

# Public Perceptions of the Media Coverage of Irregular Immigration: Comparative Insights From France, the United States, and Norway

American Behavioral Scientist  
2015, Vol. 59(7) 839–857  
© 2015 SAGE Publications  
Reprints and permissions:  
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/0002764215573253  
abs.sagepub.com



Audun Beyer<sup>1</sup> and Jörg Matthes<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

Irregular immigration has become a globally important topic. While there have been some studies on public opinion toward irregular immigration, virtually no studies have examined how audiences evaluate the media coverage of this issue. There is also a lack of comparative research. The aims of this article are to provide survey data on public opinion toward irregular immigration in the United States, France, and Norway as well as a comparative analysis of public perceptions of the news coverage. Findings suggest that irregular immigration remains a highly salient issue in public opinion in all three countries. Furthermore, public opinion is generally critical and skeptic toward irregular immigration and immigrants, and differences between countries regarding the coverage of the issue in national mainstream media do not necessarily seem to be mirrored in public opinion. The survey data also suggest that citizens in all three countries tend to believe that the negative aspects of irregular immigration such as crimes or border control receive too little coverage whereas perspectives more positive to irregular immigration receive too much. Implications for further comparative research on public opinion and media coverage are discussed.

## Keywords

public opinion, irregular immigration, comparative research, media evaluation

---

<sup>1</sup>University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway

<sup>2</sup>University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

## Corresponding Author:

Audun Beyer, Department of media and communication, University of Oslo, Box 1093 Blindern, Oslo 0317, Norway.

Email: [audun.beyer@media.uio.no](mailto:audun.beyer@media.uio.no)

## Introduction

Irregular immigration has become an important topic in many Western democracies in the past decades, and is high on and public agendas (Facchini, Mayda, & Puglisi, 2009). More specifically, illegal immigration is a contested and polarized issue around the globe. The polarized and contested nature of this issue is also apparent in media content (Benson, 2013; Horsti, 2008), and especially in elite perceptions and criticisms of the media coverage (Figenschou & Beyer, 2014). In fact, we can observe massive criticism of the way the news media covers and frames immigration from critics with opposite viewpoints regarding the issue (Benson, 2013; see Thorbjørnsrud, 2015). These criticisms typically relate to what is regarded as appropriate perspectives in the debate concerning (irregular) immigration (Figenschou & Beyer, 2014). In mediated debates on irregular immigration, one can find demands of stricter policies, focusing on deportations, a need for control, and securing borders. An opposite perspective typically focuses on the plight of particular individuals, and the different causes that make people enter into various statuses as “irregulars.” Such a polarizing of the discourse leads to both implicit and explicit criticism of the news media in a metadepbate on (irregular) immigration, where elite sources on the one hand claim that the media is not adequately addressing the problems caused by irregular immigration. From the opposite perspective, the claim is that the media fail to address causes of irregular migration, and that by constantly employing the “illegality” frame, the news media wrongly places a large and heterogeneous group into a category of lawbreakers.

However, most of this criticism is essentially voiced by elites who claim to speak on behalf of the public. We barely have any empirical knowledge about how the general public evaluates media coverage on illegal immigration. In fact, Freeman, Hansen, and Leal (2013a) recently stated that many Western democracies suffer from a democratic deficit. In the context of the present article, this means that the media and policy discourse may be out of touch with the public’s actual opinion on the issue of (irregular) immigration and their evaluation of the news coverage. We therefore need clear empirical evidence on the question of how the public—rather than elites—view the media’s framing of this contested topic.

Therefore, the first aim of this article is to document people’s perceptions of media coverage concerning irregular immigration in representative surveys of news audiences. Based on research on hostile media perceptions (e.g., Gunther & Schmitt, 2004; Gunther, Christen, Liebhart, & Chia, 2001), we analyze several survey questions about the frequency of coverage, the adequateness of important information and multiple perspectives, and the perceived bias against one’s own views. Finally, we ask respondents how they view actual coverage with regard to the topics covered. According to the public, is there, for instance, too much or too little focus on crimes committed by irregular immigrants and the securing of borders, and on the other hand, is there too much or too little focus on the humanitarian situation including the situation for children of irregular immigrants?

As a second and closely related research aim, we look at public opinion about illegal immigration. While there have been some studies on public opinion toward

irregular immigration, the vast majority of them concern irregular immigration to the United States and irregular or unauthorized immigrants residing in the main border states of this country (e.g., Cowan, Martinez, & Mendiola, 1997; Diaz, Saenz, & Kwan, 2011). Furthermore, we know of no studies that relate analyses of actual media framing of irregular immigration to analyses of how the public perceives media coverage of the issue. We therefore investigate general attitudes toward immigration and irregular immigration as well as people's interest in the topic, or their evaluation of its importance for society.

We investigate the perceptions of media coverage as well as public opinion on irregular immigration from a comparative perspective. We report findings from three simultaneously conducted surveys in Norway, France, and the United States. These three countries represent quite different cases when it comes to their immigration histories, their media and political systems, and also share some similar traits regarding the large emphasis on irregulars, and the basic elements of the discourse and policy. We start by discussing previous research on the perceptions of media bias. Then, we review previous studies that have investigated public opinion on illegal immigration. We then present three research questions and a comparative analysis of audience's public opinion as well as their perceptions of media coverage on illegal immigration.

## **Evaluations of Media Coverage of Irregular Immigration**

There is not a large pool of research on the media coverage of irregular immigration or immigrants. However, as discussed by Figenschou and Thorbjørnsrud (2015), much of the literature on immigration in general shows an emphasis on the illegality frame, where (irregular) immigrants to an increasing degree are viewed as threats and law-breakers (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Suro, 2008). Also, the increased attention to the need for control, of borders and individuals, has increased according to some scholars (Kim, Carvalho, Davis, & Mullins, 2011; Suro, 2008).

From this research, however, we cannot derive any knowledge about how the public evaluates coverage on illegal immigration: that is, to what extent audience regard the coverage as biased. Yet we know that audience around the world partly, and to an increasing degree (Glynn & Huges, 2014), view news content in general as biased. A large literature concerning so called hostile media perceptions shows that especially highly involved (both cognitively and affectively; see Matthes, 2013; Matthes & Beyer, 2013) and partisan individuals, tend to view media content as biased against their own views (Gunther & Schmitt, 2004; Vallone, Ross, & Lepper, 1985). Hostile media perceptions have been documented over a range of issues, such as elections, war, abortion, and national security (Hartmann & Tanis, 2013), and also for the topic of irregular immigration (Matthes & Beyer, 2013). Hostile media perceptions have been shown to hold even though media content in fact is fairly neutral (Gunther et al., 2001), and to a degree that involved members of either side of an issue will view the same content as biased against their own views.

Perceptions of bias can be considered as summary judgments about news media content. Such judgments imply that audience members are not satisfied with how an

issue is framed in news coverage. However, such broad bias judgments do not inform us about how audience members evaluate the frequency of *certain* perspectives or frames covered in the media (Entman, 1993; Matthes, 2009, 2012). Thus, rather than only asking for broad bias perceptions regarding coverage in general, it is also imperative to look at how the media covers specific issues and perspectives, and how these are evaluated by the public. Therefore, research needs to ask two things: First, how do audience evaluate media coverage of irregular immigration (i.e., general bias perceptions)? Then, we need to move beyond these general evaluations and ask respondents how they think the media covers specific subtopics as crime and irregular immigration, the situation concerning border controls and deportation of irregular immigrants, and the humanitarian situation for individuals characterized as irregular or unauthorized immigrants, each representing different possible perspectives on the topic of irregular immigration.

One key lesson from research on the hostile media phenomenon is that audience's evaluations of news coverage may not be objective (Gunther & Schmitt, 2004; Vallone et al., 1985). The evaluation of news coverage depends on their prior attitudes and their cognitive and emotional involvement. The same neutral article may be perceived as biased by two opposing camps who understand and read the presented information in different ways. It follows that perceptions of the media coverage on illegal immigration crucially depend on people's issue opinions. If people have negative views on illegal immigration, they are more likely to believe that news coverage is too positive compared with individuals who are less negative about this topic.

## Irregular Immigration and Public Opinion

Espenshade and Calhoun (1993) provide one of the most cited works concerning public opinion toward undocumented migrants and irregular immigration. Based on survey data from six Southern California urban counties, they show that attitudes vary greatly between different groups of the population. The clearest structural predictors of attitudes relate to respondents' age, education, and ethnicity. Furthermore, "respondents who cast immigrants as poor and welfare dependent or as making little effort to learn English have some of the most unfavorable rankings of undocumented immigration and its impacts" (Espenshade & Calhoun, 1993, p. 210). Also in a U.S. context, Fetzer (2000) shows that irregular immigrants are the group viewed as most unwanted among several different immigrant groups, and significantly lower than the average for immigrants in general. Espenshade (1995) notes, with a reference to Passel (1986), that more irregular or undocumented immigrants than before characterize immigration to the United States in the past 20 to 30 years. Also, those who believe irregular immigration is particularly high also tend to regard current levels of immigration as being too high (Espenshade, 1995). Suro (2009) sums up the tendencies of the past decade by stating that "analysis of the Gallup surveys shows that worry about irregular immigration increased in virtually every segment of the population in recent years" (p. 15). For Norway and France, we are not aware of studies concerning public opinion and undocumented immigrants. Furthermore, we lack comparative data.

There exists a notable literature that seeks to explain the public's attitudes and opinions toward immigration in general in Western democracies. The main dividing line concerning factors that are said to explain variation in such attitudes and opinions is between economic factors (resources) on the one hand, and cultural factors (symbolic) on the other (Facchini, Mayda, & Puglisi, 2013). Yet the only clear and consistent predictor of attitudes toward immigration across countries is education, where more educated people seem to have more liberal views (Schmuck & Matthes, 2014). However, whether it is education in itself, or if education is only a proxy for the respondents' higher skill (Freeman et al., 2013a) remains contested. Based on a recent overview (Freeman et al., 2013b) by leading researchers in the field, one has to say that the support for either of these broad hypotheses is vague and inconclusive, and no consensus has been achieved (Hainemueller & Hiscox, 2013).

While public opinion scholars and scholars studying migration might be concerned with a variety of antecedents of public attitudes toward (irregular) immigration, communication scholars will seek knowledge about how, if, and why, different modes of (mediated) communications might influence perceptions the audience might have (Joyce & Harwood, 2014). But even scholars who are not placed within communication studies acknowledge the possible strong influences that mediated communication can have on how people come to form attitudes toward a phenomenon such as immigration. In their state-of-the-art publication on public opinions toward immigration, Freeman et al. (2013a) point to a gap between public attitudes and both policies and media discourse. Indeed, the authors go so far as to claim that most Western democracies "may suffer from a permanent democratic deficit" (Freeman et al., 2013a, p. 2) with regard to the wider issue of immigration (see also Birrell, 2013). If the media is out of touch with public opinion, we should expect to see clear evidence of this in public opinion data, as bias perceptions should tend to be quite high. In general, public opinion on the issue tends to be quite strict (Fetzer, 2000), but responsive to contextual information such as ethnic background (Cowan, Martinez, & Mendiola, 1997; Diaz, Saenz, & Kwan, 2011; Lee & Ottati, 2002; Salwen & Matera, 1997), location, and their job status (Muste, 2013). In recent years, the issue of immigration has also included the subtheme of irregular or unauthorized immigration and immigrants, due to rising numbers of such immigrants (Passel, 2005).

## Research Questions

Taken together, we lack comprehensive knowledge on how audience evaluate news coverage on irregular immigration. From the literature on media bias (e.g., Gunther & Schmitt, 2004; Vallone et al., 1985), we know that public seldom view media content as completely balanced, correct, or appropriate. More specifically, scholars have pointed to an interesting and important aspect of the relationships between media coverage, political perspectives, and media coverage of (irregular) immigration (Freeman et al., 2013a). The argument is mainly that both media coverage and available political perspectives do not reflect public opinion on the issue. Rather, public opinion seems to be less liberal and more restricted than both media stories (Wettstein, 2012) and political

solutions to the issue at hand (Freeman, 2011). On the one hand, there are many good reasons and explanations why media coverage does not (and even should not) merely reflect public opinions. Taking bias theory into account, we know that it is often not the coverage itself that causes bias evaluations. The same fairly neutral coverage has been shown to be evaluated as biased against their own views by partisans with opposing viewpoints (Gunther et al., 2001). On the other hand, one could argue that every problem field or issue set needs some sort of correspondence between media perspectives, political solutions, and public opinion, for democracy to work. More specifically, political actors are expected to communicate their perspectives and viewpoints to the public via the mass media. The public should be able to process and evaluate those perspectives in order to arrive at informed opinions. If there are completely different perspectives prevalent in the news media as there are in public opinion, one could argue that the news media is not relevant to the public, which could pose a challenge to democracy.

Also, while we have some knowledge on public opinion on illegal immigration, comparative work is scarce and therefore highly warranted. We thus present an analysis on both, media perceptions and public opinion based on surveys simultaneously conducted in three countries, Norway, France, and the United States. Immigration in general continues to be both contested and polarized in all three countries, and there is a popular resistance to immigration even though this opposition may manifest itself quite differently politically. Also, the share of the immigrant population is fairly similar in all three countries. However, there are also important country differences. For instance, the United States has been a country largely based on immigration for centuries (Zolberg, 2006), France is a former colonial power with a long history of immigration among European countries (de Wenden, 2010), while in Norway, net immigration started to rise more recently (Brochmann & Kjeldstadli, 2008). The three countries also differ when it comes to their belonging to three different media systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; see also Benson & Wood, 2015 for more detail). Finally, the three countries have quite different political systems. The structure of the political party system is different, and both Norway and France have had political parties that in large have anti-immigration as their main issue, while no such political party has developed in the United States, where strong anti-immigrant groups largely exist outside the formal political system. Also, the immigrants in the countries have had different status, while the case for the United States has been largely economic immigrants, France and Norway has traditionally had more asylum seekers. Due to the much less strained economic situation in Norway compared with the other two countries, one may anticipate more liberal views toward irregular immigrants. Consequently, there may also be lower bias perceptions in Norway, as the issue might not be regarded as overwhelmingly important compared with the United States and France. However, we lack a coherent body of research to derive hypotheses about these relationships.

Taken together, previous research has revealed some insights on how the news media frames irregular immigration and how the public reacts to those frames. However, there is hardly any comparative work involving perceptions of news coverage and public opinion. Based on the scarcity of available literature, we formulate rather broad, explorative, and descriptive research questions instead of hypotheses:

**Research Question 1:** How does the public regard the importance of irregular immigration, and what are their attitudes toward the topic? Do public attitudes toward irregular immigration differ between the three countries, and if so, how?

**Research Question 2:** Do general perceptions of media bias differ between the three countries, and if so, how?

**Research Question 3:** What aspects of the coverage are viewed as particularly biased? Do perceptions of bias regarding *how* the media covers the issue differ between the three countries, and if so, how?

To answer these three general research questions, we first give a brief description of the public opinion on immigration in general and irregular or unauthorized immigration. Then, we proceed to analyze how audiences in the United States, France, and Norway view news on irregular immigration with regard to general perceptions of bias, for example, if the content provides multiple perspectives, and whether such news is perceived to be favorable or unfavorable toward irregular immigrants. Finally, we conduct analyses showing how people perceive the coverage of different *aspects* of irregular immigration. If people find that there is too much or too little of, for example, crime and humanitarian aspects in the coverage, this would be an indication of a perceived bias of how the media *frame* irregular immigration.

## Method

We conducted three simultaneous surveys in the United States ( $n = 1,026$ ), in Norway ( $n = 1,048$ ), and in France ( $n = 1,034$ ). Respondents were recruited from the online access panels of IPSOS, a global market research company. Respondents were provided with an incentive. Quota sampling was applied with respect to age, gender, and education in each country (United States: 60% female,  $M_{\text{age}} = 53.01$ ,  $SD = 15.36$ ; education = 66% some kind of college degree; Norway: 53% female,  $M_{\text{age}} = 53.28$ ,  $SD = 15.10$ ; education = 54.1% some kind of college; France: 58.3% female,  $M_{\text{age}} = 46.82$ ,  $SD = 17.10$ ; education = 18.4% college degree). IPSOS reported a response rate (RR) for online data collection  $RR1 = .29$  (Norway),  $RR1 = .22$  (France), and  $RR1 = .07$  (United States). Concerning the wording of the items, we took care to balance the use of either *unauthorized* or *illegal* throughout the survey. In short, we made sure to employ different wordings in different contexts, in a random fashion, so that questions relating to either more positive or more negative aspects of the issue both employed either *unauthorized* or *illegal* (this was true for all three countries).

If not mentioned otherwise, all constructs were measured on a 7-point scale. First we measured *issue opinion about immigration* (1 = *immigration should not be limited* to 7 = *immigration should be limited*) and *issue opinion about irregular/unauthorized immigration* (index based on five items, Cronbach's  $\alpha = .834$ ). Other constructs measured include four items for *general bias evaluations* (based on Kohring & Matthes, 2007), two items for *Bias toward irregular immigrants in the coverage*, two items for *Issue importance* (with respect to general immigration and irregular immigration). *Perceptions of coverage* were also gauged with five items concerning news media framing of issue (1 = *focus too little*, 4 = *about right*, 7 = *focus too much*). For sets of

**Table 1.** Issue Importance and Attitudes Toward Immigration.

	Issue importance immigration				Issue importance irregular immigration				Negative immigration attitude				Negative irregular immigration attitude			
	Total	US	FR	NO	Total	US	FR	NO	Total	US	FR	NO	Total	US	FR	NO
<i>M</i>	4.94	4.84 <sup>a</sup>	5.32 <sup>ab</sup>	4.68 <sup>b</sup>	5.15	5.04 <sup>a</sup>	5.52 <sup>ab</sup>	4.89 <sup>b</sup>	5.06	4.90 <sup>a</sup>	5.44 <sup>ab</sup>	4.87 <sup>b</sup>	5.08	5.45 <sup>ab</sup>	4.93 <sup>a</sup>	4.89 <sup>b</sup>
<i>SD</i>	1.59	1.68	1.59	1.44	1.56	1.68	1.50	1.41	1.63	1.75	1.58	1.49	1.41	1.34	1.53	1.27

Note. US = United States; FR = France; NO = Norway;  $N = 2,941$  to  $3,007$ . Mean differences were tested by a one-way analysis of variance with post hoc Scheffe. Significant differences  $p < .05$  are noted by the same superscript.

items that belong together under a common heading, the order of the items were rotated. All items used are listed in full in the appendix.

## Results

### *Issue Importance*

In all three countries, regardless of the differences between them, immigration and irregular immigration in particular, is considered a very important topic in public opinion (see Table 1). For all three countries, importance mean scores for the general immigration item were higher than  $M = 4.6$ , and the topic is considered most important in France, followed by the United States, and Norway. The difference between France and the two other countries is clearly statistically significant. Also, the topic of irregular or unauthorized immigration is considered important. In fact, we see the exact same pattern as for the general immigration item, but here the scores are even higher, which means that the topic is considered more important than immigration in general. France has the highest mean score ( $M = 5.52$ ), while the scores for the United States and Norway are about .5 points lower ( $M = 5.04$  and  $M = 4.87$ , respectively).

To answer Research Question 1, it seems as if immigration in general, and irregular immigration even more so, is considered a highly important issue for publics. One should note that Norway, however, has the lowest mean scores, even though it does not differ significantly from the United States. Due to these quite high importance levels, one should expect levels of bias also to be quite high, and further, that bias perceptions should be higher in France.

### *Critical and Strict Views Toward (Irregular) Immigration*

With the issue placed as highly salient in the eyes of the public, it is perhaps not surprising that respondents from all three countries also have fairly strict views toward immigration in general (based on a 7-point scale, where 1 indicates a highly liberal view and 7 indicates a view that says immigration should be limited as much as possible). We basically see the same pattern as for the two importance items reported above, and mean scores on the same level (Norway:  $M = 4.87$ ; United States:  $M = 4.90$ ; France:  $M = 5.44$ ). In answering Research Question 1, our analysis also reveals



(see Table 1) that there exist quite strict attitudes toward irregular immigration in all three countries. France and Norway share similar scores, while the United States have statistically significant stricter attitudes than both France and Norway (by about 0.5 points on the scale ranging from 1-7). Furthermore and not very surprisingly, issue attitude is positively correlated with issue importance in all three countries, meaning that the more interested you are in immigration and irregular immigration, the more restrictive are your views toward the issue.

### *General Perceptions of Bias*

We have established that people in general seems to be highly involved in the issue of irregular immigration, and that many respondents in all three countries share a strict view regarding the issue, in the sense that they tend to agree with statements highlighting negative consequences and aspects of irregular immigration. From the literature on the hostile media effect (e.g., Gunther & Schmitt, 2004; Matthes, 2013; Vallone et al., 1985), we know that issue involvement and strong opinions toward an issue are important antecedents of bias perceptions. In this section, we first explore what characterizes public opinion when it comes to general perceptions of bias concerning news on irregular immigration. We then compare the three countries.

We would like to know how citizens evaluate the coverage in general and asked them six questions tapping into different dimensions of bias perceptions. The first four were asked as statements where respondents should note to what degree the media fulfilled certain obligations (e.g., if the frequency of coverage is adequate; if important aspects are covered; for full listing of items see the appendix). As can be seen from Table 2, there are some interesting common characteristics for the three first questions, dealing with the frequency of coverage, the degree to which important information is provided, and whether the coverage includes different points of view. For these items between 40% and 52% of respondents think that the media fulfil these criteria to a small degree (values 1-3). About 25% notes a neutral attitude, while only between 25% and 34% (values 5-7) feels that the media fulfils their obligations concerning providing balance and accuracy in their coverage, which must be said to be a central norm of journalism.

A large share of people have a view of the media as not fulfilling basic obligations concerning how often they cover the topic, and if relevant information with sufficiently balance in perspectives is provided. The fourth item must be interpreted a bit differently, as higher values on the scale now denote media bias perceptions. Results show that 34% (i.e., scores from 5 to 7) think that the media coverage is clearly biased against their own views, while about the same share populate the opposite part of the scale (36%, scores from 1 to 3). When we analyze these items country by country, we find some interesting differences. For the frequency item there is not much of a difference, but U.S. and French respondents tend to have more polarized scores than Norwegian respondents, who rather cluster more in the middle. Especially in the United States, and also partly in France, higher shares seem to hold strong opinions, which suggest that the media neither includes all relevant information nor includes sufficient perspective in their coverage of irregular immigration. This finding may be contextualized with reference to the actual media content in the three countries.

**Table 2.** General Bias Perception.

	Frequency is adequate				Important information provided				Includes different points of view				Biased against your own views			
	Total	US	FR	NO	Total	US	FR	NO	Total	US	FR	NO	Total	US	FR	NO
1—Small degree	12%	14%	14%	9%	16%	24%	17%	8%	11%	15%	14%	5%	10%	11%	12%	8%
2	14%	12%	15%	15%	17%	17%	19%	16%	11%	13%	12%	10%	10%	9%	9%	11%
3	20%	15%	21%	23%	19%	19%	21%	18%	18%	15%	17%	21%	16%	13%	15%	21%
4	25%	25%	25%	25%	22%	19%	20%	26%	26%	25%	23%	30%	30%	28%	29%	34%
5	16%	17%	15%	17%	14%	12%	13%	16%	19%	17%	19%	21%	16%	16%	17%	13%
6	9%	10%	5%	10%	7%	6%	5%	11%	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%	11%	9%	8%
7—Large degree	4%	7%	4%	2%	4%	4%	4%	5%	6%	6%	7%	3%	8%	12%	8%	4%
M	3.64	3.80 <sup>a</sup>	3.46 <sup>ab</sup>	3.66 <sup>b</sup>	3.38	3.13 <sup>a</sup>	3.23 <sup>b</sup>	3.79 <sup>ab</sup>	3.79	3.67 <sup>a</sup>	3.76	3.94 <sup>a</sup>	3.92	4.11 <sup>ab</sup>	3.89 <sup>a</sup>	3.75 <sup>b</sup>
SD	1.62	1.74	1.57	1.51	1.67	1.72	1.62	1.58	1.63	1.74	1.72	1.39	1.66	1.79	1.68	1.48

Note. US = United States; FR = France; NO = Norway; N = 2,707 to 2,833. Mean differences were tested by a one-way analysis of variance with post hoc Scheffe. Significant differences  $p < .05$  are noted by the same superscript.

As U.S. and French respondents were generally more critical toward the media when it came to the inclusion of different points of view, we could expect that media coverage of the issue would be shorter and less complex than would be the case for Norway. However, Figenschou and Thorbjørnsrud (2015) do not find this to be the case in their analyses of the average frame complexity (frames per article) and length of news items. On the contrary, U.S. coverage was, on average, both longer and more complex than the other countries. Of course, one could argue that the frame complexity measure is not a perfect measure of multiple perspectives in news, as it may not be *different*, but rather *related* frame elements that contribute to a high frame complexity. For instance, Benson and Wood (2015) find evidence of some sort of diverse perspectives in news on irregular immigration in the three countries. However, their source utterance analyses also show that the different perspectives are less of a real dialogue and more of a shouting match, especially for the United States. Nevertheless, our findings may also suggest that it may not be the actual media content in itself that causes perceptions of bias. This reasoning is in line with the literature on hostile media perceptions, which suggests that it is characteristics in respondents (i.e., cognitive and affective involvement) that cause perceptions of media bias, and not entirely the nature of the content itself.

The pattern is the same for the fourth bias item, where we find that particularly U.S. respondents have a stronger tendency to view content as biased against their own views (39%, values 5-7, vs. 25% in Norway, and France in the middle with 34%). Taken together, these findings suggest a strong presence of bias attitudes toward the media coverage of irregular immigration in all three countries, but notably stronger in the United States, and partly France, than in Norway.

We also added two more bias items (noted in the appendix), which ask respondents whether media coverage is favorable or unfavorable toward irregular immigrants, and if they think that news on irregular immigration is biased against or in favor of this group. The findings based on these items are shown in Table 3. There we see that the distribution of bias toward either side is relatively balanced. That is, 38% find coverage somewhat unfavorable toward irregular immigrants (values 1-3), while 34% find

**Table 3.** Media Bias Toward Irregular Immigrants.

	Media coverage unfavorable/ favorable toward illegal immigration				Media coverage is biased against or in favor of irregular immigrants				
	Total	US	FR	NO	Total	US	FR	NO	
1—Unfavorable	11%	10%	16%	6%	1—Biased against	6%	7%	7%	4%
2	11%	10%	11%	12%	2	10%	10%	9%	10%
3	16%	16%	13%	19%	3	21%	21%	17%	26%
4	28%	28%	20%	35%	4—Strictly neutral	26%	21%	23%	35%
5	15%	15%	14%	16%	5	16%	15%	16%	17%
6	9%	10%	9%	8%	6	10%	13%	11%	6%
7—Favorable	10%	11%	15%	3%	7—Biased in favor	11%	13%	17%	2%
M	3.92	4.01 <sup>a</sup>	3.94	3.81 <sup>a</sup>	M	4.11	4.20 <sup>a</sup>	4.36 <sup>b</sup>	3.79 <sup>ab</sup>
SD	1.729	1.747	1.985	1.415	SD	1.627	1.750	1.784	1.270

Note. US = United States; FR = France; NO = Norway; N = 2,738 to 2,746. Mean differences were tested by a one-way analysis of variance with post hoc Scheffe. Significant differences  $p < .05$  are noted by the same superscript.

it favorable toward the group. Furthermore, 37% finds the news somewhat biased against (values 1-3) irregular immigrants, and also 37% reports bias in favor. For both items, about 40% of respondents find news and media content highly biased (i.e., values 1-2 or 6-7).

Moving on to the comparative dimension (Research Question 2), we find some of the same patterns as before. The main finding is that Norwegian respondents cluster much more together in the middle of the scale, thus pointing to less bias perceptions in this country. Furthermore, France has the highest scores on the extreme categories. That is, 17% find the news strongly biased in favor of irregular immigrants, but still, France and the United States are fairly similar. These analyses corroborate earlier findings and leave us with a general impression that perceptions of bias regarding the content referring to irregular or unauthorized immigration are fairly high. An exception is to some degree Norway, where we find statistically significant lower levels of general bias perceptions than in the other two countries.

### Evaluations of Different Aspects of How Irregular Immigration Is Covered in the Media

As can be seen from Table 4, we also asked respondents more concrete questions about how they viewed the nature of the media coverage of irregular immigration (e.g., whether the media focus too little, about right or too much on crime; the humanitarian situation for irregulars; border controls, etc.; for full listing of all the five items, see appendix). For instance, when asking about irregular immigrants and the job market, we include references to how this might contribute to the lowering of wages and that immigrants may come to take jobs away from the legal population. We first analyze the complete data set and find that especially the two items that are clearest regarding the highlighting of *negative* or *critical* arguments concerning irregular immigration, crimes and border controls, are the items that most respondents think the media focus too little

**Table 4.** Perceptions of the Coverage of Different Aspects.

	Crime	Reinforcing border controls and deportation	Job market	Humanitarian situation	Situation for children
1—Too little	21%	20%	14%	10%	12%
2	15%	14%	11%	12%	12%
3	15%	16%	17%	17%	17%
4—About right	22%	25%	29%	28%	25%
5	11%	13%	14%	14%	14%
6	8%	6%	8%	9%	10%
7—Too much	8%	5%	7%	10%	10%
<i>M</i>	3.42	3.36	3.73	3.90	3.87
<i>SD</i>	1.867	1.717	1.703	1.720	1.767

Note. *N* = 2,798 to 2,830.

**Table 5.** Perceptions of the Coverage of Different Aspects by Country.

	Crime			Reinforcing border controls and deportation			Job market			Humanitarian situation			Situation for children		
	US	FR	NO	US	FR	NO	US	FR	NO	US	FR	NO	US	FR	NO
1	27	20	17	24	20	17	17	15	9	11	14	6	14	15	7
2	15	12	18	12	10	20	11	11	11	9	11	14	11	12	13
3	13	12	19	14	13	22	15	15	20	14	16	23	17	15	20
4	20	21	24	23	23	29	23	23	40	26	24	33	26	22	28
5	10	12	11	15	16	9	15	15	12	17	12	13	14	15	15
6	7	10	7	7	9	3	10	8	4	10	10	6	9	10	10
7	8	12	5	4	9	1	9	12	3	13	13	5	10	12	8
<i>M</i>	3.2 <sup>a</sup>	3.7 <sup>ab</sup>	3.4 <sup>b</sup>	3.3 <sup>ab</sup>	3.7 <sup>bc</sup>	3.0 <sup>bc</sup>	3.8	3.9 <sup>a</sup>	3.6 <sup>a</sup>	4.1 <sup>a</sup>	3.9 <sup>b</sup>	3.7 <sup>ab</sup>	3.8	3.9	3.9
<i>SD</i>	1.91	1.99	1.68	1.79	1.89	1.38	1.83	1.87	1.35	1.79	1.87	1.46	1.79	1.90	1.61

Note. US = United States; FR = France; NO = Norway; *N* = 2,798 to 2,830, split by country. Mean differences were tested by a one-way analysis of variance with post hoc Scheffe. Significant differences *p* < .05 are noted by the same superscript.

on. This can be seen both from the frequency distributions and the means, reported in Table 4. Still, a substantial share of respondents (about 40%) also find the other aspects insufficiently covered. In general, fewer respondents find that aspects are covered too much, but the distributions for the last three items (jobs, humanitarian, and children) are quite balanced, whereas the distributions for the negative frames (i.e., crime, border controls) are rather skewed. Also, there is a notable share of respondents (22%-29%) clustering around the center (about right). The finding that it is the negative frames that are covered too little is in line with the findings noted above regarding how strict are the views that many respondents actually have of irregular/unauthorized immigration.

When we move on to analyses conducted country by country, we again see interesting differences. There is a general tendency for Norwegian respondents to occupy

more of the center of the scales, while U.S. respondents often have higher shares of the extreme points of the scale. Looking at the crime aspect, we find that more than 1 out of 4 respondents in the United States think that there is far too little focus on crimes committed by unauthorized immigrants, and when we combine the three values denoting too little (1-3), we see that 55% of U.S. respondents belong to this group, while only 44% of their French counterparts do. Norwegian respondents fall somewhere in between here, both with regard to the frequency distributions and the means. It is also worth noting that one should take both the means and the frequency distributions into account when analyzing these data. A good example of this can be found for the second item, border controls and deportations. While Norwegian respondents have the lowest mean here ( $M = 3.0$ , denoting most critical to how little the media cover this), both French and U.S. respondents have higher shares in the extreme category. This is corroborated by earlier findings, where we saw that Norwegians had a higher tendency to group around the middle categories of the variables. This could indicate something quite interesting concerning the degree to which attitudes toward media coverage of irregular immigration seems to be more polarized in both the United States and France, compared with Norway.

Regarding the more positive framed aspects (especially the humanitarian situation and the situation for children), we see the same basic pattern here. U.S. and French respondents are more likely to hold more polarized attitudes, but here we see the means very close to the middle of the scale ( $M = 3.7$  to  $M = 4.1$ ). Last, French respondents show means that are closest to the middle of the scale for all five items.

## Discussion

The aim of this article was to provide an overview on public opinion about irregular immigration in the United States, Norway, and France. Furthermore, this article explored how citizens in the three countries evaluated media coverage on irregular immigration. Confirming prior research (e.g., Espenshade & Calhoun, 1993; Fetzer, 2000), our findings revealed that citizens in all three countries have a negative or strict view on irregular immigration clearly highlighting negative over positive aspects. Strict attitudes toward irregular immigrants are more pronounced in the United States compared with France and Norway. At the same time, a large share of the public in all three countries feels that media coverage on irregular immigration is biased against their views, especially so in the United States and France compared with Norway. One explanation of this finding can be found in theorizing on the hostile media effect (Vallone et al., 1985). Citizens in France and in the United States are more involved in this issue compared with Norway, and as a consequence, their evaluation of media coverage is more negative.

Furthermore, our survey data suggest that citizens in all three countries tend to believe that the negative aspects of irregular immigration such as crimes or border control are covered too little, whereas positive aspects are covered too much. Comparing these findings with the analysis of news content presented in this special issue (see Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015), we may conclude that the news media

do not reflect public opinion on this issue. By contrast, media coverage is much more liberal and less critical of irregular immigration than a large share of the public believes it should be. When it comes to contested issues such as irregular immigration, the actual distribution of opinions in the public may therefore not necessarily translate to the share of frames that are covered in the news.

As a consequence of this finding, one may conclude that media coverage is not to blame for the prevailing negative public view on irregular immigration. More specifically, given that bias perceptions are rather high among the public in all three countries, it can be expected that citizens may disregard the information about irregular immigration they receive from the news media. In other words, perspectives from the irregular immigrants' own point of view, and their personal stories and struggles, which tend to be highlighted in the news media, will most likely not lead to an increased sympathy or empathy with irregular immigrants.

As with all studies, there are some limitations. This study took an explorative and descriptive approach that is unsuited to make causal claims. Related to that, this article focused on public opinion data only. Other research has combined opinion data with content analytical data to get a more precise picture on how the media drives or mirrors public opinion (i.e., Matthes & Schemer, 2012; Slater, 2013). This was, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this article. However, the study reported by Figenschou and Thorbjørnsrud (2015), analyzing media content from the same three countries and the same time frame as our surveys, show that human-interest framing, often putting emphasis on the perspectives of individual immigrants, is prevalent in all countries, even though quite surprisingly, it is most common on Norway (see Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015, for a more thorough discussion). Thus, for a public that in general remains quite critical and strict in their attitudes concerning immigration, the prevalence of such frames might lead to more critical evaluations of the media (see also Aalberg & Beyer, 2015, for a discussion of this). Finally, we have worked with some selected items that are far from covering every important aspect of irregular immigration. Clearly, a more fine-grained analysis of public attitudes involving more arguments, knowledge about the issue, and public fears is needed.

These limitations notwithstanding, our findings raise some interesting questions for future research. First of all, while news coverage may be only weakly related to public sentiment regarding irregular immigration, more research is needed on the factors that drive the negative attitudes, especially in adolescence when opinions are initially formed. In this context, the exploration of affects, especially fears, seems worthwhile. More research is needed on the reception and the effects of media coverage on irregular immigration. For instance, given that bias perceptions are comparatively high, we need to explore how the public learns from the news and how this information is used in judgment formation. When it comes to bias perceptions, it is worthwhile to explore country differences in how these bias judgments are formed. Some differences in bias perceptions may be explained by the hostile media effect. However, differences in the content of news, differences in media systems and political systems, and not least differences in actual immigration patterns between countries and contexts, are most likely important factors that future research needs to take into account.

## Appendix

We used the terms *unauthorized immigrants* and *illegal immigrants* interchangeably throughout the survey, and items were rotated so that not one item always came first.

### General Bias Evaluations (Four Items)

Now we want to ask you some questions regarding how the media cover illegal immigration. Illegal immigration issues refer to people entering the country without legal authorization, people who reside in a country illegally (e.g., after their applications for residence have been turned down), how the government and politics deal with these phenomena, and consequences and causes of illegal immigration (for the job market, for social services).

On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means to a *very small degree* and 7 means to a *large degree*, do you think that . . .

the frequency with which illegal immigration is covered by the news media is adequate?

all the important information regarding the topic of illegal immigration is provided in the news?

the news coverage about illegal immigration includes different points of view?

media coverage of illegal immigration is biased against your own views?

### Bias Toward Immigrants (Two Items)

Do you think that media coverage is favorable or unfavorable toward illegal immigrants? (Scale from 1 = *unfavorable* to 7 = *favorable*)

Do you think that the portrayal of immigration in the news is biased against illegal immigrants, strictly neutral, or biased in favor of illegal immigrants? (Scale from 1 = *biased against*, via 4 = *strictly neutral*, to 7 = *biased in favor*)

### Perceptions of Coverage

The media focus on different aspects when covering illegal immigration. Now we want you to assess whether different aspects in your opinion are covered too little, about right, or too much by the media. Please indicate your opinion on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means that the media focus *too little*, 4 means *about right*, and 7 means that the media focus *too much on the issue*:

Crimes committed by unauthorized immigrants

Reinforcing border controls and deportation of illegal immigrants

Illegal immigrants and the job market (lower wages, taking jobs)

The humanitarian situation for illegal immigrants (securing basic rights, racism, exploitation)

The situation for children of unauthorized immigrants (anchor babies, attain citizenship)

### **Issue Importance Immigration**

How important are issues concerning immigration to you?

Please indicate your answer on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means that *it is not important at all* and 7 means that *it is very important to you*.

### **Issue Importance Illegal Immigration**

How important is the issue of illegal or unauthorized immigration to you?

Please indicate your answer on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means that *it is not important at all* and 7 means that *it is very important to you*.

### **Issue Opinion**

Please indicate on a scale from 1 to 7 where you would place yourself with regard to this issue. 1 means that immigration *should not be limited*, while 7 indicates that immigration *should be limited as much as possible*.

### **Issue-Specific Opinion Toward Illegal Immigration**

Index based on five items (listed below) that were first confirmed as a factor in an exploratory *principal components analysis* (1 = *completely disagree*, 7 = *completely agree*). The five items were then scaled and obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .83.

Illegal immigrants pose a problem for national security.

Unauthorized immigration is undermining the immigration system and immigration laws.

Illegal immigrants come to take jobs.

It must be easier for the government to deport unauthorized immigrants that do not leave the country voluntarily.

The government should improve border control.

### **Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

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

### **Funding**

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Grant number 202480, Norwegian Research Council



## References

- Aalberg, T., & Beyer, A. (2015). Human interest framing of irregular immigration: An empirical study of public preferences for personalized news stories in the United States, France, and Norway. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *59*(7), 858-875. doi:10.1177/0002764215573258
- Benson, R. (2013). *Shaping immigration news: A French-American comparison*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Benson, R., & Wood, T. (2015). Who says what or nothing at all? Speakers, frames, and frameless quotes in unauthorized immigration news in the United States, Norway, and France. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *59*(7), 802-821. doi:10.1177/0002764215573257
- Birrell, B. (2013). Media effects and immigration policy in Australia. In G. P. Freeman, R. Hansen, & D. L. Leal (Eds.), *Immigration and public opinion in liberal democracies* (pp. 254-270). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Brochmann, G., & Kjeldstadli, K. (2008). *A history of immigration: The case of Norway 900-2000*. Oslo, Norway: Universitetsforlaget.
- Cowan, G., Martinez, L., & Mendiola, S. (1997). Predictors of attitudes toward illegal Latino immigrants. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *19*, 403-415.
- de Wenden, C. W. (2010). Irregular migration in France. In A. Triandafyllidou (Ed.), *Irregular migration in Europe: Myths and realities* (pp. 115-124). Farnham, England: Ashgate.
- Diaz, P., Saenz, D. S., & Kwan, V. S. Y. (2011). Economic dynamics and changes in attitudes toward undocumented Mexican immigrants in Arizona. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, *11*, 300-313.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, *43*, 51-58.
- Espenshade, T. J. (1995). Unauthorized immigration to the United States. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *21*, 195-216.
- Espenshade, T. J., & Calhoun, C. A. (1993). An analysis of public opinion toward undocumented immigration. *Population Research and Policy Review*, *12*, 189-224.
- Facchini, G., Mayda, A. M., & Puglisi, R. (2009). *Illegal immigrants and media exposure: Evidence on individual attitudes* (Centro Studi Luca D'agliano Development Studies Working Papers. N. 285). Retrieved from [http://www.dagliano.unimi.it/media/WP2009\\_285.pdf](http://www.dagliano.unimi.it/media/WP2009_285.pdf)
- Facchini, G., Mayda, A. M., & Puglisi, R. (2013). Individual attitudes towards immigration: Economic vs. Non-economic determinants. In G. P. Freeman, R. Hansen, & D. L. Leal (Eds.), *Immigration and public opinion in liberal democracies* (pp. 129-157). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fetzer, J. S. (2000). *Public attitudes toward immigration in the United States, France, and Germany*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Figenschou, T. U., & Beyer, A. (2014). The limits of the debate: How the Oslo terror shook the Norwegian immigration debate. *International Journal of Press/Politics*, *19*, 430-452. doi:10.1177/1940161214542954
- Figenschou, T. U., & Thorbjørnsrud, K. (2015). Faces of an invisible population: Human interest framing of irregular immigration news in the United States, France, and Norway. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *59*(7), 783-801. doi:10.1177/0002764215573256
- Freeman, G. P. (2011). Comparative analysis of immigration politics: A retrospective. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *55*, 1541-1560. doi:10.1177/0002764211409386
- Freeman, G. P., Hansen, R., & Leal, D. L. (2013a). Immigration and public opinion in liberal democracies. In G. P. Freeman, R. Hansen, & D. L. Leal (Eds.), *Immigration and public opinion in liberal democracies* (pp. 1-18). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Freeman, G. P., Hansen, R., & Leal, D. L. (Eds.). (2013b). *Immigration and public opinion in liberal democracies*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gabrielatos, C., & Baker, P. (2008). Fleeing, sneaking, flooding: A corpus analysis of discursive constructions of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK Press, 1996-2005. *Journal of English Linguistics*, *36*, 5-38.
- Glynn, C. J., & Huge, M. E. (2014). How pervasive are perceptions of bias? Exploring judgments of media bias in financial news. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *26*, 543-553. doi:10.1093/ijpor/edu004
- Gunther, A., Christen, C., Liebhart, J., & Chia, S. (2001). Congenial public, contrary press, and biased estimates of the climate of opinion. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *65*, 295-320.
- Gunther, A., & Schmitt, K. (2004). Mapping boundaries of the hostile media effect. *Journal of Communication*, *54*, 55-70.
- Hainemueller, J., & Hiscox, M. J. (2013). Voter attitudes towards high- and low-skilled immigrants: Evidence from a survey experiment. In G. P. Freeman, R. Hansen, & D. L. Leal (Eds.), *Immigration and public opinion in liberal democracies* (pp. 158-204). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems three models of media and politics*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Hartmann, T., & Tanis, M. (2013). Examining the hostile media effect as an intergroup phenomenon: The role of ingroup identification and status. *Journal of Communication*, *63*, 535-555. doi:10.1111/jcom.12031
- Horsti, K. (2008). Overview of Nordic media research on immigration and ethnic relations: From text analysis to the study of production, use and reception. *Nordicom Review*, *29*, 275-293.
- Joyce, N., & Harwood, J. (2014). Improving intergroup attitudes through televised vicarious intergroup contact: Social cognitive processing of ingroup and outgroup information. *Communication Research*, *41*, 627-643. doi:10.1177/0093650212447944
- Kim, S., Carvalho, J. P., Davis, A. G., & Mullins, A. M. (2011). The view of the border: News framing of the definition, causes, and solutions to illegal immigration. *Mass Communication and Society*, *14*, 292-314.
- Kohring, M., & Matthes, J. (2007). Trust in news media: Development and validation of a multidimensional scale. *Communication Research*, *34*, 231-252.
- Lee, Y.-T., & Ottati, V. (2002). Attitudes toward US immigration policy: The roles of in-group-out-group bias, economic concern, and obedience to law. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *142*, 617-634. doi:10.1080/00224540209603922
- Matthes, J. (2009). What's in a frame? A content analysis of media-framing studies in the world's leading communication journals, 1990-2005. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *86*, 349-367. doi:10.1177/107769900908600206
- Matthes, J. (2012). Framing politics: An integrative approach. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *56*, 247-259. doi:10.1177/0002764211426324
- Matthes, J. (2013). The affective underpinning of hostile media perceptions: Exploring the distinct effects of affective and cognitive involvement. *Communication Research*, *40*, 360-387. doi:10.1177/0093650211420255
- Matthes, J., & Beyer, A. (2013, August). *Toward a cognitive-affective process model of hostile media perceptions: A multi-country structural equation modeling approach*. Paper presented at the Communication Theory & Methodology Division at the AEJMC Convention DC 2013, Washington, DC.

- Matthes, J., & Schemer, C. (2012). Diachronic framing effects in competitive opinion environments. *Political Communication*, 29, 319-339. doi:10.1080/10584609.2012.694985
- Muste, C. P. (2013). The dynamics of immigration opinion in the United States, 1992–2012. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 77, 398-416. doi:10.1093/poq/nft001
- Passel, J. S. (1986). Undocumented immigration. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 487, 181-200
- Passel, J. S. (2005). *Unauthorized migrants: Numbers and characteristics*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center.
- Salwen, M. B., & Matera, F. R. (1997). Setting the news agenda with an ethnic-relevant topic: Public salience of illegal immigration. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 8, 329-341. doi:10.1080/10646179709361764
- Schmuck, D., & Matthes, J. (2014). How anti-immigrant rightwing populist advertisements affect young voters: Symbolic threats, economic threats and the moderating role of education. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, doi:10.1080/1369183X.2014.981513
- Slater, M. D. (2013). Content analysis as a foundation for programmatic research in communication. *Communication Methods & Measures*, 7(2), 85-93. doi:10.1080/19312458.2013.789836
- Suro, R. (2008). *The triumph of no: How the media influence the immigration debate*. Brookings Institution. Retrieved from [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2008/9/25%20immigration%20dionne/0925\\_immigration\\_dionne.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2008/9/25%20immigration%20dionne/0925_immigration_dionne.pdf)
- Suro, R. (2009). *America's views of immigration: The evidence from public opinion surveys*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- Thorbjørnsrud, K. (2015). Framing irregular immigration in Western media. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 59(7), 771-782. doi:10.1177/0002764215573255
- Vallone, R. P., Ross, L., & Lepper, M. R. (1985). The hostile media phenomenon: Biased perception and perceptions of media bias in coverage of the Beirut massacre. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49, 577-585.
- Wettstein, M. (2012). Frame adoption in referendum campaigns: The effect of news coverage on the public salience of issue interpretations. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 56, 318-333.
- Zolberg, A. R. (2006). *A nation by design. Immigration policy in the fashioning of America*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

## Author Biographies

**Audun Beyer** (PhD, University of Oslo) is an Associate Professor at the Department of media and Communication, University of Oslo. His research focuses on political communication, news framing, and public opinion formation.

**Jörg Matthes** (PhD, University of Zurich) is professor of communication science at the Department of Communication, University of Vienna, Austria, where he chairs the division of advertising research and media effects. His research focuses on advertising effects, the process of public opinion formation, news framing, and empirical methods.