

Irish Print Media Framing of Syrian Migration to Ireland in the Irish Times and Irish Independent

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Abstract : Since the escalation of the Syrian conflict in 2011, 6.9 million Syrians have fled to neighbouring countries, and 6.7 have remained displaced in Syria. Out of the 6.9 who fled Syria, over one million have crossed the Mediterranean Sea and become refugees and asylum seekers in various European countries. As a European and a member country of the EU, the Republic of Ireland was not an exception. In response to the refugee crisis caused mainly by the Syrian displacement, Ireland established the Syrian Humanitarian Admission Programme (SHAM) in 2014 and the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) in 2015, followed by its second phase in 2019. In light of these events, Irish print media played a significant role in covering the Irish government's decisions, political stance, and public opinion on the debate on taking Syrian refugees into Ireland. Considering the tremendous impact of media on politics and public opinion, my research examined how The Irish Times and Irish Independent framed Syrian migration to Ireland. I adopted a qualitative framing analysis to identify the prominent framings in these two newspapers. The collection of newspaper articles focused on three periods. The first period is from the first of January 2014 to the end of December 2014. During this period, the media covered the launch of the Syrian Humanitarian Admission Programme (SHAP) and stories about the first arrival of the Syrian refugees to Ireland. The second period is the year 2015. During this year, various events gained the attention of the Irish media. These events include Ireland's establishment of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme, the Paris attacks, and the publishing of Aylan Kurdi's Photograph. The third period is from the first of December 2019 to the thirtieth of January 2020. In this period, the media covered the convention of Ireland with the UNHCR and the European Union to provide sanctuary to 2900 refugees in the years 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. The primary findings of my study indicate that The Irish Times and Irish Independent's framing of Syrian migration to Ireland was various. My research findings indicate that The Irish Times and Irish Independent's framing of Syrian migration to Ireland was varied and asymmetrical. The dominant frames used by these two newspapers are humanitarian, responsibility, contribution, burden, intruder, and threat. The former three frames positively perceive Syrian migration to Ireland and support the Irish government's decisions to welcome more Syrian refugees. On the other hand, the last three frames perceive Syrian migration and refugees negatively and stand for the principle that Ireland should not take Syrian refugees.

Keywords : framing, Syrian migration, Ireland, newspaper

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