

# EUROPEANISATION OF PUBLIC DEBATE

## SWEDISH AND FINNISH NEWS ON AFRICAN MIGRATION TO SPAIN

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### Abstract

Immigration is a policy field increasingly shifting under supranational decision-making in the EU. This article analyses news coverage of African “illegal” migration to the Canary Islands in a Finnish and a Swedish newspaper.

Analysis of the northern European public debate of a southern European news event shows how the “migration crisis” is simultaneously Europeanised and domesticated in Finland, yet treated as a typical foreign news event in Sweden. Domestication increases coverage and viewpoints: in addition to the dominating news frames which present the African migrants as objects of criminalisation, control, and victimisation, reportage from Africa suggests a heroic frame. Although there are characteristics of a mediated public crisis within the event, and therefore potential for social change through increased media salience, the main news coverage remains stigmatising – constructing a division between Europe and Africa.

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## Introduction

Public debate through Europeanised (mass) communication has increasingly been presented as one important way to solve the problems of the European Union's democratic deficit and its low level of legitimacy in decision making (Slaatta 2006, 11). The concern over the democratic deficit assumes that increased European-wide communication will increase the sense of community and European identity and involve people in democratic decision making at the European level. In the course of the history of nation-states, the media has played an important role in the creation of national imagination and identity. National media institutions, especially national public service broadcasting, have participated on one side of this process, but dissemination of stories that encourage people to attach themselves to a national community has played a role on the other side of the construction of imagined communities (Downey & Koenig 2006, 165-6). The European administrative elite anticipate that political and cultural integration requires attachment to a culturally shared European identity.<sup>1</sup>

Another heated debate is immigration and the integration of ethnic minorities. This policy domain is increasingly shifting to supranational decision making within the EU,<sup>2</sup> which means that analysing immigration-related public debate from a Europeanised perspective becomes increasingly relevant. For instance, the borders of the Mediterranean and on the Canary Islands are not only Spanish borders, but also Schengen borders, and therefore possible entry points to other Schengen countries such as Finland and Sweden. The interesting question, therefore, is how news media in different European countries are responding to this changing political, social and cultural landscape.

Public discussion and debate in the European public sphere is particularly relevant in this case. In this study, I analyse news coverage as horizontal Europeanisation, a process in which issues and events are discussed simultaneously in various media in Europe (van de Steeg 2002, 508). In this paper, I am looking at the Europeanisation of public debate over African undocumented migration to Spain in the context of two Nordic nationwide newspapers.<sup>3</sup> Is African migration "crisis" presented as a European issue?

There is a significant difference between the two newspapers (Helsingin Sanomat, Finland and Dagens Nyheter, Sweden) in their coverage of the "migration crisis" in the Canary Islands in 2006. This event involved approximately 30,000 Africans who arrived without documents in small vessels. An estimated 6,000 migrants died in their attempt to reach Spain.<sup>4</sup> Between March and August 2006, *Helsingin Sanomat* (HS) covered the event in 29 stories, and the *Dagens Nyheter* (DN) in 12 stories.<sup>5</sup> The unequal coverage raises questions: Why is the event more important for the Finnish newspaper? What are the social, political and practical issues that influenced the selection and perceived salience of this particular news event for these two newspapers?

The methodological starting point is in critical discourse and frame analysis, which stress the political and social functions of language use. Although shifts at the political and cultural level in the European Union influence the news, news coverage plays an important role in contributing, changing, questioning, or legitimising these social changes and continuities. Therefore, language both reflects social realities and

reproduces them. In addition, language use (re)produces identities and positions in the society. Language use can be social action when various “sponsors” inform or argue for and against something. Therefore, there are power and political issues involved in language use. In particular, the news genre is considered influential in this regard (Richardson, 2007, 268)

## European Identity: There Is no “Us” without “Them”

European identity is experienced often either as something pretentious and negative or as something enlightened and celebrative. European identity is seen without the burden of possibly dangerous nationalism; after all, the foundations of the European Union were originally built after the Second World War to secure peace and democracy in the continent. Given that, tolerance and universalism are ideas attached to European identity. However, following Étienne Balibar’s (2004, 24) notion of nation-states, we should resist the illusion of believing that the European Union or European practices and traditions would be tolerant and Universalist by nature, as often is the case in the European Commission’s community and social cohesion building exercises.<sup>6</sup> European identity necessarily requires drawing borders between those who belong to Europe and carry “European values” and those who do not. This is a debate taking place over many current events, such as Turkey’s EU accession, integration of migrants, and policies to invite or exclude new migrants. There are non-EU spaces both within the EU (illegal migrant enclaves) and outside the borders.

Current public debate on immigration issues involves discourses of threat which support the “Fortress Europe” concept, but also cosmopolitan multiculturalism, transnationalism and celebrative diaspora discourses. European societies wish to construct a globally attractive multicultural atmosphere for the global elite – a type of multicultural zoo-like city, where all kinds of safe and domesticated otherness is available for consumption, similar to what Ghassan Hage (2000, 111) observes in the Australian debate. However, at the same time, traditionally nationalistic ambitions prevail and immigration is seen as a threat, especially in the case of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants (Horsti 2003; Nordberg 2004; Van Gorp 2005).

Furthermore, there is a fear of “lack of integration.” Many crises in various European countries, such as the Prophet Mohammed cartoons in Denmark, disturbances in French suburbs, “honour violence” and debates on *hijabs*, reflect the majority’s fear of feeling “as a stranger in one’s own country.” In addition, fear discourses have increased after the terrorist attacks in London and Madrid, and asylum seekers and refugees are often seen as potential terrorists (Ahmed 2000).

In most European countries, as well as at the supranational European Union level, there are currently new attempts to distinguish wanted migrants from those expected to integrate from among the unwanted and those presumably not likely to integrate. Many European countries have adopted models of selective immigration. For instance, Denmark and Germany have introduced tests for citizenship measuring the level of cultural and social knowledge as well as language skills. Finland requires a certain level of language ability from the ethnic Finns living in Russia before they are able to apply for residence permit in Finland. Basically these tests are intended to measure immigrants’ abilities to integrate into the host society. These developments reveal the worries and fears that are present in contemporary

European societies. There is a shift from multicultural policies to focus on a “social cohesion” paradigm, which stresses the migrants’ responsibility for integration.

## News Discourses Related to “Illegal” Migration

Current research on news coverage of immigration and integration of ethnic minorities indicates that there are routine biases, negative representations of certain minorities, irrelevant minority viewpoints, and exclusion of media professionals with “ethnic” backgrounds (e.g. ter Wal 2002). However, the media is not uniform: there is variety in its practices and genres.

Previous research on media representations of asylum seekers and “illegal” migrants prove that in general three types of framing are used in news coverage: the often unwanted immigrants are framed as (1) “illegals,” (2) objects of control and (3) victims. Many case studies claim that the media are involved in a process, wherein they collaborate with state authorities to construct a social problem that may develop into a moral panic (Cohen 2002) in the society at large. The panic or a threat of a panic often results in deportations of “illegal” migrants, changes in the asylum process, tightening of internal and external immigration controls, changes in the rights and privileges of asylum seekers, etc. (Hier & Greenberg 2002; Horsti 2007; Horsti 2003; Nordberg 2004; Wal *et al.* 2002). In most cases the construction of a social problem involves surprisingly similar language use in media texts. The activity is verbalised in terms of natural catastrophes or war: the people are framed as intruders (Van Gorp 2005).

Although most studies focus on the criminalising framings of asylum seekers and “illegal” migrants, van Gorp (2005) reminds us that the media also quite frequently uses victimisation. This framing has previously been connected to victims of natural catastrophes and wars and to refugees located in neighbouring areas of catastrophes (Malkki 1995). Undocumented migrants can be framed as victims of smugglers, dangerous seas, tight policies or inhumane treatment by authorities.

However, it is clear that in all such framings, undocumented migrants are presented as objects (of charity, criminalisation or control), which means that they are treated as having no social or personal history and life; they are non-persons, as characterised by Dal Lago (1999). In addition there is an atmosphere of conspiracy. “Illegal” migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are labelled in hyphenated terms. There is never trust or an answer to who these people are and why they are here. Conspiracy is evoked under the precepts of terrorism, human trafficking, smuggling and drug trafficking, which are often contextualised with asylum seeking (Horsti 2007).

There is not yet much knowledge about the coverage of migration issues within the context of the Europeanised public debate. Analysis of news coverage typically focuses on a single nation. Although the policies and practices related to migration and asylum seeking are becoming increasingly European in terms of policy, public discussions of these issues occur mostly in national news media. It is not clear to what extent national media apply a European framework in their reporting, but some studies suggest that in recent years this framing has increased at the cost of national framing. For instance, Della Porta *et al.* (2007) in their study on the Europeanisation of the Italian media, note that in general supra-nationalisation of the public sphere is growing, although with significant differentiation among policy

fields. On the topic of immigration, the Italian media increasingly raises and frames the issues with a European dimension.

Since asylum policy and practise are increasingly shifting to the European level, it is necessary that the public debate and media coverage also be Europeanised. Otherwise, there is a danger that decisions will not have the support of European citizens. Public discourse on asylum issues has in most European countries been condensed to nationalistic sentiments: newcomers have been presented as folk devils. Increased Europeanisation could encourage two competing tendencies: (1) strengthening (white) European solidarity and identity against the common “folk devil” or (2) strengthening transnational civic communication, observation and critique of asylum policy and practise. With relevance to either tendency, anti-racist activism is still rather undeveloped in the field of undocumented migration. In theory, intensified public debate might generate more counter-argumentation and protests against Fortress Europe policies.

### European Mediatised Crisis on the Canary Islands

Mediterranean undocumented migration has made European-wide news for the last ten years. In Southern European countries the events are often clearly public crises: they are exceptional events interrupting the routine news agenda (Couldry 2003, 15; Cottle 2006). Exceptionality is highlighted, for instance, when governments declare a state of national emergency as in Italy in 2002. However, in other European countries the news does not interrupt the everyday agenda, but still may hit the front page and be followed on a daily basis.

The news about migrants without documents entering Italy (Lampedusa), Malta, and Spanish territory (Costa del Sol, Gibraltar, Melilla, Ceuta, Canary Islands) construct a long-term narrative. Many of these cases can be seen as key events (Brosius & Eps 1995, 393), which increase the media’s access to similar events taking place afterwards.

The story of African migrants arriving to Europe through “the back door” (as it is called in the Helsingin Sanomat of June 23, 2006) was raised in public discussions across Europe in the spring and summer of 2006 when African migrants arrived in a number of ships to the Canary Islands, having departed from Senegal and Mauritania. Many of them died on the way. The first news items on the relocation of the migration route (from Morocco – continental Spain to the sub-Saharan West coast – Canary Islands) was published in March 2006, with the focus on numbers of arrivals and drowned migrants. The news also referred to previous migration conflicts, such as those in Gibraltar in the early 2000s and Melilla and Ceuta in 2005. The news reported (using terms of natural catastrophe) migration “flows,” “waves,” and “streams” being re-directed to Western African locations because border control, surveillance, and patrols at previous locations had been tightened by the EU, Spain and Morocco.

Spain receives the highest numbers of migrants in Europe, both documented and undocumented (and it has operated six regularisation programmes since 1985, the largest one being in 2005 when 700,000 people without documents received resident permits (*BBC News*, July 1, 2005). “Naturalisation” has been a contested issue among the European countries, and other countries have criticised Spain and accused it of “attracting” migrants with its policy.

The Canary Islands case is one event in the continuum of similar mediated crises in the Mediterranean. The media images on television and newspapers of African men in wooden boats and corpses on beaches in Italy and Spain have been engraved in the minds of European citizens. One manifestation of the forcefulness of these media images is the piece of artwork at the Venice Art Biennale 2007 by a Finnish artist, Maaria Wirkkala. Her installation contains a wooden boat on broken Venetian glass. She observed about this particular piece, “People who are forced to leave on boats and who cannot beach their boats anywhere. People who never reach their destination. This is the news I repeatedly see in the newspapers” (*HS*, June 7, 2007).

There are no boat people arriving in Finland; still, the media image of Africans arriving “here” and being denied entrance is something that gave a Finnish artist the urge to participate in the public discussion on immigration through her work of art. This is a concrete example of the Europeanisation of the public sphere, and media’s repetition of certain events and frames as crises.

The news coverage was rather similar in Finland and Sweden until early June 2006. The only striking difference between the two newspapers was in the semantic differences in characterising the migrants. The Swedish *DN* used the word refugee (*flykting*),<sup>7</sup> whereas the Finnish *HS* used the term migrant (*siirtolainen*). The connotations of the words are different: by using the term “refugee,” *DN* refers to a possibility that the arrivals are in need of asylum, whereas the term “migrant” stresses that the people are on the move because they want a better life for themselves, and are not necessarily in need of protection. However, *DN* used a term combining the meanings “illegal” and “refugee” (*illegala/olagliga flyktingar*), which questioned the legality and honesty of these people.

On May 31, *HS* reported that Finland considered sending an aircraft to patrol the shores of Mauritania and Senegal. Spain had requested help from the EU to cope with incoming migrants. The involvement of Finland immediately raised the news value of the event. What had so far been covered in the typical tradition of foreign reporting became covered more in domestic reporting terminology; the case got “domesticated.”

Furthermore, in June it was reported that the European commission had decided on joint patrol operations, which would assist countries facing problems with migration at Schengen borders. Finland became involved in three ways, which increased domestic treatment of the event. Firstly, the Executive Director of Frontex, Mr. Ilkka Laitinen is a Finn. Secondly, Finland took over the EU presidency in June. Thirdly, Finland offered to send an aircraft to the Frontex operation on the West African coast. In addition, the Minister of Interior at the time, Mr. Kari Rajamäki, raised his profile in the public debate by arguing against immigration.

This kind of news coverage dominated coverage until June 7, but after national turns in the narrative, genres and sources multiplied. On June 7, 8 and 11, *HS* published more featured reports from Tenerife by a Barcelona correspondent. The first story looked at the issue from the viewpoint of Spanish fishermen, and the second offered views on the reception of migrants by covering the arrival of one boat. The third story explained the prospects of young migrants in reception centres. Migrants were interviewed in the third story, but no photographs of young migrants were published. Instead there was a news agency picture of a group

of arrivals in police custody. The news text revealed however, that photography was prohibited. The media is repeatedly criticised because they do not consider the views of ethnic minorities, asylum seekers, “illegals” and refugees important enough to interview, quote and mention their names (Wal *et al.* 2002). In this case, the journalist explained why pictures were not taken. The reader thereby became more aware of journalistic practises and constraints, which may have entailed more critical interpretation among readers.

Other reportage style coverage was published on June 23 and 29, and July 3, when an *HS* reporter and photographer were sent to Senegal to cover the issue of migration from the viewpoint of the emigrants’ country. In addition to these genres, one editorial was published with reference to the events taking place in the Canary Islands. The use of other journalistic genres in addition to the news genre reflected the importance of the event. Since the routine news genre had highlighted the “crisis” framing of the event, the journalistic logic of newspapers demanded further development of the subject in other journalistic genres such as editorials and different kinds of reportage.

Furthermore, the fact that the issue was on the agenda attracted news of related subjects which would not have been covered otherwise. A UN report on the advantages of migration and a World Bank report on remittances and development to third countries are examples of such related stories. They also painted a richer image of the case in comparison to the basic news coverage, which relayed mainly on the numbers of migrants and the actions by authorities. These types of reports also gave the viewpoint of the migrants, or at least they gave some idea why the people had left their home countries. As represented in the language of the average news text, the migrants could be understood as rational actors rather than as passive, “naturally” drifting bodies. In the Swedish *DN* the event was treated according to routine standards of foreign news coverage on Africa. The event was not contextualised to the EU presidency or Swedish politics.

## Problems, Heroes and Villains

The news in both outlets defined the following problems: (1) the high number of arrivals, (2) the illegality of their entrance, (3) the dangers to them during travel and (4) the difficulties encountered in their arrivals and deportations.

Table 1: Problem Framing of the Event in *DN* and *HS*

Problems	High numbers of arrivals	Illegality of entrance	Dangers in travel	Difficulties in reception and deportation
Sources of problems	Redirection of route Poverty Spanish amnesty and black market jobs	Smugglers	Smugglers Poor skills and equipment Weather and the sea	Too many arrivals 3 <sup>rd</sup> countries not co-operating as EU/Spain wishes
Solutions	Increased control, patrol, and EU co-operation. The Finnish <i>HS</i> stresses Finnish involvement as a solution, claiming that the Spanish are not efficient enough.			

The majority of the news were about basic items that did not give reasons for the actions of the Africans. The news looked at the event from a European and/or Spanish viewpoint, and did not present African migrants as actors making rational

choices. However, the rationality and motivation of their actions were presented in the reportage genre, particularly in those stories that quoted the migrants and potential migrants in Senegal.

Illegality was mentioned in all stories in both newspapers. The migrants were characterised as “illegal immigrants/refugees,” which is from the viewpoint of the country receiving migrants. Senegal and other African countries do not consider emigration undesirable, and therefore do not necessarily wish to accept the migrants back. The journalistic text in itself, but particularly the quotations of Spanish authorities, characterised the nature of the event in terms of “crisis” and “illegality.” Organised crime and trafficking of people were mentioned.

The first reports rationalised the actions of African migrants in very technical terms with details on routes. The problem was defined as the “arrival of migrants to Canary Islands” and the blame for this was the relocation of migration routes. Deaths and drowning were also presented as problems, but mainly in technical terms, such as bad weather and migrants’ incompetence. The underlying economic cap between Europe and Africa implicitly was given as a reason, as the following quote illustrates:

*By the end of spring the pace of migrant ships was 1-2 per week, but in the last few days a total of 1300 people have drifted to the tourist islands in approximately twenty tottering vessel* (HS, May 17, 2006).

Most news coverage of this event produced what Balibar (2004, 42-5) calls European apartheid: ethnic classification as either European or Other (Africans in this case). This classification was created through colonialism to divide the global labour force and increase the power and wealth of white Europeans. Balibar sees in contemporary Europe that the control and repression of “illegal” immigrants, particularly, contribute to European apartheid, which leads to untenable contradictions and conflicts – focal points for repeated forms of violence by marginal hate groups.

One manifestation of elite power in the news coverage of African migration is the way “illegality” was reproduced in the coverage of both newspapers without questioning it. The repetition of “illegality” has become an automatic term in reference to undocumented migrants, and this tendency is reproduced here in the context of African migrants. This is a form of symbolic power and even violence (Bourdieu 1991, 23). It is invisible power which seems natural and legitimate: by legal definition, African migrants arriving to the Canary Islands are without documents and therefore illegal. However, the “illegal” label is powerful particularly because it becomes difficult to present any counterarguments against the deportations and other controlling actions. Human rights issues are limited only to the protection of physical life, which is not in any conflict with the “illegal” framing. On the contrary, patrolling and increased control are presented as human rights actions; i.e., preventive actions save lives. This patronising argumentation amplifies the already passive and non-personalising treatment of Africans in the news.

Difficulties in reception and deportation were presented as Spanish problems, and they did not get much attention in the coverage. On the one hand, the authorities of the Canary Islands reportedly made claims to both the Spanish government and the EU for funds and assistance to deal with the migrants. Spain, on the other hand, made claims to the EU. However, the newspapers studied here did not get



involved with the claims-making to the extent that is typical in national coverage of immigrants. Previous studies in Finland on the coverage of immigrants defined as 'illegal' show that the public discussion is strongly harnessed to the claims-making of authorities (Horsti 2003).

In this case the *HS* stressed, much more than the *DN*, the patrolling, controlling, and stopping of the immigrants. In this sense the coverage was Europeanised: the border is an EU matter and requires co-operation between the countries. Reception and return, on the contrary, are still more of a national responsibility.

The following example shows how, in the beginning, the problem of "some countries with large migration streams" (referring to Italy and Spain) was presented as the result of a lack of efficiency. In the following paragraph Finland is presented as the authority to solve the problem.

*It has turned out that in some countries with large migration streams the fingerprints are not taken although the countries are involved with the Eurodac system. Therefore, the register is deficient and not as useful as imagined in the first place.*

*During its presidency Finland is going to raise this defect. The Ministry of Interior is preparing an initiative to deepen the European burden sharing in matters of migration, border control and refugee issues. Finland wants the EU to have a system in which the costs of asylum procedure, return and the burden of border control are taken jointly (HS, June 14, 2006).*

The same article continued with national glorification:

*The role of fosterer of EU's border security suits Finland well. Finnish border patrol is praised to be the Europe's most efficient and due to the EU's agency for management of external borders' Executive Director Ilkka Laitinen Finland is well inside the core of border management.*

*The co-operation model of the police, customs and border patrol and the police co-operation in the Baltic sea region are good examples of the tools used in the Finnish border security. Co-operation of authorities in the EU is not nearly at this level.*

These examples express the domestication of the issue as nationalistic discourse takes over and European events are being transformed into national self-praise and the glorification of certain stakeholders (or sponsors (Gamson & Modigliani 1989, 6-7)) who profit from the event.

The European Union was presented as another actor with solutions, in addition to Finland. The claims made by Canary Islands and Spanish authorities were directed to the EU. The EU's solutions were solely control-based: more surveillance in Africa, more efficiency in patrolling migration routes and controlling migration in general. These actions were justified as countermeasure to the drowning of migrants and the dangers resulting from the trafficking and smuggling of migrants. In the following quotation, EU patrol operations are justified with human rights arguments presented by the EU commission.

*The European Union is going to build a patrol network to the Mediterranean and Canary Islands areas in order to cut off the flow of illegal migration. An operation in the waters off the Canary Islands and Malta has been agreed*

upon. In November, led by Greece, a new joint project to increase the patrolling of the Eastern Mediterranean will be launched. In addition the area's satellite systems will be increased with EU support.

Approximately 50,000 people are desperately looking forward to crossing the sea in Mauritania. There are 25,000 migrants gathered in Senegal who will attempt to cross the sea. Every day people drown. "This tragedy can no longer be accepted," emphasised Franco Frattini, the Vice-President of the EU commission, in an interview with the STT (HS, June 11, 2006).

There were two types of divisions constructed in the coverage: one between Africa and Europe and the other between Northern Europe and Southern Europe. These divisions characterise what Balibar calls "European race relations" (Balibar 2004, 5). Europe is complex; it is constituted of overlapping zones of various, often contradictory, civilizations, and therefore it is home to tensions between different religions, political affiliations and traditions. The division was highlighted in the Finnish newspaper where "the national efficiency" was glorified in opposition to Southern European "inefficiency." At the same time, Europe was constructed as one "rich and hopeful" entity opposed to "poor and hopeless" Africa.

The Swedish *DN* tended to stress the drowning and deaths more than the *HS*. It raised this issue in the headlines more frequently, which suggests that the *DN* framed the event more in terms of a humanitarian crisis. By contrast, the *HS* tended to view the issue as a border crisis within the European Union dimension of the event. In addition, the role of Finland in the process of finding a solution was emphasised in the *HS* choice of headlines.

Some examples of headlines that focused on deaths and difficulties:

*Boat Refugees Died of Thirst.* (*DN.se*, August 11, 2006)

*Tens of Boat Refugees Found Drowned.* (*DN.se*, August 27, 2006)

"Crisis" was the main framing word for the event. However, the crisis had two dimensions, or sub-frames. Firstly, it was treated as a border crisis. Borders of Spain – and the European Union – were "leaking." Response to this border crisis-framing was joint European action through Frontex. This was highlighted in the Finnish *HS*, which extended the European response to national Finnish involvement. Secondly, the crisis was framed in humanitarian terms, stressing the drowning of the Africans. The Spanish were the most visible actors in this framing, since the Canary Islands' authorities, fishermen and reception centres helped the survivors. The Swedish *DN* stressed this framing in its headlines, but without positing any particular national interest. It was treated as foreign news.

Table 2: Topics of Headlines in *HS* and *DN*

	Deaths, drownings, dangers	Unusual numbers of arrivals, re-direction of route	Claims for EU, EU procedures and co-operation	Finnish assistance	Other	Total number of headlines
<i>HS</i>	3	8	8	5	7	31
<i>DN.se</i>	5	4	1	-	2	12
Total	8	12	9	5	9	43

## Discussion: Constructing National and European Identity against the “Other”

The comparison between a Finnish and Swedish daily newspaper demonstrates that Europeanisation of news journalism related to immigration is still random and very much connected to national interests. In this case, a European framework was adopted when it fitted national interests. Journalistic practices and news values played a role in this respect.

The comparison suggests that the Canary Islands case received more media attention in Finland than in Sweden. Firstly, there were journalistic practises that influenced intensification: *HS* had a correspondent in Barcelona and the events in the Canary Islands were high on the public and political agenda in Spain (Mena Montes 2008). Secondly, national interests played a role. Finland took the EU Presidency and this in itself increased the news value of European-related news items. Swedish newspaper did not address these events from the viewpoint of the EU Presidency at all. In addition, Finland assisted Frontex’s patrolling operations off the Canary Islands and the West African coast.

The migration crisis was “domesticated,” and therefore its news value was raised in Finland. In addition, Finland is a northernmost European borderland country which has a long border with Russia. This position might contribute to its borderland self-identity and increase its sensitivity to border issues. Sweden, on the other hand, has raised the profile of its international role in immigration with more humanitarian themes. Sweden has taken in the highest number of asylum seekers among the Nordic countries. News coverage of the Canary Islands case was therefore tuned more to humanitarian crisis-framing than to border crisis-framing.

The Finnish *HS* covered the event, stressing a ‘border crisis’ framing. Still, we need to recognise that coverage using a variety of journalistic genres, styles, sources and viewpoints also increased. The paper sent a reporter to Africa to interview locals in the areas from which migrants had been leaving. In addition, the correspondent in Spain travelled to the Canary Islands and interviewed asylum seekers in reception centres. This was not the case with the Swedish *DN*.

There was an explicit difference between the routine news coverage and the eye-witness reportage in terms of agency and viewpoint. In the news, African migrants were put in the role of impersonalised passive object: they were presented either as intruders or as victims of traffickers and dangerous seas. However, in the eye-witness reportage, the Africans were presented also as heroes who were risking their lives to support whole families.<sup>8</sup> The hero frame has not been recognised in previous research on news coverage of asylum seekers and so-called illegal migrants. Research should pay more attention to the variation between different media and genres.

With the Europeanisation of the media I mean that the national media cover issues from within a European framework. Domestication and other kinds of proximity effects have previously been noted to be typical in foreign reporting (Slaatta 2006, 12). Tore Slaatta argues that the domestication model operates on a particular old-fashioned model of separately structured spaces (nation-states): “To domesticate something means to transport it across a border, from an outside to an inside; from the outside of the nation-state – into the nation-state.” Based on

the analysis made in this paper I would extend Slaatta's argument: domestication of the event in Finland increased the frequency and the scope of coverage – and therefore increased public debate on a European issue. Intensification opened opportunities for critical counter-interpretations, firstly through genre variation, and secondly through giving attention to the issue of immigration itself. Attention may create advocacy, such as artist involvement, as the Maaria Wirkkala's example demonstrated above. This type of engagement would not be possible without Europeanised coverage.

However, as crisis-framing was dominant and both the border crises and humanitarian crises were presented as having been solved by enforcement, Africans were treated as objects of criminalisation, control and victimisation. In the context of African migration, the Nordic press can be seen to justify and promote a collective mindset favouring persecution of migrants (Girard 1996, 107) taking place in European societies at large. Patrolling and deportation are legal actions according to European law, but they are stimulated by extremist views in society. In this sense the coverage partly supports construction of the European identity against "the Other," that is Africa. This explanation would be in line with the Durkheimian argumentation on ritual and social cohesion. However, as we have seen, the story is not this simple. There are disruptions in the mediascape. Intensification and Europeanisation of the coverage increases variety, and as the example of the hero frame suggests, there are possibilities within mediated crises to promote social change for a more humane politics of immigration. However, these more critical positions are not yet fully explored in the news coverage on undocumented African migrations.

## Notes:

1. The White Paper on a European communication policy of the Commission of the European Communities (2006) is one recent example of the concerns and proposed practices to enforce the European public sphere. <[europa.eu/documents/comm/white\\_papers/pdf/com2006\\_35\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu/documents/comm/white_papers/pdf/com2006_35_en.pdf)>
2. The Amsterdam Treaty in 1999 followed by the European Council's Tampere conclusions in 1999 and the Hague Action Plan of 2005 started a policy development to set some migration issues under supranational powers. The European Commission sent out a Green paper on the future of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) on the 6 June 2007 to identify what options are possible under the current EU legal framework and prepare the second phase of CEAS, which should be adopted by the end of 2010. <[http://www.ec.europa.eu/commission\\_barroso/frattini/doc/2007/com\\_2007\\_301\\_en.pdf](http://www.ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/frattini/doc/2007/com_2007_301_en.pdf)>
3. *Dagens Nyheter*, Stockholm, is the largest daily quality newspaper in Sweden and *Helsingin Sanomat*, Helsinki, is the equivalent paper in Finland.
4. Reuters 12.4.2007.
5. This number refers to stories published in the *DN.se* online version. The paper version had even fewer stories.
6. See e.g. European year of intercultural dialogue 2008 <[http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/406.0.html?&redirect\\_url=my-startpage-eyid.html](http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/406.0.html?&redirect_url=my-startpage-eyid.html)>
7. *DN* uses the word *refugee* 59 times and the word *migrant* 8 times. *HS* uses *refugee* only in one story, and *migrant* or *aspirant* in rest of the stories.
8. More detailed analysis of the representations of Africa and Europe in the *Helsingin Sanomat* (Horsti 2008).

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