Heed Their Rising Voices: Conflicts and The Politics of Women's Representations

Maha Bashri
United Arab Emirates University, U.A.E.

Prospera Tedam
United Arab Emirates University, U.A.E.

Heed Their Rising Voices: Conflicts and The Politics of Women's Representations

By Maha Bashri[1] and Prospera Tedam[2]

Abstract

Conflicts and wars have many parallels wherever they occur around the world. For many people worldwide, the media is the most important source of information on these conflicts and their effects on vulnerable groups such as women and children. Women's experiences in particular mirror the atrocities of war zones. Yet, it is certain women whose stories and voices are amplified the most by the media. The war in Ukraine in comparison to ongoing conflicts in countries such as Afghanistan and Syria garnered more media coverage in a shorter time span. By reporting on some conflicts while neglecting others and representing vulnerable groups in these selected areas in particular ways, the media influences whose voices get heard and which conflicts are at the forefront. This is especially important in determining the outcome of wars, the amount of global and humanitarian aid vulnerable groups in conflict zones receive, and the success of refugee assimilation in host countries. The following research analyzed studies examining media coverage of Ukrainian, Afghan, and Syrian refugees, particularly women, in the West. The research seeks to unveil the framing patterns found in Western media discourses regarding these refugees, arguing that these frames impact policy and public opinion.

Keywords: Refugees, Media frames, Public opinion, Global conflicts, Policy, Intersectionality

Introduction

In democracies, the media informs the public and provides information required for public discourse and debate. It allows for the exchange of information needed by the audiences to understand issues and for the formation of public opinion. The more a topic or news item is covered by the media, the more the public will consider it as important (Scheufele, 2000). The audiences' understanding of the world beyond their direct experiential perception is constructed through media coverage (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Harcup & O'Neill, 2017). Consequently, the media shapes the public's understanding of conflicts across the world.

The 1980s witnessed two major events which greatly influenced how the media covered global events and conflicts. The first event was the proliferation of new technologies which transformed news production and allowed for constant real-time coverage of news. The media's pervasiveness meant that foreign policy and its decision-makers were under direct scrutiny by

---

[1] Maha Bashri received her Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina's School of Journalism and Mass Communications. She is currently Associate Professor of Communication at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), previously holding the same position at Bradley University in Illinois, USA. Focusing on political communication and the impact of technology on politics, her research explores the interplay between mobilization and new media. Dr. Bashri's most recent article in *Information, Communication & Society* investigates grassroots feminist groups in Sudan and their mobilization efforts to ratify the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Email ID: maha.bashri@uaeu.ac.ae; bashrimaha@yahoo.com

[2] Prospera Tedam is an Associate Professor of Social Work and Chair of the Department of Social Wellbeing, United Arab Emirates University. She has previously taught at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, United Kingdom where she was Principal Lecturer and University of Northampton where she was Senior Lecturer. Prospera's research interests are in the areas of equality, diversity, and inclusion and also around the experiences of racially minoritized women and children in vulnerable contexts. Email ID: p.tedam@uaeu.ac.ae

journalists (Robinson, 1999). The second major event was the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. A bipolar order no longer existed and Western journalists were perceived to be freer to cover stories that criticized their decision-makers in the West. There was no longer a need for the ideological bonding that existed between Western journalists and politicians during the Cold War era. Cable News Network, better known as CNN, was the first outlet to cover news content 24/7. CNN's role as a major player in covering conflict and influencing foreign policy was cemented with its round-the-clock news coverage of the first Gulf War in 1990. The phrase the "CNN effect" encapsulated the idea that real-time communication technology influenced audience and policy-makers' perspectives on conflicts and humanitarian intervention (Olsen et al., 2003; Robinson, 1999; Williams, 2005).

It has long been argued that media coverage of global conflict and war greatly influences humanitarian intervention and foreign policy. The 1984 Ethiopian famine led to much discussion on the media effect on foreign intervention during crises in the developing world. In the early 1990s the crisis in Somalia and the Rwandan genocide further focused the lens on the purported media role in encouraging humanitarian intervention (Bennett & Paletz, 1994; Hoge, 1994; Kennan, 1993). While there has been a longstanding debate over the media's role in shaping policy and humanitarian aid, both camps (realists and humanitarians) acknowledged the pivotal role media coverage played in humanitarian interventions. The CNN effect became an "untested and unsubstantiated 'fact' for many in foreign policy and humanitarian circles" (Robinson, 1999, p. 303). On 24th February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine and by 5th July 2022, the UK Home Office issued 148,300 visas as part of the Ukraine Scheme (Government of UK, 2022). A CBS News senior foreign correspondent Charlie D'Agata stated while on air that Ukraine "isn't a place, with all due respect, like Iraq or Afghanistan, that has seen conflict raging for decades. This is a relatively civilized, relatively European – I have to choose those words carefully, too – city, one where you wouldn't expect that, or hope that it's going to happen" (Bayoumi, 2022). The statement was met with criticism and anger at the overtly racialized language used. The trend appeared to have continued as other media outlets and news anchors used similar language to describe a population of people who would be more welcomed within Europe than other previous groups of refugees.

In this article we draw upon postcolonial feminism to examine the ways in which women of color have been represented in conflicts and the absence of their voices in mainstream media. Focusing on the framing of girl and women victims in armed conflict and their displacement, a postcolonial feminist lens aims to scrutinize the ways in which gender and race as well as other factors such as religion, economics, politics, and culture impact whether their voices are heard. According to Staszak (2009), the postcolonial subject is othered, directly and indirectly through the visible superficial traits such as skin tone, facial features, dress, hair texture and language.

Context and Background
In this section the authors outline debates in relation to policy-making and present competing paradigms about the media framing and the implications for policy-making.

Policy-making: A Question of the "CNN Effect" and Manufacturing Consent
Scholars have long debated the CNN effect on policy-making. There are those who argue that media coverage plays an integral role in the formulation of foreign policy, particularly in humanitarian-related issues. Other researchers argue that it is the political elites who shape the foreign policy narrative and drive the media to frame issues in a particular manner. They

manufacture the consent of the media either through aligning news reporting with the official agenda or by conforming with the interests of political elites (Bennett, 1990; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Entman, 2004).

Clearly there are two paradigms at odds with one another—one where the media has the ability to move government to action, and the other where it is political elites who manufacture the consent of the media in framing news stories especially those related to foreign policy. Brock (1992) argues that Western media content, especially American media, frame stories about conflict in the developing world in ways that define the publics' relationship and involvement with such stories. The media plays a role in shaping and strengthening people's views on foreign affairs, while also promoting widely accepted ideas about the current state of things (Domke, 1997; Hall, 1981; Robins, 2003). The layperson usually has no interest in foreign policy or conflicts in faraway lands. Foreign news is just that, complicated foreign stories that the media attempts to cover while using relatable local frames that the general electorate can understand and digest (Tuchman, 1978).

 Another debate exists regarding whether the media reflects or creates attitudes and perceptions of conflicts, humanitarian aid, and refugees. Scholars argue that regardless of how strong or weak the role media plays in setting the agenda on foreign policy, knowledge regarding political issues is unavoidably and inherently mediated (Bleiker et al., 2013). Research on refugee representations suggests that the more the media humanizes conflict and utilizes visuals, the more the media coverage impacts audience views and engagement (Koopmans, 1996).

The media is very influential in shaping the public's perceptions of humanitarian issues, refugees, and asylum seekers because the general public tends to have little direct contact with these groups (Bunce, 2019; Saxton, 2003). While political elites are deemed to be the ones shaping the refugee/asylum agenda, research indicates that public opinion regarding migrants is greatly shaped by the press. Negative media representations and stereotypes of refugees and asylum seekers directly correlate to the public's negative reception of these groups (European Commission, 2011). Scheufele and Brosius (2001) found that framing refugees as the "other" excludes them from their adopted countries and relegates them to a lesser group. In turn this leads to oppressive and marginalizing practices against these groups (Saxton, 2003).

The rates of global migration have increased exponentially, becoming a highly politicized issue in countries where people seek refuge. Analyzing media coverage offers insights into how different groups of refugees are portrayed and treated by policy-makers (Crawford & Hutchinson, 2016).

Methodology

Rapid reviews serve as a synthesis of knowledge that informs policy decisions and discussions. The systematic review of existing literature produces valid conclusions related to the current state of the topic in question. The authors conducted a rapid review of the literature on western media representations of refugees, particularly women and children refugees, from Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine. The study aimed to examine the linkages between media representations and Western government policy regarding the refugees. The rapid review approach sheds light on patterns in media coverage, allowing for the assessment of existing government policy and the forging of new policy.

The overarching review question was: How are refugees from Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine depicted in Western media? This inquiry fosters a better understanding of how these refugees are represented and seen in their Western host countries. Two other secondary review

questions were developed and refined as the review process evolved: Are there differences in depiction of non-Western/European refugees (i.e., Afghans and Syrians) versus European refugees (i.e., Ukrainians)? Do existing government policies align with media representations of the refugees examined?

The rapid review method examined longitudinal peer-reviewed studies in English that focused on media depictions of the refugees, especially women and children. The focus was on longitudinal studies because such research unveils patterns in coverage which tend to mirror and or influence public opinion (Gonzenbach, 2013; Dunlap, 2014). A total of 15 studies were reviewed. While the limited number of studies might make the rapid review less reliable, the strength of these studies lies in their longitudinal approach. The studies focused on US, Canadian, and Western European media since countries in these regions hosted significant numbers of Afghan, Syrian, and Ukrainian refugees. Google Scholar was utilized to search for the studies. The keywords employed were: media representations of Afghan refugees, media representations of Syrian refugees, media representations of Ukrainian refugees, female refugees Afghanistan, female refugees Syria, female refugees Ukraine, Afghan conflict (post 9/11), Syrian conflict, Ukraine conflict. The parameter for the search for the Afghan conflict was after September 11, 2000 to the present, March 2011 to the present for the Syrian conflict, and January 2022 to the present for the Ukrainian conflict.

Fürsich (2002) and Mander (1999) demonstrate that a systematic analysis of news narratives reveals patterns in media coverage as well as the ideological underpinnings of the outlets in question "even though news stories are assumed to be merely a rendition of the facts" (Robins, 2003, p. 32).

In the following section we detail the recurring themes that the reviewed studies unveiled within the media coverage. While the media attempted to report on the facts, the constructed representations of Afghan and Syrian refugees are very different from those of Ukrainian refugees. In keeping with postcolonial feminist thought, geography, according to Staszak (2009), produces and maintains "otherness" and it is "othered" refugee populations from Afghanistan and Syria who have been constructed less favorably by the media than those from Ukraine.

Results

The results uncovered the following four overarching themes:
1. Refugee Assimilation
2. Economic, Social, and Political Impact on Host Country
3. Humanitarian Aid
4. The West as a Savior

Refugee Assimilation in Host Country

Media coverage of Afghan and Syrian refugees focuses on the cultural differences between these groups and their host countries which in turn leads to assimilation problems. US and Canadian media depict Afghan women as having such difficulties in assimilation because of lack of education and language skills. The news stories do not simply report that Afghan women refugees lack educational skills needed to navigate their new countries, but they also imbue Afghan women with negativity by using words and phrases such as "oppressed women" and problematic minority religion" with "assimilation issues" (Stabile & Kumar, 2005; UNHCR Report, 2006). On the other hand, there is no mention of Syrian refugees' level of education despite existing reports supporting their high levels of education (UNHCR Report, 2006). Rather there is a glorification

of Western humanitarian principles and a focus on the assimilation difficulties Syrian refugees are encountering because they are "alien" and do not understand life in the West (Tyyskä et al., 2017). Ukrainian refugees are represented as well-educated with the desired skills to join the workforce in their host countries. The coverage tends to depict them as having values similar to those of their host countries; therefore, their assimilation is deemed "seamless" as they are culturally aligned (Finchelstein et al. 2022; Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2022). Finchelstein, Clavaud, and Peltier (2022) argue that European media consider Ukrainians as part of what they term the "Us-group" (white, European, and mainly Christian) unlike refugees from Africa or Asia. Consequently, the plight of Ukrainian refugees is one that Europe needs to help alleviate. Such discourses are absent in media coverage of other refugees, e.g., Afghans and Syrians (Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2022).

In relation to refugee assimilation in the host country, UK coverage tended to conflate refugees with extremists, through association. This, according to Ozdora-Aksak et al. (2012), occurs by including both groups within the same article despite there not being a link but implying that somehow the refugee crisis is increasing the threat of extremism. David Cameron, the UK Prime Minister from 2010 until 2016, is reported to have referred to the arrival of Syrian refugees as the "swarm" (Langdon, 2018). By referring to particular refugees in this way, the then Prime Minister opened the floodgates for further criticism and hostility towards Syrian refugees. On 2nd September 2015, when the lifeless body of 3-year-old Alan Kurdi washed up to the shores of a Turkish resort in an attempt to get to safety with his family, Adler-Nissen et al. (2019, p. 76) suggested that:

> [T]he photographs of Kurdi did not produce new information about the refugee crisis as such: it was well known by September 2015 that people—including children—died trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea. What made the photographs so powerful were their ability to shift the epistemic terrain of the migration discourse from numbers and statistics to an identifiable human with a face, a body, and a life story.

Prime Minister David Cameron, for example, declared that "[a]nyone who saw those pictures overnight could not help but be moved and, as a father, I felt deeply moved by the sight of that young boy on a beach in Turkey." He added that "Britain is a moral nation and we will fulfil our moral responsibilities" (Adler-Nissen et al., 2019, p. 76). This sentiment, however is reported to have been short lived as pledges to reevaluate and improve Syrian refugee settlement packages in various countries did not materialize.

There is also a trend for resettlement countries to give first preference to refugees who are most likely to "blend" into the host country (Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001). This "blending in" from a racial and cultural perspective illuminates the experiences of African, Asian and Arab people when they attempted to flee Ukraine at the start of the war. According to Cénat et al. (2022), the average time for these groups to cross borders was reported to be longer compared to Ukrainians. Those who eventually managed to cross the borders found it more difficult to access temporary housing and assistance in European countries. This pervasive racism opened doors for some refugees on the basis of their skin, hair, and eye color, thereby compromising the health and lives of thousands of Pakistani, Indian, Black, and Arab refugees.

Economic, Social, and Political Impact on Host Country

A relatively high proportion of Ukrainian refugees are reported to have gained tertiary level education and whilst this does not automatically imply ease in securing jobs in the host countries, it does improve their employment prospects. This could also make them better equipped to learn the language of their host country than low-educated or illiterate refugees, which is often how refugees from Syria and Afghanistan are portrayed. Limited or no language proficiency in the host society's language(s) creates barriers for integration and minimizes participation in the broader community (Morrice et al., 2021). Often women from Syria and Afghanistan are viewed as either passive victims or beneficiaries, not contributors.

According to Gladwell (2021), young Afghans account for the highest proportion of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASCs) across England, Scotland, and Wales. On arrival, they are assessed and when found to be under 18 years old are accommodated in foster and other governmental care environments. As a group, these young people are said to be vulnerable in a myriad of ways, not least in terms of their health, wellbeing, and integration. In addition, until refugee status is granted, these young people are not permitted to seek employment which can place further limitations on their integration and progress. British Member of Parliament for Monmouth David Davies spoke to the *Daily Mail* about the issue of adults claiming to be children, thereby gaining preferential treatment from the British government and taxpayers' money. An Afghan child seeking asylum was alleged to have attacked his foster family in Wales, resulting in this interview with the MP. Subsequently, an assessment of dental maturity revealed that the Afghan asylum-seeker was at least twenty years old and not a child of 16 which was claimed when he arrived in the UK (Silverman, 2016).

Adult Afghan people in the UK who hold foreign qualifications have to rely on low skilled work such as work driving taxis, working in restaurants and washing cars. Syrian and Afghan refugees are represented as an economic burden on their host countries, the former more so than the latter. Integration of these groups is seen as a strain on the host countries' coffers (Berry et al., 2015; Guidero & Hallward, 2018). Syrian refugees in particular are represented in European media as a main factor for why crime rates have exponentially increased and security issues have surfaced in European host cities (Crawley et al., 2016; Georgiou, 2018). Other media representations report on "fears of overpopulation" and "running down of resources" by Syrian refugees (Chouliaraki et al., 2017). European media depictions point to the movement of refugees as an economic and political threat towards Europe (Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018). While the media does at times emphasize the vulnerability of Syrian and Afghan women and children refugees, it continues to report on a "European refugee crisis" while demonizing refugees from the MENA region (Chouliaraki et al., 2017). Connor and Krogstad's 2018 study on European media coverage indicated negative portrayals of refugees from the MENA region that were mirrored in public attitudes (Wike et al., 2016). The study found that Europeans were more inclined to believe these refugees are an economic burden and a security liability as they are terrorists in disguise (Wike et al., 2016). Heath et al., (2016) found that Muslim refugees attract the most anti-immigration media portrayals and public sentiments.

There is a stark difference in Ukrainian refugee depictions in Western media. There is no hostility in media depictions; rather, there is more receptiveness to hosting them (Bayoumi, 2022; Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2022). Despite claims of a refugee crisis and strain on economic resources, Europe took in an estimated 7.9 million Ukrainian refugees in 2022 in comparison to a total of 100,000 Syrian refugees in all of Europe (Bayoumi, 2022).

UK Response to Syrian, Afghan, and Ukrainian Refugees

In 2020 the UNHCR's High Commissioner reported that Syria represents the largest humanitarian crisis of our time (UNHCR, 2020). Turkey, as a result of its open door policy has resettled a total of 3.6 million Syrian nationals while Bulgaria is reported to have accepted nearly 60,000 migrants. The UK, which no longer belongs to the EU, is reported to have settled about 15,000 Syrian refugees under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). This scheme was launched in January 2014 with the aim of helping those in the greatest need such as survivors of violence and torture, women and children at risk, and people requiring urgent medical treatment. Working with the UNHCR, the UK government made a commitment to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020, however the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a delay to meeting this target by the deadline set.

Reports from Amnesty International (2020) indicate an increasing number of Afghan families on the move, including single women who either have traveled independently or with their children. Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP), announced in 2021 in England, was a scheme which offered accommodation to Afghan citizens who had worked for and with British forces in Afghanistan. This scheme covers a very specific group of Afghanis and as a result, the UK government created the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) in January 2022, with a plan to resettle more than 5,000 people in the first year and up to 20,000. The scheme will prioritize women, girls, and members of minority groups at risk (Amnesty International, 2020).

Humanitarian Aid

The amount of media coverage a conflict receives is directly proportionate to the amount of humanitarian aid allocated to those affected (Colombo, 2022). The Russo-Ukrainian conflict in February 2022 has been intensely covered by Western media while other serious humanitarian crises that have been around longer have not captured Western media's headlines or continuous coverage (Rozzelle, 2022).

Humanitarian aid was a reoccurring theme unveiled in studies examining US, Canadian, and European media. In the early years of the Afghan conflict, American media focused on coverage of aid, especially aid to women in Afghanistan. There was little to no mention of aid programs and initiatives for Afghan women who have resettled in the United States (Barakat & Wardell, 2002; Stabile & Kumar, 2005). It is unclear why the media focused on aid programs in the conflict zone rather than within the United States. The US hosts approximately 180,000 Afghan refugees (Workie et al., 2022). Canadian media, on the other hand, focused on the government's role in repatriating Afghan women and Syrian refugees in the country, thus forming an emphasis on the country's efforts to assist refugees with integration. There was a spike in such stories during election cycles and an emphasis on how the programs used taxpayers' money wisely in such initiatives (Wallace, 2018; Tyyskä et al., 2018). The media representations were more focused on the success of government operations other than a humanization or retelling of these refugees' stories. U.S. media representations of aid programs to Syrians are comparable to its Canadian counterpart. Their focus was on how local and state programs were successfully helping Syrian refugees in the United States (Alitavoli, 2020). In covering aid to these refugee groups, Western media must rationalize and justify the use of public/government funding.

European and American media used strong morality frames and human-interest stories in coverage related to humanitarian aid for Ukrainian refugees (Fichtelstein et al., 2022; Rozelle, 2022; Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2022). There was no justification for aid appeals or programs designated for Ukrainians. News frames emphasized the society's moral responsibility to help

these refugees who were "forced to leave their country," while ignoring the fact that this is the general definition of a refugee (Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2022). Interestingly, humanitarian aid appeals were made for those who have fled the conflict as well as those who were still in Ukraine.

The UK government pledged and disbursed £200 (approx. 226 Euro) per Ukrainian refugee in addition to the practical and material support of housing, education, transport, health, and support to relocate pets (Government of UK, 2022).

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) issued statements condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine and offering various forms of emotional, logistical, and financial support to social workers in Ukraine while appealing to social workers in Russia to become peacemakers (British Association of Social Workers, 2022).

The "Homes for Ukraine" scheme is a UK government program which aims to match Ukraine refugees with host families and individuals in the UK. Each country of the United Kingdom ran its own version of this program (Government of UK, 2022).

The West as a Savior

The narrative and depiction of the West as savior is one that is used to refer to refugees from Afghanistan and Syria. For the refugees from Ukraine, who are themselves Western, there appears to be an expectation of duty and feeling of entitlement.

Media coverage of both Syrian and Afghan refugees valorized European, Canadian, and American compassion and the willingness to extend a hand to those less fortunate (Wallace, 2018). Yet this humanitarian aid is covered predominantly using frames depicting Syrian and Afghan women refugees as backward and not capable of assimilation (Fichtelstein et al., 2022; Rozelle, 2022; Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2022). Syrian refugees, as indicated earlier in this paper tend to be highly educated, but this is rarely mentioned in Western media coverage. Frames tend to focus more on the security threat and the unwillingness of this group to integrate into their host countries (Mullol, 2018; Guidero & Hallward, 2019).

Media coverage of Afghan refugees is usually focused on Afghan women and their plight. However as Barakat and Wardell (2002) demonstrate in their analysis, the "plight of Afghan women" is detailed through the voices of gender advisors and specialists rather than through Afghan women themselves. These gender specialists claim to speak for Afghan women "at the expense of listening to them" (Barakat & Wardell, 2002, p. 910). Such media coverage has resulted in a tendency towards template solutions that fail to address the needs of these women and take away their agency in telling their own stories. Discrimination against Afghan women is not a phenomenon that suddenly manifested with the Taliban regime. Media coverage seems to have preconceived ideas of who and what Afghan women need to be "saved" rather than examine ways in which they can be assisted in gaining social and economic independence (Wright, 2004).

Notably, with coverage regarding Ukrainian refugees, the media assessment is that they are equal because they share similar values and looks with the audiences consuming said media (Colombo, 2022; Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2022). There is no hostility in the frames used to cover them. More importantly there are many human-interest frames employed in the coverage where Ukrainian refugees are given space to tell their stories (Colombo, 2022; Rozzelle, 2022). This humanizes refugees and media audiences can better understand their situations.

Discussion

Women refugees are not a homogenous group, and as has been outlined in this article, there are different levels of attention, care, and support provided to the different groups of women refugees. While gender is a common identifier within this focus, these women possess other identities which creates intersectional experiences. Intersectionality seeks to capture the interaction between two or more forms of discrimination or systems of subordination. It specifically addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantages, and other discriminatory systems contribute to creating layers of inequality that structure the relative positions of women and men, races, and other groups (Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001).

According to Koshiw (2022), the majority of refugees from Ukraine are women and children, because men regarded as adults and aged between 18–60 years were required to join the armed forces and remain in Ukraine. As has already been stated, this demographic is different from the Syrian refugees as The Council of Europe (2022) reported that the war in Ukraine has disproportionately impacted women and children. Children have been displaced and orphaned with no access to health and education services. In addition, there is evidence that some of these children have been adopted in Russia, which is in breach of guidance from UNICEF that any children who become separated from their families during a humanitarian emergency should not be perceived as orphans and consequently should not be available for adoption. Gabriel and Harding (2009, p. 136) argue that the construct of a "good refugee" is someone who "gives back" and contributes to the host nation thus allowing for easier integration.

The demographic of people seeking refugee status in the UK appears to be different depending on country of origin. For example, in Syria and Ukraine, the majority are women and children of all ages, whereas from Afghanistan, the population are young males. This diversity has resulted in the differential approach to welcome and resettlement. Much of the literature about social work and social services responses to people fleeing conflict and war focuses on resettlement, health, mental health, and other trauma support. For children, this support also includes education and support with wellbeing more generally (Preston, 2022).

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) announced the IFSW Action on Ukraine Crisis on 10th March 2022 in which there was a call for action for social workers to coordinate the community's responses to the needs of refugees fleeing Ukraine. There was also a call for social workers to continue to support the populations who remained in the country

Conclusion

Refugee women and girls, while sharing the same basic needs for water, shelter, food, sanitation, and security with men and boys, have different needs and face additional difficulties in accessing these. This is further exacerbated by the silencing through media representation of women and girls from particular countries and jurisdictions which cast some groups of women as more deserving, such as Ukrainian women, while othering Syrian and Afghani women and ultimately children. Media discourses and representations of refugees are intertwined with social policies and humanitarian aid for these groups. We have argued in this article that in host countries, professions such as social work and social services bear the responsibility for operationalizing social policy for refugees, and these professions are committed to upholding and respecting human worth and dignity. Consequently, to address this global commitment, social workers around the world pledged to work towards "the peaceful prevention and resolution of conflict and adherence to international agreements which can reduce violence and its consequences" while advocating for the "right of people to move between and within countries and for the right of documented and

undocumented migrants to have access to social services" (International Federation of Social Workers, 2012, p. 3). Needless to say, this global commitment must be translated into local solutions if it is to work in host countries and the countries where these conflicts arise. However, media representations of these groups can be hostile, unwelcoming, and discriminatory which can influence professionals' responses to these groups. It is interesting to note, according to Peseckyte (2022), that even before the conflict Ukrainians were among the most vulnerable to exploitation and human trafficking in the EU. Consequently, there is the need to ensure heightened vigilance of all migrant and refugee groups to prevent criminals involved in human trafficking from being able to prey on them.

References

Adler-Nissen, R., Andersen, K. E., & Hansen, L. (2020). Images, emotions, and international politics: The death of Alan Kurdi. *Review of International Studies*, *46*(1), 75-95. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210519000317

Alitavoli, R. (2020). Framing the news on the Syrian War: A comparative study of antiwar. com and cnn.com editorials. *Media, War & Conflict*, *13*(4), 487-505. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1750635219850326

Amnesty International. (2020). 2019 in review - Afghanistan: Civilians continue to pay the price of conflict. https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/01/2019-in-review-afghanistan/

Barakat, S., & Wardell, G. (2002). Exploited by whom? An alternative perspective on humanitarian assistance to Afghan women. *Third World Quarterly, 23*(5), 909-930. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3993395

Bayoumi, M. (2022, March 2). They are 'civilised' and 'look like us': the racist coverage of Ukraine. *Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/mar/02/civilised-european-look-like-us-racist-coverage-ukraine

Bennett, W. L. (1990). Toward a theory of press-state relations in the United States. *Journal of Communication*, *40*(2), 103-127. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1990.tb02265.x
Bennet, W. L., & Paletz, D. L. (1994). *Taken by Storm: The media, public opinion, and US foreign policy in the Gulf War*. University of Chicago Press.

Berry, M., Garcia-Blanco, I., & Moore, K. (2015). *Press coverage of the refugee and migrant crisis in the EU: A content analysis of five European countries*. United Nations High Commission for Refugees. https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/56bb369c9.pdf

Bleiker, R., Campbell, D., Hutchison, E., & Nicholson, X. (2013). The visual dehumanisation of refugees. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 48*(4), 398-416. https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2013.840769

British Association of Social Workers (2022). Invasion of Ukraine. BASW Statement. Online at https://www.basw.co.uk/media/news/2022/mar/invasion-ukraine-%E2%80%93-basw-statement-update [accessed on 16 August 2023]

Brock, L. (1992). Inkatha: Notions of the "primitive" and "tribal" in reporting on South Africa. In B. G. Hawk (Ed.). *Africa media image*, pp. 149-161.

Bunce, M. (2019). Humanitarian communication in a post-truth world. *Journal of Humanitarian Affairs, 1*(1), 49-55. http://dx.doi.org/10.7227/JHA.007

Cénat, J. M., Darius, W. P., Noorishad, P. G., McIntee, S. E., Dromer, E., Mukunzi, J. N., Solola, O., & Williams, M. T. (2022). War in Ukraine and racism: The physical and mental

health of refugees of color matters. *International Journal of Public Health*, 67:1604990. https://doi.org/10.3389/ijph.2022.1604990

Chouliaraki, L., Georgiou, M., Zaborowski, R. (2017). *The European "migration crisis" and the media: A cross-European press content analysis*. London School of Economics and Political Science. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/id/eprint/84670

Colombo, S. (2022). Are death and suffering in Ukraine different than in Yemen, Afghanistan or Ethiopia? Double standards in humanitarian assistance. *Epidemiologia & Prevenzione*, *46*(3), 130-133.

Council of Europe. (2022, November 18). *Protecting and supporting children impacted by the war in Ukraine must be top priority*. Commissioner for Human Right, Council of Europe. https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/protecting-and-supporting-children-impacted-by-the-war-in-ukraine-must-be-top-priority

Crawford, A., & Hutchinson, S. (2016). Mapping the contours of 'everyday security': Time, space and emotion. *British Journal of Criminology, 56*(6), 1184-1202. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azv121

Crawley, H., McMahon, S., & Jones, K. (2016). Victims and villains: Migrant voices in the British media. *Coventry: Centre for Trust, Peace, and Social Relations, Coventry University*. https://pure.coventry.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/8263076/Victims_and_Villains_Digital.pdf

Domke, D. (1997). Journalists, framing, and discourse about race relations. *Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication Monographs*, *164*, 5-55.

Dunlap, R. E. (2014). Trends in public opinion toward environmental issues: 1965–1990. *American environmentalism*, 89-116.

Entman, R. M. (2004). *Projections of power: Framing news, public opinion, and US foreign policy*. University of Chicago Press.

European Commission. (2011, May). "Migrant Integration. Aggregate Report," *Qualitative Eurobarometer*. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/quali/ql_5969_migrant_en.pdf

Finchelstein, G., Clavaud, A., & Peltier, J. (2022). European peoples behind Ukraine: The Ukrainian war seen from France. *Germany, Italy and Poland, Fondation Jean-Jaurès*.

Fürsich, E. (2002). Nation, capitalism, myth: Covering news of economic globalization. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 79*(2), 353-373. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/107769900207900207

Gabriel, J. & Harding, J. (2009). On Being a 'Good Refugee'. In G. Bhattacharya (Ed.), *Ethnicities and Values in a Changing World* (pp. 135-154). Ashgate.

Georgiou, M. (2018). Does the subaltern speak? Migrant voices in digital Europe. *Popular Communication, 16*(1), 45-57.

Gladwell, G. (2021). The impact of educational achievement on the integration and wellbeing of Afghan refugee youth in the UK. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *47*(21), 4914-4936, 10.1080/1369183X.2020.1724424

Government of UK. (2022). Transparency data: Ukraine family scheme, Ukraine sponsorship scheme (Homes for Ukraine) and Ukraine extension scheme visa data. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukraine-family-scheme-application-data/ukraine-family-scheme-and-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-homes-for-ukraine-visa-data--2

Gonzenbach, W. J. (2013). *The media, the president, and public opinion: A longitudinal analysis of the drug issue, 1984-1991*. Routledge.

Guidero, A., & Hallward, M. C. (2019). *Global responses to Conflict and Crisis in Syria and Yemen*: Springer International Publishing.

Hall, S. (1981). The whites of their eyes: Racist ideologies and the media. In G. Bridges & R. Brint (Eds.), *Silver linings: Some strategies for the eighties* (pp. 28-52). Sage Publications.

Harcup, T., & O'Neill, D. (2017). What is news? News values revisited (again). *Journalism Studies, 18*(12), 1470-1488. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2016.1150193

Heath, A., Richards, L., Schmidt, P., Green, E. G., Ramos, A., Davidov, E., & Ford, R. (2016). *Attitudes towards immigration and their antecedents. Topline results from round 7 of the European social survey*. London: The European Social Survey European Research Infrastructure Consortium. https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/docs/findings/ESS7_toplines_issue_7_immigration.pdf

Hoge, J. (1994). Media Pervasiveness. *Foreign Affairs*, *73*, 136-144.

Herman, E. S. & Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing Consent: The political economy of the Mass Media.* The Bodley Head Random House.
International Federation of Social Workers. (2012). The global agenda for social work and social development. Commitment to action. https://www.ifsw.org/wp-content/uploads/ifsw-cdn/assets/globalagenda2012.pdf

Kennan, G. F. (1993). *The other Balkan wars: A 1913 Carnegie Endowment inquiry in retrospect with a new introduction on the present conflict.* Washington: Carnegie Endowment.

Koopmans, R. (1996). Explaining the rise of racist and extreme right violence in Western Europe: Grievances or opportunities? *European Journal of Political Research, 30*(2), 185-216. https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1475-6765.1996.TB00674.X

Koshiw, I. (2022, 6 July). *Ukraine's military plans to limit free movement to make conscription easier*. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/06/ukraines-military-plans-to-limit-free-movement-to-make-conscription-easier

Langdon, N. (2018). Empathy and Othering: Framing Syria's Refugee Crisis in the British Press. https://www.e-ir.info/2018/09/06/empathy-and-othering-framing-syrias-refugee-crisis-in-the-british-press/

Mander, M. S. (1999). *Framing friction: Media and social conflict*: University of Illinois Press.

McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 36*(2), 176-187. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2747787

Morrice, L., Tip, L. K., Collyer, M., & Brown, R. (2021). "You can't have a good integration when you don't have a good communication": English-language learning among resettled refugees in the UK. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *34*(1), 681–699. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fez023

Mullol, A. (2018). *The role of media in the Syrian and Yemeni conflicts: The effect of US and Saudi media coverage in their foreign interventions* [Unpublished Dissertation] Georgetown University. http://hdl.handle.net/10822/1050731

Olsen, G. R., Carstensen, N., & Høyen, K. (2003). Humanitarian crises: What determines the level of emergency assistance? Media coverage, donor interests and the aid business. *Disasters, 27*(2), 109-126. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7717.00223

Ozdora-Aksak, E.,Connolly-Ahern, C., & Dimitrova, D. (2021). Victims of intruders? Refugee portrayals in the news in Turkey, Bulgaria and the UK. *Media, War & Conflict*, *14*(3), 282-302. https://doi.org/10.1177/17506352211013482

Peseckyte, G. (2022, March 31). *EU to step up human trafficking prevention for Ukrainian refugees*. EURACTIV. https://www.euractiv.com/section/health-consumers/news/eu-to-step-up-human-trafficking-prevention-for-ukrainian-refugees/

Pittaway, E., & Bartolomei, L. (2001). Refugees, Race, and Gender: The Multiple Discrimination against Refugee Women. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, *19*(6), 21–32. https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.21236

Preston, R (2022). *For some fleeing Ukraine, the trauma will never end.* Community Care. https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2022/03/15/for-some-fleeing-ukraine-the-trauma-will-never-end/

Primack, B. A., Swanier, B., Georgiopoulos, A. M., Land, S. R., & Fine, M. J. (2009). Association between media use in adolescence and depression in young adulthood: A longitudinal study. *Archives of general psychiatry, 66*(2), 181-188. https://doi.org/10.1001%2Farchgenpsychiatry.2008.532

Robins, M. B. (2003). 'Lost Boys' and the promised land: US newspaper coverage of Sudanese refugees. *Journalism*, *4*(1), 29-49.

Robinson, P. (1999). The CNN effect: Can the news media drive foreign policy? *Review of International Studies, 25*(2), 301-309. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20097596

Rozzelle, J. (2022, April 8). *Whose suffering counts? A discussion looking at crisis coverage beyond Ukraine*. The New Humanitarian. https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/2022/04/08/event-crisis-coverage-beyond-Ukraine

Saxton, A. (2003). 'I certainly don't want people like that here': The discursive construction of asylum seekers. *Media International Australia, 109*(1), 109-120. https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X0310900111

Scheufele, B., & Brosius, H. B. (2001). Media coverage on violence committed by Kurds and Kurdistan Workers Party (PPK) and xenophobic attacks. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, *42*, 447-473.

Scheufele, D. A. (2000). Agenda-setting, priming, and framing revisited: Another look at cognitive effects of political communication. *Mass Communication & Society, 3*(2-3), 297-316. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0323_07

Silverman, S. J. (2016). "Imposter-Children" in the UK Refugee Status Determination Process. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, *32*(3), 30–39. https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.4037 South Africa', in Beverly Hawk (ed.) Africa's Media Image, pp. 149–61.

Stabile, C. A., & Kumar, D. (2005). Unveiling imperialism: Media, gender and the war on Afghanistan. *Media, Culture & Society, 27*(5), 765-782. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443705055734

Staszak, J. F. (2009). Other/ Otherness. In R. Kitchin, & N. Thrift (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography: A 12-Volume Set*. Oxford: Elsevier Science.

Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making news: A study in the construction of reality*. New York: Free Press.

Tyyskä, V., Blower, J., DeBoer, S., Kawai, S., & Walcott, A. (2017, April). *Syrian Refugee crisis in Canadian Media*. Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement. https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/centre-for-immigration-and-

settlement/tmcis/publications/workingpapers/2017_3_Tyysk%C3%A4_Vappu_Blower_J
enna_DeBoer_Samantha_Kawai_Shunya_Walcott_Ashley_The_Syrian_Refugee_Crisis_
in_Canadian_Media.pdf

UNHCR. (2006). *The State of the World's Refugees 2006.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Vollmer, B. A., & Karakayali, S. (2018). The volatility of the discourse on refugees in Germany. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies, 16*(1), 1-22. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2017.1288284

Wallace, R. (2018). Contextualizing the crisis: The framing of Syrian refugees in Canadian print media. *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue Canadienne de Science Politique*, *51*(2), 207-231.

Wike, R., Stokes, B., & Simmons, K. (2016, July 11). *Europeans fear wave of refugees will mean more terrorism, fewer jobs*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/07/11/europeans-fear-wave-of-refugees-will-mean-more-terrorism-fewer-jobs/

Williams, L. (2005). Interpreting services for refugees: Hearing voices? *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care*, *1*(1), 37-49. https://doi.org/10.1108/17479894200500005

Workie, E., Hinkle, L., & Heredia, S. (2022). *The missing link: Connecting eligible asylees and asylum seekers with benefits and services*. Migration Policy Institute. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/asylees-asylum-seekers-benefits

Wright, T. (2004). Collateral coverage: Media images of Afghan refugees, 2001. *Visual Studies, 19*(1), 97-112. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1472586042000204870

Zawadzka-Paluektau, N. (2022). Ukrainian refugees in Polish press. *Discourse & Communication*, *17*(1), 3-22. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/17504813221111636