

Research in Brief

Public perceptions on migration
and journalistic roles:

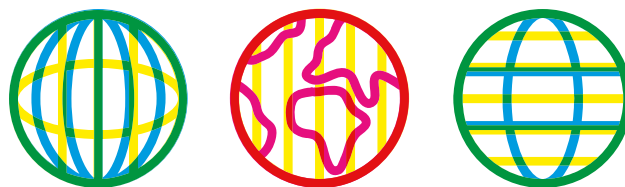
Recommendations for media professionals

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opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration



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Project: OPPORTUNITIES- Crises as Opportunities: towards a Level Telling Field on Migration and a New Narrative of Successful Integration

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1. Policy context

For many years, migration has been a highly salient topic in societal and political debates in the European Union (EU). However, since 2015-2016, when a large number of refugees and asylum seekers entered the EU as (amongst others) a result of the Syrian civil war, the situation has increasingly been characterized as a 'crisis' by media and political actors, and as a result, by the public as well. Over time, this crisis narrative has deepened existing cleavages, or opened up new ones within the EU. There was a lack of cross-country coordination in the reception and integration of these many asylum seekers and refugees. Thus, the migration crisis evolved into a crisis of the EU as well. The ambition of the OPPORTUNITIES project is to develop a 'new' narrative on migration that acknowledges that every crisis is also an opportunity: a chance to revisit foundational principles, create new knowledge and initiate forward-looking narrative strategies which allow us to come to terms with a world in flux. Grounded in an ethics of dialogue and a human rights approach, the narrative of OPPORTUNITIES redirects attention to the benefits of migration, as suggested in the European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (2011) and moves towards a more successful integration of migrants. The objectives of the project are eight-fold, but this policy brief geared towards media professionals focuses on the findings of Task 1 in Work Package (WP) 4, which attempts to provide an answer to the fourth objective of OPPORTUNITIES:

To analyse the changing attitudes of citizens towards migrants in European member states using quantitative methods, and develop a clearer understanding of the cumulative effects and consequences of media selection behaviour on individual attitudinal outcomes when adopting narratives on migration.

In WP4, titled 'Analysis of changing attitudes and understanding', the main goal is to quantitatively analyze dynamics and outcomes of narratives. Migration into Europe is increasingly (super)diverse in terms of motives for migration, social status, urgency, country of origin, and cultural and ethnic diversity... (Geldof, 2019). Aspects of this growing diversity have been used by political actors and news media to undercut the legitimacy of some migrants' claims to protection by, for instance, framing asylum seekers as "economic migrants" (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; De Coninck, 2020). This was particularly prominent during the migration crisis in 2014-2016 and now the war in the Ukraine (De Coninck, 2022), which resulted in immigration becoming one of the most polarised issues in society.

Despite the growing diversity of the migrant population, there is an important mismatch between this social reality and the academic literature in migration studies. Most contemporary studies on public perceptions of migrants document either general attitudes towards them on a positive to negative continuum or focus on specific perceived threats (e.g., economic, cultural). As such, these studies often fail to consider to what extent the growing heterogeneity of migrant groups is reflected in public perceptions. As migrant groups are diverse, to what extent can people still hold positive or negative feelings towards 'the migrant', envisioned as a single homogeneous category? This lack of theoretical/conceptual clarity calls for a more nuanced approach.

Research guided by a deservingness framework can address this important caveat. This framework allows for the examination of the conditions under which individuals are willing to support the granting of rights and entitlements to specific individuals or groups. In the context of the current project, the framework could provide media professionals with better tools to study or frame complex judgements about migrants by the public by evaluating different migrant characteristics (e.g., religion, ethnicity, reason for migration; Lawlor & Paquet, 2021) and answer the question of which 'type' of migrant deserves to settle in a country, according to the public? The findings of this WP directly inform the newly developed migrant deservingness framework.

Previous studies have used a deservingness framework to examine differential public support for welfare provisions to different groups based on the CARIN-criteria: Control, Attitude, Reciprocity, Identity, and Need (van Oorschot, 2000, 2006). *Control* predicts that those who are perceived to be in control of (or responsible for) their situation will be considered less deserving of support. According to the *attitude* criterion, individuals who are thankful for the support they receive will be perceived as more deserving. The *reciprocity* criterion states that deservingness depends on the extent to which the support has been 'earned', for example by contributing to a country's economy through labour market participation (Meuleman et al., 2020). The *identity* condition implies that deservingness increases as the cultural distance between those in need and the majority population decreases. Those who are considered 'one of us' (part of the ingroup) will be perceived as more deserving. Finally, *need* postulates that individuals with substantively greater needs will be considered as more deserving of support (De Coninck et al., 2022).

Applying the CARIN-criteria to migration provides both theoretical and empirical insight into how people distinguish between different types of migrants and which migrant characteristics are more highly valued. In their recent study on deservingness among Canadians, Lawlor and Paquet (2021) report that public preferences vary across migrants with different characteristics and regions of origin. Although previous findings indicate that receiving nationals tend to favour involuntary migrants (De Coninck, 2020), skilled migrants (Bansak et al., 2016), and culturally similar migrants (Alarian & Neureiter 2021), there is no overarching theoretical framework that harmonises public perceptions towards different types of migrants. Compared to measuring general attitudes, the CARIN-criteria offer a more fine-grained lens on the conditions under which individuals are willing to support the granting of rights and entitlements to migrants in the destination country. Application of these criteria in turn, provides journalists with tools to study complex judgements about migrants by the public (Lawlor & Paquet, 2021).



2. Methodology

2.1. Public opinion research

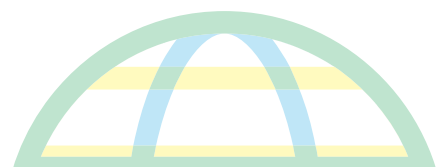
Public opinion research may be conducted in various ways, but one of the most common methods is survey research. In this methodology, researchers pose a set of questions – either online or face-to-face – to participants. Although the (often closed question) format has some drawbacks, the main advantage is that it provides a relatively easy and, in the case of online surveys, cost-effective methodology to gather data among a large sample of the population. It is a widely used methodology to assess public attitudes, as evidenced by large-scale, high-quality European studies like the European Social Survey or the Eurobarometer that both utilise survey research.

The current survey was fielded to investigate the dynamic interplay between media representations of and narratives on different migrant groups and the governmental and societal (re)actions on the other. With these data, we provide more insight into these societal reactions by investigating attitude formation. Through an online survey, we collected quantitative data on attitudes towards outgroups (e.g., immigrants, refugees), exposure to and trust in news media, intergroup contact, and political attitudes (e.g., right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation) among the adult population aged 25 to 65 in four European countries: Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Italy. We collected the data in collaboration with Bilendi, a Belgian polling agency, and selected the methodology for its cost-effectiveness in cross-country research. Respondents received an e-mail asking them to participate in a survey without specifying the subject matter, which was essential to avoid priming. Three weeks of fieldwork in May and June of 2021 resulted in a dataset of 6,065 respondents (a little over 1,500 per country).

To measure migrant deservingness, we developed a thirteen-item scale to capture the extent to which people endorse the five deservingness dimensions (control, attitude, reciprocity, identity, need) in the context of migrant settlement. Items were responded to using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The statements gauged respondents' views on requirements for migrants to be allowed to remain in their country upon arrival. The control principle was measured using three statements referring to whether individuals who are personally responsible for their needy situation (e.g., poverty, lack of housing) – because they either chose or were forced to migrate – should be entitled to remain in the country. Attitude was operationalised via two statements that migrants should be grateful and have no right to complain about their situation. Reciprocity was measured by three statements that settlement in the country should depend on (potential) contributions to the national economy, labour market, or culture. Identity was assessed using three items indexing the idea that permanent settlement in the country should be reserved primarily to migrants who are more like the ingroup in terms of cultural, religious, or ethnic background. Finally, we measured the need criterion using two items stating that permanent settlement should be reserved for those migrants living in (extreme) poverty or with dependent young children. This scale has been validated in all countries under study (De Coninck et al., 2022).

2.2. Journalism role perceptions research

The second database we used consists of journalism variables. Journalism is, among other professions, known to have an ideology of its own. This ideology has been interpreted in many different ways across the globe. **The Worlds of Journalism Study** (WJS) brought together researchers from 67 countries. In an unprecedented collaborative effort, more than 27,500 journalists were interviewed between 2012 and 2016, based on a common methodological framework. The WJS questionnaire deals with many dimensions of the occupational ideology. We will particularly look into the role perceptions of the journalists that were surveyed in Austria, Germany, Hungary and Italy.



3. Results: public opinion research

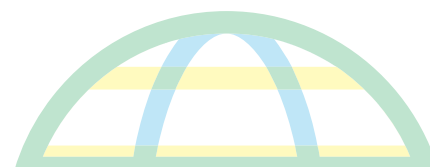
In Table 1, we first conducted a partial correlation analysis (controlling for country) to investigate how different news media consumption variables are associated with outgroup attitudes more generally (without a focus on the deservingness traits). To enable cross-country comparison, we use the aggregated quality and popular newspaper/website consumption. An analysis per country can be found in the appendices, in which the individual newspaper/digital news indicators were used. Table 1 shows that news media consumption is associated with feelings towards immigrants, refugees, and Muslims in several ways. Regarding television news consumption, correlation coefficients show that consumption of public service and local news is associated with positive sentiments towards these outgroups, while commercial news consumption is associated with negative sentiments. The link between radio news and sentiments is weaker: only the consumption of public service radio news is (positively) associated with outgroup sentiments. Although different newspapers and digital news outlets adopt different narratives to talk about migrants and migration, the effects of newspaper and digital news consumption are relatively uniform. This was confirmed by additional correlation analyses that related 1) the correlation between newspapers and outgroup attitudes with 2) the correlation of digital news outlets and attitudes. The result was – in all countries and for all outlets with both an online and offline version – clear: correlation coefficients exceeded .85 in all cases and .90 in most, which indicates that the effect of (the same) offline and online outlets on attitudes are highly similar. Consuming news on quality outlets is strongly associated with more positive sentiments towards immigrants, refugees, and Muslims. However, and perhaps contrary to some expectations, consuming news on popular outlets is also associated with positive attitudes in some instances, although the link is weaker than for quality outlets.

When individuals hold greater perceived threat towards refugees, they also hold more negative attitudes. Although the link between all threat variables and sentiments is negative, it is most pronounced for the item regarding refugees' threat towards the country's cultural life: when respondents believe refugees will threaten their culture, their attitudes towards refugees and other outgroups will be negative.

Table 1. Partial correlation analysis of outgroup attitudes with news media consumption, and perceived threat (N = 6,065), controlled for country

	Feelings: Immigrants	Feelings: Refugees	Feelings: Muslims
Television consumption			
Public service news	.07***	.11***	.04**
Commercial news	-.07***	-.05***	-.07***
Local news	.07***	.06***	.06***
Radio consumption			
Public service news	.09***	.10***	.08***
Commercial news	.01	-.01	-.00
Local news	.03*	.01	.02
Newspaper consumption			
Quality newspapers	.17***	.18***	.18***
Popular newspapers	.03**	.02	.06***
Digital news consumption			
Quality news websites	.16***	.17***	.17***
Popular news websites	.07***	.07***	.07***
Outgroup attitudes			
Perceived threat: more crime	-.38***	-.43***	-.42***
Perceived threat: jobs	-.47***	-.51***	-.48***
Perceived threat: social benefits	-.56***	-.64***	-.60***
Perceived threat: economy	-.59***	-.66***	-.60***
Perceived threat: cultural life	-.62***	-.69***	-.66***
Perceived threat: values	-.21***	-.22***	-.21***

Note: *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.



The results in Table 2 link news media consumption indicators to the five CARIN criteria through linear regression modelling. A few notable findings can be discerned. First, heavy viewers of commercial television and readers of popular newspapers tend to be more conditional; they uphold stricter criteria for migrants to be allowed to settle in the destination country. For heavy consumers of commercial television, we observed that the strongest link was found with the attitude criteria – elements of gratefulness are important to them. Heavy consumers of popular newspapers tend to ascribe the greatest importance to identity, i.e., the cultural or ethnic similarity of migrants to the majority of the host population. Consuming popular digital news also appears to be mostly strongly linked to preferences regarding gratefulness from migrants for the help that they receive from the destination country.

Consuming public television, quality newspapers, and quality digital news was not as strongly linked to the CARIN criteria – or in different ways. Consuming public television was linked to lower importance attributed to the control criterion, i.e., to what extent migrants had control over their decision to migrate. A weak link with the identity criterion was also found, but no other significant links emerged. Reading quality newspapers was linked to a greater importance attributed to the need criterion, i.e., to what extent migrants are in need of aid. Regarding quality digital news consumption, a strong negative link is found with the control criterion – mirroring the finding for public television consumption – and the attitude criterion.

Overall, these findings indicate that consuming different types of news media is linked to different preferences regarding migrant deservingness.

Table 2. Linear regression results for CARIN criteria on news media consumption

	Control	Attitude	Reciprocity	Identity	Need
News media consumption					
Public television	-.06***	.01	-.02	-.03**	.00
Commercial television	.06***	.08***	.07***	.05***	.03**
Quality newspapers	-.03	-.04**	.00	.05***	.07***
Popular newspapers	.03*	.05***	.05**	.10***	.09***
Quality digital news	-.14***	-.09***	-.02	-.05***	-.00
Popular digital news	-.01	.06***	.03*	.04**	.05***

Standardized results reported. Note: *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

4. Results: journalistic roles research

This section on the study of journalistic roles presents the results, starting with a discussion of the average importance of journalistic roles and a differentiation of role importance for journalists working in public service media compared to that of journalists working for commercial media (tables 3 to 7). National differences in role importance are also presented (Table 8).

Table 3. Role perceptions of journalists of public and commercial media in Austria, Germany, Hungary and Italy (from 1=unimportant to 5=extremely important): observing and analyzing roles

	Mean	Public Service Media	Commercial Media
Be a detached observer ***	4.37	4.49	4.34
Report things as they are **	4.59	4.67	4.58
Provide analysis of current affairs **	4.29	4.31	4.10

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

The results on the journalistic variables in Table 3 show how important the surveyed journalists in Italy, Hungary, Germany and Austria consider their different role perceptions to be on a scale of one to five. Being a detached observer is very important for surveyed journalists (mean=4.37), regardless of whether they work for public or other media, although it is relatively slightly more important for public broadcasting journalists (mean=4.49 versus mean=4.34). It is also very important for all journalists (mean=4.59), but most for public broadcasting journalists (mean=4.67 versus mean=4.58). Again, the same conclusion applies to the role of analysis of current affairs: it is important for all journalists (mean=4.29) and most for those in public broadcasting (mean=4.40 versus 4.26). **Observation and analysis** is a core task of journalists and is rated highest by public broadcasting journalists.



Table 4. Role perceptions of journalists of public and commercial media in Austria, Germany, Hungary and Italy (from 1=unimportant to 5=extremely important): Monitoring roles

	Mean	Public Service Media	Commercial Media
Monitor and scrutinize political leaders **	3.06	3.27	3.02
Monitor and scrutinize business	3.0	3.02	2.98

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

In addition to the roles related to analysis and observation, **monitoring and controlling** political (mean= 3.06) and economic (mean=3.0) elites is also a task of journalism to which the surveyed journalists attach importance, albeit much less than observation and analysis. Both monitoring political and economic elites are also roles that are more important to public service media journalists (mean= 3.27 versus 3.02 for political elites and mean=3.10 versus 2.98 for economic elites). However, the difference in monitoring business elites does not reach the significance threshold.

Table 5. Role perceptions of journalists of public and commercial media in Austria, Germany, Hungary and Italy (from 1=unimportant to 5=extremely important): Interventionist roles

	Mean	Public Service Media	Commercial Media
Set the political agenda	2.3	2.35	2.29
Influence public opinion	2.73	2.68	2.74
Advocate for social change	3.03	2.97	3.05

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Intervention in society is especially important under the form of advocating for social change (mean=3.03). Slightly less importance is attached by journalists to influencing public opinion (mean=2.73) and still somewhat less to setting the political agenda (mean=2.3) The importance attached to these roles is not significantly different between public service and commercial media journalists.

Table 6. Role perceptions of journalists of public versus commercial media in Austria, Germany, Hungary and Italy (from 1=unimportant to 5=extremely important): Roles towards the government

	Mean	Public Service Media	Commercial Media
Be an adversary of the government	2.23	2.27	2.22
Support national development	2.29	2.3	2.29
Convey a positive image of political leadership	1.41	1.4	1.42
Support government policy	1.45	1.47	1.45

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Journalistic roles in which **journalists interact directly with the government** are less popular. Supporting national development (mean = 2.29) and being opponents of the government (mean=2.23) score above a score of 2 but generating a positive image of political leadership scores below 2 (mean= 1.41), and this also holds for the supporting of government policy (mean=1.45). There is no difference between journalists in public service and commercial media in terms of their perceived roles in the direct interaction between journalism and the government.

Table 7: Role perceptions of journalists of public versus commercial media in Austria, Germany, Hungary and Italy (from 1=unimportant to 5=extremely important): entertainment roles

	Mean	Public Service Media	Commercial Media
Provide entertainment and relaxation ***	3.36	2.98	3.46
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience ***	3.72	3.57	3.76

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Two more roles are the two surveyed roles that have to do with **providing entertainment and attracting the largest possible audience**. These are roles that are of stronger interest to journalists in commercial media, although they are not unimportant to public journalists either. The mean scores for these variables are 3.36 for providing entertainment and 3.72 for attracting a large audience, both scoring significantly stronger among commercial media journalists (means of 3.46 versus 2.98 for entertainment and means of 3.76 versus 3.57 for attracting a large audience).



Table 8: Role perceptions by journalists of public versus commercial media in Austria, Germany, Hungary and Italy (from 1=unimportant to 5=extremely important): Other roles

	Mean	Public Service Media	Commercial Media
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	3.56	3.56	3.56
Provide information people need to make political decisions	3.41	3.81	3.31
Motivate people to participate in political activity ***	3.07	3.31	3.02
Let people express their views	3.47	3.47	3.45
Educate the audience ***	3.61	3.88	3.55
Tell stories about the world ***	3.73	3.91	3.68
Promote tolerance and cultural diversity	3.84	3.89	3.84

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

In fact, these entertainment-oriented roles are the only two surveyed that are more popular among journalists working for commercial media. A few **other roles** are more popular among journalists working for public media. Even though there is no significant difference between journalists of public and commercial media in the extent to which they want to influence public opinion (cf. *infra*), journalists working for public service media are somewhat more active in reaching out to the public because they want to educate the public more (mean=3.88 versus mean= 3.55), provide the public with more information to make political decisions (mean=3.81 versus mean=3.31) and encourage people more to participate in political activities (mean= 3.31 versus mean=3.02). In turn, advice and orientation and direction on daily life (mean=3.56) is equally popular among journalists working for public and commercial media. Giving people a platform to express their views (mean=3.47) is also equally popular with journalists of both media types. Finally, important to mention in the context of research on migration is that promoting tolerance and cultural diversity is very important (mean=3.84) to the surveyed journalists and that journalists of public service and commercial media do not have significantly different views in this regard.

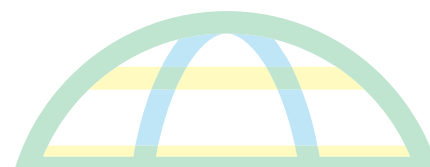
Table 9. National differences in journalistic roles between Austria, Germany, Hungary and Italy (statistically different in all cases)

	Austria	Germany	Hungary	Italy	Total
Be a detached observer	4.41	4.27	4.38	4.47	4.37
Reporting things as they are	4.63	4.59	4.50	4.60	4.59
Provide analysis of current affairs	4.44	4.31	4.10	4.13	4.29

Monitor and scrutinise political leaders	3.18	2.79	3.12	3.28	3.06
Monitor and scrutinise business	3.03	2.80	3.03	3.29	3.00
Set the political agenda	2.22	2.10	2.61	2.54	2.30
Influence public opinion	2.59	2.68	3.35	2.52	2.73
Advocate for social change	2.96	2.77	3.45	3.28	3.03
Be an adversary of the government	2.46	2.27	2.42	1.52	2.23
Support national development	2.33	2.14	3.49	1.32	2.29
Convey a positive image of political leadership	1.27	1.25	2.08	1.37	1.41
Support government policy	1.34	1.27	2.20	1.32	1.45
Provide entertainment and relaxation	3.37	3.51	3.79	2.65	3.36
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	3.73	4	3.74	3.09	3.72
Provide advice, orientation, and direction for daily life	3.70	3.82	3.58	2.73	3.72
Provide information people need to make political decisions	3.67	3.36	3.24	3.15	3.56
Motivate people to participate in political activity	3.32	3.10	2.85	2.72	3.41
Let people express their views	3.42	3.27	3.59	3.82	3.07
Educate the audience	3.55	3.60	3.80	NA	3.47
Tell stories about the world	3.78	3.56	3.95	NA	3.61
Promote tolerance and cultural diversity	3.80	3.80	4.05	NA	3.73

ANOVA analyses showed that for every role significant differences between the countries could be discovered. Post hoc Tukey tests allowed us to differentiate the groups. The above table shows the different means in the different countries under study. Based on the Tukey post hoc tests, we developed a typology of the four countries under study.

German journalists score slightly lower on journalistic roles focused on mere observation of reality such as "being detached observers" and "reporting things as they are", but highest on providing analyses of current affairs. Following political and economic elites by journalists is also a role less prevalent in Germany than in the other three countries. German journalists score low on interventionist roles such as influencing public opinion, setting the political agenda, and advocating for social change. Also of relatively low importance for German journalists are roles related to interaction with the government. Opposing the government, supporting national development, presenting a positive image of leadership or



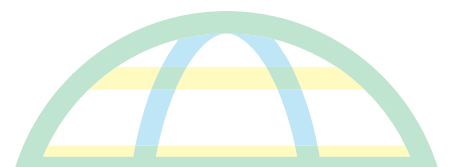
supporting government policies are not priorities for German journalists. In contrast, roles related to delivering news that attracts the widest possible audience and the role of entertainment are important for German journalists. Finally, German journalists score high on the roles where they are considered responsible for providing advice, orientation, and direction in the daily lives of the public, where journalists should provide information to enable people to make political decisions and where they should motivate people to participate in political activities.

Hungarian journalists resemble German journalists in some respects, but not in others. One similarity is that the Hungarian journalists score low on the role of being "detached observers" and likewise score low on the role of "reporting things as they are". Also similar to German journalists is a higher score on the role of "providing analysis of current affairs", and even further similar is the relatively low score on the roles having to do with monitoring political and economic elites. In other areas, Hungarian journalists score quite differently. This is the case for the interventionist roles. Setting the political agenda, influencing public opinion and advocating for social change weigh much more heavily for Hungarian journalists. The roles in which the journalist has a place in relation to the government are also important for Hungarian journalists. They score especially high on the three roles in which the journalists play a supportive role toward the government, namely "supporting government policy", "conveying a positive image of political leadership" and "supporting national development". The role in which journalists are opponents of the government also scores high in Hungary, but no higher than in Germany and Austria. Journalists from these three countries do score significantly higher on this role than Italian journalists. In terms of entertaining roles (providing entertainment and reaching the widest possible audience), Hungarian journalists rank first and second, respectively, while the other two high places in terms of these entertainment roles are taken by German journalists. Hungarian and German journalists are thus the most entertainment-oriented, compared to the Italian and Austrian journalists. Further roles that Hungarian journalists score high on are "letting people express their views," "educating the audience," "telling stories about the world" and "promoting tolerance and cultural diversity."

The **Austrian** journalists are in line with the Italian journalists but not with the Hungarian and German journalists in that they score higher on "being detached observers" and "reporting things as they are", but lower on "analysis of current affairs" and also higher than the German and Hungarian journalists on checking economic and political elites, like the Italian journalists. Another category in which Austrian along with Italian journalists score lower are entertainment-oriented roles (providing entertainment and attracting the widest possible audience). However, besides the roles in which Austrian journalists are aligned with their Italian counterparts, there are also many roles in which Austrians are more aligned with German journalists. Low scores on interventionist roles are an example of this (setting the political agenda, influencing the public and advocating social change), as well as roles related to the national government (such as being opponents of the government, supporting national development, giving a positive image of political leadership and supporting government policies). Scores are also similarly high as in Germany on the roles "providing advice, orientation and direction for daily life", providing information people need to make political decisions", and "motivating people to participate in political activities".

Similar to Austria, **Italian** journalists score higher on "reporting things as they are" and "being a detached observer", but somewhat lower on "analysis of current affairs". Like Austria, they also score lower on roles related to controlling political and economic elites and lower on entertainment roles (providing entertainment and attracting the widest possible audience". In terms of interventionist roles, Italian journalists are on par with Hungarian journalists, especially in terms of setting the political agenda and advocating for social change, but less so in terms of influencing public opinion. As for the roles journalists

play vis-à-vis the government, the results of the survey of Italian journalists paint a somewhat mixed picture. They score high on "being an adversary of the government", but low on the other three government-oriented roles, namely supporting national development, supporting government policies, and giving a positive image of political leadership. Finally, we mention that on the roles "giving advice, direction and orientation in daily life", "providing information that people need to make political decisions", and "motivating people to participate in political activity", the Italian journalists lean toward the Hungarian journalists and score rather low on these roles. However, the Italians do score high on "letting people express their views", as do the Hungarians. The roles "educating the audience", "telling stories about the world", and "promoting tolerance and cultural diversity" were not surveyed in the Italian version of the Worlds of Journalism study.



5. Results: aligning public opinion and journalistic roles

Table 9. Overview of journalistic roles, public opinion, and deservingness evaluations per country

	Germany	Hungary	Austria	Italy
Journalistic roles				
Analysis	High	High	Low	Low
Observational	Low	Low	High	High
Control	Low	Low	High	High
Intervention	Low	High	Low	High
Governmental	Low	High	Low	Low
Entertainment	High	High	Low	Low
CARIN criteria				
Control	2.86	3.11	2.92	2.72
Attitude	3.46	3.21	3.57	3.29
Reciprocity	3.08	3.25	3.18	3.14
Identity	2.55	2.76	2.71	2.57
Need	2.38	2.37	2.50	2.61
Feelings towards immigrants	5.42	4.07	5.20	5.59

Note: Deservingness criteria range from 1 (low importance) to 5 (high importance). Feelings towards immigrants range from 1 (very negative feelings) to 10 (very positive feelings).

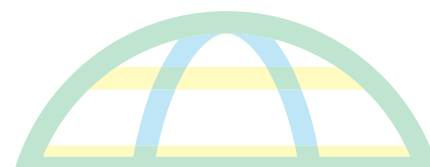
In terms of deservingness perceptions, we observe that conditionality generally seems to be highest in **Hungary**. Scores on several criteria are significantly higher than in other countries, indicating that Hungarians believe that migrants must meet a number of criteria (mostly related to control, reciprocity and identity) before being admitted to the country. The country's lowest score on the 'need' criterion

underlines this: whether or not a migrant needs urgent help is not considered important, despite its relevance as a policy indicator for allowing migrants to settle permanently in a country. In terms of feelings towards immigrants, Hungarians also expressed the most negative opinions.

The Hungarian government also has a reputation for being against migration, but media report that positive attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees are very different from those toward refugees from the Middle East, because of the cultural similarity between Ukrainians and Hungarians (Stewart, 2022). This seems to resonate well with the importance of the **'identity' criterion** among Hungarian audiences. Journalists have an opportunity to change the narrative on migration in Hungary because of their high scores on interventionist journalistic roles such as setting the political agenda, influencing public opinion and advocating for social change. It should be added that Hungarian journalists also attach importance to governmental journalistic roles, which might limit their eagerness to create a new narrative on migration, since the Hungarian government is known to be highly critical of migration. The high scores on entertainment roles might also pose a risk for tendencies towards critical reporting.

At the other end of the spectrum, **Italians** seem the most lenient. With low scores on almost all criteria and, conversely, a high score on the **'need' criterion**, Italians generally do not think that migrants should meet many criteria to be allowed to settle permanently, especially if they are in great need. In terms of general attitudes, Italians also gave the most positive opinion about immigrants. Italian journalists' support for an interventionist role could encourage them to create an alternative narrative on migration, which could resonate well with the public due to their open attitude. Journalists' tendency to be critical of the government and to monitor politicians could also help them contradict mainstream or right-wing views on migration.

German and Austrian audiences adopt a moderate view towards migrants. Austrians place a lot of importance on the **'attitude' criterion**, indicating that they feel it is important that migrants are grateful for the help that they receive from Austria and engage themselves to integrate into the country. Searching for an alternative migration narrative by journalists in Germany and Austria would not so much be based on interventionist roles, such as advocating for social change or setting the political agenda. Interventionist journalism is less popular in these countries. In sum, the strategy for developing an alternative agenda might develop more strongly through other perceptions of the roles of journalism, such as controlling political elites in Austria or providing a thorough analysis of current affairs in Germany.



6. Call for Action: recommendations

The current media climate frames migrants often as a crisis or threat. Vicarious storytelling speaking on behalf of migrants might help to overcome this perspective. Gebauer and Sommer (2023) argue that speaking on behalf of migrants, as in vicarious storytelling, does not suffice in itself. In a “level telling field”, migrants get equal chances to speak for themselves. This effort to be more open to migration in order to speak on their behalf and let them speak for themselves may be difficult in the current political climate dominated by right-wing voices. Journalists can nevertheless contribute towards this ideal, taking into account the specifics of the public opinion and journalism culture in their countries.

In each country different paths of action can be foreseen to work towards a climate that helps making the idea of a level telling field possible.

- ⇒ In **Italy**, the public has comparatively the most positive attitudes towards migrants. Journalists should take this into account, and the strong desire of journalists to be anti-government advocates could be helpful in contradicting right-wing policies.
- ⇒ In **Hungary**, a setback could be that the public is most negative about migrants, but journalists could benefit from their support for interventionist roles, such as advocating for social change, setting the political agenda, or influencing public opinion.
- ⇒ In **Germany and Austria** support for migrants is moderate and journalism is not interventionist or eager to contradict mainstream policy, but elements of journalism culture in both countries could support the development of an alternative voice against the mainstream discourse on migration, such as the importance of the analysis of current affairs in Germany or the eagerness to control political elites in Austria.

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