News Framing and Public Support for a Common Foreign and Security Policy*

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Abstract

A common EU foreign and security policy (CFSP) can be framed by elites and media as a risk or as an opportunity. This article examines the effects of framing in terms of ‘risk’ and ‘opportunity’ on public support. Moreover, we examine first whether the effect of framing CFSP as a ‘risk for the nation-state’ has more impact than ‘risk for the EU’ framing, and second whether fear of globalization moderates the effect of news framing at the individual level. Drawing on a survey-embedded experiment (n = 2,081) we found that participants in the ‘risk’ frame condition showed significantly lower levels of support compared to participants in the ‘opportunity’ condition. Those in the ‘risk for the nation-state’ condition were significantly less supportive of CFSP than those in the ‘risk for the EU’ condition. The framing effect was moderated by fear of globalization so that individuals more afraid of globalization exposed to the ‘risk’ frame condition were significantly more susceptible to ‘risk’ framing than individuals with low fear of globalization. The results provide insights into the effects of valenced news frames and support for specific EU policies.

Introduction

Since the establishment of the European Economic Community, the scholarly literature mainly identified the project of European integration as an

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elite-driven process, largely independent from public support (Hallstein, 1972). However, as the focus of the EU has moved to more political matters rather than the mere pursuit of economic goals, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the use of referendums to decide on a variety of EU-related issues is becoming a common practice, the importance of public attitudes towards further integration is increasingly acknowledged. Recognizing the importance of public support, the EU foreign and security policy (CFSP) represents one of the largest challenges in the history of the EU because its development marks an important step towards further integration: the establishment of a common foreign security and defence policy among EU Member States, which will enable the EU to acquire ‘considerable structure, salience and legitimacy in the process of international politics’ (Allen and Smith 1991, p. 116).  

Eurobarometer reports show that support for EU foreign and defence policy is generally quite high, despite considerable Member State divergence (Eurobarometer 61, 2004, p. 62). Nevertheless, before taking support for granted, several points are worth noticing. First, a closer examination of the available data reveals that Europeans are still ‘far from being favourable to a really integrated defence policy’ (Manigard, 2001, p. 45). Second, given that research has demonstrated that support for European integration in general and CFSP in particular is highly dependent on citizens’ utility perceptions (Gabel, 1998a, b; Carruba and Singh, 2004), ‘the practical question is whether the hypothetical endorsement of increased defence spending to match increased European responsibility would yield public support in the face of real defence budget increases’ (Eichenberg, 2003, p. 637). Third, new information such as that provided by elites and the media may shape public preferences (Zaller, 1992), also in the case of European integration (De Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2003). Since the news media are identified as Europeans’ main source of information about the EU (Eurobarometer 59, 2003, p. 59), certain attributes of their content can be expected to play a key role in that process. Research on the news coverage of the EU has mainly focused on European Parliament elections (Blumler, 1983; De Vreese et al., 2006) or referendums (De Vreese and Semetko, 2004; Siune et al., 1994), but we know only little about the effects of news on support for specific policies such as CFSP.

The present study investigates the potential impact of valenced news frames on public opinion on advances in common EU foreign, security and defence policy. Initial investigations of framing effects on support for the EU

1 Support for European Foreign, Security and Defence policy is the focus of our investigation. Nevertheless, for the sake of brevity we refer to that as ‘support for CFSP’.
have shown that frames can impact public attitudes (De Vreese and Boomgaard, 2003; Schuck and De Vreese, 2006). Nevertheless, those studies, as well as explanations of EU support, mainly focus on diffuse support for integration and little work has been done in explaining public opinion on specific policy areas, such as the common foreign and security policy. The present study addresses exactly this gap by examining the impact of framing CFSP in terms of ‘risk’ and ‘opportunity’ on public support.

I. CFSP and the Need for Public Support

The common EU foreign and security policy was established as the second pillar of the European Union by the Maastricht Treaty as a replacement for EPC (European political co-operation). A number of developments were introduced in the Amsterdam Treaty which declared that ‘the common foreign security policy shall include all questions related to the security of the Union, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence’ (TEU, 1992, Articles J, J.1 and J.3). Advances in the institutional structure, the resources and the scope of CFSP have continued apace with the establishment of a common defence policy within the overall framework of CFSP, the designation of Javier Solana as the High Representative and the launching of operational capabilities such as the European Rapid Reaction Force.

Although the acceleration of steps towards an integrated CFSP has not been unproblematic, it is considered to be central to the future structure of international politics (Howorth, 2001). In the new geopolitical environment, security and defence issues are ‘likely to prove more difficult to manage and more divisive precisely because there is more latitude available in deciding what to do’ (Martin and Roper, 1995, p. 1). Thus, CFSP is a dynamic process whose scope and development is still in the making. Many studies have sought to analyse how CFSP could work more effectively at the institutional level (Tonra, 2003; Clarbo, 1991), while recently researchers have recognized that ‘to some extent the success of the entire project will depend on finding a means to conferring upon it democratic legitimacy’ (Howorth, 2001, p. 779) through the involvement of national parliaments and attention to public opinion (Cameron, 2002; Manigard, 2001; Sinnott, 1997).

The ability of a political system to respond to the preferences of its citizens is central to democratic theory and there is an extensive body of literature stressing that at the domestic level public opinion is often permissive and directive of policy decision-making, even in the previously considered areas of ‘high-office politics’ such as foreign and defence issues (Foyle, 1999;
Powlick and Katz, 1998; Hinckley, 1992). On pragmatic grounds, officials’ rising levels of attention to citizens’ support stem partly from the observation that the nature of public opinion on foreign and security policy issues is more rational than previously assumed. Research has demonstrated that aggregate public opinion does not shift at random, but moves under the influence of new information and experience (Page and Shapiro, 1992, 1988; Holsti, 1992). At the individual level general foreign policy orientations have been found to exhibit some structure with reference to core beliefs and values (Peffley and Hurwitz, 1992). What is more, it has been argued ‘that democratic control of foreign policy improves the quality of the latter [. . .]. The level of democracy is also positively related to levels of international trade, levels of participation in multilateral institutions and capacity to commit credibly to international agreements’ (Koening-Archibugi, 2002, p. 69).

The present institutional framework of CFSP, where decision-making is a mix of intergovernmentalism and EU activity, however, does not allow an equal comparison to the dynamics of domestic foreign and defence policymaking. European publics are not called to vote on CFSP issues but are able to express support through the EP elections or through electoral support for their governments which decide on the direction of integration (Genna, 2005, pp. 2–4). Knowing that CFSP policies also have a domestic political impact (Smith, 2000), one has to consider the relevance of public opinion to the success of processes of EU political integration, such as the meaning and the implications of an integrated CFSP.

II. How Can News Media Matter for Public Support for European Integration?

In addition to other known antecedents of public support for European integration, scholars have recently turned their attention to the potential impact of news media under the assumption that ‘without any direct experience of European politics, people have to rely on other sources of information for their knowledge and evaluations of EU institutions and policies’ (Norris, 2000, p. 205). The main hypothesis behind research is that the effects of news media are likely to be conditioned by their actual contents (Miller et al., 1979) and therefore, ‘what the media report may prove more decisive in altering public attitudes than simply how much information is transmitted about an issue’ (Jacobs and Shapiro, 1996, p. 12, authors’ own italics). Zaller

2 In some cases public control is direct, but it can be very indirect. In some cases, officials are trying to anticipate the future impact of their policies on public opinion when making foreign policy decisions (Foyle, 1999). It should be noted that those studies mainly deal with the impact of public opinion on US national foreign and defence policy.
(1992) argued that if the news media are to impact on policy preferences, their content needs to provide a consistent directional bias. Following on that, research has demonstrated that the tone of news messages can influence the direction of public opinion on domestic policies (Sanders and Gavin, 2003; Sanders et al., 1993), while their effects can be even stronger on perceptions and evaluations of foreign policy issues (Mutz, 1998; Iyengar, 1991).

New information and considerations provided by the media and elites can change citizens’ opinions and foreign policy preferences (Page and Shapiro, 1988). Knowing that, Europeans’ low levels of knowledge about the EU (Anderson, 1998, pp. 571–3) render the way information is presented in the news media particularly relevant to driving overall support. Along this line, research has demonstrated a link between the tone of both the regular and the national election campaign press coverage of EU issues and EU support in Britain (Dalton and Duval, 1986; Carey and Burton, 2004). Norris (2000, pp. 183–207) observed that the tone of regular press and television coverage of European integration and the euro during the period 1995 to 1997 was reflected in aggregate levels of support in most Member States.

Nevertheless, none of the aforementioned studies have gone into an exploration of the nature of the observed effect. For this to be clarified, two issues need to be addressed. First, what are the features of news content that underlie what could be generally termed as ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ direction of coverage of EU issues? Second, what are the mechanisms through which the public’s perception of these features can lead to attitude change?

III. News Framing and Public Opinion

Relevant to the posed questions is the concept of news framing which takes as a starting point that news media can portray the same topic in very different ways by emphasizing certain aspects of an issue at the expense of others. Based on a conceptualization of a news frame as consisting ‘of specific elements, also called the framing devices [. . .] which define the news frame as distinct from other elements in the news [. . .] while other elements may be referred to as core news facts’ (De Vreese, 2004, p. 37), researchers have identified certain types of frames in routine news coverage of political issues. A distinction can be made between studies that investigate generic and issue-specific frames. Issue-specific frames emphasize a subset of relevant considerations and are sensitive to particular issues or events, while ‘generic frames can be applied to a broad range of topics, hereby exceeding thematic, cultural or time limitations (De Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2003, p. 363; see also Reese et al., 2001). The presence of both generic and issue frames in national
news media coverage of EU related issues has been well demonstrated by empirical research (Schuck and De Vreese, 2006; De Vreese et al., 2001; Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000).

In addition to the aforementioned classification, news frames can carry an inherent valence. By valence it is suggested that ‘some frames are indicative of “good and bad” and (implicitly) carry positive and/or negative elements while others appear to be more neutral’ (De Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2003, p. 363). A news article, for example, which focuses on positive or negative economic consequences of EU policies has a specific directional bias by implicitly evaluating the EU as a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ thing.3

This goes beyond stressing different aspects of an issue and additionally suggests that frames may have normative implications. This leads us to the key concept under investigation here: framing effects. A framing effect can be said to occur ‘when in the course of describing an issue or an event, a speaker’s emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions’ (Druckman, 2001, p. 1042). Research has demonstrated that news frames can influence the evaluative dimension of thoughts (Price et al., 1997) and issue interpretations (De Vreese, 2004). The effects of issue-specific frames with an inherent valence on public support for political issues have been implicitly conceptualized in a variety of studies, providing evidence that the directional balance of frames can affect the degree of tolerance towards political movements (Nelson et al., 1997) and support for certain policies (Haider-Markel and Joslyn, 2001).

The dynamics of valenced generic news frames has a strong theoretical foundation in psychology, where Tversky and Kahneman (1979, 1981) have argued that different ways of framing an issue can impact on certain psychological mechanisms, thus producing predictable shifts of preference. Specifically, prospect theory suggests that preferences are the outcome of a value-function (instead of a utility-function) whereas decision-making is highly dependent on the way identical outcomes are expressed as negative or positive deviations (gains or losses) from a neutral preference outcome. In their classic ‘Asian disease’ experiment they showed that when presented with the same factual information framed in terms of gains people are often risk averse and when framed in terms of losses, often risk taking (Tversky and Kahneman, 1981). Considering that the outcome of many situations can be conceptualized in terms of losses or gains from the present point, valenced

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3 We would like to note that the conceptualization of a frame as inherently positive or negative depends on the perspective. Here we acknowledge that there might be no consensus with respect to for whom the information is positive or negative per se.
generic frames can be widely applied and have important implications for the direction of opinion on a variety of issues.\textsuperscript{4}

Framing issues and situations in terms of ‘gains’ or ‘losses’ from a current state is highly relevant to the concept of EU integration and media can affect this perception (De Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2003; Schuck and De Vreese, 2006) for example, by framing enlargement in terms of ‘risks’ and ‘opportunity’ which can either reduce or enhance EU support. As one of the most integrative among EU policies, CFSP can be easily conceptualized as a ‘risk’ versus ‘opportunity’ situation, which is also reflected in the presence of ‘risk’ and ‘opportunity’ frames in newspaper coverage of CFSP related issues in a number of Member States (Kandyla and De Vreese, 2008). The degree and the direction of CFSP integration have raised debates about the balance of sovereignty as well as the economic and military interests of domestic and EU actors (Major, 2005). The limited body of research stresses the role of multilevel utility considerations in driving individual support, as advances in this area ‘can affect the provision of multiple goods, even in very indirect and secondary ways and individuals recognize and take that into account when deciding whether to support a particular policy’ (Carruba and Singh, 2004, p. 219). Support can also be a function of perceptions of common interest where self-interest and EU interests are interdependent (Genna, 2005).

Thus, here ‘risk’ framing can be perceived as putting emphasis on the negative aspects and unwanted consequences of an integrated CFSP, whereas ‘opportunity’ framing focuses on future benefits. Following previous research, we expect ‘risk’ framing to have a negative impact on public support and ‘opportunity’ framing to advance it. What is more, research has forcefully demonstrated that people frequently use the nation-state as a vehicle for evaluations of the EU, are attached to their national communities and ‘are ultimately concerned about problems related to the degradation of the nation state’ (McLaren, 2002, p. 554).\textsuperscript{5} Drawing on that, we extend prospect theory, expecting a difference in the impact of risk depending on whether the issue ‘at stake’ is the nation-state or the EU. Specifically, we hypothesize that negative consequences for the nation-state would be perceived as ‘higher’ and would lead to even less support for CFSP than when it is suggested that it is the EU that will face the

\textsuperscript{4} In health communication several studies investigate the risk perception of people by focusing on framing identical information in terms of ‘gain’ or ‘losses’. Schneider \textit{et al.} (2001) found that ‘loss’ framed messages were more persuasive than gain framed messages in motivating preventive health behaviour (see also Rimal and Real, 2003). Loss framing is more persuasive because it emphasizes the risks of not taking action (Kahneman and Tversky, 1981).

\textsuperscript{5} For an excellent discussion on the role of perceptions of domestic politics and national benefits from EU integration in driving overall EU support see Anderson (1998).
We do not expect variation in the impact of opportunity framing depending on whether future benefits refer to the nation-state or the EU.

IV. Moderator of ‘Risk’ Versus ‘Opportunity’ Framing Effects

Media effects research has repeatedly provided evidence that people do not respond to the content of media messages in the same way (see Zaller, 1992). Consequently, news frames may not be expected to affect all individuals equally and framing effects research has recently started to pay attention to the influence of individual orientations and attitudes of media users that exist prior to exposure to news frames. Nevertheless, the role of different concepts as potential moderators is still mixed. The role of political knowledge, for example, in moderating the effects of news frames has been repeatedly examined (Schuck and De Vreese, 2006; Druckman and Nelson, 2003; Nelson et al., 1997). An individual’s ‘need to evaluate’ (Druckman and Nelson, 2003), degree of expertise (Druckman, 2004) and relevant values (Slothuus, 2005) have also been found to moderate framing effects. In this study we explore the potentially moderating role of fear of globalization. Research has shown that feelings of hostility towards EU integration can be related to perceptions of cultural threats (McLaren, 2002). As the list of fears related to issues of foreign and security policy is rather diverse (Manigard, 2001) it is possible that the bases of support are also multifaceted (Carruba and Singh, 2004). Because advances in CFSP can involve perceptions of central features of globalization, an individual’s fear of globalization processes can be relevant to the issue under investigation. We expect fear of globalization to define susceptibility to the effect of ‘risk framing’ as follows: CFSP advances open the door to political transnationalization by requiring the transfer of sovereignty from national to supra-national institutions and posing constraints on domestic foreign and defence decision-making. Consequently they can be viewed as a threat to the nation and be less supported by those individuals who are more afraid of globalization. But, an integrated CFSP can also be a safeguard against globalization, protecting common European interests from international forces. Consequently, when advances in CFSP are perceived as a threat to the EU they will also be less supported by individuals with a higher fear of globalization.

Research has shown that ‘territorial’ proximity to places that have been already attacked by terrorists advances perceptions of future risks of terrorism (Fischhoff et al., 2003). Nevertheless, here we are interested in the perceived distance or proximity of risk, where the nation-state is perceived as more proximate and the EU as more distant. The well-documented association of feelings of national identity with support for the EU is also relevant to the concept of the nation-state as more proximate to the individual (see McLaren, 2002).
V. Hypotheses

The central starting point of this study is the importance of public opinion for the legitimacy of CFSP. Previous evidence shows that news media coverage of foreign affairs can affect public opinion on foreign and defence policy issues and support for war (Lewis, 2004; Bennett and Paletz, 1994). Given that the media are repeatedly named by Europeans as their most important source of news about European integration and its policies (Eurobarometer 61, 2004, p. 62), there are good reasons to believe that this is their main source of news and information about CFSP too. Research has forcefully demonstrated that foreign policy opinions are responsive to the available information as provided by the media and political elites (Page and Shapiro, 1988). Unlike other foreign policy domains, attitudes towards CFSP have been shown to lack meaningful structure even for citizens with relatively high levels of knowledge (Sinnott, 2000). Given that framing effects are less likely to occur when an individual has strongly held attitudes or high personal involvement in an issue (Levin et al., 1998, p. 160), we expect that the way CFSP is framed has important implications for public support. In examining the link between public support for CFSP and potential framing effects of news media content we look at the effect of ‘risk’ and ‘opportunity’ (valenced) frames, the enhanced effects of risks that are proximate and the moderating effect of fear of globalization. Based on the considerations outlined above we formulate the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Framing CFSP as a ‘risk’ has negative effects on public support for CFSP.

Hypothesis 1b: Framing CFSP as an ‘opportunity’ has positive effects on public support for CFSP.

Hypothesis 2: ‘Risk’ framing about the nation-state has a bigger negative effect on support for CFSP than ‘risk’ framing about the EU.

Hypothesis 3: The effect of risk framing is moderated by fear of globalization so that individuals with high levels of fear of globalization who are exposed to the ‘risk’ frame condition will be significantly less supportive of CFSP compared to individuals with low fear of globalization.

VI. Methods

Design

This study used a 2x2 between-groups experimental design with random assignment to one of four conditions, as part of a general survey held in the
Netherlands. In addition to the between-conditions comparisons, we also tested a conservative model in which the effect of exposure to a news frame was compared to other known antecedents of support for advances in EU integration and CFSP. We opted for the experimental design because it is superior in an attempt to isolate the effects of a key independent variable (Kinder and Palfrey, 1993). To avoid certain artefacts of a laboratory setting we decided to conduct a web-based survey experiment and ensured a more realistic setting by using a design that resembles an everyday media experience (reading newspapers online).7

Sample

Given that research on support for the EU has shown that there are significant differences in support for EU policies between different age groups (Inglehart, 1970), a large, diverse sample is appropriate. Two thousand and eighty-two participants (valid cases only) were recruited to ensure a variation in terms of gender and age (51.5 per cent male, aged 18–90). The subjects were recruited from the CentERdata panel which includes a representative sample of 5,000 households in the Netherlands. The response rate was 68 per cent (following AAPOR RR1).

Procedures

The experiment was carried out in May 2005. Participants were assigned randomly to one of four conditions on accepting an online invitation. They were told that the survey was about opinions on current affairs. Demographics were collected on recruitment in the sampling frame of CentERdata panel and all control variables were known before the experimental manipulation. Participants were exposed to a news story that framed CFSP as either a ‘risk for the EU’, a ‘risk for the nation-state’ (the Netherlands), an ‘opportunity for the EU’ or an ‘opportunity for the nation-state’. They were told that the story was published in a daily newspaper, without specifying which one so as to ensure the absence of source characteristics on defining the success of frames (Druckman, 2001). After having read the news article, participants completed a post-test questionnaire which called for their responses to four questions asking their opinion about CFSP.

Stimulus Material

We designed the stimulus material building on content analytical work showing that ‘risk’ and ‘opportunity’ frames occur regularly in press coverage

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7 For an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of online research methodology see Reips (2000).
of EU enlargement (Schuck and De Vreese, 2006) and CFSP issues in particular (Kandyla and De Vreese, 2008). The stimulus material consisted of one news article in four alternative variations (see Appendices I and II) which was produced rather than selected, allowing us to keep the sub-headline and the core section with factual information identical in all four versions. This approach not only ensures that the stimulus is representative of the frame under investigation but also that participants have not already been exposed to the news story.

Within this design the first condition represents the ‘risk for the Netherlands’ frame, the second represents the ‘risk for the EU frame’, the third the ‘opportunity for the Netherlands’ frame and the forth the ‘opportunity for the EU’ frame. The focal point of the news story was the gradual implementation of a common EU foreign and defence policy. Within the experimental condition three parts varied according to the valence of the frames. The first part consisted of a headline that characterized CFSP as a ‘Big danger for the Netherlands’, ‘Big danger for Europe’, ‘Big opportunity for the Netherlands’ or ‘Big opportunity for Europe’. The second part consisted of a quote that evaluated the future benefits or losses of advances in CFSP either for the nation-state or the EU. This part covers two of the frame dimensions that have been identified both in EU enlargement and CFSP newspaper coverage: (1) future benefits/losses; (2) positive/negative quote. The third part covers the ‘emotional pro/contra’ frame dimension as it consists of a quote that explicitly evaluates CFSP as either ‘risk’ or ‘opportunity’.

VII. Measures

The Dependent Variable

Support for a common EU defence and security policy was measured by four questions on five-point scales where higher values indicate more support: (1) ‘A common European defence and foreign policy is a good thing’; (2) ‘The EU should have a common foreign policy’; (3) ‘A common European defence and foreign policy is positive for The Netherlands’; (4) ‘The EU should be able to use military force in international conflicts’. Responses were summed and then divided by four so that the index of support is a scale that ranges

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8 The design of the stimulus material as a combination of an identical core section and sections that consist of the frames under investigation has been common in previous empirical work on framing effects (see, for example, Price et al., 1997).
from 1 to 5 ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.82$). The Standardized Cronbach’s $\alpha$ for the index is 0.87.9

We first look at the between ‘risk’ and ‘opportunity’ conditions means and then we specify a model of support where the influence of exposure to the stimulus material is assessed when known antecedents of support for the EU and CFSP are controlled for. This was done with multivariate stepwise OLS regression modelling.10 The explanatory variables are the following.

**Experimental Conditions**

(1) Risk frame: for analytical purposes we created a dummy variable, where respondents exposed to the article that framed CFSP as a ‘risk’ either for the EU or the Netherlands are assigned a value of 1 and those exposed to the ‘opportunity’ frames a value of 0. (2) Risk for the nation-state frame: measured with a dummy variable with respondents in the ‘risk for the nation-state’ condition being assigned a value of 1 and respondents in the ‘risk for the EU’ condition a value of 0. (3) Opportunity for the nation-state frame: dummy variable where respondents who received the ‘opportunity for the nation-state’ frame took a value of 1 and those at the ‘opportunity for the EU’ a value of 0.

**Moderator**

Fear of globalization was measured by the question: ‘In the process towards economies of scale many jobs will disappear from the Netherlands’ ($M = 2.44$, $SD = .82$). The variable was recoded into two groups at the mean: (1) participants with ‘high fear of globalization’ and (2) participants with ‘low fear of globalization’.

9 Although it is possible that the four items measure different aspects of support, the high correlations between them indicate that this index does tap diffuse support for CFSP. The bivariate correlation between the four questions that form the ‘general attitudes towards the European Union’ index is significant ($p < .001$; 2-tailed test). Since the data that make up the scale are not normally distributed around the mean value due to the ordinal level of measurement, Kendall’s Tau was also calculated and yielded significant correlation coefficients for all items ($p > .01$; 2-tailed test). To gain more insight into the structure of the scale the four items were subjected to Principal Components Analysis, which confirmed that they measure aspects of the same underlying variable. Prior to performing PCA the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin value was 0.82, exceeding the minimum value and Barlett’s Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance thus supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. PCA showed one component with Eigenvalues more than one, explaining 72.3 per cent of the variance.

10 It could be argued that maximum likelihood estimation (logit and probit) models would provide a more suitable model estimation of the relationship under study. Nevertheless, if previous research is to be believed, it is quite unlikely that OLS results presented here will be massively different (Sanders and Brynin, 1998).
Other Antecedents

In order to investigate whether the hypothesized relationships are significant when relevant predictors are included in the model, control variables were used. In the absence of empirical research on predictors of support for CFSP we had to use variables that have been identified as important antecedents of support for the EU. The first block of the model includes the key independent variable. In the second block we also control for socio-demographic characteristics, political knowledge, political interest, satisfaction with the incumbent government and evaluations of the national economy. We expect these to be related to support as follows: men are more supportive (Nelsen and Guth, 2000) and younger citizens are more supportive (Inglehart, 1967). In addition, higher educational attainment (see Gabel, 1998a), political sophistication (Inglehart 1970), positive evaluations of the incumbent government (Ray, 2003) and of the national economy will lead to more support (Gabel and Whitten, 1997).

We additionally control for fear of immigration and feelings of national identity, expecting that respondents with high fear of immigration will be less supportive of CFSP (De Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2006) and that those who feel a more European than a national identity will be more supportive of advanced integrative EU policies such as CFSP (McLaren, 2002). Indicators of overall support for the EU are also included expecting that positive attitudes towards EU integration will drive support for specific policies (Svensson, 2002) but also to control for their possible effect of CFSP support which could otherwise bias the estimates for the explanatory variables. Attitudes to EU–US co-operation and, in the full model, fear of globalization are also controlled for without any theoretical expectation. All items and statistical descriptives are found in Appendix II.

VIII. Results

Effects of Experimental Condition on Support for CFSP

Hypotheses 1a and 1b predicted differences in support between respondents in the ‘risk’ and ‘opportunity’ conditions. A One-Way ANOVA (Table 1) confirmed a significant effect of the ‘risk’ versus ‘opportunity’ conditions on support for CFSP \((F(1, 2090) = 18.52, p < .01)\). Respondents in the ‘risk’ condition have a mean support for CFSP of 3.30, which is less than the mean value of support for the full sample \((M = 3.38, SD = 0.82)\), while those exposed to the opportunity condition have a mean of 3.46. Hypothesis 2 also received support in a One-Way ANOVA. Respondents in the ‘risk for the
nation-state’ condition exhibit significantly lower mean support than participants in the ‘risk for the EU’ condition ($F(1, 1039) = 5.21, p < .05$). There is no significant difference in support for CFSP between respondents exposed to the ‘opportunity for the nation-state’ and the ‘opportunity for the EU’ condition. Considering that the index of ‘support towards the CFSP’ has a mean of 3.38 and a standard deviation of 0.82, we also conclude that exposure to a text framed in terms of risks did not lead to opposition to CFSP but it did, nevertheless, cause a considerable variation in individual support and may suppress enthusiasm.

Table 2 displays the results for the full model. Respondents in the risk condition were significantly affected by the frame. The effect is in the expected direction, with those exposed to a text framed in terms of risk significantly less supportive of CFSP than those exposed to the opportunity frames. The effect of the experimental condition remains significant, with only small variations in magnitude, in all blocks. Therefore, we can be confident in the hypothesis that, even when individual characteristics that could a priori affect support are controlled for, exposure to either ‘risk’ or ‘opportunity’ frames can make respondents less positive or more in their attitudes towards that policy.11 Finally we note that for most of the control

### Table 1: CFSP Support by Experimental Condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Risk condition ($N = 1,041$)</th>
<th>Opportunity condition ($N = 1,051$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFSP support</td>
<td>3.30\textsubscript{a} (0.03)</td>
<td>3.46\textsubscript{b} (0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk for the EU condition ($N = 525$)</td>
<td>Risk for the Netherlands condition ($N = 516$)</td>
<td>Opportunity for the EU condition ($N = 524$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFSP support</td>
<td>3.36\textsubscript{a} (0.03)</td>
<td>3.25\textsubscript{a} (0.04)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Authors’ own data.

**Note:** Cell entries are the mean scores of CFSP support on a five-point scale (1 = less support, 5 = more support), standard deviations in parentheses. Different subscripts \(a, b\) indicate significant between condition difference with \(p < .01\) while different subscripts \(c, d\) indicate significant condition difference with \(p < .05\).

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11 The interaction effect of fear of globalization on the effect of ‘risk’ frame is in the expected direction but did not reach statistical significance.
variables the direction of the effect is as expected while their significance value changes between blocks.12

The Moderating Effect of Fear of Globalization

Given our theoretical expectations we formally test the moderating effect of fear of globalization using a split-half sample of (1) respondents with high fear of globalization and (2) respondents with low fear of globalization. As Table 3 shows, the difference between the two groups is in the expected direction. Like in the full model (Table 2), between respondents with high

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12 More European identity, higher level of overall support for the EU and satisfaction with the government and the economy are significantly related with support for CFSP in the expected direction. Male and more educated respondents were also more supportive but the result did not reach statistical significance, while there was no difference between those with high and low political knowledge and also between older and younger citizens. More positive attitudes towards EU–US co-operation lead to significantly more support for CFSP. Fear of immigration did not perform as expected, with respondents more afraid of immigration significantly more supportive of CFSP.
Table 3: Support for Common EU Foreign and Security Policy by Fear of Globalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Social demographics and predispositions</th>
<th>Attitudinal predispositions</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Low fear group</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-0.10 (0.05)*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.04 (0.05)</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>Political knowledge</td>
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<td>0.12*** (0.03)</td>
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<td>Government satisfaction and economic optimism</td>
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<td>0.19*** (0.03)</td>
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<td>Fear of immigration</td>
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<td>Support for the EU</td>
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<td>.41*** (0.04)</td>
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<td>EU identity</td>
<td>.12* (0.04)</td>
<td>.18*** (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for closer co-operation between EU and US</td>
<td>.17*** (0.02)</td>
<td>.05* (0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.6*** (0.13)</td>
<td>2.37*** (0.13)</td>
</tr>
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<td>(7, 1211) 9.09***</td>
<td>(7, 855) 12.03***</td>
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Source: Authors’ own data.

Notes: OLS regression. Entries are B’s, standard errors in parentheses. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.
fear of globalization, those exposed to a text framed in terms of risk are significantly less supportive of CFSP than those exposed to the opportunity frame. Respondents with low fear of globalization are just somewhat affected by the risk frame: those in the risk condition are marginally less supportive of CFSP than those in the opportunity condition but not at a statistically significant level. Taken together, the result provides empirical support for our hypothesis that fear of globalization moderates the effect of risk framing. Individuals with high fear were not only significantly affected by the risk frame but also at a greater magnitude than those with low fear. In passing we should note that the direction and the size of the coefficients of the control variables are almost comparable to the full sample model.

Conclusion

The present study provided empirical support for the impact of valenced news frames on support for a common EU foreign, security and defence policy. We found that participants in the ‘risk’ framing conditions expressed significantly less support for CFSP than those in the ‘opportunity’ conditions. The regression analysis showed that the effect remained significant, with only small variations in magnitude even when relevant antecedents of support were controlled for, allowing us to be more confident in attributing it to the experimental manipulation. The concept of ‘risk’ and ‘opportunity’ valenced frames that is investigated here has a strong theoretical foundation in prospect theory (Tversky and Kahneman, 1979), indicating that people’s political preferences can be quite dependent on frames, in the same way as it has been demonstrated in other disciplines such as health and marketing communication (Rothman and Salovey, 1997; Levin et al. 2002; Jackson and Dutton, 1988). Given that the operationalization of the frames was based on findings of content analytical work on the framing of EU and CFSP related issues in the national news media (De Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2003; Kandyla and De Vreese, 2008), our analysis suggests that variance in public perceptions of

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13 In order to gain a more valuable insight into the moderating effect of fear of globalization we replaced our risk frame dummy with the two risk frames disaggregated and ran the same model. The analysis showed that among individuals with high fear of globalization a text framed in terms of risk for the nation-state was significantly related to less support for CFSP. There was no significant difference among individuals with low fear of globalization. For reasons of economy regression diagnostics are not reported here.

14 More European identity, higher levels of overall support for CFSP, closer co-operation between the EU and the US and satisfaction with the government and the economy were significantly related to support for the EU for both groups. Again, fear of immigration was significantly inversely related to support. For gender, age, level of education and political knowledge the results are also not significantly associated with support.
the implications of an integrated CFSP among individuals can potentially be attributed to the way information is presented by the news media, with implications for individual support.

Moreover, this study extended previous research on risk aversion to demonstrate that proximity affects the magnitude of the perceived risk but not of the perceived benefits. ‘Distance’ matters in such a way that if an outcome involves close-by risks, such as risks for the nation-state, citizens are less supportive than when it involves risks that are more distant. Respondents in the ‘risk for the nation-state’ condition were not only the least supportive of CFSP but also significantly less supportive of CFSP than individuals in the alternative ‘risk’ condition. Respondents in the ‘opportunity for the nation-state’ condition did not exhibit significantly more support than individuals in the ‘opportunity for the EU’ condition, suggesting that the effects of proximity are dependent on the type of frame through which information is presented. The centrality of utilitarian and normative perceptions of national interests in driving individual support for the EU in general and CFSP in particular, has been well documented (Carruba and Singh, 2004; Anderson, 1998), but they have not been examined in the context of prospect theory and ‘risk’ framing effects. Given that the news media and political elites tend to present global and European news from a domestic point of view (Trenz, 2004), the dynamics of valence frames which associate advances in EU and CFSP integration with risky outcomes that are at a level closer to the respondent, specifically the nation’s interests, can have important implications for the direction of public opinion.

We found that the framing effect was not fully independent; it is moderated by fear of globalization. Individuals with high fear of globalization who read a text framed in terms of risk were significantly less supportive of CFSP than respondents with low fear of globalization, who were just somewhat affected by the risk frame. This adds to previous research on the role of personal attributes relevant to the issue under investigation in moderating the effect of frames. Overall, evidence shows that valence frames are not pervasive or omnipotent; rather it is individual characteristics that define, to a great extent, susceptibility to framing effects.

Due to the lack of empirical work on the antecedents of support for CFSP the choice of the controls was based on what has been shown to a priori affect attitudes towards the EU. Although it could be argued that those predictors are irrelevant to CFSP and, thus, unable to demonstrate that the effect can be attributed to the frames, the direction and the statistical significance of some of them show that this is not the case. We also examine whether they are also similar to antecedents of support for CFSP in particular. More European identity, more positive evaluations of the government and the domestic
economy were significantly associated with support for CFSP in the same way as it has been documented for overall EU support.

Socio-demographic characteristics and political skills do not seem to be significantly related to support for CFSP. The inclusion of attitudes towards the co-operation between the EU and the US shows that those more supportive of co-operation were significantly more supportive of CFSP as well, verifying Eichenberg’s claims that Europeans like to ‘have it both ways’ (Eichenberg, 2003, p. 635). What is more, we found attitudes towards the EU to be considerably associated with variation in support for CFSP, showing that diffuse support for the EU can drive support for specific EU policies, such as CFSP (Svensson, 2002).15 The only predictor that performed contrary to the expectations is fear of immigration. Explanations of overall EU support stress that an integrated EU (which imposes threats to the cultural integrity and the labour market) would be viewed with hostility by individuals who are afraid of immigration (De Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2005). Advances in CFSP do not seem to pose the same problems though, as they do not address aspects of xenophobia or national labour market threats. What is more, an integrated CFSP is an important step towards further EU integration, implicitly defining the EU’s territorial space which could be one of the reasons that CFSP is supported by those individuals that are more afraid of immigration.

This study has a number of shortcomings that merit attention. First, it is a single study with one post-test. As indicators of support were not measured before the experimental manipulation we cannot assess whether the frames caused a pre-post effect in all conditions or merely a between-condition effect. Nevertheless, due to the use of a large, representative sample, random assignment to one of four conditions and the theoretical interest in between-group differences as opposed to change, we believe that the absence of pre-experimental measures, that could potentially cue the respondents, is not a problem here. Second, the operationalization of the moderator using a single item was caused by questionnaire length constraints. Future research should improve the measurement of the moderators of CFSP framing effects by using multiple indicators, which would distinguish both between different dimensions of globalization and between sociotropic and egocentric fears of globalization as well as issues of national security, opinions on warfare and the role of the military (Carruba and Singh, 2004).16

15 The bivariate correlation coefficient between ‘support for CFSP’ and ‘attitudes towards the EU’ is 0.41.
16 The latter is not such an omission to the investigation of support to an integrated CFSP in general, but would enable us to also examine potentially differential effects on support for specific policies imposed by CFSP.
These limitations notwithstanding, the present study should be considered a first approach to the examination of the effects of valence framing effects on a novel issue. Valence framing effects may prove very important for the direction of support for CFSP, on which citizens’ attitudes lack an adequate level of stability.

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Appendix I

News Article for Experiment (Stimulus Material) in Alternative Versions

Risk for the Nation-State and the EU (in parentheses) Condition

‘Big danger for the Netherlands’ (‘Big danger for Europe’). European Security- and Defence policy under way.

The latest plans of the European Union are a big danger for the Netherlands. ‘The Netherlands are forced to take part in military operations and will lose the right to make their own decisions’ (a big danger for Europe. ‘Europe will not be able to come to an agreement on this topic and is threatened to fall apart’) according to J.M. Nijboer, professor in European integration at the University of Maastricht. A common foreign policy might lead in the future to a common security policy. This will allow the European Union to apply civil and military means. The Union can apply these means for missions outside its borders in order to keep peace, prevent conflict or reinforce international safety operations.

A common policy will become reality when the European Council unanimously agrees on this topic. In the upcoming years the Member States of the EU are obliged to improve their military capital. An agency will be created in the field of defence. This agency will undertake research and co-ordinate purchase of arms. ‘Dutch interests are not served with these plans. The threat of losing sovereignty is too big’ (‘European interests in other fields are not served with these plans. There is a big threat that this only leads to more arguments between countries’) adds Professor Nijboer.

Opportunity for the Nation-State and the EU (in parentheses) Condition

‘Big opportunity’ for the Netherlands (‘Big opportunity for Europe’). European Security- and Defence policy under way.

The latest plans of the European Union are a big opportunity for the Netherlands (a big opportunity for Europe) to be part of a safer world according to J.M. Nijboer, professor in European integration at the University of Maastricht. A common foreign policy might lead in the future to a common security policy. This will allow the European Union to apply civil and military means. The Union can apply these means for missions outside its borders in order to keep peace, prevent conflict or reinforce international safety operations.

A common policy will become reality when the European Council unanimously agrees on this topic. In the upcoming years the Member States of the EU are obliged to improve their military capital. An agency will be created in the field of defence. This agency will undertake research and co-ordinate purchase of arms. ‘The Netherlands has the opportunity to play an important role to guarantee security and peace. We should not let this chance pass by’ (‘Europe has the opportunity to play an important role to guarantee security and peace. We should not let this chance go by’) adds Professor Nijboer.
Appendix II
Overview of the Variables Used in the Models

Dependent Variable
Support for CFSP: was measured on a scale by adding up and then dividing by 4 responses to the following questions, so that the additive index ranges from 1 to 5:

1. ‘A common European defence and foreign policy is a good thing’
2. ‘The EU should have a common foreign policy’
3. ‘A common European defence and foreign policy is positive for the Netherlands’
4. ‘The EU should be able to use military force in international conflicts’

I strongly disagree = 1; I disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; I agree = 4; I strongly agree = 5 (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.87$, $M = 3.38$, SD = 0.82).

Moderator
Fear of globalization: was measured by the question: ‘In the process towards economies of scale many jobs will disappear from the Netherlands’.

I strongly disagree = 1; I disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; I agree = 4; I strongly agree = 5 (M = 2.44, SD = 0.82).

Demographic Characteristics
Gender: male = 1; female = 0 (M = 0.51, SD = 0.50)
Age: Age is recoded as the self-reported number (M = 48.1, SD = 15.8)

Satisfaction with the Incumbent Government (Government Support) and the Economy
Satisfaction with the economy: ‘The Dutch economy will get worse in the next 12 months’
I strongly agree = 1; I agree = 2; Neutral = 3; I disagree = 4; I strongly disagree = 5
Satisfaction with the incumbent government: ‘The current government is doing well’
I strongly disagree = 1; I disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; I agree = 4; I strongly agree = 5
Responses to those questions were summed up and then divided by 2, so that the index ranges from 1 to 5 (Cronbachs $\alpha = 0.625$ ) (M = 2.7, SD = 0.87)
Economic Calculation-Human Capital

Educational Level: was measured by respondents ‘Educational training in CBS categories’ where higher values indicate higher educational level (Range 1–6, M = 3.65, SD = 1.478)

Political Skills

Political knowledge: was measured on a scale by adding up and then dividing by 4 correct answers to the following questions:

1. ‘To which political party does Henk Kamp belong?’
2. ‘Which is the political function of Karla Peijs?’
3. ‘What is the number of EU Member States at this moment’?
4. ‘What is the name of the Dutch Commissioner?’ (Correct answers took a value of 1 and wrong answers – including non-answers – a value of 0. (Mokken scale: H value = 0.37, M = 0.52, SD = 0.32)

Political interest: was measured in a scale by adding up and then dividing by 2 responses to the questions:

1. ‘How much interest do you have in politics’?
2. ‘How much interest do you have in EU politics, that is with issues that have to do with the European Union’?

Very much = 5; Quite a lot = 4; Average-some = 3; Little = 2; Very little = 1 (Cronbach’s α = 0.795, M = 2.71, SD = 90)

Attitudinal Predispositions

Fear of immigration: ‘The Netherlands should allow more immigrants (asylum seekers)’
I strongly agree = 1; I agree = 2; Neutral = 3; I disagree = 4; I strongly disagree = 5 (M = 3.83, SD = 1.03)

Fear of globalization: ‘In the process towards economies of scale many jobs will disappear from the Netherlands’
I strongly agree = 1; I agree = 2; Neutral = 3; I disagree = 4; I strongly disagree = 5 (M = 2.44, SD = 0.83)

Identity: ‘How do you see your own identity’?
Dutch only = 1; First Dutch and then European = 2; First European and then Dutch = 3; Only European = 4 (M = 1.64, SD = 0.60)

Attitudes towards the EU: were measured in a scale by adding up and then dividing by 4 responses to the following questions, so that the additive index ranges from 1 to 5:
People have several opinions concerning the European Union. What is your opinion (attitude) about the European Union?

1. Very negative = 1; Negative = 2; Neutral = 3; Positive = 4; Very positive = 5

It is a bad thing that the Netherlands participate in the euro

1. I strongly agree = 1; I agree = 2; Neutral = 3; I disagree = 4; I strongly disagree = 5

The enlargement of the European Union goes too fast

1. I strongly agree = 1; I agree = 2; Neutral = 3; I disagree = 4; I strongly disagree = 5

Turkey should become a member of the EU

1. I strongly disagree = 1; I disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; I agree = 4; I strongly agree = 5

(Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.728$, $M = 2.71$, $SD = 0.75$)

Attitudes towards EU–US co-operation: ‘The EU should co-operate closer with the United States’

1. I strongly disagree = 1; I disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; I agree = 4; I strongly agree = 5 ($M = 2.7$, $SD = 0.98$)

References


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