Framing Europe: television news and European integration

devreese, C.H.

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Towards an integrated process model of news framing

Introduction

The ability of news to "provide perspectives, shape images [...] and highlight issues" is succinctly stated by Lippmann (1922, p. 226). His observations about the impact of news on our perception of the world from the beginning of the last century have been the natural starting point for many investigations into the influence of news. The mediating role of news is also the focus of this study. With the news media and in particular television being European citizens' most important sources of information about European affairs (Eurobarometer, 56, 2002), news is an essential resource for citizens' thinking about 'Europe'.

One concept giving guidance to investigations of how news influences public opinion that has gained substantial scholarly attention in recent years, is framing. Framing is a multi-dimensional concept and has the potential to inform research on news production, contents, and effects (Entman, 1993; McQuail, 1994). The increased scholarly interest in the framing concept is reflected in overviews and meta-analyses that have been published recently (see e.g., D'Angelo, 2002; Reese, Gandy & Grant, 2001; Scheufele, 1999; 2000; Simon, 2001).

A first step in understanding how Europe is framed in the news is to specify the framing process. In this chapter, relevant literature that has gained substantial attention in recent years is reviewed and critiqued before an integrated process model of framing is proposed. The chapter consists of six elements. First, the notion of framing is discussed from a multidisciplinary perspective that traces antecedents of framing research in communication science to studies in psychology, political science, and sociology. Second, framing is outlined as a process with interchanging independent and dependent variables. Third, three co-existing traditions and approaches in framing research are identified. This leads, fourthly, to a definition of frames and a review of previous studies of frames in the news. Fifth, existing framing effects hypotheses are summarized and previous effects studies are classified according to a proposed typology. Finally, an integrated approach to studying framing is proposed and specific research questions are formulated.
Framing: An interdisciplinary introduction

Contemporary framing research is indebted to studies in several disciplines. In the following section a number of central studies is revisited to consider the sources of inspiration. The review focuses on key studies with relevance for understanding research on news framing effects.

In his seminal work from a *sociological* tradition, Goffman defined a frame as “an arbitrary slice or cut from the stream of ongoing activity” (Goffman, 1974, p. 10). His work on frame analysis is not concerned with mass media specifically, but discusses the organization and classification of life experiences in general. The use of frames in processing and interpreting unmediated events helps individuals to “locate, perceive, identify, and label” (p. 21). While Goffman’s work pertains to the human processing of *real life* experiences by means of frames, other research has focused on how subtle alterations in the *contextual cues* about reality may impact the perception, comprehension, and recollection of events.

In a study of eyewitness testimonials, Loftus (1979) demonstrates how subsequent information supplied about an event significantly alters the retrieval of knowledge and the perception of that event (Loftus, 1979; Loftus, Klinger, Smith & Fielder, 1990). In an experiment participants watched the recordings of a traffic accident and were subsequently asked to estimate the speed of the cars. In one condition, the question read: “About how fast were the cars going when they *smashed* into each other?” and in a second condition, the question read: “About how fast were the cars going when they *hit* each other?” (Loftus, 1979, p. 77, my italics). Not only did the cue in the question influence the perception of actual speed, the information provided (i.e. the framing of the event) also influenced respondents’ retrieval of information about this event. In a second post-test, held one week later, respondents exposed to the ‘smash condition’ reported a much more violent recalled perception of the accident than respondents from the ‘hit condition’ (Loftus, 1979). This experiment suggests that only minor differences in the provision of information about an event may have major implications for the perception of this event.

The framing research tradition is also indebted to Kahneman and Tversky’s (1983) seminal studies demonstrating framing effects on the perception of a pre-defined problem. They sketched two hypothetical scenarios concerning an unusual Asian disease, expected to kill 600 people. In two experiments they offered two scenarios for the participants to choose from: If program A is chosen, 200 people will be saved. If program B is adopted, there is a one-third probability that 600 people will be saved and a two-thirds probability that no people will be saved. 72 percent chose Program A, 28 percent Program B. In the second experiment the scenarios were: If Program C is chosen, 400 people will die. If
program D is adopted, there is one-third probability that nobody will die and a
two-third probability that 600 people will die. The preference for scenarios was
reversed by the framing: Program C was chosen by 22 percent, though the identi-
tical Program A was chosen by 72 percent. Program D was chosen by 78 per-
cent, though the identical Program B received only 28 percent. The experiments
provide the basis of *prospect theory*, stating that people are risk seeking when
considering losses and risk averse when considering gains (Kahneman, Tversky
& Slovic, 1984).

Several studies have replicated Kahneman & Tversky's findings (see e.g.
Frisch, 1993; Kuhberger, 1995). Another study further substantiated the evi-
dence of framing effects on preferences by adding a contextual information di-
mension to Kahneman and Tversky's initial design (Bleiss, Betch & Franzen,
1998). Replicating Kahneman and Tversky’s findings, they additionally framed
the problem as a 'medical problem' in one condition and as a 'statistical prob-
lem' in another condition. Respondents from the 'medical problem' condition
replicated earlier findings whereas respondents in the 'statistical problem' con-
dition showed no variation in their preferences. This implies that subtle cues
about the *context* may influence the degree of reflection shown by respondents
and the extent to which they 'accept' or 'reject' a frame (Bleiss et al., 1998;
Wang, 1996). In addition, the study suggests that *issue involvement* is a poten-
tial mediator of framing effects (see also Rothman & Salovey, 1997).

Studies in *economic psychology* and *health psychology* have addressed the
impact of framing of information on choices and decision-making. Financial
decision-making is traditionally considered an area of ultimate *rational* deci-
sion-making. One strand of research demonstrates how contextual informa-
tion in the form of 'anchoring', i.e. providing a point of reference, in situations
of uncertainty affects choices (e.g., Fang & Marky, 1982; Stephan, 1998). When
estimating uncertain quantities, the provision of anchor values from which the
estimation process starts largely defines the range of estimations (Stephan,
1998). Similarly, decision-making about personal health is regarded a high
salience issue. Research has demonstrated that gain-framed messages (empha-
sizing, for example, the benefits of obtaining mammography) were less effective
than loss-framed messages (emphasizing the risks of not obtaining mammogra-
phy) in both immediate post-tests and on behavior (actual obtaining of mam-
mography) (Banks, Salovey, et al., 1995).

As the previous examples suggest, research on framing effects in other disci-
plines has, despite great diversity in topics explored, methods applied, and
operationalization used, shown evidence of framing effects on both informa-
tion processing, attitudes, decision-making, and behavior. Overall, the perhaps
most influential antecedent of framing research in political communication re-
search is the study of schemas. A schema is "a cognitive structure that represents
knowledge about a concept or type of stimulus, including its attributes and the relations among those attributes” (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, p. 98). Much research has focused on the use of schema in person perception, but findings from social psychology also suggest that schemas affect the processing of information and perception of objects (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

This line of research is very influential for the study of news and public opinion and has contributed to the emergence of different approaches to framing research. Since most citizens rely on the media for information about politics, the framing of issues in the news is a key resource for forming, altering, and expressing opinions and political attitudes.

**Framing: A process with independent and dependent variables**

In political communication, framing may be perceived as a process that includes media frames and audience frames, a distinction much akin to Kinder and Sanders’ (1996) discussion of ‘frames in political discourse’ and ‘frames as structures of the mind’. Entman (1993) noted that frames have several ‘locations’, including the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. Communicators make ((un-)conscious) judgments about *what* to express and *how* to express something. The *text* contains frames that are expressed in the presence or absence of certain words, phrases, images, and sources. The *receiver*’s thinking, interpretation, and evaluations are influenced by these frames and (s)he makes inferences that “may or may not reflect the frames in the text and the framing intention of the communicator” (Entman, 1993, p. 53). Finally, the broader *culture* is the ‘stock of commonly invoked frames’ which are exhibited in the discourse and thinking of social groups. These components are integral to the process of framing that consists of distinct *frame-building* and *frame-setting* stages (D’Angelo, 2002; de Vreese, 1999; Scheufele, 1999; 2000).

*Frame-building* refers to the process and factors that influence the structural qualities of news frames. Scheufele (1999) points to factors internal to journalism that determine how journalists and news organizations frame issues (see also Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Equally important, however, are factors external to journalism. The frame-building process takes place in a continuous interaction between journalists and elites (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978) and social movements (e.g., Cooper, 2002; Snow & Benford, 1992). The outcomes of the frame-building process are the frames manifest in the text. Compared to frame-setting (discussed below), frame-building has been investigated only peripherally (e.g. Durham, 1998).

*Frame-setting* refers to the interaction between media frames and individuals’ prior knowledge and predispositions. Frames in the news may affect learning, interpretation, and evaluation of issues and events. This part of the framing
process has been investigated most elaborately, often with the goal to explore the extent to which and under what circumstances audiences reflect and mirror frames made available to them in, for example, the news (see discussion of these studies below). The consequences of frame-setting can be considered on the individual and the societal level. Individual-level consequences include altered attitudes about an issue based on exposure to certain news frames. Societal-level consequences refer to, for example, how frames contribute to shaping social processes such as political socialization, decision-making, and collective actions.

In sum, the framing process can be thought of with frames being both the independent variable (IV) and the dependent variable (DV) (Scheufele, 1999). For example, media frames may be studied as the DV, i.e. the outcome of the news production process including organizational pressures, journalistic routines, and elite discourse. Media frames may also be studied as the IV, i.e. the antecedent of audience responses.

**Cognitive, critical and constructionist approaches:**
**Three traditions of framing research**

Framing has for more than a decade been considered a promising theoretical contribution which, however, lacks structure and paradigmatic unity (Entman, 1993). Much of the conceptual and terminological inconsistency in research on framing within communication science stems from the different approaches taken by researchers to the study of framing. A recent meta-theoretical overview of framing as a research program concluded that most studies – often without explicating this – reside within one of three approaches (D’Angelo, 2002). The three approaches – the cognitive, the critical and the constructionist approach – are adopted from Rosengren’s (1993) general classification of different perspectives in the communication science discipline.

The premise of the research in the cognitive approach is that by means of activation of certain constructs, news can “encourage particular trains of thoughts about political phenomena” (Price et al., 1997, p. 483). This may lead citizens to make use of the considerations and beliefs emphasized by the news in subsequent judgments (Druckman, 2001a; Nelson et al., 1997). Research in the cognitive approach primarily addresses how, to what extent, and under which circumstances frames in the news find resonance with individuals and lead them to accept and reproduce, negotiate and reinterpret or reject the frame.

In the constructionist approach, framing is investigated as part of a system of articulations of public opinion and political socialization (Crigler, 1996; D’Angelo, 2002; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Constructionists are less concerned with the information processing effects of news frames, but focus more
on frames as one of many resources available when formulating opinions and as part of socialization processes (Gamson, 1992). The idea that individuals negotiate the meaning of frames to derive at their own ideas is emphasized in this perspective.

In the critical approach, framing is inherently related to a notion of power. Frames in the news are considered articulations of power embedded in a hegemonic world (Reese & Buckalew, 1995). Scholars in the critical tradition see news selection and news framing as intentional exclusion of some information and intentional inclusion of other (D’Angelo, 2002). Within the critical approach much emphasis is placed on sponsors of frames suggesting that, for example, elite frames dominate media coverage.

The distinction and demarcation of the three research approaches serves to understand differences in the terminology used in the framing literature. For example, if we contrast how the role of journalists in the framing process is discussed in the framing literature, framing appears as an incoherent research paradigm. However, when applying the distinction between the different approaches, these differences are put in perspective. Research in the cognitive tradition tends to conceive of journalists and news organizations as responding to journalistic professional norms and values (e.g., Price et al., 1997). Critical scholars see journalists as active players in the frame-building process where political power is not distributed in a pluralist way (e.g., Reese & Buckalew, 1995). Studies in both traditions speak to the role of journalism, but the research agendas vary. The three traditions can be used to locate both existing and new research as tying in with one of the three paradigms.

**Frames in the news: broad and narrow definitions**

Having established *framing as a process* and having distinguished different traditions and approaches to studying framing, the question still remains what a *frame* is. The variety of definitions of news frames in both the theoretical and empirical literature is considerable. Gitlin (1980, p. 7) defines frames as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse”. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) refer to frames as ‘interpretative packages’ that give meaning to an issue. At the core of this package is “a central organizing idea, or frame, for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 3, italics in original). By virtue of emphasizing some elements of a topic above others, a frame provides a way to understand an event or issue. In this vein, Cappella and Jamieson (1997, p. 47) suggest that frames activate knowledge, stimulate “stocks of cultural morals and values, and create contexts”.

As discussed above, political communication research into framing is indebted to other disciplines. One obvious predecessor is the series of studies by Kahneman and Tversky (e.g., 1984). Their framing manipulation – reversing information by altering the wording of a scenario – was appropriate to explore the psychological process of framing effects, but this definition of framing is rather narrow for application in political communication research. Simple question wording differences are not easily compatible with more complex communicative situations and politics (Sniderman & Theriault, 2002). Though some theoretical arguments support the use of the narrow conceptualization in framing research (e.g., Scheufele, 2000; Shah, Domke & Wack-mann, 2001), hardly any empirical studies in political communication have investigated the ‘reversed information’ phenomenon. The vast majority of framing studies, more or less explicitly, apply a broader definition of frames. Conceptually, a broader notion of news frames is indebted to a definition of a frame as “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

A broader definition of frames is in line with the thoughts offered by scholars working on specific aspects of the communication of politics (e.g., Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1991; Kinder & Sanders, 1996, Nelson et al., 1997). In short, a frame, then, is an emphasis in salience of some aspects of a topic. This conceptualization is commonly applied in studies of news frames and makes more intuitive sense than a narrow definition of frames because most issues – political and social – cannot be meaningfully reduced to two identical scenarios. Political, economic, and social events and issues are presented to citizens - by journalists and elites – as alternatives (Sniderman & Theriault, 2002) whereby issues are constructed and presented with emphasis on different aspects.

Zaller (1992) provides a compelling illustration of such a concept of frames. When discussing oil drilling, for example, citizens are presented with frames such as economic costs of gas prices, unemployment, dependency on foreign energy sources, and environmental considerations. Such frames are alternative ways of defining and constructing an issue, endogenous to the political and social world, and distinguish themselves from a narrow conception of framing.

A typology of news frames

While newsmakers may employ many different frames in their coverage, scholars agree that in spite of this abundance in choice in how to tell and construct stories, distinctive and particular frames dominate. In order to synthesize previ-
uous research, a general typology with reference to the nature and content of the frame is suggested here. A useful distinction can be made between "issue-specific news frames" and "generic news frames" (see also de Vreese, 1999; de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001). Issue-specific frames pertain only to specific topics or news events. Generic frames transcend thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different topics, some even over time and in different cultural contexts.  

The advantage of an issue-specific approach to the study of news frames is that it allows for a profound level of specificity and details relevant to the event or issue under investigation. This advantage, however, is inherently disadvantageous. The high degree of detail and issue-sensitivity make analyses drawing on issue-specific frames difficult to generalize, compare, and use as empirical evidence for theory building. The lack of comparability has led researchers to "too easily finding evidence for what they are looking for" and to contribute to "one of the most frustrating tendencies in the study of frames and framing [being] the tendency for scholars to generate a unique set of frames for every study" (Hertog & McLeod, 2001, pp. 150-151).

In the following section, studies of frames in the news are reviewed and classified." The review of studies of frames in the news is not exhaustive. Framing is a 'buzzword' in political communication and during the past years, numerous studies making use of the term frames have appeared. Table 2.1 classifies previous content analyses of frames in the news according to the distinction between issue-specific and generic frames and according to the focus of the study (press versus television news).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Issue-specific News Frames</th>
<th>Generic News Frames</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entman, 1991</td>
<td>Lawrence, 2000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jasperson et al., 1998</td>
<td>Pan &amp; Kosicki, 1993</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Simon &amp; Xenos, 2000</td>
<td>Patterson, 1993</td>
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<td>Television</td>
<td>Norris, 1995</td>
<td>Iyengar, 1991</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mendelson, 1993</td>
<td>De Vreese et al., 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Cappella &amp; Jamieson, 1989</td>
<td>Neuman et al., 1992</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Martin &amp; Oshagan, 1997</td>
<td>Semetko &amp; Valkenburg, 2000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shah et al., 2002</td>
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**Table 2.1. Overview content analyses of frames in the news**

**ISSUE-SPECIFIC NEWS FRAMES.** One study of issue-specific news frames focused on the presentation of US national budget deficits in the press (Jasperson et al., 1998). Drawing on a content analysis of several major US newspapers four frames were identified, and these were labeled 'talk', 'fight', 'impasse', and 'cri-
sis'. The frames deduced were highly issue-sensitive and pertained specifically to the chronology of the topic examined. Another example is Entman's study of the news media coverage of two airline accidents. He demonstrated how a US accident was framed in terms of "tragedy" and "mistake" whereas a comparable Soviet accident was framed in terms of "attack" and "deliberate" (Entman, 1991, pp. 18-19).

Two studies investigated US news media framing of labor conflicts. In one study of press and network news coverage of the closing of a General Motors plant, it was found that a 'no option' frame dominated the news coverage above an 'alternative frame' that challenged and offered alternatives to the closing of the plant (Martin & Oshagan, 1997). In an analysis of elite US newspapers' framing of a national labor strike, it was concluded that a 'disruption' frame dominated the news coverage of the strike above, for example, a 'bargaining' frame (Simon & Xenos, 2000).

In the realm of elections, Shah, Watts, Domke, and Fan (2002) identified three frames recurrent in the news during the final stages of the Clinton presidency. They identified 'Clinton behavior scandal', 'Conservative attack scandal', and 'Liberal response scandal'. Mendelson (1993) identified three frames used in the television news coverage of the 1993 Canadian general election. He suggested 'tactical motivations', 'performance', and 'leaders' moods' as the most prominent frames in the election coverage. These frames reflected themes present in this specific election campaign.

Some of these studies of frames in the news move beyond the level of issue specificity. Elements of the frames in Mendelson's (1993) study, for example, may also apply to other situations and contexts than the Canadian election. Similarly, Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) analysis of network news broadcasts, news magazines, and newspapers identified a 'progress media package'. This package "frames the nuclear power issue in terms of the society's commitment to technological development and economic growth" (p. 4). They argue that the dominance and persistency of the progress frame is due to the frame's resonance with a larger cultural theme of technological progress. In addition to the 'progress package', which Gamson and Modigliani (1989) specified prior to doing their study, they also found media packages such as 'public accountability' and 'runaway', which emerged during the analysis process. A final example is an investigation of Cold War and post-Cold War US television news where Norris (1995) identified a 'cold war' news frame. This frame "cued journalists and viewers about friends and enemies" (Norris, 1995, p. 357) by suggesting stereotyped, interpretative categories in which international power struggles could be placed. The study demonstrated how a dominant news frame as the 'cold war frame' evolved over time, creating a 'frame vacuum' after the end of the Cold War.
The frames suggested by Gamson and Modigliani (1989), Mendehlson (1993), and Norris (1995) are all examples of issue-related, context bound frames. However, given the persistency of, for example, the 'progress frame' and the 'cold war frame', we take a step beyond the purely single issue-specific news frame towards a more generic notion of news frames.

Generic news frames. Generic news frames are general and not confined to a specific issue. This increases the possibilities for making comparisons. A potential shortcoming of generic news frames is that certain issue-specific details may less easily be captured in an analysis. However, generic news frames that are structural and inherent to, for example, the conventions of journalism may prove more useful for understanding general features of news reporting beyond the issue-specific limits. Studies examining generic news frames essentially fall into two categories. The first group of studies concentrates on the coverage of politics, in particular election campaigns.

Cappella and Jamieson (1996, 1997) investigated the consequences of strategically framed news on political cynicism. Strategic news is defined as news that (1) focuses on winning and losing, (2) includes the language of war, games, and competition, (3) contains 'performers, critics and audiences', (4) focuses on candidate style and perceptions, and (5) gives weight to polls and candidate standings (Jamieson, 1992). According to Cappella and Jamieson (1997), strategic news dominates American news coverage of not only election campaigns, but also of policy issues. Their study, however, provides only a limited discussion of the design of the content analysis of news media reports, which forms the basis of their conclusions concerning the dominance of the strategy frame. In addition, they do not address whether some of the five elements constituting the strategy frame are more or less prevalent in the news and the study does not offer any discussion as to whether the strategy frame is more or less prominent in relation to certain topics. It is therefore difficult to estimate the extent to which the frame pervades US news coverage of politics.

Lawrence (2000) elaborated on the strategy frame and investigated the conditions under which the strategy frame is likely to emerge. She found that the news frame is most likely to be applied to public policy issues when discussed in national election news and when Washington policymakers are engaged in conflicts. The strategy frame is less likely to be applied when public policy issues are discussed in news about state-level political debates (Lawrence, 2000).

The focus on winning and losing and polls bears close resemblance to Patterson's (1993) discussion of the use of 'game schema' in election news. Game refers to strategies and (predictions of) electoral success, emphasizing candidates' position in the electoral race. Patterson (1993) provides evidence of
the historical increase in the use of the game or horse race frame in the press coverage of US elections from 1960 until 1992.

An often-cited study of the presence and effects of generic news frames is Iyengar’s (1991) investigation of the ‘episodic’ and ‘thematic’ news frames. In an analysis of the US network coverage of social issues such as poverty, crime, and unemployment from 1981 to 1986 he found that daily news coverage was strongly biased towards an episodic interpretation in which news depicts social issues as limited to events only and not placed in a broader interpretation or context (the thematic frame). Iyengar (1991) suggested that norms and standards within news organizations and news production reinforce episodic framing. This practice “simplifies complex issues to the level of anecdotal evidence” (Iyengar, 1991, pp. 136-137) and induces a topical, disorganized, and isolated, rather than general and contextual, understanding of public affairs and social issues.

The categories applied in Iyengar’s content analysis to identify thematic and episodic focus in news stories are not mutually exclusive. As Iyengar notes (1991, p. 145), “very few stories were exclusively thematic or episodic”, and though news stories tended to ‘tilt clearly’ in the direction of one or the other frame, the content measures suffer from imprecision. A further problem is the fact that the content analysis was based on the Vanderbilt abstracts with some real news stories from one network analyzed in addition to validate the analysis. Utilizing the Vanderbilt archive for content analyses aiming at assessing subtleties in media content has been criticized for lack of depth (Althaus, Edy & Phalen, 2001). Given these gaps in the content analysis it is difficult to appropriately assess the merit of the content analytic distinction between episodic and thematic news. This is problematic since this analysis forms the core of the argument of the effects of the episodic and thematic mode of news coverage (see below).

A second group of studies also shares a conceptualization of news frames as being ‘detached’ from any specific issue. These studies link news frames to more general features of news coverage such as journalistic conventions, norms, and news values. Though not referring to ‘generic news frames’, Neuman et al. (1992), based on in-depth interviews with audience members, derived a typology of frames used by the audience when discussing current affairs.

They found that the frames deduced from the interviews were also present in the news media coverage of a series of current issues. In their exploratory study they identified ‘human impact’, ‘powerlessness’, ‘economics’, ‘moral values’, and ‘conflict’ as common frames used by the media and the audience (Neuman et al., 1992). The human impact frame focused on descriptions of individuals and groups affected by an issue. The powerlessness frame referred to “the domi-
nance of forces over weak individuals or groups” (1992, p. 67). The economics frame reflected “the preoccupation with ‘the bottom line’, profit and loss” (1992, p. 63). The moral values frame referred to the often indirect reference to morality and social prescriptions by e.g. including certain quotations or inferences. The conflict frame referred to the journalistic practice of reporting stories of clashing interpretation and it was found to fit well with news media’s “game interpretation of the political world as an ongoing series of contests, each with a new set of winners and losers” (1992, p. 64). These frames were found in relation to different issues which suggest that the frames are more generally applicable than issue-specific news frames.”

Neuman et al.’s (1992) study refers to the framing concept as part of the journalistic packaging of events in a broader social and historical context as well as individuals’ attempt to interpret news in terms of their own lives. The study, however, does not provide a description of the measures that were used to assess and compare the framing of different issues in television news, newspapers, and magazines and there is no discussion of the reliability of these measures.

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) developed this line of research and identified five generic news frames: ‘conflict’, ‘human interest’, ‘attribution of responsibility’, ‘morality’ and ‘economic consequences’. Each of the five frames was measured by multi-item scales to assess the relative visibility of the different news frames. The conflict frame emphasizes conflict between individuals, groups, institutions or countries. The human interest frame brings a human face, an individual’s story, or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue or problem. The responsibility frame presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for causing or solving to either the government or to an individual or group. The morality frame interprets an event or issue in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions. The economic consequences frame, finally, presents an event, problem or issue in terms of the economic consequences it will have on an individual, group, institution, region or country.

The study found that the attribution of responsibility frame was the most commonly used followed by the conflict and economic consequences frames based on an analysis of national print and television news coverage surrounding an EU summit with European Heads of Government (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). A subsequent study of Dutch regional newspapers’ framing of asylum seekers using the same indicators found that the responsibility, human interest, conflict, and economic consequences frames were all used by the newspapers though with varying intensity (d’Haenens & de Lange, 2001).

Expanding the research on generic news frames to a cross-nationally comparative setting, de Vreese et al. (2001) found that although the conflict and economic consequences frames were used in television news in Britain, Ger-
many, the Netherlands, and Denmark, national news organizations provided a significant local or national ‘spin’ to the news stories. This is important because it links the generic quality of the frames with a specific resonance that in this case was national in focus. The use of similar news frames in different political and journalistic cultures nevertheless emphasizes the *generic* nature of such news frames.

### Identifying frames in the news

Previous research on frames in the news shares little conceptual ground and most studies draw on tentative working definitions or operational definitions of frames designed for the purpose of the specific study. Therefore there is little consensus as how to identify frames in the news. Most studies, however, address how frames in the news are measured, though in some exceptions this is not sufficiently explicated (e.g., Neuman et al., 1992). One approach is *inductive* in nature and refrains from analyzing news stories with a priori defined news frames in mind (e.g., Gamson 1992; Neuman et al., 1992). Frames emerge from the material during the course of analysis. Studies taking an inductive approach have been criticized for relying on too small a sample and for being difficult to replicate (Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). A second approach is rather *deductive* in nature and investigates frames that are defined and operationalized prior to the investigation.

Empirical scholars in political communication research have argued in favor of applying concise, a priori defined operationalizations of frames in content analyses. Cappella and Jamieson (1997) state that considering *any* production feature of verbal or visual texts as a candidate for news frames is a too broad view. They suggest four criteria that a frame must meet. First, a news frame must have identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics. Second, it should be commonly observed in journalistic practice. Third, it must be possible to distinguish the frame reliably from other frames. Fourth, a frame must have representational validity (i.e. be recognized by others) and not be merely a figment of a researcher’s imagination (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997, pp. 47; 89).

When working with a deductive approach, the relevant question is: *what* (which components) in a news story constitutes a frame? Entman (1993, p. 52) suggested that frames in the news can be examined and identified by “the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments”. Along these lines Shah et al. (2002, p. 367) refer to “choices about language, quotations, and relevant information”. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) identify ‘framing devices’ that condense information and offer a ‘media package’ of an issue. They identify (1) metaphors, (2) exemplars, (3)
catch-phrases, (4) depictions, and (5) visual images as framing devices. Pan & Kosicki (1993) suggested dividing news texts into four empirically operationalizable dimensions. First, a 'syntactical structure' including for example the classic inverted pyramid of news stories. Second, a 'script', such as for example the dramaturgy of news stories. Third, a 'thematic structure' that consists of logically related propositions. Fourth and finally, Pan & Kosicki (1993) suggest 'rhetorical structures' which include Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) five framing devices. The most comprehensive empirical approach is offered by Tankard (2001, p. 101) who suggests a list of 11 framing mechanism or focal points for identifying and measuring news frames: (1) headlines, (2) subheads, (3) photos, (4) photo captions, (5) leads, (6) source selection, (7) quotes selection, (8) pull quotes, (9) logos, (10) statistics and charts, and (11) concluding statements and paragraphs.

In sum, scholars within the empirical approach to measuring frames agree that frames are specific textual and visual elements or 'framing devices'. These elements are essentially different from the remaining news story which may be considered core news facts. Price et al. (1997, p. 488) operationalized a frame by varying “introductory and concluding paragraphs to establish a unique journalistic frame” with information exclusive to the frame while the other paragraphs in the news articles were kept identical. In the same vein, Neuman et al. (1992, p. 126) in their content analysis divided news articles in to sections containing 'frames' and sections containing 'facts'. The distinction between core elements and frame-carrying elements has effectively been applied in the operationalization of news frames in most studies of framing effects (e.g., Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Iyengar, 1991, Price et al., 1997; Valentino et al., 2001a; Valkenburg et al., 1999) and will be explored further in this study (see Chapter 5 and 6).

**Framing effects: A typology**

In this section the primary attention shifts from the framing of issues in the news to the effects of frames. An individual's way of understanding, interpreting, and evaluating an issue or problem is now the dependent variable, typically investigated in a study with media frames as the independent variable. To organize and systematize previous research a typology is proposed that distinguishes between effects of frames on (1) cognitive information processing, (2) attitudes, affection, and opinions, and (3) behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; McLeod, Kosicki & McLeod, 1994; 2002). Previous research has documented framing effects on cognitive and affective dependent measures, political attitudes, political evaluations, and vote intention. Table 2.2 provides a brief introduction to key findings of framing effects studies. These studies are discussed in detail below.
Table 2.2. Overview of framing effects studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect type</th>
<th>Key findings</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive responses / information processing:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frames may affect the topical focus and evaluative valence of thoughts generated in response to a news story (Price et al., 1997),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frames may influence the kind and direction of thoughts produced by news readers by eliciting thoughts mirroring the frames used in the news (Valkenburg et al., 1999),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frames may affect individuals’ interpretations of election campaigns (Rhee, 1997)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Attitudes / evaluations:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frames may generate cynicism about election campaigns and politics (Cappella &amp; Jamieson, 1996, 1997),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frames may alter public opinion towards trade organizations and health care (Cobb &amp; Kuklinski, 1997),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frames may alter the perception of national economic issues (Jasper et al., 1998),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frames may influence citizens’ perception of an issue, including the level of tolerance towards the Ku Klux Klan (Nelson et al., 1997),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frames may impact the ways people ascribe responsibility for social, political, and economic problems (Iyengar, 1991; 1996),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frames may affect public reactions towards a social protest (McLeod &amp; Detenber, 1999)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior (intention):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frames may affect the type of decision-making strategy voters employ when choosing candidates (Shah et al., 1996),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frames may marginally depress turnout intention for citizens with lower educational levels (Valentino et al., 2001a).</td>
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</table>

Framing effects: a review of the literature

The vast majority of studies investigating effects of framing rely on experimentation. However, a few survey and interview based studies have investigated news framing effects. A seminal study by Graber (1988) drawing on depth-interviews with a panel consisting of 21 persons selected to cover a range of standard demographics (as well as high and low interest in politics and easy and difficult access to media) functioned as an empirical baseline to identify a number of recurrent schemata used by citizens to 'process the news'. This study may be considered a predecessor of later framing studies. The 'thinking categories' found by Graber (1988) have several similarities with the audience frames identified by Neuman et al. (1992). The 'human interest/empathy' thinking category suggested by Graber can be equated with Neuman et al.'s 'human impact' frame, Graber's 'cultural norm' to their 'morality' frame, and
Graber's 'institution judgments' to their 'powerlessness' frame. The 'human interest/empathy' category, for instance, described the incentive for citizens to follow news to "learn about the personal lives, joys, tragedies, and varied activities of other people" while processing stories with a direct human relevance (Graber, 1988, p. 213). Graber identified her thinking categories in relation to several issues in the news which suggest that people may make use of similar strategies when processing different types of news.

Both studies emphasize that media reports are one of several resources available to citizens when thinking and talking about politics. Neither of the studies assesses in detail the specific relationship between news content and, for example, audience attitudes. The designs and sample sizes do not allow making a compelling link between, for example, exposure and attention to specific media contents and subsequent cognitive and attitudinal responses. Such a design could have answered questions such as whether citizens that rely heavily on the media for information make more use of this resource than other citizens when making sense of the political world.

Utilizing peer/focus group discussions, Gamson (1992, 1996) in his work on framing suggested that media discourse is one among several resources that citizens use in constructing political issues. He specifically investigated frames as mental constructs created to understanding current issues. Persons may choose different resource strategies on which to base their thinking including 'cultural resources', 'personal experiences', and 'media discourse'. For some issues media induced information play a more important role than 'personal resources', suggesting that issue type may be an important moderating factor of framing effects.

Gamson (1996) and Gamson and Modigliani (1989) stress that citizens employ multiple resource strategies, drawing on media discourse, popular wisdom, and experienced knowledge, when making sense of issues in the news. This approach is closely related to Graber (1988) and Neuman et al. (1992) who point out that any effects of frames is likely to be moderated by individuals' existing predispositions, socialization, and prior knowledge which may lead citizens to either accept, reinterpret, or ignore the frames offered by the media.

Turning to survey based investigations of framing effects, one study, based on a two year long content analysis linked with 12 opinion polls, concluded that changes in attribute salience in the news coverage of the national US budget was followed by changes in public opinion (Jasperso et al., 1998). More specifically they found that an increase in the 'fight frame' (a frame that focused on the conflict between political elites) boosted the public's perception of the salience of the issue (Jasperso et al., 1998). In an innovative study of public approval of US president Clinton, Shah et al. (2002) linked data from analyses of news coverage to public opinion data on support for the president. The study suggested
that the media framing of the scandal – which was specific to the chronology of the situation – explained changes in mass evaluations of Clinton during this presidency. In particular the framing of the scandal as ‘Conservative attacks’ led to a backlash and explained the sustained support for Clinton.

EXPERIMENTAL FRAMING RESEARCH. Experimentation is the most commonly used method in framing studies. Below experimental studies of effects of frames in the news are discussed. Appendix 2.1 provides a more detailed overview of the studies. The appendix specifies the design, independent (experimentally manipulated), and dependent variables, and summarizes the main findings of each study. Table 2.3 provides a brief overview of experimental framing effects studies. The distinction between different types of effects (cognitive information processing, attitudinal, and behavioral) and different types of news frames (issue-specific versus generic) is used.

Table 2.3. Overview experimental news framing effects research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRAME</th>
<th>Issue-specific</th>
<th>Generic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive / information processing</td>
<td>Domke et al., 1998</td>
<td>Cappella &amp; Jamieson, 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domke et al., 1999</td>
<td>Rhee, 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Druckman, 2001b</td>
<td>Tewksbury et al., 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nelson et al., 1997</td>
<td>Valentino et al., 2001ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nelson &amp; Oxley, 1999</td>
<td>Valkenburg et al., 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shah et al., 2001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFFECT</td>
<td>Attitudinal / Affective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cobb &amp; Kuklinski, 1997</td>
<td>Cappella &amp; Jamieson, 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Druckman, 2001b</td>
<td>Iyengar, 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>McLeod &amp; Detenber, 1999</td>
<td>Price et al., 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nelson et al., 1997</td>
<td>Valentino et al., 2001ab</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nelson &amp; Oxley, 1999</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shah et al., 1996</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Shah et al., 2001</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valentino et al., 2001a</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. Studies with multiple table entries indicate dependent measures on different levels.

EFFECTS OF ISSUE-SPECIFIC NEWS FRAMES. Turning first to studies investigating the effects of issue-specific news frames, a series of experiments investigated the ability of news frames to influence respondents’ degree of tolerance towards the Ku Klux Klan. Nelson et al. (1997) tested this in two experiments with a Ku Klux Klan group’s right to rally framed as either a ‘free speech issue’ or a ‘disruption of public order’. In the first experiment un-doctored versions of television news stories taped directly from real news programs were used. Partici-
pants who viewed the free speech television news story expressed more tolerance towards the KKK than participants who watched the public order story. In the second experiment, relying on the same design, constructed newspaper articles allowing full control over the stimulus material were used. The results of the second experiment were supportive of the first and the authors concluded that the two studies show how alternatives in the journalistic framing of an issue "can exert appreciable influence on citizens' perception of the issue" (Nelson et al., 1997, p. 576).

Drawing on the same design, Druckman (2001b) replicated Nelson et al.'s (1997) findings. He argues that certain considerations and beliefs are made more important by frames in the news and consequently used by citizens when making evaluations. Specifically it was found that a newspaper story framed in terms of 'free speech' consequently made free speech and opposing racism the most salient considerations for expressing the degree of tolerance towards the KKK. Conversely, participants exposed to a news story framed in terms of 'disruption of public order', rated public safety and opposing racism as the most salient beliefs when making their assessments of tolerance."

Nelson and Oxley (1999) manipulated news frames in a dispute over land development. Contrasting an 'environmental' versus an 'economic' framing of the issue, they found that participants exposed to the economic frame considered economic beliefs more important which lead to endorsement of the land development plan. Conversely, participants exposed to the environmental frame considered environmental beliefs more important which lead to an unfavorable evaluation of the plan.

In a series of experiments, Shah and colleagues found that frames had significant influence on voters' issue interpretation and subsequently on their decision-making strategy for choosing electoral candidates (Domke et al., 1998; Domke et al., 1999; Shah et al., 1996; Shah et al., 2001). More specifically they found that news framed in an 'ethical' rather than a 'material' way lead to an ethical interpretation of the issue of health care. They also found evidence of a "strong, consistent, and robust relationship between an ethical issue interpretation and use of a 'non-compensatory' decision-making strategy" whereby candidates that do not share participants' values are discarded (Domke et al., 1998, p. 315). The experimental studies make a direct link between media frames and voting intention. The studies make use of an 'ethical' frame which, for example in the case of abortion, meant pitting "the sanctity of an unborn child's life against the personal liberty of a woman to control her body and destiny" (Domke et al., 1998, p. 306). While this frame, as the authors emphasize, has considerable appeal given the 'layman' nature of the frame, the studies do not provide any evidence or discussion of the use of the frame in actual news reports. The important shortcoming is that we cannot infer from these effects studies
whether the ‘ethical’ and ‘material’ frames are in fact, in the words of Cappella and Jamieson (1997, p. 47), “commonly observed in journalistic practice”.

A study by McLeod & Detenber (1999) introduced a new dimension to experimental research on the effects of news frames. Rather than contrasting the effects of competing frames on an issue, they varied the level of presence of one news frame across their experimental conditions. Investigating the balance of status quo and protest group support in the framing of a social protest, they found a negative relationship between emphasis on social status quo in the news frame and public criticism of protesters. The study relies on already broadcast news stories as the stimulus material, but, as the authors acknowledge, the news reports varied in ways other than the framing of the event which makes it difficult to attribute the findings to the news frames exclusively.

Another study also addresses the effects of weight given to a frame. At the level of local politics, the effects of an ‘advocate frame’ — that is a frame advocating the viewpoint of an interest organization — were investigated in a news story about the size and regulation of local hog farms (Tewksbury, Jones, Peske, Raymond & Vig, 2000). Contrasting the effects of moderate versus strong degree of presence of the advocate frame, the study suggested that the weight given to a frame in the news was reflected in students’ interpretation of the issue. Participants exposed to the strongest framing condition showed the strongest effects. The study included a delayed post-test three weeks after initial exposure and found significant, though muted effects of exposure to the frame used in the experiment.

The common element in the studies discussed above is the use of exposure to issue-specific frames as the independent variable. The studies investigate the effects on a number of dependent measures, but the frames that drive these effects pertain specifically to the issue in question. While this evidence tells us much about the effects of news and information in a particular context, none of the studies were designed to address whether the effects on, for example, issue interpretation and evaluation can be expected to generalize to other situations.

Effects of generic news frames. Turning next to studies investigating effects of generic news frames, Cappella & Jamieson (1996, 1997) investigated the effects of strategically framed news on public cynicism about politics. In a series of experiments, carried out during the 1991 Philadelphia mayoral race and the 1993 health care reform debate in the US, participants received news about the election and the debate framed as problems and proposed solutions (issue framing) or news emphasizing how a candidate’s position either provided an advantage or disadvantage in securing votes (strategy framing). Overall, they found that participants watching news segments framed strategically reported higher levels of political cynicism.
The study is broad in scope and involves different political contexts (mayoral election campaign and health care debates) and different media (newspapers and television). The study has been criticized for relying on unconventional measures of political cynicism (e.g., Valentino et al., 2001a), but Cappella and Jamieson (1997) argue that unlike more commonly used measures of cynicism—such as those used in the American National Election Studies—their items tap cynical responses to politics and not general measures of trust. The study investigated the effects of the strategy frame, but it remains vague with regard to which elements of the strategy frame were manipulated. The strategy frame consists of five elements (see discussion of news frames above), but the stimulus material used in the experimental studies were already broadcast news stories that were either left unchanged or edited with some alterations to the audio-track if the story was not deemed to be a clear example of the strategy frame. The study is consequently not able to assess which aspects of the strategy frame cause the political cynicism.

Drawing on data from the Cappella and Jamieson (1997) studies, Rhee (1997) investigated the effects of strategic versus issue news coverage of the 1991 Philadelphia election. He found that strategic news coverage of the campaign, focusing on the strategic electoral drama, influenced audiences' interpretation and perception of the campaign. Issue coverage, focusing on substantial elements of the campaign, generated more responses focusing on content aspects of the campaign. Rhee (1997) also concluded that not only the frames in the news contributed to shaping audiences perception of the campaign. Respondents' level of knowledge was also found to have explanatory value so that knowledgeable participants were more likely to make use of the frame suggested by the news when formulating their perceptions of the campaign.

A further exploration of the effects of the strategy news frame suggested that the strategy frame fuels negative campaign evaluations and reduces recall of information in the news (Valentino et al., 2001b). Data from the same study also suggested that the strategy frame depresses vote intention and feelings of civic duty for citizens with low levels of education, as well as reduces trust and sentiments of political meaningfulness for non-partisan citizens (Valentino et al., 2001a).

Iyengar (1991, 1996) focused on the effects of episodic and thematic framing in network news coverage of five current issues (crime, terrorism, poverty, unemployment, racial issues). Based on a series of experiments, he tested the impact of such framing on the attribution of responsibility for these issues. He compared news on unemployment, for example, as a social and political phenomenon (thematic framing) with news on unemployment that emphasized the shortcomings of unemployed individuals (episodic framing). It was found that episodic news influenced the ways people ascribed responsibility for social,
political, and economic problems, so that episodic news led people to attribute responsibility to individuals whereas thematic news fuelled system-level attributions of responsibility (Iyengar, 1991, 1996).

Turning to studies investigating the effects of generic frames with a link to journalism, Price et al. (1997) explored the differential impact of three news frames: ‘conflict’, ‘human interest’, and ‘personal consequences’. The authors conclude that “by activating some ideas, feelings, and values rather than others, then, the news can encourage particular trains of thought” (Price et al., 1997, p. 3). In two experiments the effects of these news frames on thoughts and feelings were investigated. Students responded to a fictitious newspaper story about state funding of universities. All stories contained the same core of information, but varied in their opening and closing paragraphs according to the frame employed. Post-test thought-listing procedures revealed that the different news frames used in the stimulus material significantly affected both the topical focus and evaluative implications of the thoughts generated.

An experimental study elaborated on this research, and served as a pilot study to the studies discussed in this book (Valkenburg et al., 1999). The study investigated the impact of four different news frames (conflict, human interest, attribution of responsibility, and economic consequences) in relation to two different real-life issues. One story was about an issue that was more salient (increasing crime rates), and the other was about an issue that was less salient (European integration). The study showed that the way in which a news story was framed had a significant and consistent influence on the kind of thoughts produced by participants. Participants who had just read a story framed in terms of human interest, for example, emphasized emotions and individual implications in their responses. Similarly, respondents who had just read a story framed in terms of economic consequences focused on costs and financial implications in their thoughts (Valkenburg et al., 1999).

Framing: Towards an integrated approach of studying news

The chapter both serves to organize and summarize a diverse research field and to describe the contours of the key theoretical concept for this study. Thus far the chapter has (1) reviewed the antecedents of framing research in other disciplines, (2) outlined different approaches to studying framing, (3) explicated the differences and consequences of narrow and broad definitions of frames, (4) described framing as process, (5) developed and subsequently applied a typology of frames in the news, and (6) proposed a typology for an overview of framing effects. It enables us to place the approach taken to framing in this study in the light of these considerations.
The current study is an attempt to integrate the entire process of framing into a single project. The study links news production, content, and effects investigations and thereby follows the recommendations made in previous reviews of the framing literature (Entman, 1993; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Scheufele, 1999; 2000). Indeed, considering framing as a process involving both production, content, and effects is a perspective gaining support in the literature as McLeod et al. (2002, p. 230) recently concluded: “For framing to meet its full potential, audience research needs to be tied carefully to the work of journalists in meaningful ways”. To study the process of framing in its entirety, framing must be conceptualized as both dependent and independent variables and must be examined in the newsroom of news organizations, as frames in the news, and as expressed public opinion.

The study is indebted to the cognitive paradigm. Most studies within this approach focus primarily on the frame-setting phase of framing and generally pay less attention to elaborate content analyses or investigations of frame-building. However, the process by which frames in the news come into existence is the antecedent for understanding any of the consequences frames may have. The production of news determines the frames in the news so that the production process is an independent variable for news frames as dependent variables. News frames in turn are resources available to audiences and can thus be seen as independent variables for dependent audience responses. Central to the perspective on framing in this study is an integrated process model of news framing which is discussed in the next sections.

Figure 2.1. An integrated process model of news framing

Framing in the newsroom. ‘Framing in the newsroom’ is the starting point. With journalists forced to select and prioritize to tell a story in the news, framing plays a central role in the production of news. Journalists have to tell a story within a limited time or space, so they need certain frames to simplify and give meaning to the flow of events, and to keep audiences interested. Frames
guide journalists, editors, and news executives to structure and organize news stories and framing helps audiences to make sense of the information provided.

As McQuail (1994, p. 355) notes “much news is presented within frameworks of meaning which derive from the way news is gathered and processed”. Standard organizational procedures, work routines, and news values all function as ‘guidelines’ in the quest for fast and regular news output. News in itself has little value unless embedded in a meaningful framework which organizes and structures it. A news frame is a template for journalists to compose a news story in order to optimize audience accessibility.

The process of news production is influenced by factors both internal and external to news organizations and journalism. Internally, norms and values of individual journalists, specific media routines, and organizational constraints are important (see Bennett, 1996; Schudson, 1995; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Tuchman, 1978; Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996). External factors for understanding the production of news content and the way news is presented are ownership, funding, political affiliation, and the degree of competition in the news market. A key factor is also the role played by, for instance, interest groups, spin-doctors, and officials. They contribute to the process of message framing as they give stories a “spin” congenial with their goals (e.g., Esser et al., 2001; Neuman et al., 1992). Previous research in this field, however, tends to follow a static input-output model in which, for example, the arguments put forward by interest organizations is compared to the portrayal in the news (e.g., Cooper, 2002). Such studies do not analyze the process in which this interaction takes place and thereby neglect the role of news production.


In this study, the frame-building part of the integrated process model of framing is closely linked to the news selection process. A link is made between news values and framing. News values guide which events and issues are considered sufficiently newsworthy for media attention. From previous studies of news production there is little evidence to provide direction to expectations about the frame-building process in the newsroom. However, news values not only influence the selection of events and issues, they also affect the presentation of issues (e.g., Gamson, 1992; Price & Tewksbury, 1997). Framing a story in
terms of conflict, for example, is a translation of a key news selection criterion into a template for organizing the news story in a way that is familiar to journalists, sources, and audiences. This frame-building phase of the framing process is comparatively understudied and deserves attention (Scheufele, 1999) and is a key focus in the current study.

Linking the production perspective to research specifically dealing with European integration, previous studies offer analyses of either EU institutions' communication efforts (e.g., Meyer, 1999) or a discussion of the attitudes of, for example, the British press corps in Brussels (Morgan, 1995). These studies, however, tell us little about the processes of news selection and subsequent framing and presentation of issues in the news.

**Frames in the News.** The second dimension in the *integrated process model of framing* concerns frames in the news. As discussed throughout this chapter, multiple conceptualizations and methods have been applied in previous content analyses of frames in the news. In the review of previous research a distinction between *issue-specific* and *generic* news frames was proposed.

In this study the emphasis is on generic news frames. Following Price and Tewksbury (1997), Price et al. (1997), and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) the study centers on the framing of news in terms of *conflict* and in terms of *economic consequences*. These frames are generic in the sense that they have been found in relation to news coverage of a broad variety of political, economic, and social issues. The frames fall within the broader definition of frames in which framing the news implies making elements of an issue more salient than others (Pan & Kosicki, 2001).

In addition, this study explores elements of strategic news coverage. Thus far, the study of strategic news coverage has been limited to the United States and has most frequently been conducted in relation to election campaigns, but studies also suggest that the type of news reporting may be found in the coverage of policy issues (e.g., Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Lawrence, 2000). It remains, however, an open question whether news in European context also contains traces of strategic coverage and what effects such news may have.

Looking at the topic of European integration, previous research offers little in the way of systematic cross-national comparisons of media content about Europe or European affairs (Gavin, 2000; Semetko et al., 2000). While news coverage of European integration is likely to have a number of unique characteristics that are particularly relevant to European issues, this study focuses on investigating *generic* frames. This is because issue-specific frames have no reference point which makes it impossible to investigate the degree to which the framing of an issue is deviant from or similar to, for example, framing of other economic and political news. Generic frames can be investigated both in general economic
and political news and in the coverage of particular events in order to analyze differences and similarities. Second, investigations of issue-specific frames do not contribute substantially to theory-building. Notwithstanding the insights an analysis of specific ‘Europe-related frames’ could contribute with, it is problematic to generalize from such findings to other contexts or issues. Third, generic news frames can be seen as part of the integrated process model of studying the framing process. Generic news frames are linked theoretically and conceptually with our knowledge of news production processes as discussed above.

The approach taken to the study of news frames is theory-based, deductive, and designed so that the reliability of measurement can be determined (Tankard, 2001). The frames under investigation are closely related to and can be addressed in the light of journalistic practice. The frames have unique, identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997).

Beyond these theoretical considerations related to the integrated process model of framing, the analysis can be seen in the light of the issue of European integration. Given recent discussions about fraud and corruption in the European Union, we might ask whether news media coverage of EU affairs has become more critical and is framed in terms of strategy. If so, we might expect such coverage to fuel public cynicism as has been documented in the US (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). Given tension between countries and within groups over advancements in European integration, we may ask whether news coverage of European affairs is focused on conflict or perhaps the economic implications of further integration. In either case, it is important to assess what the implications of such news coverage are for citizens’ processing of information about and perception of European integration.

Framing effects. The frame-setting part of the integrated process model refers to the effects of news frames and the interaction with individual characteristics. Specifically, the study links the effects of generic news frames to the issue of European integration and investigates a variety of cognitive information processing and attitudinal effects of the conflict and economic consequences frame and of strategic news reporting.

An important question for the integrated approach to framing research is the psychological base for framing effects. Graber (1988) provided an introduction to information processing that gave guidance to the cognitive paradigm in framing effects research. Inspired by schema theory, she identified four steps. Schemata (1) determine what information is noticed, processed, and stored, (2) they serve to organize and evaluate new information to be fitted into established perceptions, (3) they help to provide extra information to complete information, and (4) they provide information about scenarios and how to cope with them (Graber, 1988).
Early empirical studies of framing effects conceive the framing process almost entirely as an accessibility effect (Iyengar, 1991). Given the key role of news media for the provision of information about politics, news is a key determinant of accessibility. Television news, for example, makes accessible or retrievable information from memory and easily retrieved or accessed information then dominates “judgments, opinions, and decisions” (Iyengar, 1991, p. 131). The concept of framing then “refers to subtle alterations in the statement or presentation of judgment and choice problems, and the term ‘framing effects’ refer to changes in decision outcomes resulting from these alterations” (Iyengar, 1991, p. 11).

Another perspective has emerged in the framing literature. Scholars have argued that framing effects occur in ‘on-line’ processing of information, independently from accessibility or memory-based activities. The effects stem from the weight and salience that citizens attach to certain considerations when making political judgments. News frames affect opinions and attitudes, not by mere accessibility, but by stressing specific values, facts or other considerations, endowing them with greater relevance to an issue than under an alternative frame. Selectively enhancing the psychological salience and relevance or weight to specific beliefs can be accomplished without accessibility of these concepts in memory (Druckman, 2001a; 2001b; Nelson & Kinder, 1996; Nelson & Oxley, 1999).

Determining the psychological antecedents of framing effects is important, though not at the core of this study. An important aspect, which is argued by several scholars (e.g., Gamson, 1992; Graber, 1988; Iyengar, 1991; Neuman et al., 1992), is that framing effects are general, but not omnipresent effects. Frames interact with individuals’ predispositions and knowledge, so that framing effects are conditional upon finding resonance with its audience. In this respect, scholars from the cognitive and the constructionist approaches share common ground by arguing that not all individuals are necessarily affected similarly and that news frames are ‘negotiated’ with prior knowledge and individual predispositions (e.g., Crigler, 1996; Gamson, 1992, Neuman et al., 1992). Following this argument, it is necessary to model and control for a number of factors that may moderate the effects of frames. Previous research on effects of news frames is primarily experimental and (implicitly) deals with the impact of individual characteristics by means of randomization, which ideally eliminates the structural impact of individual differences to randomly distributed noise. However, randomization does not necessarily eliminate the effects of all influences and therefore theoretically driven intervening variables may be introduced in the analysis.

MODERATORS, MEDIATORS AND INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES: SUSCEPTIBILITY TO FRAMING EFFECTS. Despite the fact that most previous studies of framing effects acknowledge the importance of individual characteristics, few have modeled and assessed the impact of these differences. In addition, previous
research offers little in terms of whether these characteristics have an independent, direct effect in the framing process or whether they moderate or mediate the framing effects. Moderators partition an independent variable into subgroups to illustrate differential effects on a dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). For example, political knowledge may moderate the effect of exposure to a news frame so that differences in the dependent variable vary according to the level of knowledge. Mediators function as the indirect mechanism through which an independent variable influences a dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). For example, if the magnitude of an effect of an independent variable (for example exposure to a news frame) on a dependent variable (for example support for environmental restrictions) decreases when introducing a mediator (for example political ideology) this suggest that the newly introduced variable mediates the framing effect.

In recognition of the fact that news frames are but one resource that citizens rely on when forming attitudes, a number of additional influences are considered in the effects studies discussed in Chapter 5 and 6. In the media effects literature, there is little consensus concerning which variables play a moderating or mediating role, how these should be operationalized and measured, and in which direction these variables may contribute, that is whether they enhance or diminish the main effect. Framing research resides in a stage of infancy in this respect while agenda-setting and priming research is more advanced in terms of identifying moderating variables.1

In agenda-setting, McCombs (1981) more than twenty years ago called for an investigation of mediators and moderators of the agenda-setting process.1 Previously, McLeod, Becker & Byrnes (1974), for example, specified a number of contingent or contributory audience orientations affecting the agenda-setting function of the media including partisanship, newspaper dependency, and political interest. Non-partisans, frequent newspaper readers, and persons with low political interest, for example, were found to be more susceptible to agenda-setting effects. In another study the perceived credibility of a source was found to exert a positive influence on the agenda-setting process, so that, for example, the International Herald Tribune was more likely to set the agenda for an audience that the National Enquirer (Rogers & Dearing, 1988). Weaver (1977) suggested that a high need for orientation, that is high uncertainty, leads individuals to consult more information in the media to reduce their uncertainty, and thereby enhancing the agenda-setting effect as a function of the greater exposure and reliance on news.

There is mixed evidence concerning the role of personal experience with issues. Some evidence suggests that little or no direct experience with an issue is likely to enhance the impact of the media on public opinion on that issue (e.g., Zucker, 1978). Other studies suggest that personal experience may 'sensitize' a
person to that issue and thereby increase the probability of being affected by media attention to that issue (e.g., Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Finally, there is also mixed evidence concerning the effect of political knowledge. Weaver, Graber, McCombs and Eyal (1981), for example, found that knowledge diminished agenda-setting effects while Smith (1985) found a stronger effect for more sophisticated individuals.

Political knowledge is a much-debated concept given different operationalizations and measurement and the empirical evidence on the effects of political knowledge is inconclusive. Political knowledge is an indicator of the availability of cognitive resources a person has (Fiske, Kinder & Larter, 1983; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). A number of studies use political knowledge as a dependent variable in addressing questions about media effects in terms of political learning (e.g., Graber, 2001). Although there is little known about the differential impact of different media on political knowledge, recent European research suggests that the type of news provided by public broadcasters or commercial television has differential associations with knowledge so that public television exposure is related to higher levels of knowledge (Aarts & Semetko, 2003; Holtz-Bacha & Norris, 2001).

In more general theories of media effects, some scholars have advanced the argument that political knowledge – which is referred to as 'political awareness' – is superior to other indicators as an explanatory variable (Zaller, 1992). The argument is that given the inherent measurement errors in, for example, self-reported media exposure and attention measures, general political knowledge questions function as better and more accurate predictors of learning and attitude change. Price and Zaller (1993) accordingly found that political knowledge was a strong predictor of learning from the news when controlling for education and volume of news exposure. There has been considerable criticism, however, by researchers of the actual value or relevance of these general knowledge measures in capturing what they claim to measure (e.g., Graber, 2001; Mondak, 2001).

While political knowledge in the studies discussed above is equated with and taken as a proxy of media exposure and attention, political knowledge in priming research has generally been investigated in terms of its moderating effect, but the evidence is this respect is inconclusive. Krosnick and Kinder (1996) found politically knowledgeable persons to be less susceptible to priming effects. Iyengar and Kinder (1987) found no systematic differences between 'experts' and 'novices' in the magnitude of priming. Krosnick and Brannon (1993) found that political expertise facilitates priming effects. The latter argument was elaborated by Miller and Krosnick (2000) who found the strongest priming effects for politically knowledgeable citizens who also trust media sources.

In framing research, the influence of individual characteristics is often not explicated or is omitted in analyses. Scheufele (2000) points out that default
control for demographics and pre-exposure orientations should be incorporated in models of framing effects. Others suggest that theoretically motivated or situational factors are more important, but there is no consistency concerning which variables may moderate or mediate framing effects, how these should be measured or whether these can be expected to enhance or dilute framing effects. McLeod and Detenber (1999), for example, included gender, age, political interest, and media use measures in their study of framing effects, but did not report whether or in which direction any of these moderators performed.

Druckman (2001b) suggests that source credibility can both enhance and limit framing effects, so that frames sponsored by a less credible source is less convincing and influential compared to frames endorsed in highly credible sources such as, for example, the New York Times, a finding which dovetails with previous research on agenda-setting (see above). Cobb and Kuklinski (1997) found ‘political inattentive’ participants to respond more strongly to pro-arguments suggested in a news story about the NAFTA. Domke et al. (1998) modeled gender, education, income, party identification, and issue importance in a multivariate analysis to distinguish the effects of these control variables and their framing manipulation on decision making strategies. They found a main effect of framing, but no consistent patterns with regard to the individual-level control variables.

Looking specifically at the effect of political knowledge (or equivalents hereof), the findings are mixed. For example, Kinder and Sanders (1990) found that persons with lower levels of political information were more susceptible to framing effects, while Nelson et al. (1997) found persons with higher levels of political information to be more susceptible. Valentino et al. (2001a) included education (which they called ‘political sophistication’) in their study and found exposure to the strategic frame to be associated with lower levels of turnout intention for participants with lower levels of ‘sophistication’.

Iyengar (1991) concluded that the greater the discrepancy between the attributions suggested by the frame and audience members’ predispositions (in this case party identification), the weaker the influence of the news frame. He additionally included ‘political involvement’ and social-demographic characteristics as moderators with the expectation that politically involved viewers (which was operationalized as an index of political participation, political interest, political knowledge and frequency of media exposure) would be more ‘immune’ to framing. Though there was some evidence that persons who participated frequently in political activities and were politically interested and knowledgeable, were more likely to consider societal level treatment for problems of crime and terrorism (Iyengar, 1991, p. 121) no consistent pattern emerged.

Cappella and Jamieson (1997) addressed the impact of ‘political sophistication’ which was measured as factual political knowledge. They found political
sophistication to be the strongest positive predictor of accuracy of recall of news content in their field experiment, and that this effect overrides any effects of the experimental manipulation (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997, p. 193). Based on panel data about health care reform they also found political knowledge to positively predict political cynicism.6

Price et al. (1997) found that knowledgeable students produced more responses to their open-ended measure of issue interpretation. They found no systematic influence of knowledge on the topical focus or valence of participants’ thoughts.7 Rhee (1997) found knowledge to significantly contribute to participants using an experimentally induced news frame in their interpretation of a political campaign so that “knowledgeable people were better able to take the thoughts and ideas in the news materials and to integrate them into their interpretations” (Rhee, 1997, p. 43).

In sum, there is little agreement in previous research as to what variables exert influence in the framing process, either independently and directly or through mediation or moderation. Moreover, the measurement and operationalization of these variables differ per study and the hypothesized direction of the effects is often mixed and contradictory. Based on previous priming, agenda-setting, and framing research (see Druckman (2001a), Miller and Krosnick (2000), Nelson et al., (1997), Price et al., (1997), and Rhee (1997)), political knowledge (that has elsewhere been labeled ‘political awareness’ and ‘political sophistication’) is included in the investigation of the frame-setting process (see Chapter 5 and 6).

In conclusion, bringing together the last part of the process model of framing and the discussion of framing effects and mediators and moderators, and linking this specifically with the context of European integration, key questions emerge. We may, for example, ask whether the conflict and economic consequences frames affect audiences’ associations with European issues? Similarly, does a strategic mode of reporting affect levels of political cynicism and support for EU policies? And if frames in the news affect audience responses what, if any, role does political knowledge and other individual-level characteristics play in this process?

Specifying the research questions

Following the integrated process model, framing is investigated as inherent to news production, as manifest in content, and as an effect. Throughout the book this theoretical model is at the core. However, a second aim of the study is to provide a baseline of information about ‘Europe’ and television news. Therefore several aspects are addressed in the investigation.
The broader question of 'Europe in the newsroom' is both aimed at (1) establishing a baseline of how journalists cover Europe which has been neglected previously (Gavin, 2000) and at (2) addressing the role of framing in news production by investigating the application of news values and news selection criteria. To fulfill the first aim, the organization of the news coverage of European affairs, the constraints and challenges newsmakers perceive when covering European affairs, and the editorial policies are investigated. To fulfill the second aim, the news selection criteria used when choosing European events and issues for attention in the news are investigated. As argued above, these criteria are likely to also affect the presentation and framing of European issues in the news. The specific sub-questions guiding this part of the investigation are:

- How is the coverage of European affairs organized?
- What are the constraints and challenges for newsmakers when reporting European affairs?
- What are the editorial policies applied by journalists and editors in the reporting of European economic and political affairs?
- How are news selection criteria applied in the reporting of European economic and political affairs?

The 'Europe in the news' component of the study also serves as (1) a baseline for understanding the presentation of Europe in the television news and (2) an analysis of the specific framing of European affairs. For the first aim, the visibility of news about European affairs is assessed, the extent to which news about European affairs is focused domestically or on the EU-level is investigated, and the visibility and evaluation of EU actors is compared to other actors in political and economic news. These aspects provide an overview of the coverage. The theoretical rationale and expectation for each of these questions is elaborated in Chapter 4. The second aim of the 'Europe in the news' component is to investigate the extent to which news about European affairs is framed in terms of conflict, economic consequences, and strategy. The specific design and operationalization of these frames are discussed in Chapter 4. The specific sub-questions guiding this part of the investigation are:

- How visible is European news on the national television news agendas?
- To what extent is news about European affairs focused domestically or on the EU-level?
- To what extent is news about European affairs framed in terms of conflict?
To what extent is news about European affairs framed in terms of economic consequences?

To what extent is news about European affairs presented strategically?

How visible are European actors in national television news compared to other actors?

To what extent and how are European actors in national television news evaluated in comparison with other actors in the news?

Turning finally to the ‘Europe in public opinion’ component of the study, this is investigated by means of two experiments. These investigate the effects of the conflict and economic consequences frames on the one hand, and strategic reporting about Europe on the other. The experiments are designed specifically to investigate effects of news frames (as independent variables) on a number of cognitive and attitudinal dependent measures and the potential moderating role that, for example, political knowledge (see above) plays in this process. The research questions focus on the following aspects and are dealt with in more detail in Chapter 5 and 6.

- What are the effects of reporting about European affairs in terms of conflict and economic consequences on audiences’ thoughts?
- How salient is the news frame compared to other information in the news story for the audience?
- What are they effects of news frames on support for European integration?
- What are the effects of strategic reporting about European affairs on political cynicism?
- What are the effects of strategic reporting about European affairs on issue evaluation?
- What are the effects of strategic reporting about European affairs on political mobilization?

In the following chapters the empirical studies are discussed. Chapter 3 addresses the production and framing of Europe in the newsroom and Chapter 4 analyses the framing of Europe in the news. Chapters 5 and 6 deal with the effects of news about Europe on public opinion.