminished role of AIGs should be noted. My findings suggest that very few articles out of my larger sample cover stories directly about AIGs, and many stories do not provide an interpretation of AIGs. The most relevant AIG in German politics today is

undoubtedly the *Alternative für Deutschland*, which places immigration as a core underlying concern of its stated policy stances. The AfD's rhetoric around immigrants echoes the "bad immigrant" prototype with little exception. For instance, their manifesto complains that "Muslim immigrants to Germany, in particular only attain below-average levels of education" and explains that continued migration will result in an erosion of "social solidarity, mutual trust, and public safety" alongside education and linguistic capabilities (Alternative für Deutschland 2016). Despite their platform being so wedded to immigration as an issue, the AfD does not often appear in discussions of immigration any longer, at least directly. Instead, the AfD takes up space in news coverage as a separate issue. As a result, it seems likely that the AfD's presence as a full political party, not merely as a vocal anti-immigrant group, has become the dominant media story. A future study might compare the scope and portrayal of the AfD in a way paralleling my study. The question may still remain, whether German news creates more concern about immigration or about the far-right populist parties that are most vocal about opposing immigration.

Conclusion

On the whole, the media narrative has changed since Georgiou & Zaborowski (2017) made their report on the portrayal of immigrants in the media in 2015. The narrative is no longer focused on humanitarian efforts, though stories that portray immigration as a humanitarian issue do remain. The narrative is also less preoccupied with the second shift that Georgiou & Zaborowski (2017) found: the preoccupation with immigration as a threat to national security. While there are stories that portray immigration as an issue of national security, they are predominantly focused on *individuals* who have committed crimes and given a counter-point

with positive images of individuals who have integrated successfully. Further, the concerns of German immigration policy have shifted from border policy and numbers to what comes next. Millions of people have arrived due to the migrant crisis, and they are not leaving. This state of affairs necessarily shifts the focus of political and media attention to questions of integration and what to do with immigrants deemed to be “bad” for society. These discussions will continue into the future simply as Germans adjust to their ever-changing culture.

While my research largely condemns the discussion of immigration as a political issue, in so far as it marginalizes and catastrophizes immigrants, there are many important implications of these discussions. A large number of articles covered the BAMF scandal of this spring and summer, highlighting a societal understanding that the government plays a huge role in the regulation of immigrants in society. The pressure on BAMF and the Bundestag when it comes to immigration suggests that Germans are largely looking to their government to act. By repeatedly tying political crisis to immigration, news outlets are contributing to the pressure on the government to make a change. Additionally, German society is undergoing a conscious shift in the direction of integration policy over immigration policy. To be certain, deportation is a constant question in the news relating to immigration. Many people are in support of deporting many people, especially those who seek asylum but fail to meet the requirements for such a plea.

These questions of government decision, of deportation, of integration, connect to the ongoing discussion of Germany’s place in the global world order. Germany took on many more migrants than other countries during the migrant crisis, particularly during 2016 (Migration Policy Institute 2018). As a consequence of this decision, Germany also took a higher proportion of immigrants relative to other EU countries. Integration and international burden-sharing have been on the table since the earliest days of the migrant crisis. With the 2019 European Parliament

elections rising, immigration will be used as a major pivot point between domestic strife and the balance of power in Europe. With the rise of anti-European, anti-immigrant parties like the AfD, all the major parties in the EP elections will be forced to address the aftermath of the refugee crisis. In a way, the EP elections serve as a referendum as to how the crisis was handled.

Given Germany's leading position in Europe and the symbolic role Germany has played in the migrant crisis, Germany is one of the most relevant cases when discussing immigration in European politics today. However, its particular historical circumstances do automatically limit the scope of a study like this to a particular moment in time. Further research could expand beyond the scope of Germany, following up on countries across Europe. In addition, media framing studies about immigration should be accompanied by media framing studies about anti-immigrant groups more explicitly, even beyond their comments on immigration. The press shapes and interprets the relationship between native Germans and immigrants. Understanding the role of the print media can clarify existing threads of public discourse and offer an interpretation of how the migrant crisis has changed views and relationships three years after its major moment in the media spotlight. These issues should be tracked and understood in future years, as the landscape of European politics continues to shift and the world becomes more culturally mixed by the effects of immigration.

Appendix 1: Past Studies

The two most influential studies on the design and execution of my project are a report commissioned by the Council of Europe, led by Georgiou & Zaborowski; and a study conducted by the Ethical Journalism Network. Georgiou & Zaborowski (2017) chose three major points in the year 2015 and conducted cross-sectional data, using a total of 1200 articles from 20 different newspapers. The German papers analyzed included *die Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *der Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Unfortunately, neither of these newspapers had readily accessible articles in the scope that I needed. Furthermore, the design of this study was aimed at comparing across countries, while my study aims to engage within greater detail to Germany. Their study, because of its cross-national focus, necessarily asked different questions than are useful to my study. Germany's newspapers have a particular history of being independent, influential, and powerful, with a large outreach (Georgiou & Zaborowski 2017, p. 13). The Ethical Journalism Network (2017)'s study was similarly large in scope, spanning 17 different countries. It is somewhat more difficult to determine the research methods that went into this study, further, as it draws on particular stories and provides a much more qualitative focus. While it would have been beneficial to my study to imitate some of the methods and ask similar questions for a more exact replication of data, I must deviate from these sources in significant ways. Thus, my study should not be read as a replication, as my methods and data sources were created independently.

Appendix 2: Newspaper Bias

In selecting the three newspapers I used in my study, I aimed to collect newspapers from different political viewpoints. *Taz* is known as being quite left-wing, while *die Welt* is regarded as a conservative newspaper and *die Zeit* as a highbrow magazine by comparison, though still somewhat left. At some points, the bias of the newspapers definitely did create predictable patterns for the portrayal of immigrants and the categorization of immigration as a type of topic. Below, I show how these biases play out. Figure A1 shows the breakdown of immigrant portrayal sorted this time by newspaper. Figure A2 shows the breakdown of article topic of by newspaper. Figure A3 shows the breakdown of issue portrayal by newspaper.

Some of the expected results can be found in this data: namely, that *taz* is more likely to write positive or very positive stories about immigrants, while *die Welt* is more likely to produce negative or very negative stories about immigrants. However, neither newspaper is exclusively positive or negative on the subject of immigrants. In Figure A3, it can be seen that *die Welt* also describes immigration more frequently as an issue of national security, especially in comparison to the other two papers. Similarly, *taz* chooses to portray immigration as a humanitarian issue more frequently. Still, while these biases do appear, they by no means dominate the data.

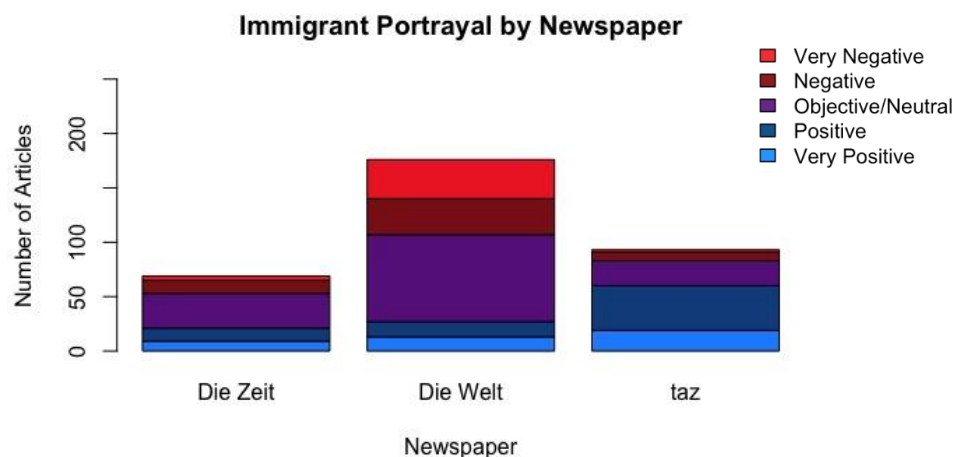


Figure A1: Immigration Portrayal, sorted by newspaper (n=457)

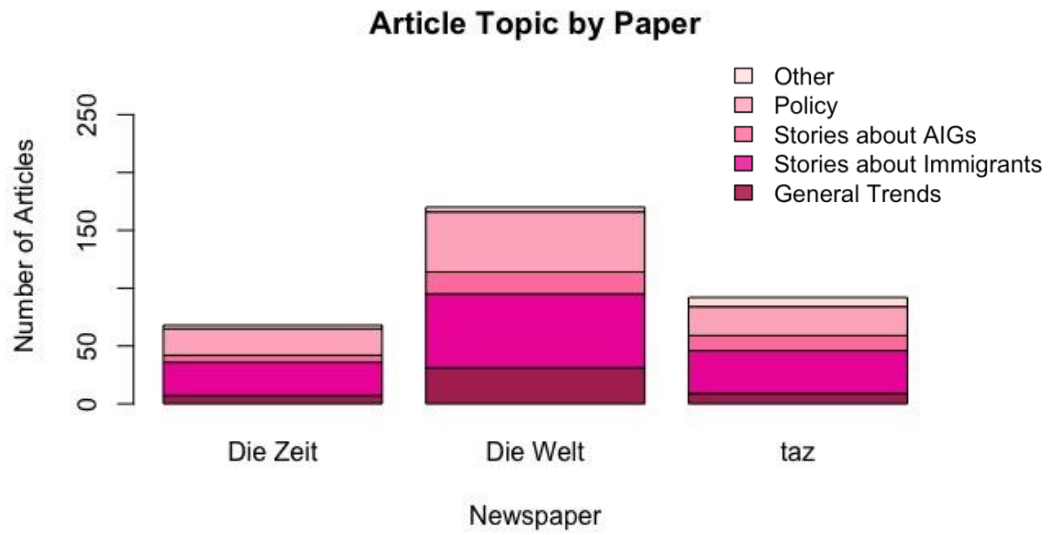


Figure A2: Distribution of Article Topics, sorted by paper (n=457)

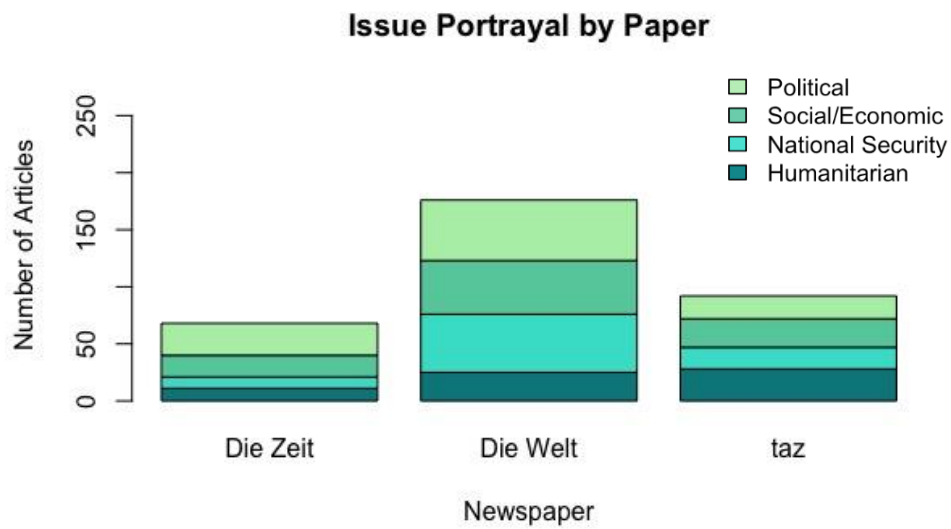


Figure A3: Distribution of Issue Portrayal, sorted by paper (n=453)

Appendix 3: Codebook for Variables Tested

Categorizing variables:

- Newspaper
 - 0: NA
 - 1: Die Zeit
 - 2: Die Welt
 - 3: Die Tageszeitung
- Date (DDMMYYYY)
- Article Name
- Author Name

Events (*total of 16 variables: Event 1_occurrence, Event 1_duration; Event 2_occurrence, Event 2_duration, etc.*)

- Event occurrence (for EACH event):
 - 0: Event has not occurred before the article was published
 - 1: Event has occurred after the article was published
- Event time duration (# of days past event)

Content Material (for broad analysis):

- Topic Material (what is the article about?)
 - 0: Not directly related to immigration
 - 1: General trend about migration patterns
 - 2: Events or stories about immigrants
 - 3: Events or stories about AIGs
 - 4: Immigration policy
 - 5: Other immigration-related story
- Headline slant (how does the headline advertise the *issue*?)
 - 0: NA or other
 - 1: Statistical or neutral observation
 - 2: Quotation from a participant in the event
 - 3: Positive value statement
 - 4: Negative value statement
 - 5: Openly ironic statement or cultural reference
- Article position (where is the article in the paper?)
 - 0: Advertisement or non-news section
 - 1: Headline (main article on first page)
 - 2: First-page
 - 3: Interior-page
- Article weight (what is the importance of the article?)
 - 0: n/a
 - 1: Main issue/headline issue

- 2: 2 pages or more are dedicated to the issue
- 3: 1 page, or most of 1 page, is dedicated to the issue
- 4: ½ a page or less is dedicated to the issue
- 5: Opinion or brief commentary

Portrayals and framing variables

- Immigration issue portrayal (how is the issue of immigration framed?)
 - 0: Immigration is not the main issue
 - 1: Humanitarian, international issue
 - 2: National security issue
 - 3: Social or economic issue
 - 4: Political issue, or issue of the public sphere generally
- Immigrant portrayal (how are immigrants framed generally?)
 - 0: No coverage
 - 1: Very positive
 - 2: Somewhat positive
 - 3: Neutral/objective (statistics only)
 - 4: Somewhat negative
 - 5: Very negative
- AIG portrayal (how are AIGs framed generally?)
 - 0: No coverage
 - 1: Very positive
 - 2: Somewhat positive
 - 3: Neutral/objective (statistics only)
 - 4: Somewhat negative
 - 5: Very negative
- Immigrant focus (how are specific immigrants described?)
 - 0: No immigrants are named specifically
 - 1: Nationality or legal status
 - 2: Neighborhood or other community group
 - 3: Socioeconomic status or profession
 - 4: Religion
 - 5: Appearance or other mannerisms without symbolism of the above categories
 - 6: Actions taken (usually those taken within the story or past criminal activity)

Interviews and Images (for detailed analysis only)

- Interview # [used for multiple interviews in an article, 0 if this line of data is not about an interview]
- Name of interview (is the person interviewed named, or referred to by their group?)
 - 0: Person interviewed is not referred to by name
 - 1: Person interviewed is referred to by name
- Interview status (who is being interviewed in the article? – repeated per interview)

- 0: No interviews appear in the article
- 1: Person interviewed is an immigrant
- 2: Person interviewed is a member of an AIG
- 3: Person interviewed is an “expert” in a related field
- 4: Person interviewed is a government official
- 5: Person interviewed is a non-specified witness or resident
- 6: Person interviewed is a helper/ally of immigrants
- Image function (when images are used, what do they show?)
 - 0: No images are given in the article
 - 1: Immigrants in their daily lives
 - 2: AIG members or events
 - 3: Coverage of an event described in the article
 - 4: Coverage of politicians or other well-known figures
 - 5: Statistical information, i.e. charts or graphs
 - 6: Other non-listed image function

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