

Emotions as Mediators of Framing Effects

Else Marie Holm

PhD Dissertation

Emotions as Mediators of Framing Effects

Politica

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ISBN: 978-87-7335-157-4

Cover: Svend Siune

Print: Juridisk Instituts Trykkeri, Aarhus Universitet

Layout: Anne-Grethe Gammelgaard

Submitted September 2011

The public defense takes place 25 January, 2012

Published January 2012

Forlaget Politica

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Preface

This thesis has been long in the making. It is based on an idea that came out of my reading of 'The Affective Intelligence' during my year in Essex in 2006. This book and some inspiring discussions with Didi Kuo and Anja Neundorf paved the way for a whole new way of viewing classic questions in political science.

Many have helped me guide my numerous ideas into an identifiable project. My supervisors Lise Togeby, Christoffer Green-Pedersen, Rune Slothuus and Michael Bang Petersen have provided guidance throughout the project. They have been an excellent supervisor team! Their help, advice and supervision have been invaluable and their continuing enthusiasm for the project has been of vital importance.

I would also like to give thanks to all my good colleagues with whom I have discussed small and big problems. Special thanks to my office mates Martin Bækgaard and Poul Aaes Nielsen for making workdays more enjoyable and to Lene Aarøe with whom I have enjoyed many good and interesting conversations over the years. I also owe thanks to Anne-Grethe Gammelgaard who in spite of time pressure provided valuable linguistic assistance.

I also want to use this opportunity to thank my family for all the support they have given me over the years. Thank you to my twin sister, Karen Margrethe, because even though she is far away, she is still close to me when I need her. Thank you to my daughter Christine for being an excellent listener and always making me smile. Finally, I would like to thank Jakob, my long suffering husband, for being at my side through all the good times and the bad. He knows the real price of this dissertation as we suffered and paid it together. Thanks for keeping me laughing!

Aarhus, January 2012

Else Marie Holm

Chapter 1

Introduction

In the summer of 2009, a group of rejected Iraqi asylum seekers took refuge in a church to avoid being sent back to Iraq. This led to a heated debate about whether these rejected asylum seekers should be allowed to stay or be repatriated to Iraq. The 14th of June, 2009, the newscasts on one of the major Danish TV-channels, DR1, aired an interview with an 11-year old Iraqi girl. With tears in her eyes, she told how much she feared being forced to return to Iraq. The 22nd of June, 2009, the front page of a Danish newspaper was dominated by the headline "Great Holiday in Iraq". The story inside the paper was that since Iraqis are willing to return to their country on holiday, it is probably not dangerous to send rejected Iraqi asylum-seekers back home (Ekstra Bladet, 22-06-2009). These two stories illustrate the polarization of the news coverage of the topic, and they are just two examples out of many of the tone of the political debate.

The two stories above clearly show why my argument is that emotions should be included in the study of communication effects. The questions raised in this project are: Do we react with different emotions to the two stories? And are these reactions likely to affect our attitudes? The project's core propositions are that both questions can be answered in the affirmative and thus emotions are important to our understanding of the effect of political communication.

In this chapter, I will first lay down the framework for the dissertation by briefly introducing the central concept of framing, outline the reasons for examining the role of emotions in framing studies and define the understanding of emotions in this dissertation. Subsequently, I will elaborate on the main claims in the project and introduce some of the questions that will be addressed. Finally, I present the structure of the remaining chapters.

1.1 Framing Effects and Public Opinion: The Tail Wagging the Dog?

People are bombarded with news-stories: Papers, newscasts and internet provide news literally 24 hours a day. Does this constant news flow just provide information facilitating an informed public opinion or does it also shape the public opinion? While politicians, according to the traditional view of democracy, are assumed to be responsive to public opinion, theories on

framing claim that the political elites can influence the public opinion through the news flow. In other words, framing theories argue that the relationship between politicians and public opinions can be the reverse of what democracy theories presume.

Most political issues can be seen from different points of view and described in many different ways. This is the basis of framing effects since it implies that the choice of focusing on some aspects instead of others can affect the way that people think about an issue (Chong and Druckman, 2007b, 104). According to theories on framing, the presentation of problems and issues in the media can affect attitudes and, consequently, the framing of issues becomes politically important. As a result, politics becomes an ongoing verbal tug of war between political parties trying to dominate the public debate. The increasing amount of money spent on spin doctors reflects the political parties' attempt to handle the press and thereby control the presentation of issues in news stories

([http://www.rigsrevisionen.dk/media\(1411,1030\)/02-2009.pdf](http://www.rigsrevisionen.dk/media(1411,1030)/02-2009.pdf)).

Based on framing theories, it follows that the presentation of issues in the media is important in the political struggle for votes and therefore also essential to explain fluctuations in public opinion. Viewing changes in public opinion as solely politically driven no doubt exaggerates the effects of political elites. However, studies have shown that framing is an effective way of influencing attitudes (Chong and Druckman, 2007: 109; Sniderman and Thériault, 2004: 134). From a political perspective, framing is important and if we are to understand fluctuations in public opinion, we need a better understanding of how frames can affect people's attitudes. But framing is not only interesting from a purely practical point of view. Research in framing has exploded in recent years and is therefore also a theoretically important area (Weaver, 2007: 144).

The practical relevance as well as theoretical importance means that framing is an important research area on which further knowledge should be build. Despite the amount of research in framing effects, we nonetheless know surprisingly little about how frames can affect attitudes and why frames differ in their effects. In this project, I argue that more knowledge is needed about the psychological mechanisms through which frames have an effect because these processes are the key to a better understanding of who is affected by frames and why frames differ in their effects. For this reason, the project focuses on the psychological processes of framing effects. In the next section, I present the reasons for suggesting emotions as variables that could improve our understanding of how frames have an effect.

1.2 Reasons for Examining the Role of Emotions in Framing Theories

In the beginning of the chapter, I used two news-stories to illustrate that presentations in the newspapers are likely to affect emotions that will affect attitudes. But why should the two presented stories about rejected asylum seekers have an effect on emotions and on attitudes? In this section, I will outline some of my reasons for expecting emotions to be central to the understanding of framing effects.

The widely held view is that emotions are obviously important for our understanding of the effect of political messages. Nevertheless, we know little about the role of emotions in framing theories. The lack of theoretical interest in framing studies in emotions is even more surprising given the findings in studies of actual political communication and decision making. First, studies show that there is a widespread use of emotional appeals in the United States which suggests that emotional stories like the ones above are not unusual in the political debate (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1944 [second printing, 1948]: 119, Brader, 2006: 153; Ridout and Searles, 2011). From a practical perspective, insights into the effect of emotions are therefore important since they characterize much of the political communication. Secondly, in recent years, the literature on decision making has increasingly focused on the effect of emotions, and findings suggest that emotions should no longer be viewed as a disturbing and unpredictable factor (Marcus 2000; Marcus, Neuman and MacKuen, 2000; Redlawsk, 2006; Lerner and Keltner, 2000; Neuman et al., 2007; Damasio, 1994).

Taken together, the above findings suggest that emotions could be potentially important variables in framing studies, which is the main claim of this project. It is therefore surprising that the literature on framing effects have devoted so little attention to the effect of emotions. Given the lack of interest in the effect of emotions in framing studies, we know little about whether emotions are important to our understanding of framing effects and *how* emotions potentially could have an effect. A few studies have examined the role of emotions in framing effects. But these studies have not examined the wider implications of emotions for the understanding of framing effects.

The project therefore aims to show how emotions could be included into framing models and the implications this inclusion has for our understanding of framing effects. In doing so, the project will address some central questions about the relationship between frames, emotions and attitudes. First, if frames can evoke emotions, it becomes crucial to understand how political

information affects emotions and whether it is possible to control the type of emotional reactions. Some of the questions I will address are therefore what kind of messages can evoke emotions, why do messages evoke different emotions, and why do some evoke stronger emotions than others? Secondly, if emotions have an effect, this leads to questions about whether the effects of emotions differ, the role of emotions in framing models, and the relationship between emotions and deliberative decision making.

So far, the argument for including emotions has focused on emotions in general. Emotions are, however, a multifaceted phenomenon. Before we continue, it is therefore necessary to discuss what is understood by the concept of emotion in this dissertation. An emotion is a rather elusive concept which makes it a difficult task to define. In a later chapter, I will put forward a theoretical definition of emotion. For now, I will only specify the type of emotional phenomenon that will not be examined in this dissertation.

Many aspects of politics can evoke emotions of many types (Marcus, 2000; Isbell and Ottati, 2002). Evaluations, predispositions, party identity, moods and emotional reactions are examples of different types of emotional phenomena. Common for all these phenomena is a 'feeling component' in the sense that people experience different affective states. However, the emotional phenomena differ on many other important aspects, and it is necessary to be clear about what type of emotional phenomena is examined in the following chapters.

Values and party identity can be argued to be long-term and stable emotional attachments towards certain ideas or political parties (Marcus, 2000: 227; Isbell and Ottati, 2002: 56; Scherer, 2005: 703). Moods, on the other hand, are not stable and not directed at specific targets (Isbell and Ottati, 2002; Scherer, 2005: 705). Finally, emotional reactions are short-lived reactions to specific objects.

The main claim here is that people experience different emotional reactions when reading frames, and that these emotions affect attitudes. While political values, party identity and moods certainly can affect attitudes, they are not reactions to specific frames. In this dissertation, the focus will be limited to the effect of emotional reactions.

1.3 The Argument in Brief

Drawing on theories of emotions, the project argues that emotions play a central role in framing theories. More specifically, I argue that frames evoke different emotional reactions with different effects. Accordingly, I will argue that emotions are central to the process through which frames have an ef-

fect. In the following, I present the main claims and discuss how they will challenge the common beliefs about the role of emotions. In doing so, the section will delimit both the scope of the argument and present some of the questions addressed in the dissertation.

Emotional appeals are all around us, and politicians use them actively. The campaigns launched by Danish parties are filled with pictures of beautiful landscapes, children, elderly, and sick and feeble persons. Thus, some campaigns mainly consist of music and pictures and have very few actual political statements. Strategic use of pictures, music and presentation style are mainly found in campaigns by political parties. Political speeches, campaigns and television ads are certainly important, but most people are not acquainted with these messages in the daily news consumption. Instead people receive most of the information about everyday political questions in news stories conveyed by journalists in papers, on the internet and on TV. Even though political messages sponsored by political parties might regularly use pictures, music and presentation style strategically, these messages are therefore not necessarily representative of most political messages.

The two stories presented in the beginning of the chapter are clear examples of everyday news stories that appeal to emotions. However, everyday political messages do not always include strong emotional appeals. Most of the daily news flow is probably either concerned with dryer subjects or with more technical presentations of facts and policy disagreement. If the effect of emotions is limited to political messages – including specific rhetorical devices (such as pictures, music or personal stories) – the relevance of emotions in framing theories would be confined to a limited group of political messages. This is problematic since we want to understand the impact of the news that people are presented with in their daily news consumption rather than the accidental political messages sponsored by political parties.

In this project my claim is that the potential impact of emotions is not limited to messages including emotional appealing stories or pictures. Instead, the project argues that emotions are important to our understanding of the effects of all types of messages. This is a central claim. The political struggle for votes is a ceaseless struggle that cannot be limited to election campaigns, and therefore it is important that emotions can explain both everyday communication and campaigns. If we want to understand fluctuations in the public opinion, we, in other words, need to understand the everyday political messages. Hence the claim, that all frames can evoke emotions, means that emotions become an important factor in our general understanding of framing effects and also for our understanding of the dynamic of public opinion.

So far, the focus has been on the impact of frames on emotions, which are only interesting if they have an effect. Secondly, the dissertation claims that emotions are important for our attitudes, information processing and for the effect of political messages. Based on the common belief that emotions are important, the argument might seem straightforward and non-controversial. What is controversial, however, is the claim that emotions and deliberative decision making are not necessarily polar opposites. My claim is instead that one does not preclude the other and that some emotions can even increase cognitive processing. In other words, emotions have different effects and therefore different roles to play in framing models.

In many ways, the dissertation challenges the common belief about the role of emotions in politics. Emotions are traditionally believed to overrule more deliberative decision making (Walton, 2008: 133). That emotions have this influence is even more problematic because emotions themselves cannot be good reasons or arguments for beliefs or actions (Govier, 2005: 198). A good argument is instead defined as being rational acceptable and providing rational support (see for instance Govier, 2005: 63). In other words, the power of emotions is their ability to distract people from proper reasoning and deliberation.

As a result, appeals to emotions have a tarnished reputation because they are generally viewed as arguments of very poor quality or even as fallacious arguments. Nevertheless, emotional appeals can have an effect because the use of emotionally charged language often “conveys an attitude without reasons, distracting us so that we do not notice the absence of any substantive argument” (Govier, 2005: 114, Walton, 2008: 107). Because emotions have a strong impact on decisions, they are believed to increase the effect of weak arguments that distract people from the fact that no arguments are given.

As a result, emotions are traditionally viewed as a threat to the thorough and enlightened political debate. Preferably, emotions should be kept out of political discussions and decisions. Thus, it is up to the politicians and the political elites to ensure a proper and reasoned political debate by keeping emotional appeals, and thereby emotions, out of politics. Although the common belief is that emotions increase the effect of frames, emotions are an adjuvant to argumentation which politicians can use in order to make more effective messages (Micheli, 2010). Politicians are thus tempted to use emotional appeals, and their widespread use shows that many politicians give in to this temptation.

The dissertation in many ways challenges these common beliefs about the role of emotions. By claiming that all messages can evoke emotions

even without clear emotional appeals, this project questions the belief that it is possible to secure a proper and reasoned political debate by not using emotional appeals. If politicians want to evoke emotions, no matter how they frame political messages, emotions become an inevitable aspect of politics. The assumption that all emotions are inherently a threat to democracy because emotions and deliberation are polar opposites is also challenged. Finally, the relationship between emotions and the effectiveness of political messages is not as simple as this traditional view suggests. Emotional reactions are not thoughtlessly turned into change in attitudes, and therefore the effect of emotions on attitudes is a bit more complicated than just functioning as a booster of framing effects. The dissertation shows that assumptions underlying the common beliefs about emotions are not in line with the latest research in emotion. By challenging these assumptions, the dissertation also breaks with the common beliefs that emotions are undesirable in politics.

1.4 Overview of the chapters

Above, I have outlined the general argument of the project and briefly introduced some of the central concepts. In order to see how emotions can improve our understanding of framing effects, it is necessary to gain a better understanding of framing theories. In the next chapter, I will present the traditional theories about framing effects and discuss why these studies have several shortcomings. Subsequently, the chapter presents the reasons why we should expect emotions to be the answer to some of the questions left unanswered by the traditional studies of framing effects.

Chapter 3 presents the main claim of the project. A theoretical model forms the basis for the development of research questions about the relationship between frames, emotions and attitudes. This chapter will also discuss the few existing studies that examine the effect of emotions and why these studies do not provide satisfactory answers to the research questions and thus not fully capture the full potential of emotions in framing theories. Based on insights from theories on emotions, some theoretical expectations about the relationship between frames, emotions and attitudes are formed.

The following chapters turn to the empirical test. The research design is introduced and discussed in chapter 4, and the empirical findings are presented in chapters 5, 6 and 7. Chapter 5 focuses on the effect of frames on emotions which is the foundation for expecting any effect of emotions on the effect of frames. In chapter 6, focus is on the effect of emotions on attitudes and to whether the effect of frames goes through emotions. An implication

of the effect of emotions on attitudes is that emotions can affect the effect of different frames, which is examined in chapter 7. Finally, chapter 8 summarizes the results of the different analyses and discusses the implications of the results for our understanding of framing effects.

Chapter 2

Framing Effects

Much work has been devoted to the task of understanding people's attitudes. However, the central driving force of a democratic system is not public opinion in itself. It is rather changes in public opinion, which are believed to lead to changes in government and eventually to changes in policies. Based on the idea of government responsiveness, it becomes important to understand why public opinion changes.

Studies of framing effects turn the relationship between public opinion and politicians upside down. Though these theories acknowledge the importance of changes in public opinion, they explain short-run fluctuations in public opinion as a result of communication from political elites. According to this view, theories on framing effect consequently become crucial in our understanding of the dynamics of public opinion.

The key question addressed in this chapter is *how* frames have an effect. This is the key issue since the perception of how frames have an effect influences the kind of variables that are included into studies. If a variable is not theoretically related to the variables central to the theory of how frames have an effect, it cannot be expected to have an effect. The question of how frames have an effect thereby affects the more general understanding of the factors important to framing effects.

Before turning to a presentation of theories on how frames have an effect, it is necessary to introduce some of the central concepts in framing theories. The understanding of how to conceptualize frames differs widely in the literature. The first section presents different understandings of frames and discusses their relevance to the study of political communication. The second part of the chapter addresses more specific theories on framing effects. The key issue in these theories is the discussion of how frames have an effect on attitudes. Based on the review of the different theories about how frames can have an effect and which factors influence this effect, a basic model of framing effects will be outlined and the validity of the theoretical model will be discussed. Finally, the last part of the chapter introduces emotions as a potential important variable in framing models.

2.1 What Is a Frame and a Framing effect?

If journalists and politicians were obliged to tell “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth”, political communication would break down. The world is full of facts and background information that must be omitted if we are to make sense of the world. Consequently, it is an inescapable aspect of media communication and politics to choose what to focus on (Nelson, Oxley and Clawson, 1997: 237; Graber, 1989: 147, Zaller, 1992: 13).

The process by which a communication source emphasizes some aspects of an issue and ignores others is called framing (Nelson, Clawson and Oxley, 1997: 567). The different presentation of political issues in political messages is called frames in communication or media frames (Chong and Druckman, 2007a: 100; Scheufele, 1999: 106). The presentation or framing of an issue in the media can have an important impact on how people view the world (Kinder, 2003: 358; Nelson, Oxley and Clawson, 1997: 223). As people do not have personal experiences with most political issues they therefore rely on the media for information. But the media does not only provide information. When a political problem is presented to an audience in a frame, the media also tell people how to make sense of the world: “When journalists choose content and frame it, they are constructing reality for their audiences...” (Graber, 1989: p. 147). People are thus likely to only focus on certain aspects of an issue when forming opinions. And when people base their opinions on specific aspects of an issue, these aspects constitute their frames in thoughts or their individual frames (Chong and Druckman, 2007a: 101; Scheufele, 1999: 107). A frame in thought is consequently “an individual’s cognitive understanding of a given situation” (Chong and Druckman, 2007a: 101; see also Druckman, 2001b: 227-228).

A framing effect occurs when frames in communication affect their audiences’ attitudes and behaviors (Chong and Druckman, 2007b: 109). However, it has also been suggested that a framing effect can be defined as when a frame in communication shapes frames in thought and thereby affects their audiences’ attitudes and behaviors (Druckman, 2001b; Slothuus and Vreese, 2010: 631; Chong and Druckman, 2007b: 109). Many studies of framing effects has focused on the ability of frames to change people’s attitudes. The framing effect is much more complex than just affecting people’s attitudes. Studies have shown that frames not only can affect people’s attitudes but also their actions such as voting (Valentino, Beckmann and Buhr, 2001) and their emotional responses (Brewer, 2001; Gross and Brewer, 2007). Frames are also capable of effecting who people believe are respon-

sible for certain political problems (Iyengar, 1991), and the content of our thoughts about an issue (Valkenburg, Semetko and Vreese, 1999).

There has been substantial research in framing effects. The literature, however, have different understandings of how a frame should be conceptualized and thus in many ways study different phenomena (Druckman, 2001b: 226; Weaver, 2007, 144; Borah, 2011; 249, Vreese, 2005: 52; Reese, 2007: 148; Tewskbury and Scheufele, 2008: 22; Scheufele, 1999, Nelson, Oxley and Clawson, 1997: 222). There are especially two prominent understandings of frames: Equivalence frames and issue frames (Druckman, 2001b; Vreese, 2005: 53; Borah, 2011, 248).

The first understanding of frames focuses on people's different reactions to frames which are logically equivalent but describe the problems differently. These frames are named equivalence frames (Druckman, 2001b: 228). A classic example is Kahneman and Tversky's study about two alternative programs to combat an outbreak of an Asian disease. They show that people are more likely to accept a program when it is framed as being able to save 200 out of 600 people than if the consequence of the program is described as the loss of 400 lives. Even though there is no logical difference between the information given in the two frames, the fact that it is framed either positively or negatively leads to a substantial framing effect (Kahneman and Tversky, 1984).

The second type of framing is called issue framing or emphasis framing (Druckman, 2001b: 230). In issue framing, a frame is defined as the way in which "words, images, phrases, and presentation styles" are used in ways to emphasize some aspects of an issue more than others (Chong and Druckman, 2007a: 100). Or as Entman expresses it:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a *particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described (italics in original, Entman, 1993: 52).

Contrary to an equivalence frame, issue frames or emphasis frames are therefore logically different since they highlight different considerations.

This dissertation will only focus on the effect of issue frames. There are two reasons for limiting the study to the effect of issue frames. First, the very essence of politics is the conflict about descriptions, consequences and solutions of the same political problem. Indeed, most political issues can be presented in at least two different ways with alternative problem definitions and different suggestions of the best course of action. This is the basis of issue

framing, since it means that choices can and must be made on how to present political problems and because the public are likely to be ambiguous about the topic (Chong and Druckman, 2007a; 100, Chong and Druckman, 2007b, 104). However, equivalence framing ignores this aspect of politics and take political conflict out of the study of political communication which seems a rather futile strategy (Vreese, 2005: 53, Sniderman and Theriault, 2004: 136).

Second, since political communication reflects the nature of politics itself; most political communication actually presents different arguments and conclusions which are in no way equivalent to each other (Druckman, 2001b: 235, 246, Slothuus, 2008: 3). A focus on equivalence frames would therefore limit the external and ecological validity of the concept and consequently not improve the understanding of actual political communication (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007: 18). From a political point of view, equivalence frames are less relevant, and therefore I focus on issue frames.

Issue frames can be differentiated further into generic and issue specific frames. Generic frames have certain characteristics which can be identified across topics. Several different types of generic frames have been defined (Vreese, 2005: 54). For instance, two well-known generic frames are the division between episodic and thematic frames. Episodic frames focus on descriptions of individuals and view political problems as limited to events and as specific instances, while thematic frames view political questions on a more abstract level and in a broader context (Iyengar, 1999: 2, 14).

The other type of issue frames is called issue specific frames. They are more closely connected to a specific topic and can thus not be found across topics (Vreese, 2005, 55). An example of issue specific frames could be the question about a Ku Klux Klan rally that can be framed as either a disruption of public order or as a free speech issue (Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley, 1997). Another example is when changing a central word cause people to change opinions. Simon and Jerit for instance show that the use of the word "baby" or "fetus" significantly affects the support for abortion in the U.S (Simon and Jerit, 2007).

The distinction between generic and issue specific frames is probably less clear than suggested above. The question is how general a frame must be in order to be generic and whether it is possible to have a generic frame completely detached from a specific issue. The generic frames are certainly important conceptualizations of how journalists choose to present certain issues. But even the most general frames will often be linked to a specific topic and consequently also with more issue specific arguments.

While the generic frames can be applied across different issues, the focus in this dissertation will be on the use of these generic frames linked to specific topics. The generic frames will therefore be coupled with more issue specific frames with focus on different aspects of the issue and consequently provide arguments in favor of and against the political issue (in line with Chong and Druckman, 2007b, 107). In other words, the dissertation works with frames at two levels – one is the overall presentation style of the communication and the second the more issue specific features and arguments.

To sum up, focus is limited to the effect of emphasis framing because the aim is to improve our understanding of the effects of *political* communication. But as both issue specific and generic frames are present in political communication both types are important to study. Therefore, the project will focus on the effect of both issue specific and generic frames. The study of generic frames will however be issue specific in the sense that the generic frames are examined as proponents of different issue specific positions.

2.2 Theories about framing effects

Above I have defined framing effects and the frames that are central to our understanding of framing effects of political communication. In this section, the focus will be on how theories have explained *how* these frames have an effect. Traditionally, framing studies have mostly been interested in framing effects on attitudes, behavior and different mental processes. But the literature has devoted less interest in whether these mental processes are the psychological mechanism through which framing affects attitudes and behavior. In spite of the numerous studies of framing effects, we therefore know surprisingly little about how frames have an effect.

To better understand framing effects, it is necessary to examine how frames have an effect. The perception of how frames have an effect namely also influence the perception of who are likely to be affected and why some frames are stronger than others. Insights into the mental processes through which frames have an effect are consequently central to our general understanding of framing effects.

The main purpose of this section is to examine the theoretical mediators of framing effects. A *mediator* is a variable that “represents the generative mechanism through which the focal independent variable is able to influence the dependent variable of interest” (Baron and Kenny, 1986: 1173). In other words, the section will focus on the theoretical explanations of how frames have an effect. In continuation of this, the section will also examine the moderators of framing effects. A *moderator* is a variable that “affects the

direction and/or strength of the relation between an independent or predictor variable and a dependent or criterion variable“ (Baron and Kenny, 1986: 1174). Two types of moderators are examined. The first group of moderators is variables which can explain why some *people* are more likely to be affected by frames than others. The second group focuses on why some *frames* are stronger than others.

2.2.1 How do issue frames have an effect?

Frames in communication are believed to have an effect by affecting people's frames in thought. In other words, it is assumed that framing effects affect the input in the decision-making process. The understanding of the decision-making processes is therefore also important to framing theories because it specifies what input is important. While the key question is how frames have an effect, it is therefore first necessary to examine how people construct their opinions.

Even though studies have not focused on the mental processes of framing effects, the literature is, nevertheless, based on the same theoretical model of decision-making. This model is usually employed to define how frames are believed to have an effect. This section will start by presenting this model of decision-making upon which most framing theories are based.

All framing studies more or less assume that people use a *memory-based* process¹ of decision-making (Druckman and Nelson, 2003: 731, Matthes, 2007: 52). A memory-based process of decision-making assumes that people's attitudes are based on some underlying considerations. Zaller defines a consideration "as any reason that might induce an individual to decide a political issue one way or the other" (Zaller, 1992: 40). But considerations have also been defined as evaluative beliefs (Nelson and Oxley, 1999; Chong and Druckman, 2007b: 105) or simply as relevant attitudes and political orientations (Lee et al., 2008: 697). The assumption is that when asked to express an opinion, people base their opinions on those considerations that come to mind. More precisely, the basic idea of the memory-based process of decision-making and consequently also of models of framing effects is

¹ Conceptually, the memory-based process of decision-making is contrasted with an on-line model of decision-making. The on-line model of judgment states that people do not remember the information they have received but simply have a running tally that is updated continuously whenever they receive new information (Hastie and Park, 1986). This model has rarely been used in framing studies (Matthes, 2007: 55), and is mainly used in explaining candidate evaluations.

that a person's attitude will depend on the balance between considerations for and against a political issue.

In other words, people's attitudes are considered to be a direct result of the considerations *available* to them – i.e. all the considerations they have stored in memory (Zaller, 1992; Chong and Druckman, 2007b: 110). Most people will have several available considerations about an issue, but available considerations do not suffice. If people cannot recall these considerations, they have no effect, because only those considerations they can recall at the time of judgment will determine the final attitude. In other words, the considerations need to be *accessible* in order to be included in the decision-making (Zaller, 1992; Kinder and Sanders, 1996; Chong and Druckman, 2007b). Finally, not all accessible considerations are used in the decision-making process as they are not automatically viewed as relevant to the issue in question. In other words, people are supposed to assess whether a consideration is *applicable* for the specific issue in question (Nelson and Oxley, 1999; Nelson, Oxley and Clawson, 1997; Chong and Druckman, 2007a; Brewer, 2001).

A consideration must thus be available, accessible and applicable in order to be part of the decision basis (Chong and Druckman, 2007b: 110). With this memory-based model of decision-making as a starting point, the definition of framing effects is straightforward: "By emphasizing a subset of potentially relevant considerations, a speaker can lead individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions" (Druckman, 2001b: 230). A framing effect occurs if a frame is able to make people focus on some considerations and not on others with the result that a person's considerations for and against an issue tips the balance. Therefore, the more ambivalent considerations people have, the more susceptible to framing effects they will be (Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997: 570). If people for instance do not have ambivalent considerations at all, it is impossible to change the balance between considerations. If you, on the other hand, have an almost even distribution of arguments for and against a political proposal, a framing effect slightly altering the distribution of considerations will result in a shift in the balance of the considerations and hence in a change of attitude. Therefore, political conflict is a prerequisite for the ability of framing issues since it paves the way for ambivalence in people's considerations about a political question (Sniderman and Theriault, 2004: 137; Chong and Druckman, 2007b, 104, Zaller, 1992).

Although all the models of framing effects more or less share this memory-based model of decision-making, there are, nevertheless, different views on which of these aspects that can be influenced by framing (Chong and

Druckman, 2007b:110). First, some theories argue that frames have an influence on attitudes because they can affect which considerations are *available*. By drawing attention to new information or new angles of an issue, a frame can create new considerations and thereby directly influence the balance between considerations for and against a political problem (Zaller, 1992; Chong and Druckman, 2007a). In other words, frames can influence the considerations that people have stored in their memories.

Other models claim that frames affect attitudes by highlighting certain considerations thereby bringing them to the top of their mind. When these considerations are made more accessible, they will be more likely to enter the decision-making process resulting in framing effects on attitudes (Zaller, 1992; Kinder and Sanders, 1996: 174; Chong and Druckman, 2007a).

Finally, it has been argued that frames primarily have an impact because they affect which considerations are judged to be applicable (Nelson and Oxley, 1999; Nelson, Oxley and Clawson, 1997; Chong and Druckman, 2007a; Brewer, 2001). From this point of view, issue frames do not add new considerations but only change the relative importance of already existing considerations because people will accept the considerations highlighted by the frame as carrying more weight.

Most of the literature emphasizes how frames have effects through changing the applicability of different considerations. Some studies have even suggested that framing effects should be limited to only include effects on the weight placed on different evaluations or the interpretations of an issue (Nelson, Oxley and Clawson, 1997: 236; Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007: 15).² Like other studies, this dissertation is cautious about defining framing effects based on just one psychological effect of the frame (Slothuus, 2008;

² The literature often sharply distinguishes between different kinds of media effects. Persuasion is defined by the changes in attitudes to political issues. Agenda-setting is concerned with the prominence of different issues on the agenda and is believed to influence what citizens believe is important political issues. Priming is believed to influence the aspects on which citizens evaluate politicians. Framing, on the other hand, focuses on how issues can be discussed and is believed to influence people's view on different political issues (Kinder, 2003, Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007). A part of the literature argues that the difference between persuasion, agenda-setting, priming and framing are to be found in different underlying psychological processes (Nelson, Oxley and Clawson, 1997: 225, Nelson and Oxley, 1999, Chong and Druckman, 2007b: 115, Druckman, 2001a: 1043). However, the literature does not agree on how the different kinds of media effects differ at the psychological level. Some has suggested that priming and framing share common processes (Chong and Druckman, 2007b: 115). Others have instead argued that priming and agenda-setting are linked by the same processes (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007:15).

O'Keefe, 2002: p. 179). A frame might have a whole range of different effects that would be overlooked by only focusing on *one* psychological aspect - it would simply be pointless to discuss alternative ways that frames can have an effect.

Apart from the problem of overlooking other interesting dependent variables, it is also problematic to define independent variables by their effects because it limits our theoretical understanding of the independent variable itself:

If an independent variable is defined by the effects it has (attitude change effects, fear arousal effects, etc.), then it becomes necessarily true that that variable has those effects; a failure of an experimental instantiation of the variable to produce the effects can be interpreted only as a failure to successfully manipulate the variable in question (O'Keefe, 2002: p. 179).

In line with O'Keefe, this dissertation therefore claims that frames should be defined according to intrinsic message features and not according to their observed effects. In other words, frames are assumed to be able to affect the availability, accessibility and applicability of different considerations.³ And more importantly, framing effects are not limited to just changes in these variables. Instead, framing effects can both be effects on attitudes, behaviors or other mental processes.

Why is the type of model underlying studies of framing effects so important? It is important, because theoretical models generate hypotheses, direct research and make claims about what variables might be important, and what the linkages between these different variables are. The process described above is therefore not only important to the theoretical understanding of how frames have an effect, but it also has an impact on all the other variables in the model. The reason is that a new variable, which might be included in studies of framing effects, must be theoretically linked to the process by which people make decisions. In other words, variables have been included *and* excluded depending on the model. Therefore, if the model above does not capture the real process of decision-making, it will affect the whole model of framing effects.

As a result of the central status of how frames have an effect, the view of the decision-making process also has an effect on the answers about who is

³ A recent study combines these different perspectives by arguing that frames have an effect through a combination of all three mediators depending on the degree of political awareness and the strength of predispositions of the receiver (Slothuus, 2005).

more affected by issue frames and what message factors are important. These questions will be examined in the next section.

2.2.2 Why do frames differ in their effects

The question of why frames differ in their effects can be divided into two sub-questions. The first question examines why some people are more affected than others and the second why some frames seem to be stronger than others. The answers to both of these questions take the model above as starting point and are therefore direct results of the model of how frames have an effect.

So far, the theory of framing effects seems to assume that the public just passively receives communication from the elites. However, the literature does not assume that framing effects are directly infused into the minds of the public. Several personal characteristics are supposed to influence the likelihood that a person is affected by frames.

The understanding of who is affected by issue frames reflects the above mentioned focus on considerations, which states that the more ambivalent a person is, the more susceptible to framing the person is. Consequently, the number and consistency of existing considerations is important to the understanding of who is affected by frames. If people have consistent considerations, a framing effect on attitude is unlikely to occur since one inconsistent consideration is not likely to change the balance of the considerations drastically. In other words, it is necessary to explain why some people have many and/or consistent considerations.

Especially political predispositions and political awareness are believed to be linked with the number and consistency of considerations. The precise relationship between political awareness, political predispositions and the framing effect is characterized by some uncertainty. Studies of framing effects generally point to these variables as the most important individual level moderators of framing effects.

Strong predispositions such as prior attitudes and values are believed to minimize framing effects (Druckman, 2001b: 241; Chong and Druckman, 2007b: 111). It is assumed that people with strong predispositions are less ambivalent because they can more easily identify and reject information which contradicts these predispositions. In other words, strong predispositions function as a filter of information and, as a result, people with strong predispositions are thought to have many consistent considerations.

Political awareness is believed to be an important moderator of framing effects. The theoretical argument is that political awareness improves the

ability to identify political information that is inconsistent with existing considerations and that people with a thorough understanding of politics tend to have more available and accessible considerations. Both the number and consistency of considerations reduce the impact of changes in available and accessible considerations (Lecheler and de Vreese, 2010; Druckman, 2004: 678). However, it has also been argued that people with high political awareness are more affected by frames (Chong and Druckman, 2007b: 112; de Vreese, Boomgaarden and Semetko, 2011; Slothuus, 2008). The argument is that more politically aware persons only have more available considerations, while the consistency in attitudes is judged to be more an effect of strong predispositions than political awareness. The precise relationship between political awareness and framing effects is therefore unclear. The different results can either be due to a more complex relationship between the variables resulting in more stable opinions among the best-informed and the worst-informed persons (Druckman and Lupia, 2000: 15). The results can be because the message intensity as well as message familiarity is important for the relationship between political awareness and opinions (Zaller, 1992: 156), and/or the different results can stem from a failure to include other moderating variables, e.g. need to evaluate (Druckman and Nelson, 2003: 732).

The last question central to framing models is what message factors that influences when an issue frame is able to affect people's opinions. Unlike the question about who is affected, this question focuses on how different attributes of the frame itself influences when to expect a framing effect. It seems rather obvious that not all issue frames are able to affect people's attitudes, but our knowledge about why some frames have a greater impact than others is rather limited (Chong and Druckman, 2007a: 110).

The literature has focused on different attributes of the frame. One aspect, which has been suggested to influence the strength of frames, is the credibility of the source. Studies have examined the importance of expertise and trustworthiness and not surprisingly, credible sources increase the persuasiveness of frames (Druckman, 2001a; Pornpitakpan, 2004). Other factors which can affect the effect of frames is their relationship to prior beliefs and shared cultural values (Brewer, 2001; Gamson and Modigliani, 1987). Cues such as value laden words, party cues or group cues can also affect the persuasiveness of frames (Barker, 2005; Slothuus and de Vreese, 2010; Zaller, 1992; Aarøe, 2010). The idea is that instead of processing the information themselves, people rely on these cues when they try to assess whether the

information is in accordance with their predispositions. However, our knowledge about which specific factors can make a frame strong is still limited.⁴

Finally, the literature also points to how the context in other ways can affect the persuasiveness of frames. The most important question concerns conflicting arguments or information in the frame. The vast majority of existing framing studies examine the effect of one-sided issue frames. The few studies examining competing frames suggest that competing frames will diminish framing effects because their effect cancel each other out (Sniderman and Theriault, 2004; Druckman, 2004: 678). People's conversations about politics are found to have similar effects (Druckman and Nelson, 2003; Druckman, 2004). These findings have been challenged by Chong and Druckman (2007c) who find that the outcome of competing frames depend on the strength of the frames: If a strong and weak frame is paired, the weak frame will backfire and the effect of the stronger frame becomes greater. This further stresses the importance of understanding what constitutes a strong frame.

The review of the moderators of framing effects shows that though several variables have been found to moderate framing effects, the precise relationship between these variables and framing effects remain ambiguous. Our knowledge of the potential factors influencing the strength of frames is also limited. Finally, most of the literature assumes that frames have an effect through the same processes independent of individual level characteristics or contextual characteristics. However, the mediating processes could be expected to depend on both individual characteristics, contextual factors such as type of topic, and message specific factors such as type of framing or the cues provided. A few studies have started to scratch the surface of these questions (Slothuus, 2008; Druckman and Nelson, 2003). These studies point to new interesting research questions, but further studies are required in order to fully understand the complexity of the relationship between the moderators and mediators. Existing studies of framing effects have provided important insights into the potential moderators of framing effects but there are still many unanswered questions.

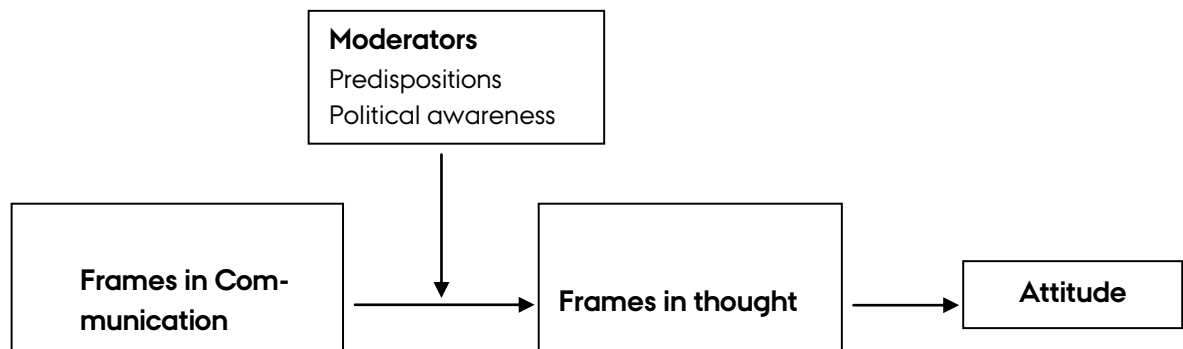
⁴ This limited knowledge for instance means that it is necessary to establish the strength of frames a priori (Chong and Druckman, 2007: 641). If we had a better theoretical understanding of the factors defining a strong frame, it would not be necessary to define a strong frame as a frame that is judged to be strong.

2.2.3 Summary: The Model Underlying Traditional Framing Theories

This section raises some questions central to the theory of framing effects, viz. how frames have an effect, who is affected and when. As the review illustrated, the literature disagrees on specific details, but nevertheless seems to share the same underlying model. This part will combine all the elements discussed above and present a full theoretical model of framing effects.

Figure 2.1 presents a model of how framing is assumed to have an effect according to the traditional theories discussed above. As illustrated, frames in communication are assumed to have an effect by affecting people's thoughts and considerations about an issue that are central to the decision-making process. The theories differ slightly on what aspects of considerations frames can affect: the availability, the accessibility and/or the applicability. Common to all the different perspectives is, however, that opinions are assumed to be based on some kind of assessment of considerations for and against a political issue. Therefore, considerations are believed to be the main mediator of framing effects. Given the fact that the way frames have an effect are important for our general understanding of framing effects, it is problematic that the literature on framing has not paid closer attention to this question.

Figure 2.1: The Model Underlying Traditional Framing Theories



The model of framing effects presented in figure 2.1 is a rather cognitive model. Cognition has different understandings in the literature. Some apply the term cognition to all information processing, while others restrict it to conscious thinking and decision-making (Marcus, 2000: 224; Petersen 2007: 48). This dissertation restricts the understanding of cognition to only include conscious thinking and decision-making well aware that this understanding differs from the more psychological understanding covering all mental activity (Spezio and Adolphs, 2007:76-77). However, the narrow understanding of

cognition is more in line with the use of the word in political psychology which is the area of interest here. According to this definition of cognition, the dominant role of considerations and the memory-based decision-making model means that the model of framing effects has a cognitive focus.

First, the cognitive focus shows itself in the definition of considerations as “any reason” that people use in deciding a political issues one way or the other (Zaller, 1992: 40). Nonetheless, Zaller argues that considerations have both cognitive and affective elements with the affective element of a consideration being the favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the information in the consideration (Zaller, 1992: 40-41; 297). Despite Zaller’s openness towards considerations having affective elements, however, the focus in later studies has been predominantly on cognitive aspects of considerations. The affective aspects have consequently not been measured in most of the studies examining mediators of framing effects. The cognitive focus of mediators is so marked that the concept of framing effects have been defined as when the impact of frames in communication affects frames in thought defined as “an individual’s cognitive understanding of a given situation” (Chong and Druckman, 2007a: 101; Druckman, 2001b: 227-228).

Secondly, the cognitive focus permeates the process in which the different considerations are converted into a single attitude is based on a memory-based model or an expectancy value model (Zaller, 1992: 278; Chong and Druckman, 2007b: 105). This model of decision making implies a rather cognitive decision-making process. The model does not require that people think all their considerations through – on the contrary, the lack of thinking through provides much of the dynamic in framing theories. But the model nevertheless assumes that people make logical inferences on the basis of those considerations they happen to have on the top of their mind. Even though Zaller mentions that considerations can have affective elements, these affective elements are therefore assumed to enter the decision-making process on the same terms as the cognitive elements. In other words, the inputs to the process can perhaps be emotional, but the process itself is cognitive.

It can be argued that some of the framing processes are more conscious than others. The argument is that when people base their opinions on available and accessible considerations it is a passive or unconscious process while applicability implies a consciously evaluation of the considerations (Chong and Druckman, 2007a: 109; Chong and Druckman, 2007c: 639; Chong and Druckman, 2007b: 110). The framing effects taking place through available and accessible considerations would consequently not be considered as cognitive according to my definition of cognition above.

However, the underlying model of decision-making is the expectancy value model regardless of whether it is changes in the availability, the accessibility or the applicability of the considerations that are forming the basis for changes in attitudes (Chong and Druckman, 2007b: 105; Chong and Druckman, 2007a: 107). The cognitive focus is consequently also present even when frames have an effect through changes in availability and accessibility.

As stated above, mediators are important because they specify the mechanisms that all other variables are supposed to affect. Since the process of decision-making is assumed to be cognitive, the moderating variables also have a cognitive nature. Zaller explicitly points out that the process in which “individuals acquire information from the environment and convert it into opinion statements” are “essentially cognitive processes” (Zaller, 1992: 42) and therefore, cognitive engagement and not affective engagement is a relevant moderator (i.e. political awareness). The cognitive focus consequently permeates the whole model since both the mediators and the individual moderators are cognitive.

The key question is: Is it likely that such a simple cognitive model can offer a realistic and adequate understanding of the complex nature of decision-making? If the cognitive mediators are unable to do so, the chances are that the other variables in the model cannot capture all the variation in the effect of frames. If studies are only interested in examining whether frames have an effect or not, these question are not important. But if we want to get a deeper understanding of framing effects, it is necessary to gain more insights into the mediators (Borah, 2011: 252; Kinder, 2003: 378). By examining mediators, it is possible to take people’s different reactions to this frame into account (Tao and Bucy, 2007, 400). A better understanding of the processes could consequently help us to clarify why some frames are stronger than others, and why some people are more susceptible to framing effects. Our knowledge about how frames have an effect is limited as only few empirical studies include mediators of framing effects (Borah, 2011: 255). Only a surprisingly small number of studies have examined the whole causal chain from frame to different mediators to attitudes (notable exceptions are Druckman and Nelson, 2003; Slothuus, 2008; de Vreese et al, 2011; Zaller, 1992; Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson, 1997; Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson, 1997; Nelson and Oxley, 1999; Nelson, 2004; Druckman, 2001a). Even though the traditional mediators do not always manage to mediate the full framing effect on attitudes, no alternative mediators have been examined to explain this residual framing effect (se for instance de Vreese et al., 2011, Slothuus, 2008).

This dissertation argues that the mediators suggested in the model do not really grasp how people make decisions in real life. If people do not always perform a memory-based calculation of the number and weight of their considerations, the whole model is open for change. Because the mediators and moderators of the model are closely linked, a change in one is likely to bring about a change in the other. By changing the mediators, new moderators would most likely be important and lead to questions about how the traditional moderators can moderate other mediators.

2.3 The Other Side of the Coin

As shown above, we have learned a lot about framing effects based on this model. However, as also shown, we still have a limited knowledge within many areas. We know too little about why some people are more affected than others and why some frames are stronger than others. The traditional framing models therefore leave much variation unexplained and fail to clearly specify some of the basic mechanisms in the models. This is exemplified in a recent study where frames have a direct effect on attitudes that are not assumed to pass through the traditional cognitive mediators (de Vreese, Boomgaarden and Semetko, 2011: 194).

As the model of framing effects leaves many questions unanswered, it becomes interesting to seek alternatives to the traditional cognitive mediators. This section examines two different sources of inspiration for framing theories. First, the literature on decision-making has a long tradition of turning to psychology for new insights to include in its theories (Petersen, 2007: 43). It is thus natural first to see whether new insights in psychology and decision-making can provide new alternatives to the purely cognitive mediators of framing effects. Secondly, the theories of framing can also draw inspiration from the actual communication that politicians and journalists use.

Traditionally, emotions did not take up much room in the political science literature. In most of the twentieth century, the literature on decision-making was characterized by a fairly negative view on emotions that were viewed as irrational and unpredictable and therefore mainly regarded as a threat to the “rational” decision process – and consequently to democracy itself (Marcus, 2000: 221; Marcus, 2003: 182; Redlawsk, 2006). However, in recent years, the literature on decision-making has increasingly focused on the effect of emotions (Cacioppo and Gardner, 1999; Marcus 2000; Marcus, Neuman and Mackuen, 2000; Redlawsk, 2006; Lerner and Keltner, 2000; Neuman et al., 2007; Damasio, 1994).

Today, emotions are viewed as part and parcel of decision-making processes (Marcus 2000), a development fueled by new insights from psychology and neuroscience. It shows that without the full capacity to experience emotions, people are unable to make everyday decisions and initiate action (Damasio, 1994; Bechara, 2004). As a result of these insights, emotions are also used more and more in political science. Studies have shown that emotions have a whole range of effects (review in: Schwarz, 2000, Cacioppo and Gardner, 1999) and that most aspects of political life are able to elicit emotional reactions (Marcus, 2000:228-229; Isbell and Ottati, 2002: 55-56; Lodge and Taber, 2005).

The literature on decision-making consequently gives reasons to suspect that emotions can be important in framing theories. Another reason for framing studies to look more into the role of emotions can be found in political communication. Even though only a few studies have actually examined the use of emotional appeals, it is widely assumed that such appeals have a prominent position in political communication (Pfau, 2007, Perloff, 1998: 172; Huddy and Gunthorsdottir, 2000: 745; Nabi, 2003: 224), which the few studies actually examining this question confirm. As early as 1944, Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet concluded that "All sorts of propaganda rely on emotional appeals to get their message across" (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1944 [second printing, 1948]: 119). In their analysis of the presidential campaign communication in Erie County in the 1940 election, they found that almost all sentences in the campaign propaganda included sentimentalized terms or symbols. The use of emotional appeals is, in other words, not a new tendency in politics. Even before studies examined the importance of emotions to political decision-making, the politicians seemed to be aware of their importance in politics, which later studies of political campaigns in the United States have confirmed. Kaid and Johnston found emotional proof in 84 per cent of all presidential television spots and out of these 44 per cent relied solely on emotional proof (Kaid and Johnston, 2001: 54-55). Brader finds that almost all campaign TV ads during the 2000 election cycle appealed to the emotions of the viewer (Brader, 2006: 153). Finally, after examining ads aired during the U.S. Senate races in 2004, Ridout and Searles also conclude that emotional appeals are used strategically (Ridout and Searles, 2011). Despite of (or maybe because of) the traditional negative view of emotions, politicians have consequently widely used emotional appeals.

If emotions are important variables in both decision-making and political communication, it is plausible that they could also be important variables in framing studies. Furthermore, emotions have been suggested as potential important variables for the effect of frames (Slothuss, 2008: 50-51; Valken-

burt, Semetko, and de Vreese, 1999: 566). Nonetheless, emotions are left out of most framing theories and certainly not included in the general model of framing effects described above. As early as 1994, Kinder pointed to the mismatch between theory and practice:

The managers, consultants, and pollsters that comprise the new and often vilified political class have appreciated the importance of emotional appeals and “hot-button” issues better and faster than those of us inside the ivy wall. It is time we caught up. (Kinder, 1994: 307).

Nevertheless, the main focus of research on framing effects is still on cognitive variables, and even though Kinder in 1994 encouraged studies of framing effects to include emotions, they have only been included in a limited number of studies. In other words, real life political communication focuses on emotional appeals, but the theory on the effects of political communication leaves no room for the effect of emotions.

The realism of the simple cognitive model underlying theories of framing effects is also questioned in the psychological literature on decision-making. By overlooking a potential important variable and focusing solely on cognitive mechanisms, traditional framing studies risk to be based on an incomplete and unrealistic model. It could be argued that the realism of the model is of secondary importance as it can be seen as an ideal type of decision-making: It does not correspond to all the characteristics of decision-making, but it is useful when developing theories – exactly because of its simplification. Simplification is always necessary when studying psychological processes and framing studies have without doubt provided important insights into framing effects based on this model. The problem is, however, that the theoretical simplification guides the empirical testing and the variables which are included in studies.

When the model of framing effects focuses narrow-mindedly on the cognitive aspect, it also has theoretical implications because it precludes fertile avenues of research in the affective aspect of decision-making. The studies thereby risk making inaccurate conclusions because they risk overlooking potential interesting paths of analysis beforehand. It is problematic that a theoretical model, which has only rarely been explicitly tested, has influenced the further theoretical and empirical research. Not only have the model been tested in a limited number of studies, but the literature also lacks consensus about the main mediators of framing effects. Finally, the simple model can only explain a limited part of the effect of frames (see de Vreese, Boomgaarden and Semetko, 2011).

“Any attempt to explain political action by considering only its cognitive roots is certain to result in only a partial explanation, and a not very good one in the end” (Redlawsk, 2006: 3). In line with Redlawsk, this dissertation believes that by excluding emotions we only know part of the story of framing effects. And this naturally raises the question: What will the conclusions be if emotions were included in models of framing effects?

2.4 Cognition and Emotion – Two Sides of the Same Coin, But One Side is Missing

Framing is an inevitable part of political communication and a major source of influence on public opinion. Therefore, a better understanding of framing effects will also improve our understanding of the dynamic of public opinion.

Our understanding of framing effects is still characterized by a narrow focus on cognitive variables since most research in framing studies only examines cognitive mediators and moderators. Even though the literature on decision-making in later years has come to view cognition and emotions as two sides of the same coin, the literature on framing has mainly focused on only one side of the coin. The failure to incorporate the new insights from decision-making theories, leave framing studies with a seemingly inaccurate theoretical model which, nevertheless, steers the course of much of the research in framing effects. The importance of emotions in the study of framing effects is further stressed by the use of emotional appeals in political communication. Even though emotional appeals are pervasive in political communication, and psychologists have demonstrated that emotions are an integral part of human decision-making, we still lack a systematic investigation of the extent to which emotional processes underpin framing effects on public opinion. By bringing emotions into the theory of framing, the aim of this project is to bridge the gaps between framing theories and the findings in studies on decision-making and political communication.

The next chapter presents the basic argument of the dissertation and develops a theoretical model of how emotions can be included in framing theories. This model will form the basis for a systematic investigation of the role of emotions in framing studies.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Model

As illustrated in chapter 2, the central mediators and moderators in the framing literature originate from a cognitive model of decision-making. It was also illustrated how new studies of decision-making and research on political communication have questioned the realism of this cognitive decision-making model. Therefore, the chapter concluded by suggesting that emotions are potentially important variables. This chapter will clarify the explanatory potential of emotions for our understanding of media effects.

One thing is to suggest emotions as potential important variables another to specify theoretically how they can be included into framing models. This chapter therefore focuses on developing a theoretical model of how to include emotions based on the literature on emotion. My argument is that the best way to include emotions is to examine them as mediators of framing effects which will be unfolded in the next section as well as a theoretical model of how emotions more precisely can be included in framing theories. Subsequently, the implications of such an inclusion on the overall understanding of framing effects will be discussed.

The framing literature has focused on cognitive variables, and emotions have as a result been more or less absent. However, the greater focus on the effect of emotions on decision-making has also spilled over to some of the literature on framing though the main focus here is still on cognitive variables. In recent years, emotions have been recognized as potential important variables and been included in a few studies of framing effects. To clarify how this dissertation can contribute to our understanding of framing effects, it is necessary to examine what we already know about the effect of including emotions into models of framing effects. The following section will therefore also briefly discuss the different ways these framing studies have included emotions. In doing so, the section will show the failure of existing studies to properly assess the role of emotions in framing models and how this thesis will fill in some of the gaps still existing in the literature.

Finally, the chapter will look into the theoretical model in more detail and provide the theoretical understanding of emotions and their effects. This section will focus on different parts of the model separately. Firstly, the theoretical understanding of emotions will be discussed. Secondly, three theories with focus on different aspects of relationships between frames, emotions

and attitudes will be presented in order to form theoretical expectations about the relationships between the model's central variables.

3.1 The Main Claim

From a theoretical and empirical point of view, mediators are important because they set the boundary between relevant and irrelevant variables and capture people's different reactions to frames. Mediators are therefore important to our understanding of framing effects, but they are, nevertheless, undertheorized and insufficiently studied in the literature. Furthermore, studies have questioned the cognitive nature of the traditional mediators of framing effects. Therefore it seems reasonable to examine the processes of framing effects in more detail and the issue of mediators is accordingly the focal point of the dissertation.

As chapter two illustrated, studies have shown that appeals to emotions are common in political communication and affect the decision-making in crucial ways. Based on these theoretical insights, the basic argument of this dissertation is formed. Because taken together, these findings give theoretical reasons to expect that emotions can be central to the processes through which frames have an effect. In other words, this project claims that emotions can be central mediators of framing effects as summed up in the following proposition:

P1: Framing effects are at least in parts mediated by emotions

Emotions consequently become critical for the understanding of framing effects and by including them as mediators, focus moves from conscious cognitive responses (a focus which almost has a computer-view on political decision-making) to a focus on automatic responses originating outside conscious awareness.

I do not, however, argue that cognitive mediators do not matter. The claim is that framing effects can take a cognitive route as well as an emotional route. Emotions consequently become central mediating variables of framing effects side by side with the traditional cognitive mediators. The argument is that while the cognitive mediators are important, they are not likely to fully explain how people in general form attitudes and must thus be supplemented with emotional mediators.

As the review in chapter 2 illustrated, cognitive variables also provided the answers to the question of why frames differ in their effects. The inclusion of emotions will also affect the answer to this question. If emotions are included into the model of framing effects, it means that people can react with

different emotional reactions to the same frames. The dissertation will argue that these different emotional reactions can be central to the explanation of why some people are more affected than others. This argument can be summed up in the following core proposition:

P2: Framing effects will vary across individuals according to their emotional reactions

The two propositions above might seem as rather small and inconsequential changes in the theoretical model with few practical implications: It might provide us with a deeper and more realistic understanding of the underlying processes of framing effects, but our main conclusions about framing are not affected. However, just as the cognitive mediators influenced the general perception of framing effects, the emotional mediators are likely to influence the general understanding of framing effects. The reason is that by including emotions the way is paved for new questions to examine and new variables to include. Each of the two propositions above consequently points to new important research questions.

The proposition that some of the framing effect is mediated by emotions leads to new research questions about whether frames have an effect on emotions, which message factors can affect the intensity and type of emotions evoked and how the new mediator relate to the traditional mediators. The question about individual variation in effect of frames leads to questions about the moderating role of the intensity and type of emotions. In the following, the different research questions will be presented. To illustrate how this dissertation can extend existing knowledge, I also discuss how prior studies have examined these questions.

3.1.1 Implications of the Proposition that Emotions Can be Mediators of Framing Effects

The proposition that framing effects are partly mediated by emotions has consequences for our understanding of what message factors are important and for our understanding of the framing effect. The reason is that by including new mediators, the model also introduces new causal relationships – between the affective mediators and the traditional framing variables – that lead to a number of new research questions. These are presented in the following just as prior studies examining these questions are discussed.

First, if emotions are mediators of framing effects, frames need to have an effect on emotions. However, it is not enough that frames evoke emotions. In order to mediate framing effects, frames should also evoke different

types of emotions. The first research question that the inclusion of emotions as mediators leads to is therefore:

RQ1: Can emphasis frames evoke different emotions?

This is a central research question since the framing effect on emotions is a prerequisite for examining any later effect of emotions on framing effects. If frames do not affect emotions directly, emotions can still have an impact on the framing effect. But this effect would stem from an effect of mood rather than an effect of framing induced emotional reactions (see Druckman and McDermott, 2008: 307).

In order to understand how this project can extend our knowledge, it is necessary to see what existing studies conclude about the effect of frames on emotions and what aspects they fail to address. The literature has three different approaches to how political communication can evoke emotions. Some studies have focused on special rhetorical devices that evoke emotions, others on the effect of generic frames and, finally, a group of studies have examined the effect of specific emotional appeals.

The first group of studies shows how music, symbols and pictures can elicit emotions not directly related to the topic in the frames. Even though these emotional reactions are without relevance to the political issue, they have an effect on people's attitudes without affecting the more cognitive considerations about the topic (Brader, 2005; Huddy and Gunthorsdottir, 2000).

The second group of studies examines the impact of generic frames on emotions and whether specific frames have different impact on the kind or the intensity of emotions evoked (Gross and D'Ambrosio, 2004; Gross and Brewer, 2007; Gross, 2008; Aarøe, 2011). These studies find that the generic frames (conflict frames versus substance frames, dispositional versus situational frames and thematic versus episodic frames) affect emotions differently. Therefore, the studies illustrate the necessity to differentiate among different types of frames when discussing the impact of frames on emotions. However, based on these studies it is unclear whether all generic frames have an effect on emotions since only one study includes a control group (Aarøe, 2011).

Besides studies of the effect of generic frames on emotions, there is a long tradition of studying how specific emotional appeals in persuasive messages can evoke emotions. During the last 50 years, there has been considerable research in especially the effects of fear appeals. These studies use both pictures and textual presentation in order to evoke specific emotions

and therefore combine the instruments of the two groups above (for a review see Witte and Allen, 2000).

The existing studies above are important. They show that frames can actually evoke emotions and thereby give grounds for further studies of the impact of emotions. Yet, our understanding of the effect of frames on emotions is still limited because the studies have different shortcomings. First, the studies of the effect of pictures and music are central to our understanding of how political ads and campaigns work, but less relevant to our general understanding of framing effects. When politicians are cited in newspapers or asked to give a statement on television to something in the news, they seldom have any control of the context. They are only in control of the statement itself. So, although the existing studies give us important insights into how political ads and campaigns work, the findings cannot be generalized to everyday political communication. This is a problem since the majority of political struggles take place outside political campaigns.

Secondly, most studies of generic frames do not include a control group which makes it difficult to assess the examined frames' ability to evoke emotions. And even though it is important to distinguish between different generic frames, not all real life communication fits neatly into these categories. It can be problematic to generalize the results from these studies to other types of frames such as issue specific frames. Based on existing studies, we therefore know practically nothing about the role of emotions when issue specific frames are used just as our knowledge about the effect of generic frames is tentative.

Finally, while the studies of fear appeals in many ways examine issue specific frames, these studies are deliberately constructed in order to evoke specific emotions. As a result, they can only show that messages *can* evoke emotions but not answer the question whether emphasis frames in general can evoke emotions since these messages are not representative of everyday messages. A second problem with these studies is that they do not provide theoretical insights into the message factors leading to specific emotions, because the construction of these emotional appeals is often not theory-driven but instead defined according to their effects: A fear frame is simply defined as a frame that evokes fear (O'Keefe, 2003: 256, 265). The definition of a fear appeal based on its effect on fear does not provide insights about the message factors leading to fear, and the effect-based definitions in these studies do not provide any guidance about the general characteristics of a strong emotional appeal (O'Keefe, 2003: 265). Of course, the literature on fear appeals has indirectly examined the characteristics of fear-evoking frames since they try to maximize the feeling of fear. Severity of a

threat and a person's susceptibility to it have been suggested as two important aspects of a strong fear appeal, just as vivid language, pictures and personalized communication are believed to be effective tools in ensuring these perceptions (Witte and Allen, 2000: 606). But there are two reasons why these recommendations are not very useful when examining the effects of emotions in everyday news consumption. First, these recommendations are useful when constructing messages about health issues, which many fear appeals do, but it is probably more difficult for practitioners of political communication to incite the same feelings of urgency and susceptibility. The second and more important problem is that these recommendations do not improve our knowledge about how to construct frames able to evoke other emotions such as anger or sympathy.

Existing studies examining the first research question do not provide insights into the general ability of frames to evoke emotions and whether it is possible to control the emotional responses. But they show that frames can have an effect on emotion which is important since emotions would otherwise be of marginal interest to framing theories. These studies thereby give grounds for studying the impact of emotions on framing effects.

A second implication of including emotions as mediators is that the size of the framing effect might depend on how emotionally engaging it is. It therefore becomes central to understand why frames differ in type and intensity of the emotions evoked. As a consequence, the first proposition directs attention to what message factors can explain differences in emotional reactions and to the following research question:

RQ2: Do frames vary in the intensity of emotions evoked in people?

While existing studies show that some frames can evoke emotions, less attention has been paid to the second research question about whether frames vary in the intensity of emotional reactions. Two studies have examined the differences between the effect of thematic and episodic frames, and both conclude that episodic frames are more emotionally engaging than thematic frames. Aarøe even finds that thematic frames have no impact on emotions (Gross, 2008; Aarøe, 2011).

We only have limited knowledge about why some frames evoke stronger emotions as only few studies have examined this question. Moreover, these studies have focused on the differences between generic frames rather than on why a specific frame is able to evoke stronger emotions. The problem with examining differences between frames is that these studies often become a question of whether one frame is more emotional than

another. This is certainly an interesting conclusion, but it does not provide insights into *why* some frames evoke stronger emotions since it is only possible to conclude that episodic frames are more emotional than thematic frames. The focus on the differences between thematic and episodic frames means that no one has explored whether episodic frames might have differential effects. The conclusion about the effect of thematic and episodic frames is black and white: episodic frames evoke more emotion, *per se*. Little attention has been paid to the possibility that some episodic frames might be more emotionally engaging than others. However, the intensity of emotional reactions is also likely to depend on the type of topic and other aspects not related to the episodic framing, *per se* (Valkenburg, Holli and de Vreese, 1999: 566). In other words, the distinction between episodic and thematic frames seems to be an oversimplification of the possible factors influencing the intensity of emotional reactions.

We therefore need more insights into the two research questions concerned with the effect of frames on emotions and a more thorough understanding of why frames evoke specific emotions and why some evoke stronger emotions than others. A general principle, which can guide the construction of emotional appeals, would greatly improve our knowledge about the effect of frames on emotions. Such a model should be able to explain both why frames evoke specific emotions and why some evoke stronger emotions than others. The aim of this dissertation is to contribute to the knowledge about the effects of frames on emotions in two ways. First, I will extend the knowledge about the effect of issue specific frames by examining their effect on emotions where an effect is less likely to be found. The second objective is to put forward a theory about how to evoke different emotions and how to vary their intensity. By providing a theoretical grounding for these questions, the model can guide the construction of frames across issues and across different types of emotions.

Besides leading to questions about the causal relationship between frames and emotions, the first proposition, that emotions are mediators of framing effects, naturally also has implications for the question *how* frames have an effect. Since the model includes two different types of mediators, it opens up for questions about the relationship between the different mediators. Firstly, the question about whether the two types of mediators are always equally important, which is concerned with the possibility that the type of frame affects the type of mediator:

RQ3: Does the type of frame affect the type of mediators?

Only two studies have directly examined the possibility that emotions evoked by frames can have an effect on attitudes and consequently function as mediators of framing effects. In a study of episodic and thematic frames, Gross (2008) suggests that frames can have an effect through a cognitive and affective route, and she finds that emotions more seem to mediate the effect of episodic than of thematic frames. In line with this study, Aarøe (2011) finds that while the effect of episodic frames is dependent on the emotional reaction, the effect of thematic frames is not affected by emotions. Both studies consequently focus on episodic and thematic frames and conclude that emotions seem to mediate the framing effects of especially episodic frames. Other studies have pointed to the idea that the effect of frames depend on the evoked emotional reactions, though no direct test of mediation is performed (Brader, 2005, Brewer, 2001; Huddy and Gunthorsdottir, 2000).

The two studies have provided some evidence for stating that emotions can be mediators of framing effect. But as the research has focused on generic frames, we thus lack knowledge about the effect of for instance issue specific frames. While prior studies show that emotions *can* mediate framing effects, the small number of studies examining a limited array of frames does not allow for a reliable test of the second part of the question about *when* emotions can be mediators. Finally, it is also necessary to examine the mediators of thematic and episodic frames in a study which includes a control group in order to properly assess whether emotions also mediate the effect of thematic frames.

The two types of mediators also lead to another question of whether the two types of mediators are directly related or completely independent of each other. The last question related to the proposition that emotions are mediators is therefore:

RQ4: What is the relationship between emotions and the cognitive mediators?

Previous studies have examined the question of whether emotions can mediate the effect of frames, but have failed to address the research question above. The reason is that both studies examine emotions as mediators and do not include measures of the traditional cognitive mediators; they only focus on the affective mediators. Since these studies examine the effect of emotions independently of the traditional cognitive mediators, they are not able to examine the interrelationship between the two types of mediators. On this basis, it is not possible to assess whether affective mediators contri-

bute with extra explanatory force in comparison with the cognitive mediators. If emotions do not improve our understanding of framing effects, the inclusion of emotions can be considered as a way of making the model of framing effects unnecessarily more complicated. By not including measures of cognitive mediators, it is neither possible to examine whether the type of frames influences the type of process mediating framing effects.

By examining issue specific frames and by including measures of cognitive mediators, it will be possible to improve our knowledge about the two research questions linked to the question of how frames have an effect.

3.1.2 Implications of the Proposition that Framing Affects will Vary across Individuals according to their Emotional Reactions

The first proposition led to research questions about message factors and mediators, whereas the second proposition leads to new questions such as, why some people are affected by an issue frame and others are not. The reason is that the kind of emotions evoked and the intensity of the emotional reactions are likely to differ from person to person. These emotional reactions are subsequently assumed to have an influence on the effect of frames. This leads to the first research question linked to the second proposition that framing effects will vary across individuals according to their emotional reactions:

RQ 5: Do emotional reactions affect the persuasiveness of frames?

In contrast to traditional framing theories, emotional reactions are also likely to vary across different versions of the same frame. Two frames with the same basic argument but different emotional appeals (due to for instance the details in the descriptions of certain persons) should, according to traditional framing theories, have the same effect: No new relevant considerations are presented, predispositions and political awareness are static variables and neither availability, accessibility nor applicability should be influenced by differences in the emotional appeal, but the different versions most likely lead to different emotional reactions. It is advantageous to include emotions because they can explain the variation both between persons and in a person's susceptibility across variations of the same frame.

The question about the effect of emotions on the persuasiveness of frames has mostly been examined in studies examining the effect of induced or primed emotions. Since these emotions are present prior to the experimental stimulus, these studies only examine how people's moods and issue-irrelevant emotions can affect the effect of issue frames. The conse-

quence is that the role of emotions is reduced to being just moderators of framing effects. I will, however, present these studies briefly because they constitute the majority of studies examining the role of emotions in framing studies, and because they can hint to the potential role of emotions as moderators of the framing effect.

The studies examining the effect of different moods or induced emotions disagree on the nature of this effect. Some studies focus on whether the emotional states and framing of an issue are congruent or not, but they disagree about whether congruence or incongruence will lead to higher persuasion (Keller, Lipkus and Rimer, 2003; Kuvaas and Kaufmann, 2004; DeSteno et al., 2004). Other studies argue that it is not enough to examine the effect of positive and negative moods since discrete emotions of the same valence can have different effects. These studies specifically focus on the ability of anxiety to make people more susceptible to framing effects (Druckman and McDermott, 2008; Witte and Allen, 2000). Despite the fact that the different approaches and theories differ in their expectations about the precise relationship between emotions and the effect of frames, they do agree on the fact that moods and induced emotions have an effect on the persuasiveness of frames.

Several studies have examined the different effect of the different types of emotions, but only Aarøe have examined the importance of the intensity of evoked emotional reactions (2011). She concludes that the effect of episodic frames depends on the intensity of the emotional reactions, and thus stronger emotions lead to greater effects. The effect of thematic frames, on the other hand, was not affected by the intensity of the emotional reactions. Her study is important since it points to the importance of including emotions among the factors that can explain differences in the strength of different frames and explain individual differences in susceptibility. However, this study only examines the effect of anger- and compassion-related emotions. Based on the insights from the studies examining the effect of induced emotions, other emotions such as the feeling of anxiety could be an important emotion when examining framing effects. If anxiety is such an important emotion, it might be problematic that it was not included in the study above.

The dissertation does not reject the traditional moderators of framing effects, which can still be important and also have an effect on emotions. Pre-dispositions and political awareness can have an impact on both the kind of emotional responses people experience and on the likeliness that people will react based on these emotions.

However, new and potential important message factors, new ways of explaining how frames have an effect and individual differences in suscep-

tibility are not the only implications of including emotions as mediators. To include a new set of mediators paves the way for research questions focusing on whether the type of mediators will vary across individuals:

RQ 6: Can emotions have an impact on the use of the different mediators?

This last research question concerns the impact of emotions on the weight of different mediators. Traditional models of framing effects assume that all people process frames in the same way. The possibility of moderated mediation has only recently been examined (Slothuus, 2008). If people's different emotional reactions to a frame can affect the weight between the different types of mediators, the understanding of framing effects is broadened by extending the moderated mediation with a new type of moderator and mediator.

Several studies have examined the effect of both cognitive and affective mediators, but no studies have yet included both types of mediators, and the interrelations between the two types of mediators have not been examined. This is therefore an untouched territory. While no studies have examined how emotions evoked by frames can affect the decision-making process, some studies have examined the effect of moods or induced emotions on decision-making processes. Some studies examine the effect of emotions on recall. Traditional theories of framing effects believe that frames can have an effect by affecting the accessibility of different considerations. So if emotions can influence which considerations are accessible, then emotions have a direct influence on balance of considerations and hence bias the decision-making process (Kuvaas and Kaufmann, 2004; Nabi, 2003). Other studies examine how emotions can bias the search for more information (Nabi, 2003). By influencing the preferences for further information seeking, emotions cannot only affect what people remember but also what they will learn in the future. Emotions are also thought to influence the complexity of the decision-making process and be able to both enhance and reduce conscious decision-making (Lang et al., 2007; Hullett, 2005). Finally, anxiety has been found to increase confidence in one's preferences (Druckman and McDermott, 2008). Even though the emotions examined were issue-irrelevant, these studies give reasons to expect that frames evoking emotions can be processed in different ways.

This project can extend these studies by examining directly whether frames themselves are able to generate this effect and what the consequences of such an effect is for the impact of frames. The project can also improve our understanding of why anxiety has an effect, since only few stu-

dies have actually directly tested the assumptions underlying the effects of anxiety.

3.1.3 Summary: The Next Step – How this dissertation can extend our knowledge of framing effects

Table 3.1 creates an overview of how the different research questions are linked with the proposed propositions and the questions central to framing theories presented in chapter 2. As illustrated, by including emotions as mediators of framing effects, the answers to all the questions central to framing theories are likely to change.

Table 3.1: Overview of propositions and research questions

Proposition	Research Question
P1: Framing effects are at least in parts mediated by emotions	<p>Message factors: Framing effects on emotions</p> RQ 1: Can emphasis frames evoke different emotions? RQ 2: Do frames vary in how strong emotions they evoke in people? <p>How: Emotions as mediators</p> RQ 3: When do emotions mediate the effect of frames RQ 4: What is the relationship between emotions and the cognitive mediators
P2: Framing effects will vary across individuals according to their emotional reactions	<p>Who: Individual variations in the effects of frames</p> RQ 5: Does the intensity of the emotional reactions affect the persuasiveness of frames RQ 6: Can emotions have an impact on the use of the different mediators?

First, the question, how frames have an effect, has become much nuanced with the inclusion of emotions as mediators. Not only can frames be mediated by two types of mediators, it has also become possible for the weight of the different mediator to depend on the type of frame in question and the individuals' emotional reactions. The second question, who is influenced by frames, is also affected since the kind and intensity of emotional reactions can be central elements in the answer to this question. The answer to the question about message factors has also shifted from factors that affect cognitive variables to factors that are likely to affect emotional reactions. The research questions presented above will guide the remaining part of the dissertation.

The propositions and the research questions also have implications for the theoretical model about framing effects. Firstly, emotions need to be included as mediators. Frames, therefore, not only have an effect on people's

frames in thought, but frames can also have an effect on people's frames in emotions. Secondly, the models need to be extended with the potential moderating role of emotions on the weight of the traditional cognitive mediators.

Figure 3.1: The theoretical model of the relationship between issue frames, emotions and attitudes

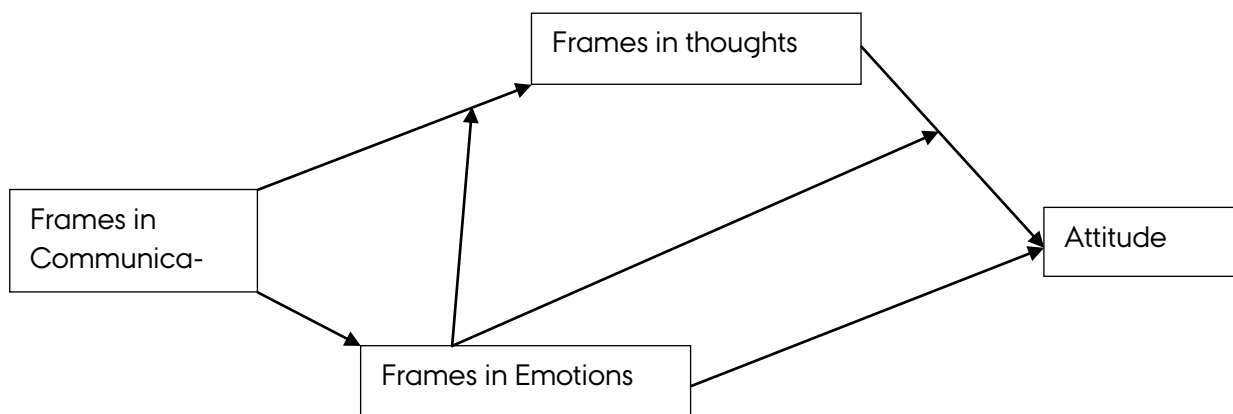


Figure 3.1 illustrates the theoretical model described above. For the reason of clarity, the traditional moderators of framing effects are not illustrated in the figure. However, they are still assumed to be important and can most likely affect both the effect of frames on the different mediators and the effect of these mediators on attitudes. This model will be the underlying theoretical models of the project.

Existing studies including emotion in framing models examine different aspects of the relationship between frames, emotions, and decision-making processes, and all point to different ways emotions can be influential. The studies show that issue frames can evoke emotions. Two studies showed that emotions evoked by issue frames are not just an interesting by-product, but actually do have an impact on the attitudes people form. The studies of induced emotions on attitudes indicated that emotions can affect people's susceptibility to framing effects. Finally, studies also show that emotions can affect processes. Taken together the existing studies suggest that emotions might very well be important variables in framing models.

The majority of existing studies only focus on specific aspects of the relationship between frames, emotions and decision processes. Seen in isolation, these studies cannot provide insights into the general impact of emotions. Even though it is possible – based on all the studies – to piece together some insights about the potential impact of emotions, the full picture of the role of emotions in framing models can only be assessed in models examining the

whole causal model. However, only two studies examine the full causal relationship between frames, evoked emotions and attitudes.

Besides the lack of studies examining the full model, they also have other shortcomings. The effect of frames on emotions, e.g., fail to provide a theoretical model of why frames vary in the intensity of evoked emotions, and we lack insights into the effects of issue specific frames on emotions. Even our knowledge about most of the examined generic frames is tentative because no control group has been included in these studies. Since focus has been on the effect of moods or induced emotional states, no studies have examined whether emotions evoked by frames can affect the mental processes leading to framing effects.

The two studies examining whether emotions can mediate framing effects, also have shortcomings. They do not include a control group in their analysis of mediation and therefore their conclusions about the thematic frames are only preliminary. Finally, we do not know how the affective and cognitive mediators relate to each other. So even though existing studies can provide insights into different parts of the causal model, and in two cases also into the effect of emotions as mediators, they do not provide adequate answers to the research questions above. More research is needed in order to fully grasp the role of emotions in framing studies.

The shortcomings of existing studies illustrate that this project in several ways can contribute to the literature on the role of emotions in framing models. This dissertation aims to shed light on some of the uncharted areas described above and thereby improve the understanding of how emotions affect the effect of framing effects in general. In order to form more precise expectations about the implications of including emotions as mediators, it is first necessary to examine in more detail the insights from different theoretical approaches about emotions. In the next section, the definition of emotions will be discussed and three approaches presented. These three approaches give insights into different aspects of the relationships between frames, emotions and decision-making and form the basis on which theoretical expectations can be formed.

3.2 Theoretical Basis of the Model

From the discussion of the implications of including emotions into the theoretical model, it is clear that emotions in many ways can change the understanding of framing effects and the underlying processes. However, in order to form more specific expectations about the implications of including emotions as mediators, it is necessary to look at the theoretical basis of the model.

This section will look into the different parts of the model and present the theoretical basis of each part separately.

Given that emotions are a commonly experienced psychological state, it is perhaps surprising that the literature lacks a widely shared definition of what an emotion actually is. The first important theoretical aspect to examine is therefore the emotional responses themselves: How are they defined in this dissertation, and how are they delimited to other affective phenomena. In the following section, the different understandings of the nature of emotions will first be discussed and the delimitation of the understanding of emotions presented.

After discussing the definition of emotion, the section will present different approaches examining how emotions relate to the other important variables in the model. Firstly, if emotions mediate framing effects, frames need to have an effect on emotional reactions and secondly, the emotional reactions need to affect people's attitudes. These causal relationships are central to the model, and I will present two approaches to form the theoretical basis for expecting these relationships. Thirdly, the relationship between emotions and the decision-making process becomes a new interesting relationship to examine and will be discussed theoretically. The three causal relationships and the three corresponding approaches to emotions will be addressed according to their placement in the causal chain.

3.2.1 The nature of emotions

An increasing amount of literature has explored the effect of emotions. Within the literature there is nonetheless a profound disagreement on how emotions is best defined (Marcus, 2003: 187). Before turning to specific approaches about the relationship between frames, emotions and attitudes, it is necessary first to define the fundamental concept of emotions. The definition of emotions is linked to the discussion of the number of emotions and relationship between the separate emotions. The second part of this section therefore discusses the different theories to the structure of emotions.

What Is an Emotion?

Even though the term is used very frequently, to the point of being extremely fashionable these days, the question "What is an emotion?" rarely generates the same answer from different individuals, scientists or laymen alike ((Scherer, 2005: 696).

As the quote illustrates, the literature lacks a clear understanding of how to define the concept of emotions (Izard, 2009). The problem is that emotion is in introspection an indefinite and vague phenomenon, and it can be difficult to pin down exactly what are the defining features. As a consequence of this vagueness, it can also be argued that emotions are almost everything. Accordingly, this chapter will first address the question, what is to be understood by the concept of emotion and subsequently discuss how an emotion is distinguished from other emotional phenomena.

The literature has no generally accepted definition of emotion, and I do not venture to put forward such a definition in this dissertation. However, some conceptual delineation or exemplification of the phenomenon is necessary in order to gain a basic idea of the defining characteristics of emotions.

Scherer (2005) offers a definition that views emotions as responses to specific events leading to synchronized and interrelated changes in up to five components. These components are firstly unconscious or conscious *appraisal* or evaluations of the event – for instance the importance or consequences of an event. The second component is *physiological changes* such as heart beat, breathing or sweating. Thirdly, emotions can *initiate action* by for example changing attention or by stopping ongoing action. The fourth component is changes in for instance facial *expressions* such as smiling, but can also be changes in voice (trembling or volume). Finally, an emotion also involves a change in the *subjective experience* of emotions – we start *feeling* sad or happy. In everyday speech, this definition states that emotions are clusters of mental and psychological reactions to specific events/stimuli, and that they often have a high intensity and short duration because they must be able to quickly adapt behavior and attention to the surroundings – many others share this understanding of emotions as stated in these practical terms (Marcus, 2000: 224; Scherer, 2005: 700-702; Isbell and Ottati, 2002: 56f).

Not all theories agree on this definition and many will argue that all components need not be present for an emotional reaction to occur. The merit of this definition is, nevertheless, that it points to different important aspects of emotions and since these five components are not viewed as mandatory, the theories can differ depending on what components they study. The definition is a useful starting point for a discussion about what an emotion *can* be, and it can help to clarify some of the differences between theories.

Besides the rather broad theoretical definition of emotions, it is also necessary to distinguish emotional reactions from other emotional phenomena. In the introduction, a number of different emotional phenomena were men-

tioned. They can be distinguished according to their duration and whether the phenomena are connected with specific objects. Specifically, it is important to separate emotional reactions from two phenomena.

The first type is long-term emotional attachments. Evaluations, predispositions and party identity can be argued to have an emotional content. These emotional attachments are directed at a specific target, can have a high intensity and are often not very differentiated (either positive or negative). They are also stable and not likely to easily change (Marcus, 2000: 227; Isbell and Ottati, 2002: 56; Scherer, 2005: 703).

The second type is mood. Mood is assumed to have a low intensity and to last over a longer period, but is not believed to be very specific in its emotional expression. More importantly, mood is free-floating and therefore not directed at a specific target. This means that people cannot point to any specific event or stimulus that has triggered a certain mood (Isbell and Ottati, 2002; Scherer, 2005: 705).

Though much research has focused on the effect of mood on political attitudes and decision processes, this dissertation will limit its focus to the effect of emotional reactions. The central question here is whether political communication can affect emotions subsequently affecting attitudes. Following this focus, the emotional phenomena under examination need to be formed as a reaction to the concrete information and must be changeable. As opposed to moods, emotions have a specific object and contrary to the long-term emotional attachment, emotions are short-lived and volatile. So only the emotional reactions have the qualities necessary to function as mediators of framing effects.

Above I presented a number of prior studies examining the role of emotions in framing studies. They illustrated just how broad the understanding of emotions is on framing effect and how the understanding of emotions have implications for the conclusions about the impact of emotions. Many of the studies focus on the impact of moods or issue-irrelevant emotions on attitudes, while only a few studies focus on issue specific emotional reactions to frames. This distinction is important, because it has implications for the view on the impact of emotions. Since mood and issue-irrelevant emotions are unrelated to specific political questions, any impact of emotions understood as moods is therefore problematic. These studies naturally also imply that any effect of these emotions on political decision-making will be irrational or at least distort the decision-making process.

Studies examining the effect of emotional reactions to political objects and issues do not necessarily make this implicit assumption. From their perspective, emotions can be both relevant and irrelevant reactions to the politi-

cal issue and emotions are not necessarily detrimental to the decision-making process. These studies illustrate that the understanding of emotions is not just a question of no or little importance but a question with significant influence on the conclusions about the role of emotions.

The structure of emotions

In 1999, the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* devoted a special section to a discussion of the structure of emotions. Ten years later, the disagreement has not yet been resolved. Since the structure of emotions has important implications for both the theoretical view on the effects of emotions and for the perceived right way to measure emotions, this disagreement has profound consequences for the scientific study of emotions (Diener, 1999: 803).

In this section, I will, more precisely, present three different approaches to the structure of emotions: Discrete emotion theories, valence theories and the multidimensional approach. The discussion will be centered on two issues central to this disagreement. First, the literature differs in breadth in the emotional categories. Some theories emphasize the different influence of distinct emotions while others argue that emotions are best described using broad dimensions in which several emotions are collapsed. I will begin by discussing the theories focusing on only one dimension and then gradually move to more nuanced theories. Apart from the differences in the breadth of emotional categories, the literature also disagrees on the number of emotional categories and whether emotions are bipolar by nature. The discussion will therefore touch upon this issue as well.

The highest degree of breadth is found in theories that regard emotions as one-dimensional. These theories generally view positive and negative emotions as highly negatively correlated and, consequently, positive and negative emotions are viewed as opposite poles of the same dimension. This overarching dimension is often described as a measure of an overall evaluation which is either positive or negative. An evaluative dimension going from positive to negative is for instance the basis for the theory of an on-line model of decision-making (Hastie and Park, 1986). The model argues that people will immediately extract the relevant information from political messages and include them in a running tally. This running tally works as an affective tag, which they later will be able to recall when asked about their opinions or can update if new information comes along.

This one-dimensional view is challenged by models claiming that certain patterns in people's emotions go beyond the one-dimensional view. Instead,

these models claim that self-reported measures of affect are characterized by more or less independent dimensions. However, the literature disagrees on how these dimensions are best described and whether they are bipolar or not. The literature thus offers different descriptions of these dimensions. Particularly two are widespread.

The first approach defines the two dimensions by valence and arousal. The poles of the dimension of emotional valence has been defined differently (pleasantness versus unpleasantness, positive versus negative, approach versus avoidance) but the different classifications are consistently characterized by bipolarity (Russell and Barrett, 1999:809). One pole is hence characterized by emotions such as happy, pleased, and satisfied while the opposite pole is defined by indicators such as sad, sorry, and unhappy. The second dimension captures the degree of arousal, that is, the poles are characterized by low engagement (quiet and still) versus high engagement (aroused, astonished and surprised).

The model's two dimensions have been criticized for not reflecting the feelings of emotions adequately. The fact that you are ambivalent about a stimulus and consequently simultaneous can have positive and negative emotions toward a stimulus is one of the arguments against the bi-polar view of valence described above. A critic of the arousal dimension is that it lacks good neutral marker terms – the emotions measuring this dimension do not merely measure the degree of arousal but also have either a positive or negative valence (Watson et al., 1999: 823). As a result, a second approach has been proposed in which the variation in emotional responses should be represented by two dimensions describing the degree of either positive or negative engagement. In contrast to the aforementioned bipolar structure, this approach has a uni-polar view of emotions (Watson et al., 1999: 827). The poles of the two dimensions are characterized by high positive or negative activation or the absence of this activation. For instance, the high pole of the positive dimension is characterized by emotions such as enthusiastic and exited while sleepy, dull, and drowsy indicate the low pole. The high pole of the negative dimension can be described using indicators such as distressed, fearful, and nervous while the low pole is characterized by terms such as calm, relaxed, and placid (Watson, Wiese, Vaidya, and Tellegen, 1999: 821). Even though these two dimensions can be correlated, they are still relatively independent dimensions. Therefore you can feel positive and negative emotions at the same time.

Though the two models seem to disagree fundamentally on the structure of emotions, the two approaches are probably not that far from each other. Indirectly, the arousal dimension is present in the second model too since it

can be viewed as part of the two independent positive and negative dimensions (Västfjäll et al, 2002: 20; Russell and Barrett, 1999: 810). The difference is that arousal is not viewed as an independent dimension but instead simply considered to reflect the degree of activation of the positive and negative emotional system. Consequently, the two different models can be said to describe the same structure, and some researchers simply view the two models as two different rotational variants (Watson, et al., 1999; Västfjäll et al, s .20; Russell and Barrett, 1999).¹

However, an increasing amount of literature on emotions shows that the negative emotions of fear/anxiety and anger affect political decision-making differently. In accordance with this view, it has been suggested that an important extension to the above two-dimensional model of positive and negative emotions is needed. These models suggest to add a third dimension to the two positive and negative dimensions since the dimension consisting of negative emotions should be differentiated into two separate dimensions: One dimension measuring the degree of anxiety and the other the degree of aversion (Marcus, 2003; Marcus, MacKuen, Wolak, and Keele, 2006: 38).

Finally, a group of studies argues that too much information is lost by collapsing emotions into dimensions. Instead, discrete emotional theories focus on the distinct effect of specific emotions. The argument for studying discrete emotions instead of dimensions is that highly correlated emotions can, none the less, have different influences. The reason is that two emotions with the same valence can be a result of very different evaluations of the situation and therefore have very different effects on behavior and attitudes (Izard, 2007: 267). For instance, negative emotions such as anger and anxiety are often highly correlated. Nevertheless, these two feelings have been found to have quite different effects: Anxiety makes people less risk-seeking, whereas aversion has proved to lead to more risk-seeking behavior.

Discrete emotional theories therefore argue that there exist a small number of basic emotions which have different sources and effects. These emotions are assumed to share characteristics such as being a result of an evolutionarily adapted system that works without the need to include higher order

¹ The view of the different models as rotational variants can be illustrated using a circumplex. It illustrates all the dimensions and the emotions are placed around the perimeter of a circle. Though the circumplex suggests a structure in which the dimensions are uncorrelated, this has proven not to be the case empirically (Watson et al., 1999). It has also been suggested that the two pair of dimensions are important at different stages in the affective process or that they can be in a hierarchical relationship (Watson, Wiese, Vaidya and Tellegen, 1999 p. 828).

cognition or appraisal, and that can change and motivate action. Since emotions are a result of evolution, it follows that the expressive behavior such as facial expressions are universal and thus found across culture, lifespan and even across species (Izard, 2007: 262; Ortony and Turner, 1990: 317; Ekman, 1999).

However, there is disagreement on the number of these discrete emotions and on how to define them (Russell and Barrett, 1999: 807; Marcus, 2003: 192; Ortony and Turner, 1990: 315; Scherer, 2005, 707). The description of discrete emotions can for instance be based on examinations of expressions of emotions, on neurobiological evidence, by the different processes leading to an emotion, or by their different effects. Nevertheless, a consensus seems to have emerged on the centrality of emotions such as joy/happiness, sadness, anger, disgust, and fear/anxiety (Izard, 2007, 261; Izard, 2009: 7-8; Ortony and Turner, 1990: 315; Neuman, Marcus, Crigler, and MacKuen, 2007:11).

These different views of the structure of emotions seem to be rather incompatible. Some also understand the three different theoretical perspectives as complementary instead of mutually exclusive (Izard, 2007; 269). A hierarchical model with three levels has been suggested as a way to solve the disagreement within the literature (Watson and Clark, 1999; Russell and Barrett, 1999). Each level in the model is characterized by a change in the degree of nuance – the higher level consists of only one dimension, which is bipolar, the second level consists of theories with two dimensions which are uni-polar and, finally, the theories at the lowest level focus on discrete emotions (Watson et al., 1999: 825; Tellegen, Watson, and Clark, 1999). The idea is that the approaches of each level are appropriate for certain problems and questions. That is, even though emotions can have distinct contents and effects, they also have some parts in common with other feelings. A focus on discrete emotions can therefore be the right approach when examining some issues, while emotional dimensions can be of importance in others.²

3.2.2 Summary

As illustrated, the literature on emotions disagrees on central questions so it is important to be very specific about how emotions are understood in this dis-

² Another study claims that both discrete emotions and dimensional approaches apply to some but not to all people. The studies claim that people differ in their focus of valence and arousal and that these differences can explain why some people report high co-occurrence between discrete emotions and others do not (Barrett, 1998).

sertation. Political values and party identity are important in our understanding of voter-decision-making, but less interesting when examining short-term fluctuations in attitudes since they are not easily changed by politicians. The same apply for mood which is mainly outside the control of politicians. Even though moods, political values, and party identity can have an emotional dimension, they are therefore not within the scope of this project. Instead focus is on the consequences of short-term emotional reactions induced by political communication.

With regard to the structure of emotions, this dissertation acknowledges that both discrete emotional theories and the dimensional view presented above contribute with important insights into the nature of emotions. The dissertation thus assumes, in accordance with the hierarchical view presented above, that the structure of emotions is likely to depend on the political phenomena in question. More specifically, the assumption is that the focus on discrete emotions is fruitful when examining the effect of emotions on attitudes. The dimensional view on the other hand is useful when examining the effect of emotions on processes.

3.3 The Causal Relations between Emotions, Frames and Attitudes

The theoretical model presented in this chapter assumes that frames can affect emotions and subsequently affect attitudes. If these causal relations do not exist, emotions cannot function as mediators of framing effects. So far, these assumptions are only based on a general reading of the importance of emotions in the literature on political communication and decision-making. In order to form specific expectations about the implications of emotions as mediators, it is necessary to consult this literature in more detail. This section discusses the more theoretical understanding of the function of emotions and introduces different theoretical approaches which can form the basis for some expectations about the causal relations between frames, emotions and decision-making.

More specifically, three approaches offering insights into three different aspects of emotions will be presented. The first offers insights into how emotions are elicited since this is needed in order to form expectations about the relationships between frames and emotions. The second focuses on the effect of emotions on attitudes and will form expectations about the relationship between emotions and attitudes. The third presents the effect of emotions on decision processes. It will only be possible to state how the inclusion

of emotions can change our understanding of framing effects, if insights from all three theoretical approaches are combined..

3.3.1 Elicitors of Emotions: The Appraisal perspective

In a model with emotions as mediators, it is essential to understand how emotions are evoked since it is necessary to be able to predict how frames systematically can affect emotions. But, only a small number of theories address the question of elicitors of emotional reactions (Smith and Kirby, 2001: 76). One of the few theoretical approaches addressing this question is the appraisal approach. It has an extensive theoretical framework of why specific emotions are elicited.

When people react with different emotions to the same situation or event, it can be perceived as if emotional responses are completely erratic, unpredictable and inconsistent. However, the appraisal perspective assumes that what might seem inconsistent at an aggregate level can be consistent and meaningful at the individual level (Smith and Kirby, 2001: 78). The appraisal approach basically argues that the specific emotional reactions to an event or situations do not depend on the event itself but rather on how a person interprets this situation. Based on this argument it is clear why framing is likely to evoke different emotions as framing an issue is precisely about telling people how to interpret certain issues.

The core assumption in the appraisal approach is that people constantly evaluate their surroundings and that these evaluations or appraisal of their circumstances result in emotions (Ellsworth and Scherer, 2003: 572; Roseman and Smith, 2001: 3). More precisely, an event or situation is appraised on different dimensions also called appraisal variables. The assumption is that different patterns of appraisals are linked to different emotions. Emotional reactions, in other words, depend on the individual's perception of the situation or event. This approach allows people to appraise the same situation differently, and that explains why people do not react in the same way to the same information and why they can react differently over time (Ellsworth and Scherer, 2003: 584; Roseman and Smith, 2001: 6; Smith and Kirby, 2001: 78).

Though the different studies based on the appraisal approach agree on the importance of appraisals, there are differences in the precise number and types of appraisal variables that these studies examine. However, several appraisal variables are deemed important across all studies. Some of these important appraisal variables are novelties, goal relevance/-significance and desirability/pleasantness (Ellsworth and Scherer, 2003: 574; Smith and Kirby, 2001: 81). Novelty simply evaluates changes in the circum-

tances which mean that new appraisals must be made. The degree of goal relevance evaluates whether a situation is related to the person's goals. It is assumed to influence the intensity of the emotional responses whereas the desirability of an event decides the valence of the emotions. Situations which increase the chances of achieving one's goals will lead to positive emotions and the opposite applies if the situation obstructs the chances of achieving one's goal. Other important appraisal variables can be the ability to cope with the situation, who is responsible for the situation, compatibility with social norms, and several other appraisal variables (Smith and Kirby, 2001: 81; Ellsworth and Scherer, 2003:574). The central idea of the appraisal approach is that different combinations of appraisals on these different variables are expected to result in different emotional responses. A situation which is not in congruence with one's goal, and social norms of correct behavior is assumed to result in the feeling of anger.

The description of the appraisal process can easily make one assume that appraisals are conscious and deliberate, but that is not necessarily the case. Appraisals can be a result of both a conscious and unconscious/-automatic process (Ellsworth and Scherer, 2003: 586). It does not follow that appraisals necessarily precede the emotional feeling. It has been argued that appraisals can also be perceived as components of emotions. According to this understanding, it does not make sense to discuss the causality between appraisals and emotional reactions as the two concepts are two sides of the same coin (Ellsworth and Scherer, 2003: 575). Here, it is important to bear in mind that the appraisals examined are unconscious and not cognitive in the same manner as the considerations in the traditional framing theories.

With the appraisal approach as the starting point, it is possible to form theoretical expectations about how frames can affect people's emotional reactions and the two research questions linked to this causal relationship. The definition of issue frames stated that issue specific frames work by emphasizing a subset of potentially relevant considerations which cause individuals to also focus more on these considerations. By focusing on different aspects and making them seem more important, it is likely that frames can also change the person's appraisals of the situation. For instance, by focusing on different consequences of a political proposal, a frame can affect the evaluation of whether a situation is viewed as a case of goal congruence or the opposite. According to the appraisal approach, this change in the appraisal of the situation should therefore result in a change of the emotions experienced. In other words, frames evoke emotional reactions by simply framing an issue.

The appraisal approach thus gives reasons to expect that all issue frames can evoke emotional reactions, and that it is unnecessary to use specific rhetorical devices in order to evoke emotions since the simple framing of an issue is enough to affect the appraisals. These are two important conclusions. If music, symbols and pictures were needed to evoke people's emotional responses, the strategic use of emotions would be limited, because politicians normally do not have the opportunity to control music and pictures in everyday news coverage. But politicians can control how they frame political problems and, according to the appraisal approach, this can be enough to control people's emotional reactions. If framing of arguments can be used in the same way as pictures and music, it would increase the importance of emotions in framing studies.

The appraisal theory does not only provide basis for arguing that all emphasis frames can evoke emotions. The specific appraisal patterns of the different emotions can also be used to argue that frames can control the type of emotion evoked by giving information that fits into these appraisal patterns. Since specific appraisals are linked to each specific emotion, the appraisal approach would argue that if these specific appraisals can be made more likely by framing an issue in a certain way, then the frame will also be more likely to evoke the intended emotion. In other words, by focusing on the dimensions central to a specific appraisal pattern and by providing cues about the position on these dimensions, it will probably be possible to affect people's appraisals, and thereby affect the kind of emotional responses they experience. The appraisal patterns of emotional reactions can therefore be used to guide the construction of messages which tries to control the kind of emotional reactions evoked. The insights from the appraisal approach consequently provide the theoretical grounding for arguing that the answer to the first research question is affirmative.

Besides substantiating the claim of a causal relation between frames and emotions, the appraisal approach also gives reason to expect that it is possible to control or at least influence the intensity of the emotional reactions people experience. According to appraisal theories, it is possible to expect that the intensity of emotional reactions could be varied by fitting the information according to the appraisal pattern connected with each emotion. It is consequently possible to control how emotional engaging a frame is by varying the explicitness of cues and the fit between the cues given and a certain appraisal pattern. The central question is therefore not whether a frame is thematic or episodic but how well it fits into specific appraisal patterns. The appraisal approach can consequently also form the basis for answering the second research question.

Even though appraisals and emotions can be seen as two sides of the same coin, the conclusion based on the appraisal approach is not that the cognitive and affective routes in this dissertation are viewed as interchangeable. The two processes differ on the degree of consciousness involved in the processing. Furthermore, the two processes also have very different implications for the type of variables and relationships to examine.

3.3.2 The effect of emotions on attitudes: Affect-as-Information

When discussing the impact of emotions, the general focus has been on how emotions hinder an otherwise perfect decision-making process. This focus reflects the traditional understanding of emotions in which emotions only have a negative impact. Emotions do not always lead people to make “errors” in their judgments. In this section, I will discuss an approach that shows how emotions can help people to make decisions.

The starting point of the affect-as-information perspective is that emotions provide feedback from unconscious evaluations of a situation (Clore, Gasper, and Garvin, 2001: 124). It follows that these emotions are not necessarily irrelevant to the decision-making process. If emotions are just a way of getting to know one’s unconscious judgments, emotions can instead provide people with a valid basis for decisions (Clore, Gasper and Garvin, 2001: 124). In other words, the affect-as-information perspective assumes that emotions are used as information on par with other types of information.

The only caveat is that emotions will affect whatever they are attributed to. If people believe that an emotion is linked to the object in question, emotions will influence the decision whether or not they are actually connected (Clore, Gasper, and Garvin, 2001: 125). The affect-as-information perspective has often been used to explain the effect of moods. Findings show that positive moods result in people making more positive judgments and negative emotions lead to more negative judgments even though the moods are irrelevant. The effect of emotions are context specific in the sense that a “sad affect during a sad movie, for example, would be expected to increase rather than decrease evaluation of the film” (Clore and Storbeck, 2006: 124).

Paradoxically, most studies examining how emotions can help people make decisions also examine how emotions can lead people astray. The affect-as-information approach is, however, thought as a general account of the effect of emotions (Clore and Storbeck, 2006: 124). The reason why many studies have focused on irrelevant moods has been to establish that the effect of emotions is independent of the cognitive process. In real life, emotions and their sources are likely to be closely connected and the risk of

misattributing emotions is thus smaller (Clore, Gasper and Garvin, 2001: 126). That people use emotions as basis for their attitudes is consequently not the same as arguing that people make wrong or biased decisions as emotions can provide important information that helps people to make a decision. Emotions just represent another way of processing information, and it does not necessarily follow that it is a *worse* kind of processing: Emotions can of course be irrelevant or manipulated but so can more deliberate processes.

With the affect-as-information approach as starting point, it becomes even more evident why emotions can be important for the framing effects. There are two important consequences of emotions being equated with other kinds of information and thoughts. The first conclusion is that since emotions reflect unconscious evaluations of situations, they are likely to be a more reliable source of information about a person's actual reactions to a frame than the average considerations.

Secondly, the fact that emotions are a general feature of decision-making means that everybody is likely to include their emotional reactions when they form attitudes in framing situations. Accordingly, the effect of emotions is expected to be a general characteristic of decision processes and is, in other words, not limited to specific topics, frames or individuals.

The affect-as-information perspective means that emotions are not only interesting when especially emotional issues are examined or when political communications are specifically constructed in order to evoke emotional reactions. Emotions can also be an important aspect to consider in all areas and all types of political communication. These conclusions have important implications for framing studies. Firstly, emotions can be assumed to be far more than just a disturbing and irrelevant effect of frames. And secondly, emotions cannot be reduced or limited to obscure areas of framing research. In line with the appraisal approach, the affect-as-information perspective also indicates that emotions can very well be central variables in framing theory in general and not only in a small corner of the framing literature.

3.3.3 The effect of emotions on decision processes: Affective Intelligence

Several theories have shown that emotions can affect the processes of decision-making. In this section, I will briefly outline one central approach about why emotions can have an effect on decision-making processes.

The affective intelligence perspective assumes that the brain has a dual system and that different emotions with their distinct effect on people's decision-making processes can be linked to different processes in the brain.

Though the affective intelligence perspective maintains that only two systems are important for the understanding of the effect of emotions, the approach, nevertheless, points to the necessity of three different emotional dimensions. One system regulates the feelings of enthusiasm and anger, while the second system solely regulates the feeling of anxiety. In other words, it views positive emotions as an independent dimension (enthusiasm), whereas negative emotions are split into two separate dimensions (anxiety and aversion). In the following, the two systems are described, and the political relevance of the three emotions is discussed.

The core idea of the affective intelligence perspective is that emotional responses to our surroundings determine our actions and reasoning. Most of the time, we perform well-known tasks in a well-known environment, and we can rely on habits and dispositions. When the surroundings are familiar and non-threatening, an emotional system called the disposition system will be activated; the emotional reaction linked to this system is enthusiasm. If everything goes according to plan, it will lead to a strong feeling of enthusiasm, but if it does not the feeling of enthusiasm will be absent (Marcus et al., 2000: 47). Hence, the emotional dimension is one-dimensional which means that the opposite of enthusiasm is not a negative feeling (a negative enthusiasm) but simply the absence of this feeling. In politics, the feeling of enthusiasm is a result of people successfully using their political habits and prior opinions. A feeling of enthusiasm will lead people to judge their prior opinions and predispositions as adequate responses to political questions. They will have higher confidence in their opinions and more motivated to participate in campaigns and discussions (Marcus et al., 2000: 82, 94).

The feeling of anger or aversion is assumed to arise when people are presented with information which they have already once rejected or which is very easily rejected (Marcus et al., 2006: 36; Marcus et al., 2000: 159). As a result, a feeling of anger will mean that people do not process this information but just reject it without further considerations and even be motivated to work against the argument presented (Marcus et al., 2000: 165). The effect is therefore almost the exact opposite reaction to information which is in accordance with prior opinion and can therefore be described as a kind of negative-enthusiasm-effect: whereas enthusiasm made people more active in spreading the presented message, aversion will make people more active in fighting the message that evoked this feeling. Anger is consequently also assumed to be linked with the disposition system as well (Marcus et al., 2000: 165).

Anxiety, on the other hand, is linked to an emotional system called the surveillance system that only becomes active if there are threatening, surpris-

ing or unknown things in the surroundings (Marcus et al., 2000: 56). In these situations, it is no longer safe just to rely on habits and routines, and anxiety will stop ongoing actions and reliance on habits. Anxiety means that a more conscious system takes control which will increase attention to the new event and engage in more thoughtful decision processes of the pro and cons of the available choices (Marcus et al., 2000: 56-58). The feeling of anxiety is also unipolar ranging from high anxiety and unease to a sense of tranquility and calm (Marcus et al., 2000: 56). In politics, feeling of anxiety will be linked to information that challenges people's opinions and make them less confident in their opinions. As a result, they will tend to reconsider their opinions and be more open to persuasion (Marcus et al., 2000: 61). As part of this process, they will search for more information to reduce their uncertainty.

The affective intelligence approach gives reason to believe that emotions evoked by frames can have an effect on decision-making processes. According to this approach, the feeling of anxiety mainly affects processes by making people reconsider their attitudes and increase their information seeking. These effects are important from a framing perspective as they are prerequisites for achieving a framing effect. If people are not ready to change their attitudes, or if they are not interested in the information presented in the frame, it will be more difficult for a frame to actually have an effect on attitudes.

The affective intelligence perspective points to the important effect of anxiety and has two important consequences. Firstly, the approach implies that the effect of frames can depend on the feeling of anxiety, and secondly, suggests that frames can have an effect on behavior and actions through anxiety. The affective intelligence perspective forms the theoretical basis for answering the two research questions linked to the second proposition about the effect of frames varying across individuals according to their emotional reactions.

3.3.4 Summary

Three different theoretical approaches have been presented and each has provided important insights into one of the causal relationships between frames, emotions, and decision-making. The argument in this dissertation is that all three approaches are needed in order to form a full theoretical basis of the model since none of the approaches are able to provide the necessary insights into all the causal relations. More specifically, the appraisal perspective mainly focuses on the elicitors of emotional responses and can be used to shed light on the relationship between frames and emotions. The

affect-as-information approach argues that emotional reactions are integrated in attitudes which give reasons to expect that evoked emotions can have an impact on attitudes. Expectations about the relationship between emotions and decision-making processes can be based on the insights from the affective intelligence perspective.

The different perspectives on emotions also reflect the fundamental disagreement in the literature about the definition and understanding of emotions. The appraisal perspective assumes that emotions are discrete, the affect-as-information approach assumes that emotions are structured along two dimensions while the affective intelligence perspective assumes that three dimensions are needed in order to correctly capture the nature of emotions. All three approaches have different perspectives on the structure of emotions.

Despite these differences, all three theories will be used in this dissertation. As stated in the conclusion in the last section, this dissertation assumes that the level of abstraction cannot be defined independently from the effect of emotions. It is therefore difficult to avoid disagreement between the different approaches in a project with focus on the complex interaction between emotions and several fundamental different variables. The different structures in the approaches substantiate the claim that it is necessary to have a flexible definition of the structure of emotions because emotions can be a multifaceted concept where the relevant level of abstraction depends on the political phenomena under investigation.

3.4 Summary and conclusion

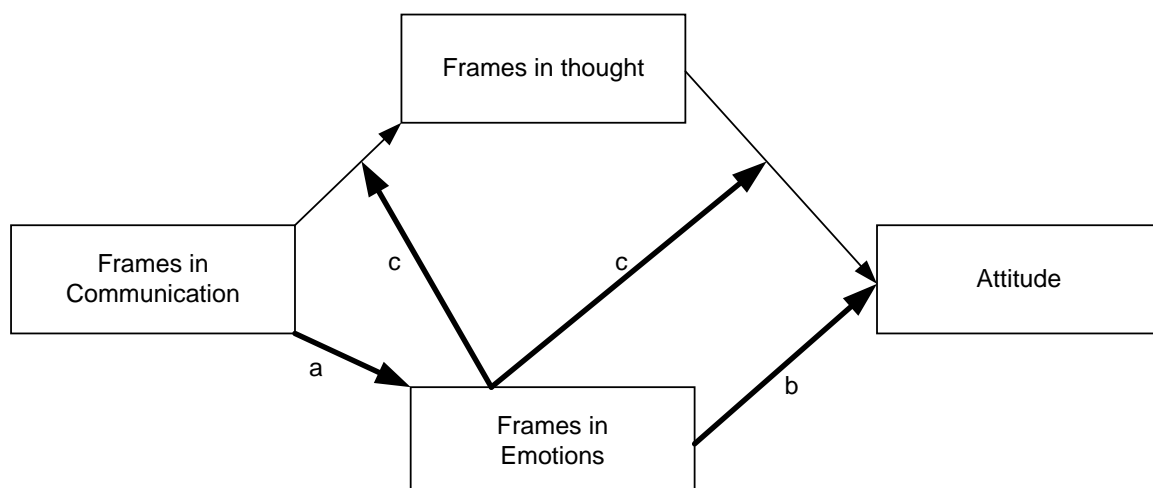
This chapter introduced the main thesis of the project and thereby outlined a new theoretical model of framing effects. The main thesis in the dissertation can be outlined in two propositions stating that framing effects are, at least partly, mediated by emotions and that they will vary across individuals according to their emotional reactions. By offering a new answer to the question of how frames can have an effect, the answer about why the framing effects differ also changes. The inclusion of emotions as mediators consequently results in important changes in the answers to all the questions central to framing theories.

These changes were stated in six research questions divided between how frames have an effect, what message factors are important and why some people are more affected by frames than others. These research questions are specific examples of how the inclusion of emotions can change the way we think about framing effects. The research questions also formed the

starting point for the review of how emotions have been included into framing models. This review showed that the existing studies are not able to provide satisfactory answers to the research questions. Even though an increasing number of studies have examined the impact of emotions, only two studies have examined the assumption that emotions can be mediators. And these two studies have not taken the cognitive mediators into account and thus not been able to examine whether emotions affect the weight of the different mediators. The majority of the other existing studies have only examined the effects of mood and issue-irrelevant emotions and focus has consequently only been on the moderating impact of emotions. From a political perspective the results are of less importance because a person's mood is seldom affected by politicians.

While existing studies examining the role of emotions in framing models have provided interesting insights, they have only examined a small part of the possible impact of emotions. Existing studies illustrate that more focus on emotions in framing theories is a research strategy worth pursuing. Additional studies are required in order to establish how the inclusion of emotions can improve our understanding of framing effects.

Figure 3.2: The theoretical causal model of the relationship between issue frames, emotions and attitudes



The chapter has shown that there is a theoretical basis for each of the causal relations between the variables, represented by the causal arrows in figure 3.2. More specifically, the appraisal approach can form the basis for expecting the causal arrow marked by an 'a' in figure 3.2 and thereby also the answers to the first two research questions about the effect of frames on emotions. The insights from the affect-as-information approach form the basis for the causal arrows marked by a 'b', and research questions 3 and 4 also de-

pend on this theory showing that emotions can affect attitude. Finally, insights from affective intelligence are the reason for expecting the causal arrows marked by a 'c' and are also the starting point for the answers to the last two research questions that examine why frames vary in their effects on people.

In the next chapters, the main claims of the theoretical model will be translated into a set of testable hypotheses that will be examined empirically in chapters 5 to 7. First, however, the next chapter will discuss how the hypotheses of the impact of emotions have been tested.

Chapter 4

Design

The propositions of the dissertation were tested in three studies. Before testing the main propositions empirically, however, it is necessary to discuss some of the challenges facing a study examining the causal model presented in the last chapter. This chapter will present how the studies in this dissertation have approached these challenges and provide an overview of the different studies and their research designs. Finally, the chapter addresses the important issues about the measurements of core variables in the causal model.

First, the chapter will provide a brief overview of the data material of the dissertation. The rest of the chapter is divided into three parts which focus on different issues concerning the testing of the causal model. The first part discusses the problem of how to establish the causal relationship between the variables in the model and experiments are presented as a strong design for the test of the causal model. The theoretical pros and cons of the experimental method will be presented and how the studies in this dissertation have tackled these potential problems are discussed.

The chapter proceeds with a presentation of how the different frames have been constructed in order to test the research questions presented in the last chapter. In the design of the experimental stimuli, questions about what type of frames, emotions and emotional cues that should be examined need to be addressed.

The third part examines the measurement of the core variables. As mediators in the model, emotions and considerations are important variables in the theoretical model. Unfortunately, these variables are difficult to measure and the literature is inconclusive about the best way of measuring these variables. Since reliable and valid measures of emotions and considerations are so central to the validity of the empirical analysis, the chapter will deal with the measurements of these variables in depth.

Finally, the chapter will bring the discussion of measurement and method together and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the overall research design. The chapter will conclude by discussing how the different studies taken together provide a strong research design for testing a model with emotions as mediators.

4.1 Overview of the Data Material

The data material of the dissertation consists of three different studies. All the studies examine the core proposition of whether emotions as well as cognitive considerations are mediators of framing effects. But they also focus attention on different aspects of the theoretical model. The healthcare-study tests whether emotions are mediators of issue specific frames. But the studies also examine the effect of emotions on information seeking and confidence in existing information which are important variables in the understanding of why frames have an effect. The asylum-study focuses on the ability to control the type of emotional reactions that people experience and also test whether the effect of emotions is limited to emotional charged frames. But the study

Table 4.1 Overview of the Data Material

Title	The Healthcare-study	The Asylum-study	The welfare-study
Topic	Private health care	Rejected asylum seekers	Ceiling on welfare benefits
Theoretical focus	The study examines whether emotions can be mediators of issue specific frames and examines the effect of emotions on information seeking	The study examines the ability to control the type of emotional reactions and test whether emotions can mediate generic frames	The study tests whether it is possible to influence the intensity of the emotional reactions as well as the type of emotional reaction. This study also examines the effect of moderators and the consequences of presenting competing frames.
No. of experimental groups	2	4	9
Type of frames	Issue specific	Generic: Episodic/thematic	Generic: Episodic/thematic (and control)
Subjects	Conscripts	Students from Aarhus School of Business	Representative sample of Danish citizens, 18-65 years
No. of participants	414	290	1975
Time of data collection	Summer, 2008	Winter, 2009/2010	Spring, 2010
Mode of data collection	Paper and pencil questionnaire	Paper and pencil questionnaire	Online survey
Field work conducted by	The author	The author	Userneeds

Note: All the studies use a between-subjects design which means that the effect of the independent variable is measured by comparing the values on the dependent variables in the different experimental conditions (McDermott, 2002b: 33).^o Block randomization was used to randomly assign participants. Block randomization ensures that the sizes of treatment groups are similar by dividing respondents into blocks. Instead of full randomization, the versions of the questionnaire are only randomized in every block. This method ensures that all versions of the questionnaire are equally likely to be present in a small group of respondents and thereby it ensures that there the different conditions are balanced within every block.

also examines the impact of emotions on the wish for more information. The welfare-study extends the asylum-seekers-study by testing whether it is possible to influence the intensity of the emotional reactions as well as the type of emotional reaction. A more thorough discussion of the specific hypotheses tested in each study will be presented in the following chapters.

Table 4.1 provides an overview of the different studies. All the studies are conducted as experiments, but the specific designs of the studies differ in many ways. Most importantly, the studies use different topics, different type of frames, different subjects and different modes of data collection. The next section will discuss the importance of the different design choices and will argue that the different research designs improve the overall confidence in the results.

4.2 Experimental Method

The core propositions presented in chapter three were both concerned with the causal relations between different variables. The effect of frames on attitudes forms the basis for examining the relationship between frames, emotions, cognitive mediators, and attitudes. Since the causal relationships are so central to my thesis, it was important to choose a design that allows me to make valid conclusions about these relationships. This is a question about establishing high internal validity. Experiments have been described as the most powerful way of establishing the internal validity of a causal chain (Munck and Verkuilen, 2005: 388; McDermott, 2002a: 339). This ability to make valid conclusions about causal relations is the reason why experiments are used in the three studies forming the basis of this dissertation.

In an experiment subjects are randomly divided into different groups which subsequently are exposed to different treatments (Munk and Verkuilen, 2005: 388; Gaines, Kuklinski and Quirk, 2006: 4). The advantage of experimental method is that the assignment of participants to values on the independent means that it is possible to control the time-order between frames and the mediators and between frames and the dependent variables. This is especially important in the test of the model presented in the last chapter. The causal order between information, emotions, and attitudes can be difficult to establish since the different factors are closely interrelated. In the experiment it is, however, possible to be certain that emotional reactions and attitudes come after frames.

Experiments also address the problem that emotions, attitudes, and media attention are likely to be affected by a whole range of other variables. Are emotions for instance a result of the media coverage or are they results

of different weather conditions on the day/place of the study. Since participants are randomly assigned to experimental groups, it can be assumed that the groups do not differ systematically on any other variables than the independent variable which is actively manipulated by the researcher (Munck and Verkuilen, 2005: 388). If the groups differ in their emotional reactions, it must therefore be because they have read different frames and not because people differ in their tendency to feel or express emotions. Any differences on potential important but nevertheless omitted variables (such as the ability to empathize or need for cognition) are consequently reduced to random noise which means that the effect of these third extraneous variables will not affect the estimated effect between the independent and dependent variables. In other words, experiments makes it is possible to conclude that an observed difference between the experimental groups can be traced back to the differences in information given to the groups in the different frames.

However, trees do not grow to the sky and experiments therefore also have their limitations. While experiments are characterized with high internal validity, they are unfortunately also criticized for having rather low external validity (Serritzlew, 2007: 284; Petersen et al., 2007: 10; Munck and Verkuilen, 2005: 390). External validity means “the generalizability of the finding of a causal relationship between variables beyond the domain of the actual units, spatial and temporal setting, and specific treatments that are examined” (Munck and Verkuilen, 2005: 385). In other words, it can be problematic to generalize the conclusions of framing studies using experiments to the effect of actual political communication on citizens in general.

The limitations to the external validity arise from two different aspects of experiments. The first part of the criticism is directed at the unnatural settings of the experimental situations per se. The problem is that the experimental situation differs from real life situations on important aspects, and if these differences can influence the causal relationship between the variables in the experiment, the predicted strength of these causal relationships will be misleading. The critique of the unnatural settings of the experimental situation focuses firstly on the problem of selective information seeking and secondly, the critique of experimental situation is leveled at the unrealistic attentive audience. The other part of the critique is directed at the implementation of the experiments and especially at the choice of participants and the construction of the experimental stimuli. This critique centers around whether the stimulus and participants are representative for everyday political communication and the public in general. In the following I will discuss how the studies have dealt with these challenges to the external validity and in doing so

the considerations behind the more general design of the different studies will be presented.

4.2.1 Exposure to Political Messages

Since people in experiments do not have a choice between what kinds of information they would like to read, experiments avoid some of the potential obstacles for the effect of political communication in everyday life. First, people might not receive political messages because they simply are uninterested in politics and consequently not looking for political communication. And secondly, in real life people tend to be biased in the political information they seek: People prefer political communication in line with their political position and therefore try to avoid information that is not in accordance with their attitudes. The result is that the likelihood that people will encounter incongruent information which could lead to attitude changes is small. Therefore political communication in real life often reinforces existing attitudes rather than converting these. According to this critique, the results of experiments can only be generalized to those few real-life situations in which people are actually confronted with political communication (Barabas and Jerit, 2010). The final obstacle is that those who are normally most exposed to political communication are also those who generally have a high interest in politics and have strong predispositions. This means, that those who usually are most exposed to political communication are also those, who are less likely to change their political opinions since they have strong predispositions (Lazardsfeld, Berelson and Gaude, 1944: 95).

Experiments are not restricted by these obstacles and consequently, experiments are believed to exaggerate the effect of frames. In an experiment, all participants are exposed to the experimental stimuli, and people cannot choose what information they are presented with. Even uninterested participants therefore receive the political messages, and participants cannot avoid to read information that are not in line with their political attitudes.

The problem with selective information seeking has also been dismissed by others who argue that people are not selective in their information seeking but primarily selective in their acceptance of information (Kinder, 2003: 369-370). If this is the case, experiments do not exaggerate the effect of frames. The three problems presented are, however, likely to be a greater problem on low-salient topics. On salient topics, the likelihood that even uninterested citizens will encounter information from the public debate is high and it is almost impossible to avoid all incongruent information. Finally, on salient issues the people with low interest are also more likely to have exist-

ing considerations and this reduces the problem with whether the participants in the experiments mirror the “ordinary” news consumer. In other words, experiments might risk exaggerating the effect of frames but the risk is likely to be smaller on salient topics which are engaging to people

The three studies in this dissertation are consequently examining high salience topics. Even though framing effects are most likely on novel issues, the topics in this dissertation are important questions in Danish politics (Tewksbury and Scheufele, 2008: 25). The healthcare-study focuses on the issue of private healthcare. Private health care is controversial in Denmark since the public sector traditionally has been the sole provider of health care. Welfare has been on top of the political agenda of Danish voters for many years and a large majority of the population thinks that it is the responsibility of the government to secure health care for the sick (Goul Andersen, 2006). Health care is therefore a salient question which touches upon one of the central pillars of the Danish welfare system. In 2002, the bourgeois government made expenses on private health insurance tax-deductible which led to a massive increase in the interest of private health insurance. The increasing interest in private health insurance naturally resulted in an increase of privately owned hospitals. The discussion about private health care is consequently a political question on which people are expected to have existing considerations and strong predispositions.

The asylum-study examines the question of rejected asylum seekers. The question of whether to send rejected asylum seekers back was very salient due to a group of rejected Iraqi asylum seekers who sought refuge in a church in order to avoid being sent back to Iraq. The group lived in the church from the 15th of May to the 13th of August 2009 where they were forcibly removed by the police. The focus on the asylum seekers was very high and brought the Danish right of asylum up for discussion which activated both sides of the political spectrum.

The welfare-study examines the welfare-assistance programs which are central to Danish party politics and characterized by strong party positions. The study examined the attitudes to a ceiling on welfare benefits which means that there is an upper limit on how much money people on welfare can receive. The ceiling on welfare benefits has been widely discussed because the political parties disagree on the efficiency of the ceiling in getting people back into regular work. The discussion has been ongoing since the passing of the proposal in 2003 as the opposition wants to abolish the ceiling and the governments adhere to their original decision.

The topics of all the studies are in other words defined by being salient questions which has been widely debated. Therefore, it is topics on which

individuals are likely to have well-developed attitudes and political knowledge. Such issues make it more difficult to find framing effects since people can be assumed to have more considerations accessible about the topic. There is also a risk of people being familiar with the frames in the study and these frames will consequently have a smaller impact than if the frames were unknown to the participants (Gaines, Kuklinski, and Quirk, 2006:13). But our knowledge of the effect of frames on salient issues is important from a political perspective because such issues are central to politics and therefore also to media coverage. Our knowledge about the effects of real political news is consequently improved by studying salient issues. Low-salient issues are interesting from a framing perspective but the ability to change people's opinions on issues where they are not likely to have any attitudes are less interesting and less relevant from a political perspective.

The use of salient issues, therefore, increases the external validity since it reflects the type of issues in actual political discussions. Secondly, it is also on issues like these that people are most likely to have strong predispositions, most likely to receive information and most likely to encounter information from both sides of the conflict which reduces the potential impact of selective attention. Finally, the use of real topics reduces the risk of exaggerating the effect of frames since smaller framing effects are likely due to the problem of pre-treatment effects.

4.2.2 Inattentive Audience

Another critique of the experimental situation is that experiments are assumed to have an audience which is fully focused on the information while in real life, people are often inattentive to political communication (Kinder, 2003: 361,371). However, the effect of attentive audiences can go both ways. More attention can increase the affect of frames because people are actually taking in the argument of the frame, however, increased attention can also diminish the effect of frames because people are likely to deliberate more and perhaps even engage in counter-arguing. It is therefore not clear what the potential effect of attention is.

Nevertheless, the way a study is conducted can reduce this problem. The realism can be increased on two dimensions. First, the participants can be kept unaware on the actual purpose of the study and thereby the risk of them changing their behaviors is reduced. In the study of the effect of political communication it is necessary to use some deception in order to ensure that the participants are not aware of the manipulation of the political communication. The participants were therefore told that the study was about

the news coverage in Denmark and they were not aware that the stories were manipulated, that the stories differed between the participants and that the important variables were the effect of the stories on emotions, considerations and attitudes.¹

The healthcare-study, using conscripts, was conducted during regular meetings in groups of around 50. They were conducted by one of their closest superiors. In order to ensure that the questionnaires were administered in the same way, a written instruction was given to the people who supervised the completion of questionnaires. The instruction contained information about the study and a written briefing and debriefing of the participants. In the instruction, it was also stressed that the participants were not allowed to talk or look at each other's questionnaires. The asylum-study, using students from the School of Business in Aarhus, was conducted during three different lectures and the questionnaires were partly completed during the break in the lecture. Again, the students were instructed not to talk or look at each other's questionnaires.

Even though full attention was sought-after, the likelihood that the participants had full attention to the stimuli is questionable. In both studies, subjects were free to go at any time and therefore would have been tempted to finish the questionnaire as fast as possible in order to enjoy some time off with their fellow students and friends. The questionnaires were also completed in the participants' own physical surroundings and the situation has consequently been less artificial than an experiment conducted in the laboratory. Though it to a great extent was possible to control that people did not talk or look at each others' questionnaires, it was not possible to control the surroundings - which in the case of the School of Business involved groups of fellow students talking. These studies are consequently characterized by a combination of control with the basic requirements for the experimental method (control with the information given to the different groups) and more realistic surroundings closer to the challenges and temptations that can affect people's attention in everyday situations.

As the welfare-study was conducted as an internet survey, this study takes the realism of the experimental settings a step further. Since people are asked to complete the questionnaires in their own homes, the experimental setting is as close to people's everyday news consumption as possible.

¹ Since deception can be seen as problematic from an ethical view, the researcher stressed the importance of a proper debriefing in which the subjects were told about the real purpose of the study, the logic of the experimental design, and the construction of the presented stimuli material (McDermott, 2002b: 41).

Overall, the issue of unrealistic attentive audiences is not considered to be a major problem in the three studies. Though the simple request of asking people to participate can increase their attention and motivation to read the stimuli, the fact that the questionnaires were completed in the normal physical and social settings of the participants helps reducing this bias. The ability to examine the research questions using different types of survey design also increases the external validity since it can be assumed that the results are not just an effect of specific design choices.

4.2.3 Realistic Experimental Stimuli

A serious criticism of framing experiments is the claim that framing experiments are examining the effect of unrealistic stimuli. This criticism can be divided in two camps. First, the realism of the frame itself can be questioned. Secondly, the fact that experimental stimuli do not reflect the contestable nature of actual frames is criticized.

Naturally, the greatest realism would be ensured by using actual political issues and real political messages. However, this straightforward solution has its problems. First, real life communication is likely to vary on a variety of variables. There can be different sources, rhetoric strategies, cues, tones, and appeals to different values. If a study using real life communication as experimental stimuli finds a difference between the experimental groups, it is consequentially difficult for the researcher to establish which of these differences has been the decisive factor. Secondly, the researcher is often interested in examining the effects of specific aspects of political news coverage. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find real life political communication that only varies on the variable that the researcher is interested in.

In order to gain as much control of the independent variables as possible, researchers therefore often dismiss the use of real life political communication. By constructing the stimulus themselves, researchers can control the differences between the experimental stimuli and can better vary only that specific variable they are interested in examining, while keeping other aspects constant between the stimuli. This means that when it comes to the construction of the experimental stimuli, there exist a trade off between the internal validity and the external validity (Munck and Verkuilen, 2005: 390).

The choice concerning the experimental stimuli reflects the focus of the specific research question. Due to the theoretical focus in this project, the internal validity was given the highest priority and the experimental stimuli were consequently constructed. The construction of the experimental stimuli was done by reading and examining the actual media coverage of the is-

sues and subsequently forming experimental stimuli which reflected the frames and coverage of the actual political debate. The experimental stimuli consequently had phrases, frames, words or stories from the actual news as their starting point. This strategy can increase the validity of the specific frames. But the strategy cannot overcome the main critique of stimulus material which is that people are not presented with information that reflects the composition of real political news. Since conflicts are central to politics, everyday news coverage does often contain conflicted frames. Studies show that in "reality, audiences are exposed to multiple frames per article and to an even greater number of distinct frames across a series of articles (Chong and Druckman, 2011:253). But most framing studies "have instead restricted attention to situations in which citizens are artificially sequestered, restricted to hearing only one way of thinking about a political issue" (Sniderman and Theriault, 2004: 141). The few studies examining the effect of conflicted frames show that the effect of frames depends highly on whether a frame is unchallenged by competing frames (Kinder 2003).

Without a doubt, the inclusion of competing frames are - all things being equal - likely to reduce the likelihood of achieving a framing effect. Consequently, studies examining only one-sided experimental stimuli are likely to exaggerate the effect of frames in real life. However, the use of one-sided frames has been a necessary starting point in this dissertation. It has been crucial to establish the existence of emotions as mediators in a simple context before complicating the situation by examining a more nuanced setting. The studies therefore do not examine the effect of competing frames

4.2.4 Subjects

Since experiments often impose on people's time and attention, the use of convenience samples is widespread in the literature. As students are inexpensive and relatively easy to assemble in big groups, many experiments are conducted using student subjects who gain course credits for their participation. I also used convenience samples in two of my studies. The health-care-study used conscripts who had their basic training in Aalborg and conscripts in the Danish Emergency Management Agency (n=462). The asylum-study used students from the School of Business in Aarhus. The welfare-study was an online survey with a representative sample.

It is obvious that a sample consisting of students is not representative for the public in general and these experimental studies have consequently been criticized for having low external validity (Druckman and Kam, 2011). This critique also applies for my convenience samples: First of all, the health-

care-study has no variation in gender but has a relatively high variation in political predispositions and in cognitive capabilities. The asylum-study, on the other hand, has variation in gender but the students can be assumed to have less variation in predispositions and are also likely to be characterized with higher cognitive capabilities. Finally, both groups of subjects differ from the public in general by being young and consequently having less developed political attitudes.

However, this does not necessarily mean that studies using convenience samples cannot tell us anything about the relationships between the variables in the real world. The limitation of the external validity depends on the type of generalization that the study wants to make (Druckman and Kam, 2011). If a wanted to make claims about the overall distribution of attitudes to the specific topics, convenience samples would not have high external validity because they are likely to have different attitudes than the public in general. However, the main objective of this dissertation is to examine the *mental processes* underlying framing effects. If I can assume that the mental processes of subjects in the convenience samples do not differ significantly from the public in general, it is possible to generalize the results concerning these processes.

The central question is consequently not whether the convenience samples are representative of the public in general, but whether the subjects differ from the general public in their mental processes. Though young people might tend to have less well-developed and crystallized attitudes and students are likely to have higher cognitive capabilities, neither of the two groups is likely to have widely different kinds of decision making processes than the rest of the population. Given the general gender stereotype is that women are more emotional than men, it might seem problematic that one of the samples consists mainly of men. However, the lack of variation on gender does not pose a serious threat to the research design. If such a gender difference exists, the study can be considered as a conservative test of the effect of emotions. Consequently, a convenience sample can still improve our understanding of these relationships. This means that we can still generalize the results from these studies.

It was, however, also possible to directly examine whether the findings in the first two studies could be replicated in a more representative sample. Contrary to the two other experiments, the welfare-study was namely conducted as an online survey interview which made it possible to examine the core propositions in a representative sample. By conducting experiments using a representative sample it is possible to have the best of both worlds – high internal validity and high external validity. The dissertation consequently

combines the use of convenience samples with a study using a representative sample.

4.2.5 Summary

Though there are many powerful arguments in favor of using experiments, there are unfortunately also serious caveats linked to this method as the last section illustrated. The choices concerning the experimental design can luckily limit some of the problems. As always, however, the choices aimed at solving one problem might create new problems and as the discussion showed there often is a tradeoff between increasing the internal and the external validity. The choices concerning the design of the studies consequently need to bear in mind the research question central to the project. In this project, the focus is on the processes of framing effects, and high internal validity is therefore crucial. The choice of design in the different studies consequently reflects the attempt to maximize the realism of the experimental situation within the limitations of maintaining a high internal validity.

4.3 Design of Experimental Stimuli

The design of the experimental stimuli is central to the test of the theoretical model. It is important to construct experimental stimuli that allows for a test of all the research question listed in chapter 3. Especially the two first research questions make demands on the type of frames that the studies should include. The design choices about the type of frames and the construction of the frames will therefore be discussed in the following.

4.3.1 Choice of Type of Frames

In order to test the research questions presented in chapter three, it is necessary to examine different types of frames. The first research question is concerned with the general impact of emphasis frames on emotions. To test this research question properly, it is necessary to examine the effect of both issue-specific and generic frames. A proper test, however, also requires that the studies examine a type of frame which is not expected to evoke emotions.

The second research question focuses on whether some frames can evoke stronger emotions than others. This question requires that the frames included in the studies are likely to vary in the intensity of evoked emotions. The distinction between episodic and thematic frames is a good starting point since prior studies show that episodic frames evoke more intense emo-

tions. In studying thematic and episodic frames, it is also possible to examine the first research question on a type of frame which is not expected to evoke emotions. While the effect of episodic frames on emotions is expected, it is namely less obvious that thematic frames should evoke emotions. The thematic frames are therefore also a hard test of the first research question.

The distinction between episodic and thematic frames is, however, not sufficient for the test of the second research question. Based on the insights from the appraisal theory, this project assumes that the differences in the intensity of emotional reactions cannot be fully captured by a simple division of frames into thematic and episodic. Instead the intensity of emotional reactions is assumed to depend on the degree of fit between cues in the frames and certain appraisal patterns. It is therefore also necessary to examine frames which vary in the specification of the emotional cues.

In order to cover the different demands above, the three studies focus on different aspects of the research questions. In the healthcare-study, the focus is on establishing that issue frames in general can evoke emotions. The review of prior studies in chapter 3 showed that our knowledge about the impact of frames on emotions is limited to the effect of generic frames and to frames which has been designed to evoke strong emotions. Our knowledge about the effect of issue specific frames on emotions is therefore very limited. The healthcare-study therefore examines the effect of issue-specific frames, and thereby provides new and important insights into the question of whether frames in general can evoke emotions.

The issue-specific frames differ in their valence since they describe the question of private healthcare in clearly positive and negative terms (Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2003: 362-363). In order to cover the arguments which have dominated the political debate, the two frames were constructed on the basis of arguments in newspaper articles and in communication from the main political parties. The discussion on private health care activates strong values of equality and freedom of choice. On the one hand, the left-wing parties are opponents of private health care because they argue that private health care departs from the principle of equal and free treatment which is a cornerstone of the Danish welfare state. On the other hand, the right-wing parties are proponents of private health care because competition is positive in itself, because the focus is on the individual's freedom of choice, and because it helps cutting hospital waiting lists. The frames reflect these different arguments and use of values. The lengths of the frames were the same and no clear sponsor or sources were used. Neither of the frames includes any specific emotional appeals and they are not constructed in order to evoke any specific emotions. It is therefore not self-evident that emotions should

have an influence. A translation of the stimulus material can be viewed in appendix A.

The asylum-study and the welfare-study, on the other hand, focus on the second research question. As a result, they both examine the effect of episodic and thematic frames. More specifically, the asylum-study employs a 2 x 2 experimental design (thematic-episodic versus for and against). A control group is not included in order to maximize the number of subjects in each experimental group. In the welfare-study, the focus is on the question of whether it is possible to influence the intensity of emotional reactions by other means than just presenting an issue in either an episodic or thematic frame. The episodic frames therefore vary in the degree of specification of their emotional cues and this study thereby theoretically constructs a weak and a strong episodic frames. The welfare-study uses a 3 x 2 experimental design. The frames vary in their valence (pro and con) and in their rhetoric types (thematic, weak episodic, and strong episodic). A control was included in order to test whether the thematic frames are able to evoke emotions. Seven experimental groups were therefore included.

Ideally, the thematic and episodic frames arguing in favor of the same position should not differ in the information or arguments given. Studies of framing effects have been criticized for not distinguishing between framing effects and information effects (Tewksbury and Scheufele, 2008; 28). When examining the effect of pro- and con-frames and the effect of different generic frames, it is impossible to keep the information completely constant. The design of the stimuli, however, tried to vary as little as possible between the different frames.

First, the overall design of the experimental stimuli is similar in the two asylum- and welfare-study. The frames were presented to the reader as an extract from a letter to the editor and had four parts. The first part is an introduction to the topic which is emotionally neutral and impartial to the topic in question. In the welfare-study, this part was also given to the control group. The second part introduces the position of the argument clearly. This part is only a short line which simply states whether the letter is in favor or against cuts in social security. The third part of the frame presents the argument in more detail – presented either as thematic or episodic frame. Finally, the frames all end by clearly stating their positions again together with a summation of the basic argument.

Second, the credibility of sources was kept constant by letting the writer in all the frames refer to a TV-program as the source of their knowledge. Third, thematic frames are often connected with statistics and more scientific information. However, facts and figures are clearly extra information and

have also been suggested as an independent important aspect of framing. The inclusion of too many facts would therefore muddle up the distinction between a thematic frame and a 'fact-frame' (Druckman, 2009). Accordingly, I have tried to keep the thematic frames free from specific facts and figures. The thematic frames consequently only refer to "a study" examining the question which concludes that the consequences are either positive or negative.

The focus in the asylum- and welfare-study is on the ability to evoke specific emotions. Before going into the discussion of the design of frames in more detail, it is therefore necessary to specify which emotions that would be relevant to examine. The reason is that the choice of emotions affects both the construction of frames and the measurement of emotional reactions. In the following, the choices of these emotions are discussed.

4.3.2 Choice of Emotions

So far the focus has been on emotions general speaking: Frames are expected to have an effect on emotions in general and episodic frames are assumed to be more emotional per se and. To test the research questions presented in chapter 3, it is necessary to be more specific in the choice of emotions.

In the healthcare-study, the experimental stimuli are based on how the question of private healthcare has the positive or negative consequences for the society. Since the focus in this study is on the valence of the broad implications, the emotions judged to be relevant is the general emotional dimensions of enthusiasm and anger. In the asylum-study, the focus is instead on reasons for asylum-seekers resisting to go back to their homeland while the welfare-study focuses on reasons for people to be without job. Contrary to the healthcare-study, these issues are related to well-defined target groups in the society and to the question of whether the society in general shall provide services for these groups. In the discussions about social security and asylum seekers, one of the central concepts is therefore the concept of deservingness. Deservingness is the question of whether a person deserves help. If people are perceived as deserving, one will be more likely to help the person than if the person is not perceived as deserving. The judgment of deservingness is in other words central to our attitudes about the policies concerning these groups (Appelbaum, 2001: 429; Petersen et al., 2010).

However, the judgment of deservingness is also likely to have an impact on our emotions and feelings towards a person or a group of persons. If people are perceived as deserving, one will be more likely to feel sympathy.

If they, on the other hand, are not perceived as deserving, one will be more inclined to feel anger (Small and Lerner, 2008: 51). Since the question about deservingness is likely to be a key question in a debate about welfare reforms and asylum seekers, compassion and anger are consequential central emotions.

A study of welfare reforms in the US confirms that compassion is one of the most important feelings in the debate about welfare reforms (Brewer, 2001). Studies have also shown that anger and compassion can affect attitudes and behaviors towards welfare recipients. A prior study of the frames about asylum-seekers shows that the emotional basis of frames for and against sending asylum-seekers home is compassion and aversion (Gorp, 2005: 491). In line with these studies, I therefore focus on the feelings of anger and compassion in the asylum- and welfare-study.

Compassion and anger are also interesting in a broader political perspective. A study by Ted Brader shows that emotional appeals to anger and compassion are commonly used in election campaigns (Brader, 2006). These emotions are likely to be even more prevalent in the media coverage of specific political questions or cases than in general campaigns since many political questions concern moral issues such as the question about deservingness (Petersen, 2010: 362). The media and politicians often focus on the disadvantaged, the sick, victims of crimes or natural disasters, and on human suffering in crisis and wars abroad. But they also often portray persons as cheaters, criminals, extremists, and others who intentionally do not follow the norms of the society. These different perspectives on people naturally influence people's opinions and their feelings of compassion and anger towards these persons (Small and Lerner, 2008).

Finally, anxiety is included in all studies. In contrast to the other emotions, anxiety is not depended on a specific pattern of appraisals. Instead, anxiety is assumed to be a reaction to novel information in general and not to the content of the specific information. Since anxiety is independent of the content of the frames, anxiety is expected to be a central emotion in all studies.

4.3.3 Choice of Emotional Cues

Language is important to our understanding of other people's motives and therefore framing can be powerful in affecting our judgments of other people's situations (Hosking, 2007: 9). Manipulative language can increase anger if people are portrayed as motivated by immoral motives or reduce compassion if their misery is portrayed as a result of carelessness or reckless behavior. It should therefore be possible to evoke the specific emotions cho-

sen above. However, in order to construct frames which evoke anger and sympathy, it is first necessary to identify those cues that evoke the distinct emotions of anger and compassion. The theoretical basis is the appraisal theory and the specific appraisals which lead to different emotions. By including cues that will evoke certain appraisals, it should be possible to manipulate people emotional reactions.

The literature has different explanations of what triggers anger. The reason is that it is possible to feel anger both on behalf of oneself and others, and because anger can have both personal as well as social justifications. First, anger can be a result of a situation where one is prevented from achieving one's goal and holds another person responsible (Haidt, 2003, 856). Second, if a person or group is treated unfair, it can also evoke anger towards those who are perceived to be responsible for this perceived injustice (Haidt, 2003, 856; Montada and Schneider, 1989: 316; Ellsworth and Scherer, 2002: 581). This form of anger has also been termed empathetic anger or moral outrage (Montada and Schneider, 1989: 314; Vitaglione and Barnett, 2003). Anger can also be triggered by an appraisal of whether persons follow moral or social norms (Ellsworth and Scherer, 2002: 581, Montada and Schneider, 1989: 318). Finally, another appraisal relevant for the feeling of anger is whether people are responsible for their action which in the case of feelings towards disadvantaged people means that the perception of whether the misfortune is self-inflicted is an important appraisal (Montada and Schneider, 1989, 318).

The different types of anger are consequently the result of very different appraisals. It is therefore necessary to decide which of these types of anger that the studies should focus on and consequently which appraisals the frames should try to tap into. As the focus in the asylum- and welfare-study is on the circumstances of certain target groups, the social justifications of anger seem most relevant. Empathetic anger, on the other hand, can be viewed as a dimension of empathy and therefore this feeling is less interesting in a study where compassion is measured separately (Vitaglione and Barnett, 2003).

Compassion, on the other hand, is assumed to be evoked if people witness other people suffering (Haidt, 2003: 862). However, we do not always feel compassion with people suffering. There are limits to compassion and the central question is whether people deserved help (Goetz, Keltner, and Simon-Thomas, 2010: 357). Two aspects can affect the degree of deservingness. First, persons have to be perceived as victims of a situation which they are not entirely in control of. If the suffering is somehow self-inflicted, people will feel less compassionate. For instance, we feel more compassion for a

man who lost all his possessions in a fire than with the man who gambled his fortune away. Second, in accordance with this logic, we also feel less compassion with people behaving in immoral ways since their misfortune is viewed as a result of their own immoral behavior.

In order to manipulate people's emotions, it is necessary to construct messages which are likely to lead to the appraisals above. The central dimensions in evoking compassion and anger are the questions of deservingness, intentionality/responsibility for the situation, the degree of suffering, and violation of a social norm about contributing to society. In the episodic frames, these dimensions were varied by using different persons and giving different explanations and motives for their current situations. Prior studies have shown that young able-bodied men are judged to be the less deserving than other groups, while physically handicapped people are judged to be more deserving (Appelbaum, 2001: 429; Petersen et al., 2010: 41). The anger stimuli consequently used a man while the compassion stimuli used a young girl and a young mother.

After having established both the relevant emotions and appraisals, it is possible to present in more detail some of the considerations behind the construction of the various frames in the asylum- and welfare-study. In the asylum-study, the argument in favor of sending asylum-seekers back to their homeland focuses on an intruder-frame in which the asylum-seekers are viewed as a threat to especially the economic welfare. In the argument against sending asylum-seekers home, the focus is on how the asylum-seekers are innocent victims that risk persecution in their homeland. These frames were prevalent in the news coverage of the problem with rejected asylum-seekers. The frames have also been found to be prevalent in other countries too and the design of the frames consequently follows the framework identified in prior studies (Gorp, 2005: 489-491). In the thematic pro-frames, the focus is on the safety of the asylum-seekers while the thematic con-frame focuses on how the asylum-seekers only want to stay because of economic reasons. The episodic pro-frame focuses on a little girl who does not speak Arabic and is afraid of returning to Iraq. In the episodic con-frame, the focus is on a young guy who is not prosecuted in Iraq but wants to stay in Denmark because he can get economic help. A translation of the stimulus material can be viewed in appendix B.

In the welfare-study, the argument of the thematic frames refer to a study which shows that the cut in social security is either forcing more people into jobs or punishing people already looking for jobs. The arguments are further based on the economic implications for the society being either positive or negative. The focus in the episodic pro-frames is on a person who unsuc-

cessfully is trying to get a job while the con-frames focus on a person not trying hard not to get a job.

The information and cues necessary to evoke specific appraisals, however, vary in the episodic frames. One difference between the welfare-study and the other two studies is the theoretical focus on the ability to manipulate the intensity of the specific feelings. The test of whether cues have an impact on the intensity of emotional reactions requires that the weak and strong episodic frames are kept as identical as possible. If the underlying frames vary too much, a difference in the effects cannot necessarily be interpreted as an effect of the emotional cues. In order to keep the weak and the strong episodic frames as identical as possible, the same fundamental story was used. The differences between the frames are therefore in small changes in the descriptors and in the details of information given about the relevant persons.

Table 4.2: Overview of emotional cues used in the episodic frames in the welfare-study

		Weak Episodic Frame	Strong Episodic Frame
Compassion	Deservingness	Mother	Single-parent mother
	Responsibility	Applied for jobs	Applied for many jobs
		Did not get a job	Did not get a job because of a work-related injury
			Children depicted as innocent victims: Santa Claus cannot come this year (age-cue) Breaking a mothers heart (stressing she is a mother)
	Degree of suffering	Consequences for her economy	Disastrous consequences for her economy
		Not afford normal things	Not afford the most basic things
		Not afford presents	Not afford proper shoes for the children
Anger	Deservingness	Man	Young guy
	Deservingness	Do not support men to stay at home	Do not support young, able-bodied men to stay at home and sponge off the state
	Intentionality	Do not miss a job versus	do not want a job but rather relax and play computer
		Applied for a few jobs	didn't apply for a single job
		Difficult to meet on time and meet every day	difficult to get up in the morning and do not bother to go to work every day

In order to vary the intentionality, for instance, the anger frames depicted the current situation as a choice made by the disadvantaged, while the compassion frames examined persons who was without control of the current situation. The behavior of undeserving groups have been characterized as not

following the social norms and being lazy, unreliable and abusing drugs or alcohol (Appelbaum, 2001: 428). The anger frames used these findings in the descriptions and varied the degree to which the young man is lazy, unreliable and follows the social norms. In the compassion frames, on the other and, the cues varies the extent to which, the mother is depicted as a victim of a situation that she is not entirely in control of. An overview of the differences in the emotional cues between the weak and strong episodic frames is presented in table 4.2., and a translation of the stimulus material can be found in appendix C.

4.4 Measurement of core variables

“...our abstract and general terms must be connected to specific measurable concepts at some point to allow empirical testing” (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994: 111).

The discussion of the external and internal validity of experiments is important. But both high internal and external validity is useless if one does not have highly reliable measures of the central variables. As the quote illustrates, the challenge of most empirical research in political science is to connect the abstract theoretical terms with specific measurable concepts which allow empirical testing. This is certainly also a challenge in this dissertation where the core variables are abstract and not directly observable. The core variables in this dissertation are the mediators of framing effects. This section will therefore discuss how to construct valid and reliable measures of the rather abstract theoretical affective and cognitive mediators.

4.4.1 How to Measure Emotions

Emotions are the most central variable of the dissertation and valid measures of emotions are therefore essential. Unfortunately, the literature does not offer a “gold standard” to the measure of emotions. On the contrary, “scientific evidence suggests that measuring a person’s emotional state is one of the most vexing problems in affective science” (Mauss and Robinson, 2009: 209). The disagreement about how to measure emotions reflects the theoretical disagreement about the structure of emotions and the multifaceted nature of the understanding of emotions themselves. This section will present the different approaches and discuss the pros and cons of these approaches in examining the specific research questions of this project.

According to the component-definition of emotions, an emotional reaction can be viewed as synchronized changes in different subsystems. In prin-

principle, emotional reactions should therefore be measured as changes in all subsystems (Scherer, 2005: 709). As a result of limited resources, it is not possible to measure all the components of emotions and mostly, researchers are forced to measure only one of the components. The different measures applied in the literature reflect this focus on different components of emotions. Emotions has consequently been assessed using measures of vocal behavior, facial expressions, startle response, brain scans measuring blood flow and electric impulses, heart rate, blood pressure, sweat, and self-report (Mauss and Robinson, 2009). There are different pros and cons of each method, and it is consequently necessary to take the question of one's specific research focus into consideration.

The advantages of the measures of non-verbal behavior and physiological behavior are that they do not depend on people's assessment of their emotional experiences and consequently they can be measured in an 'objective' manner - objective in the sense that the subject himself are not asked to assess and interpret his own emotional reactions. However, these measures are costly, require expert knowledge, and individual assessment since advanced technology is needed. These methods were therefore beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Following a well-established tradition of using self-reports as measures of emotions, emotional reactions in this dissertation were measured by asking people whether they experienced a series of emotions while reading the text (Marcus et al., 2003; Watson and Clark, 1997, Druckman and McDermott, 2008; Gross, 2008; Brader, 2006: 2004). It might seem self-contradictory to use a cognitive task to measure an affective experience and self-reports can be criticized for only assessing people's cognitive representation of an emotional feeling. This argument is that people's subjective experience is affected by the cognitive process and therefore a self-reported feeling might not capture the true emotional reaction.

The use of self-reports instead of the other measures is due to three factors. Firstly, self-reports are a widely used method in studies of emotions in political science and the measurement would consequently be in line with related studies. Secondly, self-reports can easily be applied to group settings and can be measured without the use of advanced equipment. Finally, self-reports allow for measurement of more distinct emotions. Brain scans and examination of physiological changes are not fine-tuned enough to distinguish beyond broad dimensions, and even facial expressions has been questioned as a good measure of more distinct emotions (Mauss and Robinson, 2009: 223-224). Self-report is therefore the only type of measure which allows for the emotional specificity which is a necessary in this dissertation

and are therefore considered as the best way of measuring emotions in this dissertation.²

The risk that cognition might interfere and consequently bias the self-reported feelings can be minimized by reducing the time span between the actual emotional reaction and the measurement of these reactions. By measuring the emotional reactions directly after the experimental stimuli, the risk of factors such as social desirability and gender stereotypes biasing the measurements can also be reduced (Mauss and Robinson, 2009; Shields, 2002: 61).

In self-reports the answer-format and the wording of the different questions become central for the measurement. Beliefs about the structure of emotions influence how emotions ought to be measured. A valence focus leads to simple bi-polar feeling thermometers while the two and three dimensional views on emotions need uni-polar measures of emotional responses covering all dimensions (Marcus, MacKuen, Wolak, and Keele, 2006: 34). Once again, the choice between different measures needs to take the specific research hypothesis into question. The dissertation focuses on the effect of three different emotional dimensions which are expected to differ in their effects. As a result, these emotions need to be measured independently of each other and the studies therefore used measures that are uni-polar. Answers were measured on a five-point or a seven-point scale ranging from not at all to very much.

One thing is the problem of answer format. The second problem relating to the measurement of emotions is the problem of language. The closed format question means that the researcher needs to determine which emotions that is relevant to measure. While research has made conclusions about the best emotional terms to use in research in English, the amount of research in Danish is very limited – although growing. One obstacle of this dissertation has therefore been to overcome the language barrier and develop a set of emotional terms which can measure the different emotional dimensions. The emotional terms used in the studies try, on the one hand, to be as close to the English terms as possible. The challenge is to keep both the type and intensity of the emotional reaction as close to the terms in English. On the other hand, the choice of emotional terms also emphasized the

² Unfortunately, studies seem to suggest that the different measures of emotions do not converge to a high degree. The reason is that different measures are sensitive to different aspects of emotions – for instance valence, arousal, approach or avoidance reactions (Mauss and Robinson, 2009: 228). More studies of the convergence of the different studies would therefore be an important step forward for the study of emotions.

Table 4.3: Overview of the measurement of emotions in the three studies

	Healthcare-study	Asylum-study	Welfare-study
Enthusiasm	Enthusiasm Determined Excited Happy		
Cronbach's Alpha	0,825		
Object	The experimental Stimuli		
Anger	Outrage Angry Bitter Irritated	Angry Outrage Aversion	Angry Outrage Aversion
Cronbach's Alpha	0,904	0,899	0,866
Object	The experimental Stimuli	Asylum Seekers ^o	People on social security ^o
Sympathy		Compassion Sympathy	Compassion Sympathy
Pearson Correlation		0,836	0,775
Object		Asylum Seekers	People on social security
Anxiety	Afraid Shocked Anxious Worried Distressed	Anxious Worried Nervous	Anxious Worried
Cronbach's Alpha	0,866	0,883	
Pearson Correlation			0,803
Object	The experimental Stimuli	The experimental Stimuli	The experimental Stimuli
Scale	Five-point scale	Seven-point scale	Seven-point scale

Note: Shaded areas mean that the emotion is not tested in the study. In order to avoid measuring empathetic anger the questions measuring emotions were directed at the emotional reactions towards the disadvantaged.

need of developing Danish emotional terms which produces the same emotional dimensions as found in studies in English. This was done by extended pre-testing of different emotional terms. As table 4.3 shows, two to five discrete emotions were included as measures of each emotional dimension and an index was constructed for each dimension.

4.4.2 How to measure cognitive mediators

This dissertation is challenging the traditional one-sided focus on cognitive mediators. It is therefore central to the empirical analysis to have reliable measure of the cognitive mediators too. Only by having reliable measures of the cognitive mediators can the analysis examine whether the inclusion of emotional mediators provides a better understanding of the mediating process than the traditional cognitive model.

Just as emotions; cognitive mediators are difficult to measure. The literature mostly uses either thought listing or a closed question format. Thought listing assesses people's considerations by asking them to list thoughts and considerations that was on their mind at the moment of response (Zaller, 1992: p. 56; Valkenburg, Semetko, and Vreese, 1999). The question can be asks either after people's attitudes are measured (retrospective) or before attitudes are measured (prospective). These considerations subsequently need to be coded in order to be included in the analysis.

The closed question format presents participants with a list of potential important considerations. The precise format differs between studies. The importance of beliefs has been measured by asking subjects to rank the different ideas according to their importance or simply rate the importance of the ideas or arguments (Druckman and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 2004; Nelson, Clawson and Oxley, 1997; Nelson and Oxley, 1999). The belief content, on the other hand, has been measured by tapping people's beliefs about the likely consequences of the political decision or beliefs about the reasons for the situation to arise. Finally, reaction time has been used as a measure of accessibility (Nelson and Clawson, 1997).

In order to make sure that the results do not reflect the specific measurement of the traditional cognitive mediators, different methods have been used in the different studies. In the private health care study, considerations were measured using the thought listing model. To avoid the measure of considerations to affect the measurement of the dependent variable, the cognitive responses were measured after the dependent variable and the variables measuring the emotional mediators. When coding thought-listing, it is the difficult to distinguish one consideration from another. In order to overcome this problem, the coding of the open responses were facilitated by asking subjects to list only one thought or idea per box and thereby break their considerations into units of cognitive responses (Cacioppo and Petty, 1981: 318). The considerations can subsequently be scored along different dimensions depending on the research question in consideration. In this study, the focus was on the ability of considerations to mediate the effect of

issue specific frames. Consequently, the central dimension was the direction of the considerations. Each unit was therefore coded according to the direction of the comment – whether it was positive, negative, neutral or irrelevant toward the political issue in question³. Up to five considerations were listed in each direction.

The strength of the thought-listing measure is that the question itself does not prime the subjects into writing down considerations which actually did not influence their attitudes. The downside, however, is that it is not possible to assess the weight of the listed considerations. Therefore, the closed question format approach was used in the two remaining studies.

Two different approaches to the closed ended question format were used in the asylum- and the welfare-study. In the welfare-study, the content and importance of considerations were measured using two batteries of questions which have been used in a former study examining the issue of welfare issues in Denmark (Slothuus, 2008). This was done in order to maximize the comparability to this study. The content of considerations are measured by asking subjects to indicate their agreement with a number of statements about the reasons for people being unemployed. The importance of considerations is measured by asking how important a number of general considerations are when thinking about the welfare benefits.

No studies examining mediators could be found on the issue of asylum-seekers. In line with the measurement in studies on other topics, the content of considerations was measured by asking people to indicate their agreement with a number of the potential consequences or effects of the decision to send rejected asylum seekers back (Druckman and Nelson, 2003; Nelson, 2004; Nelson and Oxley, 1999). The importance of considerations was measured by asking people how important they thought four considerations or goals were when discussing whether to allow rejected asylum seekers to stay or not.

4.4.3 Summary

The literature offers different approaches to how to measure emotions and considerations and therefore no clear guidance about the right measurement exists. The choices made about the measurement of the core variables

³ The most reliable coding is achieved when the one doing the coding is blind to the experimental conditions and to the experimental hypothesis (Cacioppo and Petty, 1981, 321). Due to the lack of resources, this was not possible to achieve since the coding had to be done by the author. However, the coding was conducted without knowing the experimental condition of the subjects.

reflect the need of finding the measures most appropriate for testing the central proposition of the dissertation. The choices therefore reflect two considerations. Firstly, the measures of emotions had to be able to capture the necessary specificity in the measure of emotions. Secondly, the measurement of cognitive considerations was chosen in order to have comparable measures of variables central to the theories that the emotional mediators challenges. The measures chosen are consequently measures thoroughly tested and accepted in the literature which allow for a proper test of the theoretical model. The choices of measurement made in the dissertation consequently allow for a reliable test of the core propositions and for a valid test of the strength between the models focusing solely on cognitive mediators and the model giving prominence to affective mediators.

4.5 Summary and Conclusion

As this chapter illustrates, the causal model presented in chapter 3 gives rise to some methodological problems. This chapter has focused on the central questions of internal and external validity, reliability and appropriate methods. First, experiments were introduced as the best way of ensuring high internal validity. Unfortunately experiments risked having low external validity due to the risk of exaggerating the degree of exposure and attention to political communication in real-life and because of unrealistic stimuli and the use of convenience samples. However, by carefully designing the studies these problems were minimized. By using salient and real topics, by conducting the experiment in the participants own surroundings, by designing frames reflecting actual news coverage and by replicating the findings in a representative sample, the studies in this project have tried to maximize the internal as well as the external validity of the different studies. Secondly, the chapter turned to the challenge of attaining reliable measures of the core variables which can be included in the quantitative analysis.

The design of the studies can minimize the consequences of these problems. But even the best designs have their limitations. Carefully designed research strategies and operationalizations can therefore only take us so far. The existence of a tradeoff between the external and internal validity means that it is often not possible to maximize both.

However, the combination of the different studies strengthens the research design. The overall confidence in the results is increased by replicating the findings across different issues, different frames, different groups of subjects, different modes of data collection and using different operationalizations of the core variables. In other words, both the external and internal

validity are increased by demonstrating that the fundamental claim about emotions as mediators can be established “across a series of experiments that demonstrate similar phenomena using different populations, manipulations, and measures” (McDermott, 2002a: 335). The fact that the same research question has been examined in three different studies using different topics, different organization of the frames and different lengths, consequently increases the confidence in the results and improve the basis of generalization (O’Keefe, 2002: 177). Taken together, the three studies consequently provide a strong research design which allows for a strong test of the causal model.

Methodologically, the asylum- and welfare-study differ from the health-care-study on a number of central dimensions due to the different focus of the two groups of studies. The experimental stimuli in the asylum- and welfare-study are constructed in order to specifically evoke specific emotional responses since they focus on the ability of frames to influence and direct people’s emotions. However, methodologically the direct manipulation of emotions has a second advantage. The greater control over the emotional reactions makes it more certain that the observed emotions are a result of the frames – or in other words, by evoking specific emotions I can be more certain that an effect of emotions is a result of emotional reactions to the frame and not a spurious relationship or reflections of differences in dispositions.

The next chapters will examine whether emotions are mediators and how this extension to the traditional model has consequences for our understanding of framing effects. The analyses will be structured around the core propositions and research questions presented in chapter three. The first proposition is the core of the theoretical argument. This argument requires first that frames can affect emotions and secondly that these emotions affect attitudes. The first requirement is tested in chapter 5.

Only if frames evoke emotions, is there a reason to examine whether the evoked emotions have an effect on attitudes. This second prerequisite for emotions being able to mediate the effect of frames is tested in chapter 6 where an actual test of the whole causal model is also conducted.

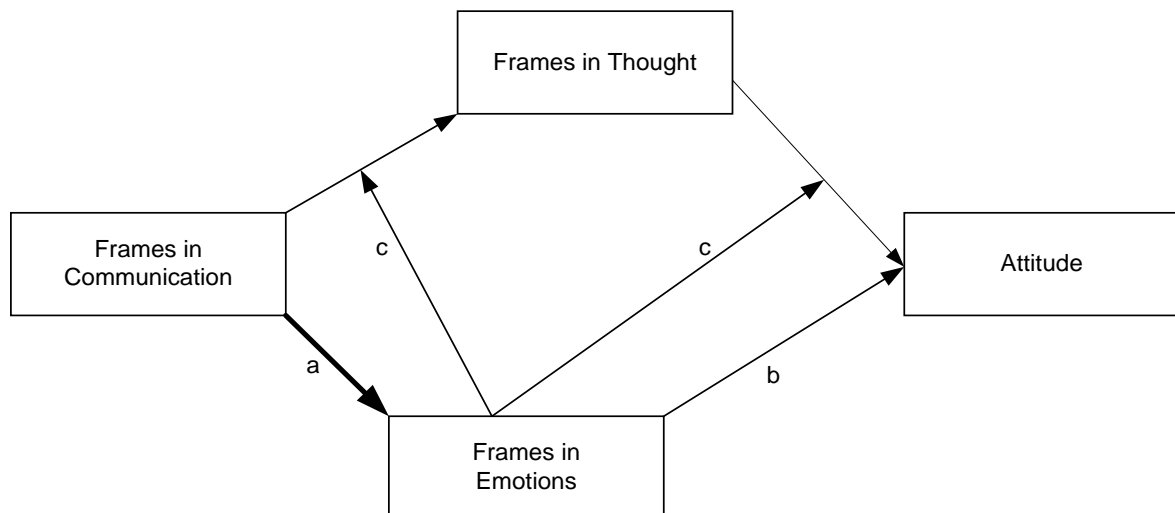
In chapter 7 the focus will be on the second core proposition that the framing effect varies across individuals according to their emotional reactions. This chapter will consequently bring the intensity of emotional reactions and the feeling of anxiety into focus and examine how emotions affect decision making processes.

Chapter 5

Framing Effects on Emotions

The first core proposition presented in chapter 3 was that emotions function as mediators. To determine whether emotions are mediators of framing effects, it is necessary to establish that frames have an effect on emotions, and that these emotions affect people's attitudes. This chapter will examine the causal arrow marked by an 'a' in figure 5.1 and consequently focus on the first of the requirements mentioned above. In the next chapter the second and the causal arrow marked by a 'b' is examined.

Figure 5.1: The theoretical causal model of the relationship between issue frames, emotions and attitudes



To examine whether or not frames can evoke emotions is the natural starting point for the analysis as this requirement is an underlying assumption of all the research questions. If emotions are uncorrelated with the experimental stimuli, any emotional effect would only reflect the impact of the participants' different moods prior to reading the experimental stimuli. All further investigation of the model in figure 5.1 would therefore be pointless, if frames do not affect emotions.

As presented in chapter three, the question about the effect of frames on emotions can be divided into two more specific research questions with focus on different aspects of the effect of frames. The first question focuses on whether frames evoke different emotions and the second on the intensity of emotional reactions:

RQ1: Do all emphasis frames evoke emotions?

RQ2: How and why frames differ in how emotionally engaging they are?

Chapter 3 outlined a number of studies examining these two questions – studies that provided some indications of the ability of frames to evoke emotions. However, existing studies also had important shortcomings. Most studies did not include a control group and the results were inconclusive about the general ability of frames to evoke emotions. This chapter overcomes some of these shortcomings and extends existing studies by examining new types of frames and by testing a theoretical framework of why frames differ in the intensity of emotions evoked.

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part develops a number of testable hypotheses based on the insights from the appraisal perspective presented in chapter 3. The second part examines these hypotheses in the three studies forming the data material of the dissertation. Finally, the chapter discusses the implications of the findings in the analysis and discusses how the findings extend our knowledge about the role of emotions in framing studies.

5.1 Testable hypothesis

As the review in chapter 3 illustrated, existing studies have shown that frames in some situations can evoke emotions. These studies have consequently provided reasons to believe that frames can influence emotions and have greatly improved our knowledge about these effects.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to form clear conclusions about the two research questions based on the above studies. It is partly because existing studies have focused on a limited spectrum of frames that do not resemble more everyday communication, and therefore it can be problematic to extend the conclusions to frames in general. But it is also partly because the studies lack a general framework of why frames vary in the intensity of the emotional reactions evoked. The differences between episodic and thematic frames are not likely to be the only relevant aspect to explain differences between how emotionally engaging frames are. More insights are needed to understand why some frames evoke stronger emotions than others.

The appraisal approach forms the theoretical basis for expecting an effect of frames on emotions. Based on the insights into how appraisals shape emotional reactions, it was possible to offer the first tentative answers to the two research questions above. With regard to the first research questions, the expectation is that emphasis-frames evoke emotions simply by putting emphasis on different aspects influencing the appraisal of the issue which leads

to different emotional responses. Based on the appraisal perspective, the answer to the first research question is therefore that all emphasis frames should be capable of evoking emotions. Just as the appraisal theory can help explain differences in the type of emotional responses; it can also help explain the differences in intensity. The answer to the second research question is that the effect of frames on emotions will vary according to how well they fit into the appraisal patterns of specific emotions. The appraisal perspective consequently provides a framework for explaining both why frames evoke different emotions and why their intensity varies.

However, these predictions about the effect of frames on emotions are too vague to be properly tested empirically. To determine the more specific relationships between frames and emotions, it is necessary to link the specific frames and emotions by using the insights from the appraisal perspective about why we experience certain emotions. In other words, it is necessary to look into the content of the specific frames and determine how these frames fit into different appraisal patterns.

Chapter 4 identified compassion and anger as relevant emotions on the topics of asylum seekers and welfare payments. The associated appraisal patterns were identified and six episodic frames constructed using cues fitting the appraisal patterns of these emotions. If the construction of the frames has been successful, they should have clear effects on the feelings of anger and compassion.

These two studies also included thematic frames that were not specifically designed to evoke these emotions. While it is obvious why episodic frames specifically designed to fit certain appraisal patterns can elicit these emotions, it is less clear why thematic frames should elicit emotions. However, even though the cues might be less clear, the thematic frames still provide some cues: A frame arguing that people do not try hard enough to get a job or that economic reasons refrain asylum seekers to return home also gives people enough information to make a judgment of what the core problem is. The first hypothesis is therefore:

H1: Frames with cues fitting the appraisal pattern of anger will evoke anger, while frames with cues fitting the appraisal pattern of compassion will evoke compassion.

In the healthcare-study, the issue specific frames were not designed to evoke any cues. They simply put emphasis on whether the private healthcare insurances had positive or negative consequences for the society in general. But even these frames put emphasis on issues that could provide

hints about how to appraise the situation: The frames provide information that allows for a rudimentary appraisal of whether the private health care is consistent or inconsistent with the participant's wishes. The frame that points out the negative consequences hints at the private healthcare insurances being inconsistent with the interests of the readers and that a third party is responsible for the growth in the private health care. This frame is expected to evoke the negative emotion of anger. The frame pointing out the positive consequences is, on the other hand, more likely to evoke positive emotions such as enthusiasm. Consequently, the predictions about the effect of the issue specific frames are as follows.

H2: Positively valenced issue specific frames will evoke enthusiasm, while negatively valenced issue specific frames will evoke anger.

When discussing the effect of frames on emotions, it is important to stress that everybody might not appraise the issue in the same way, since emotional reactions probably to some extent also depend on predispositions. The perception of injustice can for instance depend on a person's view of the persons involved (Montada and Schneider, 1989: 318). But if the manipulation is successful, the experimental groups will differ on average.

While the predictions in the two hypotheses above relate to feelings of anger and compassion/enthusiasm, the feeling of anxiety has not been touched upon. Based on the valence of anxiety, it would be natural to assume that the effect of anxiety should resemble the effect of frames on anger. However, the feeling of anxiety is theoretically expected to differ from the other feelings. According to the theory of affective intelligence, anxiety is assumed to be a reaction to novel and potentially threatening things in our surroundings. Negatively charged information can indeed be viewed as potentially threatening, but so can positively valenced information if this information is new and/or in conflict with the person's established opinions. Both negatively and positively valenced frames are expected to evoke anxiety though negatively valenced information might evoke slightly stronger feelings of anxiety.

H3: Both negatively and positively valenced frames will evoke anxiety

So far, the hypotheses have focused on the first research question about the effect of frames on the type of emotions evoked. The appraisal approach can also form the basis for hypotheses connected with the second research question about the effect of frames on the intensity of emotional reactions. As stated above, both episodic and thematic frames are assumed to be able

to evoke emotions because both types of frames provide specific interpretations of the events. Episodic frames are better to direct the emotional responses as they provide cues that fit the appraisal patterns better. In thematic frames, there are fewer and more ambiguous cues and differences between the groups can be expected to be less distinct. In line with the findings of prior studies, the hypothesis is that episodic frames will evoke more anger and compassion than thematic frames.

H4: Episodic frames will evoke stronger anger and compassion than thematic frames

This project argues that the distinction between thematic and episodic frames is too simple because even episodic frames are likely to vary in how emotionally engaging they are. An episodic frame that provides clear and unambiguous cues is likely to evoke stronger emotional reactions than an episodic frame that gives implicit or conflicting cues. The final hypothesis in this chapter is therefore:

H5: Episodic frames with clear cues (strong episodic frames) will evoke stronger emotions than frames with less clear cues (weak episodic frames).

Table 5.1 presents an overview of the hypotheses arranged according to the specific research question they address. The following section will examine these hypotheses in the three studies constituting the data material of this project.

Table 5.1: Overview of the hypotheses linked to the two first research questions

RQ1: Do all emphasis frames evoke emotions?	
H1	Frames with cues fitting the appraisal pattern of anger will evoke anger, while frames with cues fitting the appraisal pattern of compassion will evoke compassion.
H2	Positively valenced issue specific frames will evoke enthusiasm, while negatively valenced issue specific frames will evoke anger.
H3	Both negatively and positively valenced frames will evoke anxiety
RQ2: How and why do frames differ in how emotionally engaging they are?	
H4	Episodic frames will evoke stronger anger and compassion than thematic
H5	Episodic frames with clear cues (Strong episodic frames) will evoke stronger emotions than frames with less clear cues (weak episodic frames).

5.2 Analysis

After having developed testable hypotheses, it is finally possible to conduct an empirical test of the first causal arrow of the theoretical model presented in chapter three. The first research question about the effect of frames on the type of emotions evoked can be examined in all three studies. The second research question about whether it is possible to control the intensity of emotional reactions can only be examined in the asylum- and welfare-study that includes multiple frames of the same policy recommendation.

5.2.1 Do all emphasis frames evoke emotions

If all frames evoke emotions, it should be possible to find an effect of frames in all three studies that make up the data material in this project. But the hypotheses connected with this research question goes further than just arguing that frames can evoke emotions they state that it is possible, to some extent, to predict the emotional reactions.

The first hypothesis is specifically directed towards the asylum- and welfare-study. All frames in these two studies are assumed to provide some cues that can lead to the intended emotions of anger and compassion. The frames arguing against letting asylum-seekers stay and the arguments against the removal of the ceiling on welfare benefits have cues fitting the appraisal patterns of anger. The frames in favor of letting asylum-seekers stay and the frames in favor of lifting the ceiling of welfare have cues fitting the appraisal patterns of compassion. If the construction of the frames is successful and the first hypothesis correct, the con-frames should consequently evoke more anger while pro-arguments should evoke more compassion. A preliminary test of the first hypothesis is therefore whether the con- and pro-frames, generally seen, evoke the expected emotions of anger and compassion.

The results of such a comparison of the average emotional reactions among the readers of the pro- and con-frames in the asylum-study are presented in table 5.2. As expected, the con-frames evoke significantly more anger and significantly less compassion than the pro-frames. Because no control group is included in the asylum-study, it is not possible to determine whether both con- and pro-frames have an effect on emotions. The findings in table 5.2 can namely be a result of either pro-frames or con-frames evoking these emotions. Or the findings can be a result of both pro- and con-frames that are emotionally engaging but evoke different kinds of emotions. Nonetheless, the results suggest that the pro-frames on average pull the

emotional reactions in the opposite direction than the frames against letting them stay.

Table 5.2: The impact of pro- and con-frames on anger and compassion in the asylum-study

	Pro-frames	Con-frames	Difference between group means
Anger	0,176	0,360	-0,183***
Compassion	0,583	0,378	0,205***
N	142	139	

Note: Table entries on the left side are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Pro frames argue in favor of letting the asylum-seekers stay in Denmark. Entries on the right side are differences between the group means in the experimental groups receiving pro- and con-frames. *** $p < 0,001$ (two-sided test).

Table 5.3 shows the results of a similar analysis in the welfare study. Once again the predictions are confirmed: The con-frames evoke more anger while the pro-frames evoke more compassion. A control-group was included in the welfare-study, and it is thus possible to directly test whether both arguments for and against private health insurances are able to affect emotions. Both the participants reading the frames in favor of and against removing the ceiling on welfare benefits differ significantly in their emotional reactions compared to the participants in the control group. This analysis shows that both groups of frames have an effect on emotions. Moreover, the con-frames not only manage to evoke more anger, but also manage to reduce the level of compassion that these readers feel towards people on welfare benefits.

Table 5.3: The impact of pro- and con-frames on anger and compassion in the welfare-study

	Pro-frames	Control group	Con-frames	Difference between group means	
				Pro versus control	Con versus control
Anger	0,161	0,164	0,334	-0,002	-0,171***
Compassion	0,575	0,472	0,388	0,103***	0,084***
N	658-663	202	629		

Note: Table entries on the left side are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Pro frames argue in favor of removing the ceiling on welfare benefits. Entries on the right side are differences between the group means in the two experimental groups receiving pro- and con-frames and the control group, respectively. *** $p < 0,001$ (two-sided test).

The preliminary analyses above consequently confirm the hypothesis that both pro- and con-frames, in general, evoke the targeted emotions. But the

first hypothesis cannot only be tested in two independent studies with arguments in different directions. It is also possible to test the hypothesis using both thematic and episodic frames. Episodic and thematic frames in these studies are constructed in such a manner that anger and compassion are likely to be evoked. If the first hypothesis is true, then all these frames should be able to evoke emotions. A more in-depth analysis of the first hypothesis is therefore whether each frame has the expected effect on emotions.

The effect of frames on emotions is most likely to be found when examining episodic frames. Partly because prior studies have concluded that episodic frames evoke strong emotional reactions, and partly because these frames were specifically constructed to evoke these emotions. If the construction of frames has been successful, the episodic frames should have clear effects. Table 5.4 shows the results of the comparison between the readers of episodic frames in the asylum-study. They clearly show that the frames both substantially and significantly affect emotions. The con-frames evoke significantly stronger reactions of anger among their readers while pro-frames evoke significantly more compassion. Once again, the results in the asylum-study do not necessarily imply that both frames have an effect on emotions, but are most likely the result of the frames pulling in different directions.

Table 5.4: The impact of episodic frames on anger and compassion in the asylum-study

	Episodic pro-frame	Episodic con-frame	Difference between group means
Anger	0,172	0,443	- 0,270***
Compassion	0,601	0,327	0,274***
N	69	69-70	

Note: Table entries on the left side are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Pro frames argue in favor of letting the asylum-seekers stay in Denmark. Entries on the right side are differences between the group means in the two experimental groups receiving episodic pro- and con-frames. *** $p < 0,001$ (two-sided test).

Again the welfare-study allows us to compare the emotional reactions in the experimental groups that read episodic frames with the control group. However, since the welfare-study included both weak and strong episodic frames, it is also possible to test the effects of four different episodic frames. It is most likely to find an effect of frames on emotions in the groups receiving the strong episodic frames, and the results of the comparison of the average emotional reactions among these readers are presented in table 5.5. As expected, the strong episodic pro-frame evokes significantly stronger compas-

sion while the strong episodic con-frame evokes significantly stronger anger. Compared to the control group's emotional reactions, the strong episodic con-frame also evokes significantly less compassion among its readers. This means that the strong episodic con-frame is more able to direct the emotional responses in only one direction.

Table 5.5: The impact of strong episodic frames on anger and compassion in the welfare-study

	Strong episodic pro-frame	Control group	Strong episodic con-frame	Difference between group means	
				Strong episodic pro-frame versus control	Strong episodic con-frame versus control
Anger	0,166	0,164	0,430	0,002	-0,266***
Compassion	0,612	0,472	0,338	0,139***	0,134***
N	218-221	202	214		

Note: Table entries on the left side are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Pro frames argue in favor of removing the ceiling on welfare benefits. Entries on the right side are differences between the group means in the two experimental groups receiving strong episodic pro- and con-frames and the control group, respectively. *** $p < 0,001$ (two-sided test).

Table 5.6 shows the results of a similar comparison between the average emotional reactions of the participants receiving the weak episodic frames and the participants in the control group. Just as the strong episodic frames, the weak episodic pro-frame evokes significantly higher feelings of compassion than the control condition while the frame has no effect on anger compared to the baseline condition. Thus, the weak episodic con-frames evoke both significantly more anger and significantly less compassion compared to the control group.

Table 5.6: The impact of weak episodic frames on anger and compassion in the welfare-study

	Weak episodic pro-frame	Control group	Weak episodic con-frame	Difference between group means	
				Weak episodic pro-frame versus control	Weak episodic con-frame versus control
Anger	0,163	0,164	0,377	0,001	-0,213***
Compassion	0,567	0,472	0,346	-0,095***	0,127***
N	218	202	193		

Note: Table entries on the left side are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Pro frames argue in favor of removing the ceiling on welfare benefits. Entries on the right side are differences between the group means in the two experimental groups receiving weak episodic pro- and con-frames and the control group, respectively. *** $p < 0,001$ (two-sided test).

Tables 5.5 and 5.6 clearly indicate that all four episodic frames in the welfare-study differ significantly from the control group on the emotions they were intended to affect. While both the weak and the strong episodic con-frames also reduce the feeling of compassion, the episodic pro-frames have no such effect on anger. The results in the welfare-study and in the asylum-study are thus in line. In both studies the construction of the episodic frames therefore seems to have been successful.

The effect of the episodic frames on anger and compassion was expected because these frames were specifically designed to evoke such emotions. The thematic frames, however, were not designed specifically to evoke specific emotions. Nevertheless, I also expect thematic frames to have an effect on anger and compassion, but the effect is expected to be smaller than the effect of episodic frames since thematic frames provide more general arguments. To test whether thematic frames can evoke emotions is therefore considered a harder test of the hypothesis that frames in general can evoke emotions.

In the asylum-study it is possible to compare the emotional reactions in the two groups receiving thematic frames. The results are presented in table 5.7. As expected, the thematic pro-frames evoke less anger and more sympathy compared to the thematic con-frame. Both of these effects are highly significant. Table 5.7 consequently provides support for the claim that even thematic frames provide information which can affect the most rudimentary appraisals of an issue.

Table 5.7: The impact of thematic frames on anger and compassion in the asylum-study

	Thematic pro-frame	Thematic con-frame	Difference between group means
Anger	0,180	0,276	- 0,096**
Compassion	0,566	0,429	0,138**
N	73	69-70	

Note: Table entries on the left side are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Pro frames argue in favor of letting the asylum-seekers stay in Denmark. Entries on the right side are differences between the group means in the two experimental groups receiving episodic pro- and con-frames. ** $p < 0,01$ (two-sided test).

In the welfare-study, it is possible to examine more directly the effect of thematic frames by comparing the emotional reactions in the experimental groups reading thematic frames with the participants in the control group. The welfare-study is therefore an even harder test for whether thematic frames have an effect on emotions since the average intensity of the emo-

tional reactions in the two experimental groups not only have to differ internally but also from the average intensity of emotional reactions in the 'neutral' control group. The results in table 5.9 show that, generally seen, the intensity of the emotional reactions among the participants reading the thematic frames do not differ significantly from the average emotional reactions among the participants in the control group. These results are in line with a prior study suggesting that thematic frames do not evoke emotions (Aarøe, 2011: 215-216).

Table 5.8: The impact of thematic frames on anger and compassion in the welfare-study

	Thematic frames	Control group	Difference between group means
Anger	0,180	0,164	0.017
Compassion	0,509	0,472	0.037
N	444-446	202	

Note: Table entries on the left side are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Entries on the right side are differences between the group means (two-sided t-test on means).

Nonetheless, when the thematic frames are divided according to their valence, the thematic frames do have an effect compared to the control group. Table 5.9 shows that both the thematic pro- and con-frame is able to evoke emotions. The thematic con-frame evokes significantly more compassion while the thematic pro-frame evokes significantly more anger. While the episodic con-frames also reduced the amount of compassion evoked, the thematic con-frame does not influence the feeling of compassion at all. Perhaps this indicates that thematic frames are less able to direct emotional reactions than episodic frames.

Table 5.9: The impact of thematic frames on anger and compassion in the welfare-study

	Thematic pro-frames	Control group	Thematic con-frames	Difference between group means	
				Pro versus control	Con versus control
Anger	0,156	0,164	0,205	- 0,008	-0,041 *
Compassion	0,547	0,472	0,472	0,074**	0,000
N	212-224	202	218-222		

Note: Table entries on the left side are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Pro frames argue in favor of removing the ceiling on welfare benefits. Entries on the right side are differences between the group means in the two experimental groups receiving thematic pro- and con-frames and the control group, respectively. ** p < 0,01; * p < 0,05 (two-sided test).

The analysis above shows support for the first hypothesis stating that frames with cues fitting the appraisal pattern of anger will evoke anger while frames with cues fitting the appraisal pattern of compassion will evoke compassion. Across the different studies and different frames, the conclusion is the same: Frames do have an effect on emotions. And more importantly, not only episodic but also thematic frames can evoke emotions. The effect of the frames on the targeted emotions is substantial, and the effect applies without exception for all the frames examined here. These findings therefore clearly provide support for the first hypothesis.

The second hypothesis is directed at the healthcare-study in which the two frames are only characterized by framing the issue of private healthcare insurances in a positive or negative light. Theoretically, even this crude difference should be enough to lead to different appraisals and consequently to different emotions. The expectation based on the appraisal approach is that the pro-frame will evoke enthusiasm while the con-frame will evoke anger. The second hypothesis consequently examines both whether issue specific frames can evoke emotions and whether a simple difference in valence is enough to affect the type of emotional reactions.

Table 5.10: The effect of frames on anger and enthusiasm in the healthcare-study

	Pro-frame	Con-frame	Difference between group means
Anger	0,143	0,255	-0,112***
Compassion	0,281	0,175	0,106***
N	210	204	

Note: Table entries on the left side are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Pro frames argue in favor of private healthcare. Entries on the right side are differences between the group means. *** $p < 0,001$ (two-sided test).

The results are presented in table 5.10. As predicted, people reading the frame arguing against the private healthcare insurances, on average, feel significantly more anger and significantly less enthusiasm than the pro-frame readers. As no control group is included, it is not possible to conclude that both frames significantly affect emotions. But based on these results, it seems likely that the two frames, on average, pull the emotional reactions in different directions in support of the second hypothesis. These findings extend existing studies by showing that also issue specific frames can be emotionally engaging. Together with the analysis of thematic frames above, the results also show that frames do not need to include specific rhetorical devices in order to evoke emotions.

So far the analysis has only focused on the feelings of anger, compassion and enthusiasm. Focus will now turn to the feeling of anxiety and the test of the third hypothesis according to which both negatively and positively valenced frames will evoke anxiety. While cues about intentionality and responsibility should lead to anger and compassion, they should, theoretically, not affect anxiety. However, this does not imply that they do not evoke anxiety at all. Instead, the expectation is that all frames have the potential to evoke anxiety. The reason is that some of the people reading each frame are likely to be surprised by the information given in the experimental stimuli and as a result feel anxiety.

Table 5.11 shows the results of the analysis examining the relationship between the direction of the frames and the feeling of anxiety in the asylum- and healthcare-study. In the asylum-study, the results seem to suggest that anxiety does not depend on the direction of the frames. At least there is no significant difference between the average levels of anxiety among people reading the con- and pro-frames in the asylum-study. As no control group is included, it is not possible to conclude whether this result is evidence of both frames evoking anxiety to the same degree or evidence of both frames failing to evoke any anxiety at all.

Table 5.11: The impact of pro- and con-frames on anxiety in the asylum-study and healthcare-study

	Asylum-study			Healthcare-study		
	Pro-frames	Con-frames	Difference between group means	Pro-frame	Con-frame	Difference between group means
Anxiety	0,325	0,346	-0,021	0,162	0,267	-0,106***
N	143	139		210	204	

Note: Table entries are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups and the differences between these groups in the asylum- and healthcare-study, respectively. The emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger anxiety. In the asylum-study, pro frames argue in favor of letting asylum-seekers stay, and in the healthcare-study in favor of private healthcare. Entries on the right side are differences between the group means. *** $p < 0,001$ (two-sided test).

In the health-care study the same picture is not found. The frame arguing against the private healthcare insurances evokes more anxiety than the pro-frame. The explanation could be that frames criticizing the status quo are likely to not only evoke anxiety because the information is new, but also because the information unveils the potential threat of the given situation. Unfortunately, this study does not include a control group either and therefore it is only possible to conclude that one frame evokes more anxiety than another.

er. However, the hypothesis is not whether frames evoke equal amount of anxiety but whether all frames are able to evoke some anxiety. The lack of control groups in this study means that both frames have possibly made people more anxious but to different degrees.

The problem in the two studies is that it is not possible to compare the level of anxiety among the participants in the experimental groups with the participants in the neutral control group. Based on the results so far, it is therefore only possible to form a rough picture of the effect of frames on anxiety. In the welfare-study, however, a control group is included which makes it possible to make strong conclusions about the effect of frames independently of each other. From the results in table 5.12 it is clear that both pro- and con-frames evoke anxiety as the average emotional reactions in both groups reading these frames differ significantly from the participants in the control group. The pro-frames evoke slightly more anxiety than the con-frames, but while both groups differ significantly from the control group, they do not differ significantly from each other.

Table 5.12: The impact of pro- and con-frames on anxiety in the welfare-study

	Pro-frames	Control Group	Con-frames	Difference between group means		
				Pro-frames versus control	Con-frames versus control	Pro-frames versus con-frames
Anxiety	0,480	0,306	0,458	0,174***	-0,151***	0,023
N	646	194	609			

Note: Table entries on the left side are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups. Anxiety is coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger anxiety. Pro frames argue in favor of removing the ceiling on welfare benefits. Entries on the right side are differences between the group means in the two experimental groups receiving pro- and con-frames and the control group, respectively. ** $p < 0,01$; * $p < 0,05$ (two-sided test).

Taken together, the results provide support for the hypothesis that both con- and pro-frames can evoke anxiety. While it is not possible to draw clear-cut conclusions based on the asylum- and healthcare-study, the welfare-study clearly shows that anxiety is evoked and that the feeling is not linked to either pro- or con-frames.

The possibility of examining the first research question in three different studies with different issues, different types of frames with different valence, and different subjects is a unique opportunity to examine whether the results are robust. As the effect of frames on emotions is robust across a wide variety of frames, the analysis gives strong reasons to believe that the support for the different hypotheses examined is not just a result of certain characteristics of a specific design but reflects the genuine effect of frames on emotions.

5.2.2 Can frames affect the intensity of emotions

The test of the first research question established that both episodic, thematic and issue specific frames have an effect on emotions. In this section, the attention is turned to the second research question about whether it is possible to some extent to control the intensity of the emotional reactions. The focus of the analysis in the last section was on how the direction of frames affected the type of emotions evoked. The analysis will now instead examine whether frames in the same direction differ in how emotionally evoking they are. The advantage of studying the difference in intensity of emotional reactions is that the baseline for comparisons is no longer a neutral control group. The disadvantage is, however, that it is not possible to examine the hypotheses in all three studies. Neither of the two hypotheses connected with this research question can be tested in the healthcare-study as this only includes one frame in each direction. The design in both the asylum- and welfare-study allows us to test the hypothesis that episodic frames evoke stronger emotions than thematic frames. But the last hypothesis concerning the effect of weak and strong episodic frames can only be tested in the welfare-study.

According to hypothesis 4, episodic frames should evoke stronger emotions than thematic frames. Table 5.13 shows the results of the analysis of this hypothesis in the asylum-study. When examining the specific emotional reactions, only the con-frame shows a significant difference between the episodic and thematic frames. The episodic con-frame evokes significantly more anger, but also significantly less compassion. The episodic con-frame therefore seems to be able to direct the emotional responses more precisely towards the specific emotion it is intended to evoke.

Table 5.13: The impact of thematic and episodic frames on emotions in the asylum-study

	Pro-frames			Con-frames		
	Thematic	Episodic frames	Difference between group means	Thematic frame	Episodic frame	Difference between group means
Anger	0,180	0,172	0,008	0,276	0,443	- 0,166***
Compassion	0,566	0,601	-0,035	0,429	0,327	0,101**
Anxiety	0,302	0,349	-0,047	0,310	0,383	-0,073†
N	73	69-70		69-71	68-70	

Note: Table entries are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups and differences between the group means in the experimental groups receiving episodic and thematic frames. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Pro frames argue in favor of letting the asylum-seekers stay in Denmark.

† $p < 0,1$; ** $p < 0,01$, *** $p < 0,001$ (one-sided test).

But why is there no significant difference between average emotional reactions among the participants reading the thematic and episodic pro-frames? In his studies of episodic and thematic frames, Iyengar finds that thematic frames lead people to place the responsibility of social problems on society and, as a result, individuals in the target groups are not seen as responsible for their situation (Iyengar, 1991). This can perhaps lead to high levels of compassion among those presented with thematic frames. One reason to the lack of differences in the emotional reactions among the participants reading thematic and episodic pro-frames can be that the thematic framing in itself leads to high levels of compassion and thereby makes it harder to find a difference to the episodic pro-frame. The fact that the thematic con-frame evokes high levels of compassion supports this theory.

The results of the similar analysis in the welfare-study can be seen in table 5.14. In contrast to the results in the asylum-study, the difference between the average emotional reactions among the participants reading thematic and episodic frames is significant in both groups receiving pro- and con-frames. The results show that episodic frames in general evoke stronger emotions than thematic frames, and in this study, the episodic frames consequently seem to be more emotional, per se, except from the level of arousal in the con-frames where readers of the thematic frame feel more compassion than readers of the episodic frame. This supports the above explanation about thematic frames evoking high levels of compassion. It is also clear from the comparisons on the more specific emotions that this difference between the average emotional reactions in the two groups of readers are due to the episodic pro-frames that evoke significantly higher compassion and

Table 5.14: The impact of thematic and episodic frames on emotions in welfare-study

	Pro-frames			Con-frames		
	Thematic frames	Episodic frames	Difference between group means	Thematic frame	Episodic frame	Difference between group means
Anger	0,156	0,164	-0,009	0,205	0,405	-0,200***
Compassion	0,547	0,589	-0,043*	0,472	0,342	0,130***
Anxiety	0,439	0,501	-0,062**	0,406	0,486	-0,080***
N	215-224	431-439		222	391-407	

Note: Table entries are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups and differences between the group means in the experimental groups receiving thematic and episodic frames. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Pro frames argue in favor of removing the ceiling on welfare benefits. *** $p < 0,001$; ** $p < 0,01$; * $< 0,05$ (one-sided).

anxiety than the thematic pro-frame, while the episodic con-frames evoke significantly more anger and anxiety.

Across the pro- and con-frames in both the asylum- and welfare-study, the episodic frames consequently have greater emotional impacts on the intended emotions. In the asylum-study, the differences were only significant among the con-frame readers, but together with the results from the welfare-study there seems to be substantial support for the hypothesis that episodic frames evoke stronger emotional reactions on the intended emotions. These results are in line with prior studies in which episodic frames evoked stronger emotional reactions than thematic frames (Aarøe, 2011; Gross, 2008). The analysis also indicates that thematic frames are able to evoke high levels of compassion. Across the two studies, all the thematic frames evoked high levels of compassion, even in the welfare-study where con-frames evoked the same amount of compassion as in the control-group. We can therefore not conclude that episodic frames are more emotionally engaging, per se, but that episodic frames are better at directing emotional reactions.

The analysis confirms the findings of prior studies showing that episodic frames are more emotionally engaging than thematic. While the last section showed that it is possible to control the intensity of emotional reactions by using either thematic or episodic frames, this section will test whether it is possible to control the intensity of emotional reactions even further. The last analysis in this chapter tests the more demanding claim that it is possible to control the intensity of emotional reactions even across episodic frames. This hypothesis can only be examined in the welfare-study as only this study includes weak and strong episodic frames. The results of the comparison between the weak and strong frames are presented in table 5.15.

Table 5.15: The impact of weak and strong episodic frames on emotions in the welfare study

	Weak episodic	Strong episodic	Difference between group means
Anger	0,263	0,296	-0,032*
Compassion	0,463	0,476	-0,013
Anxiety	0,476	0,510	-0,034*
N	399-411	423-435	

Note: Table entries are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups and differences between the group means in the experimental groups receiving weak and strong episodic frames. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. * < 0,05 (one-sided).

At first sight, strong episodic frames seem to evoke stronger emotional reactions than weak episodic frames. Across all the emotions measured, the participants reading the strong episodic frames report stronger emotions than the participants reading the weak episodic frames, and the difference in the level of arousal is significant.

Table 5.16 divides weak and strong episodic frames into pro- and con-frames. Here it becomes clear, that the difference between weak and strong episodic frames particularly concerns the specific emotions the frames have tried to manipulate. Consequently, there is a significant difference between weak and strong pro-frames on compassion, while there is a significant difference on anger among the weak and strong episodic con-frames. The strong episodic frames are consequently more effective in directing the emotional reactions in a specific direction than the weak episodic frames.

Table 5.16: The impact of weak and strong episodic frames on emotions in the welfare-study

	Pro-frames			Con-frames		
	Weak frames	Strong frames	Difference between group means	Weak frame	Strong frame	Difference between group means
Anger	0,163	0,166	-0,003	0,377	0,430	-0,053*
Compassion	0,567	0,612	-0,044*	0,346	0,338	0,007
Anxiety	0,475	0,527	-0,051*	0,478	0,494	-0,016
N	216-218	215-221		183-193	208-214	

Note: Table entries are the mean emotional responses in experimental groups and differences between the group means in the experimental groups receiving weak and strong episodic frames. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Pro frames argue in favor of removing the ceiling on welfare benefits. * p < 0,05 (one-sided)

The analyses in this section provide support for the two last hypotheses to be tested in this chapter. The results show that it is possible to control the intensity of emotional reactions evoked. In line with prior studies, the analyses find that episodic frames evoke stronger emotional reactions than thematic frames. But the results also show that the ability to control the intensity of the evoked emotions goes beyond the simple difference between thematic and episodic frames.

5.3 Conclusion

The chapter set out to answer the two research questions about whether frames can evoke emotions, and whether it is possible to influence the intensity of these emotional reactions. Prior studies have provided some preliminary answers to these questions but have also left unanswered questions behind. These questions concerned the effect of issue specific frames, the effect of thematic frames and the effect of frames on anxiety and intensity of emotional reactions. In this chapter, insights from the appraisal approach were used to form some testable hypotheses of the general theory explaining why frames evoke different emotions and vary in the intensity of emotional reactions.

These hypotheses were subsequently put to the test in the three data sets of the project. The research questions were examined in a number of hypotheses – each testing different parts of the research question thereby contributing towards the greater picture. Across the different studies, the analysis provided support for the hypotheses linked with the first research question. Both thematic, episodic and issue specific frames had an effect on emotions. The effect of frames on anger, compassion and enthusiasm depended on the type of emotional cues given in the argument: The con-frames evoked more anger and pro-frames evoked more compassion or enthusiasm. However, the effect of frames on anxiety was only partly dependent on the direction of the argument. As predicted, all frames seemed to have an effect on anxiety and though the results of the healthcare- and asylum-study were inclusive due to the lack of a control group, the welfare-study clearly showed that both con-frames and pro-frames evoked anxiety.

The hypothesis testing the second research question was also supported in the analysis. The participants reading the four episodic frames reported significantly stronger emotions on the targeted emotions than the participants reading the thematic frames, and in three out of these four comparisons, the differences were significant. Finally, the participants reading the two strong episodic frames were more likely to express the targeted emotional reactions than the participants reading the weak episodic frames.

Therefore, based on the test of the different hypotheses above, frames, generally speaking, seem to have an impact on both the type and intensity of emotions evoked. While this might seem as an inconsequential result, the implications of these findings are substantial. If emotions were only evoked by special types of frames, it would greatly diminish the importance of including emotions in models of framing effects. Since emotions can be

evoked by almost any type of frames, emotions will instead be central to framing theories in general.

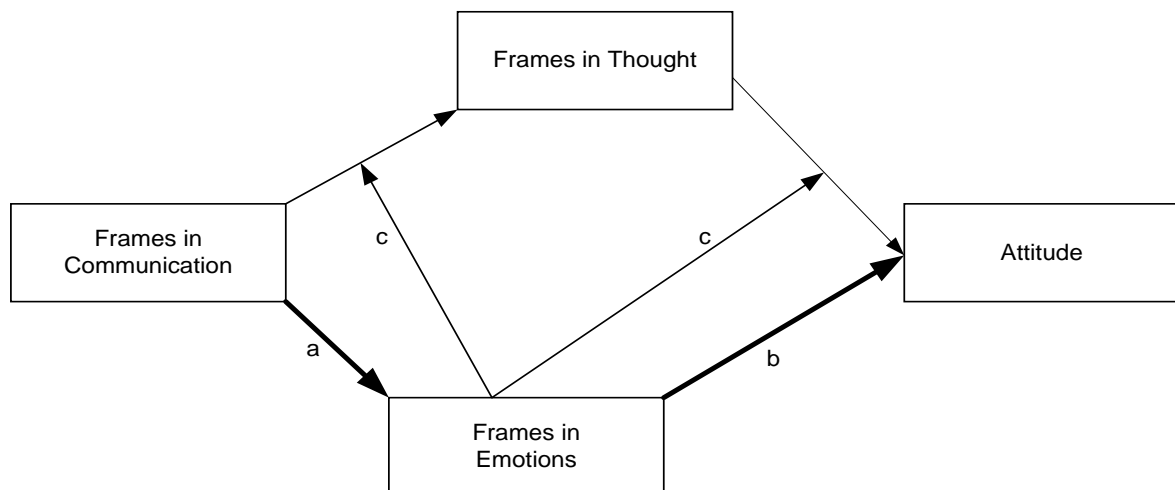
The results also have implications for the importance of emotionally engaging frames in real life political communication. As studies have shown, the effect of emotions depend on the specific emotions experienced, the possibility of controlling the kind and intensity of emotions evoked opens up new possibilities for using political communication strategically (Petersen, 2010: 363). If frames can do more than just evoke emotions, in general, it therefore enhances the potential importance of emotions in political communication.

Chapter 6

What Mediates the Effect of Frames

Chapter 5 examined the causal arrow marked as an 'a' between frames in communication and frames in emotions, and the analysis confirmed that frames have an effect on emotional reactions. This result is important as it opens up for the possibility that emotions can be important factors in our understanding of framing effects. In order to conclude that emotions are mediators, it is not enough to show that frames have an effect on emotions. It is also necessary to show that these emotions actually have an effect on attitudes. While chapter 5 provided part of the basis of arguing that frames are mediated by emotions, this chapter will test the second part and consequently examine the causal arrow marked as a 'b' in the model. By combining the results of the analyses in chapters 5 and 6, it will be possible to determine whether frames can have an indirect effect on attitudes through emotions.

Figure 6.1: The theoretical model of the relationship between issue frames, emotions and attitudes



The argument that emotions mediate framing effects were divided into two more specific research questions which will be examined in this chapter:

RQ 3: Does the type of frame affect the type of mediators?

RQ 4: What is the relationship between emotions and the cognitive mediators?

The first of these questions tests whether we can always expect emotions to be mediators or whether they only mediate the effect of certain types of frames. Implicitly, the question also addresses the question whether emotions can mediate framing effects at all. The second research question examines the relationship between emotions and the more traditional mediators.

Together with the research questions examined in chapter 5, research questions 3 and 4 are the crucial test of the first core proposition presented in chapter 3. Only a few studies have examined these research questions and our knowledge about these issues is limited. In the next section, a number of testable hypotheses will be developed which can subsequently be tested in the second part of the chapter.

6.1 Hypotheses

Only two studies have previously examined whether emotions mediate framing effects (Gross, 2008; Aarøe, 2011). They concluded that the effect of episodic frames is more mediated by emotions than the effect of thematic frames. The review presented several shortcomings of these studies. Most importantly, the studies did not include a control group in their analysis of the ability of emotions to mediate the effect of frames, and they only included measures of the affective mediators. By not measuring the cognitive mediators, the studies cannot examine the second research question addressed in this chapter.

In order to form more specific expectations about the effect of emotions on attitudes, it is necessary to use the insights from the affect-as-information approach and the affective intelligence perspective. As described in the review in chapter 3, the affect-as-information approach assumes that emotions are used as information on par with other types of information as emotions are just a way of getting to know one's unconscious judgments. Based on the affect-as-information approach, it is therefore expected that emotions can affect attitudes which was the second requirement necessary to be met in order for emotions to be mediators. More specifically, I assume that people will favor issues or proposals that evoke their positive emotions whereas they will be against if their negative emotions are evoked. Together with the insights from the appraisal perspective, the affect-as-information approach provides the basis for expecting emotions to be able to mediate the effect of frames.

According to the affective intelligence approach, the effects of different emotions cannot be reduced to the effects of the valence of emotions. The affective intelligence perspective argues that the feeling of anxiety will differ

from other negative feelings. While anger is assumed to affect the attitudes directly, anxiety is 'only' assumed to have an effect on the processes of decision-making rather than affect the decision itself.

The insights from the affect-as-information approach forms the basis for arguing that the valence of emotions affect attitudes while the affective intelligence perspective precludes a direct effect of anxiety on attitudes. Two hypotheses about the effect of emotions on attitudes can thus be put forward:

H6: If reading about a proposal or a problem makes people angry, they will adopt a more negative attitude, while enthusiasm and compassion will make them adopt a more positive attitude.

H7: Anxiety will not directly influence attitudes.

Together with the hypotheses tested in chapter 5, hypothesis 6 tests the second requirement for including emotions as mediators. The first research question does not only ask whether emotions can be mediators, but also *when* they can be expected to mediate the effect. This research question in other words concerns whether we can always expect emotions to be mediators or whether they only mediate the effects of certain types of frames.

At first sight, a frame focusing on more cognitive aspects could be expected to be mediated by cognitive mediators rather than by affective mediators. The reason is that focus in such frames would be on more general arguments and therefore provide a better basis for forming opinions through a cognitive process. The opposite could be said about a frame which is more emotionally engaging: In reading emotionally laden frames, the lack of inputs to the cognitive process could lead people to use their emotions as the basis for their decision-making. Thus, it is tempting to assume that emotions are only mediators of frames that have strong emotional appeals.

However, if emotions only mediate the effect of specific kinds of frames, then the importance of emotions in framing theories would be rather limited. Based on the insights from appraisal theories, this project instead assumes that any kind of emphasis frame is likely to evoke emotional responses simply by emphasizing different aspects of the issue. And if all emphasis frames can evoke emotions, emotions can consequently be mediators of any type of emphasis frame. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H8: Emotions will be mediators of framing effects regardless of the type of frame.

The project does not argue that emotions are the only mediators but that emotions are potentially important mediators that have been overlooked.

People's affective responses are therefore not expected to carry over the whole framing effect, but emotions are expected to carry over some of the framing effect left unexplained by traditional mediators.

The second research question addresses the question of relationship between the emotional and traditional mediators. Different theoretical causal relationships can be expected. One extreme is when there is no direct relationship between the different mediators as they simply differ in their importance according to the frames in question. Prior studies of emotions in framing theories have suggested that emotions are more important mediators of episodic than of thematic frames and, in line with these conclusions, the cognitive mediators could be expected to be more important among thematic frames. This project claims, however, that emotions are important to the understanding of the effects of all types of frames. In accordance with hypothesis 8, the expectation is that there is no difference between thematic and episodic frames when it comes to the importance of the different types of mediators.

H9: Emotions are just as important in thematic frames as in episodic

The other extreme is if emotions and cognitive mediators are inextricably linked with each other. This applies if emotions and cognitive mediators are different measures of the same fundamental process. In other words, the relationship between affective and cognitive mediators is also a question of how the different mediators are placed in the causal chain. Theoretically, three different causal relationships are possible between emotional and cognitive mediators. Firstly, they can be placed side by side in the causal chain. Secondly, emotional reactions can come before the cognitive mediators, i.e., the cognitive mediators will mediate the effect of emotions on attitudes. Finally, the cognitive mediators can come before the emotional reactions in the causal chain whereby the emotional reactions will mediate the effect of the cognitive mediators on attitudes.

If the two kinds of mediators only mediate each other, our knowledge of framing effects is not likely to be expanded significantly since no new insights would be found except for perhaps a better measure of already existing mediators. There will probably be some correlation between the measures because they measure reactions to the same information. But the argument here is that they are most likely not completely interchangeable. This expectation is based on the affect-as-information approach. According to this approach, emotional reactions can be viewed as information in line with other types of information and seen as a way of getting to know one's un-

conscious judgments of a situation. Based on this view, the assumption is that emotions are an independent route carrying the effect of unconscious judgments which more conscious considerations do not capture.

In other words, it is not expected that emotions are simply interchangeable measures of the same fundamental process. Instead, the two types of mediators are expected to be placed side by side in the causal chain. The final hypothesis to be tested in this chapter is consequently:

H10: Emotions can be placed next to the cognitive mediators in the causal chain

Table 6.1 presents an overview of how the different hypotheses above relate to the two research questions. While the general research questions cover all types of frames, some of the more specific hypotheses are targeted at the study of thematic and episodic frames and can only be tested in the asylum- and welfare study.

Table 6.1: Overview of the hypotheses linked to research questions 3 and 4

RQ 3: Does the type of frame affect the type of mediators?	
H6	If reading about a proposal or a problem makes people angry, they will adopt a more negative attitude, while enthusiasm and compassion will make them adopt a more positive attitude.
H7	Anxiety will not directly influence attitudes.
H8	Emotions will be mediators of framing effects regardless of the type of frame.
RQ 4: What is the relationship between emotions and the cognitive mediators	
H9	Emotions are just as important in thematic as in episodic frames
H10	Emotions can be placed next to the cognitive mediators in the causal chain

6.2 Analysis

While the findings in chapter 5 show that the relationship between frames and emotions meets the first requirement for stating that emotions mediate the effect, the analysis in this chapter will turn to the second requirement about the effect of emotions on attitudes. The chapter will also test the proposition about emotions being mediators more directly and, consequently, draw on the findings from chapter 5.

As the hypotheses linked to the two research questions relate to different independent variables, the structure of the analysis needs to be different from the structure in chapter 5. It is simply not meaningful to examine the effect of any of the emotions independently from the others as the effects of the different emotions are most likely correlated to some degree. The hypotheses can therefore not be tested separately. As an alternative to examining

the hypotheses one by one, the following analysis will instead be organized around the three different studies and examine all the hypotheses in one study before proceeding to the next study. The first analysis will be of the health care study before moving on to the asylum study and finally the welfare study. The findings will be discussed in each study independently and then the section will draw an overall conclusion about the general support for the hypotheses.

A prerequisite for examining whether emotions can be mediators is that frames actually affect people's attitudes. Before examining the research questions above, it is necessary to establish that the frames in each study can effectively influence people's opinions. When examining the hypotheses connected with the second research question, we must first establish that the cognitive variables actually can mediate some of the framing effect. In other words, it is necessary to examine whether these variables meet the three requirements for being a mediator before testing the hypotheses connected with the second research question.

6.2.1 Health care study

As the health care study only examines issue-specific frames, it is not possible to test hypothesis 9 in this study. The results of the test of the four remaining hypotheses can be found in table 6.2. Model 1 shows that frames have a significant effect on people's attitudes and that people become more in favor of private health care when they have read the pro-argument stating the positive consequences of private health care. This result creates a basis for examining whether emotions mediate this framing effect.

If a frame is mediated by emotional reactions, the emotional reactions must have an effect on people's attitudes. The first hypothesis states that enthusiasm will make people more in favor of private health care while anger will make people more opposed. As expected, the results in model 2 in table 6.2 show that enthusiasm and aversion have a significant effect on people's attitudes. In accordance with the theoretical expectations, the feeling of enthusiasm enhances support for private health care while anger reduces support for private health care. Consequently hypothesis 6 is supported.

Chapter 5 found that the con-frame evoked more anxiety probably because it criticized the status quo. But it is interesting that anxiety in model 2 does not have a significant impact on attitudes. This is consistent with hypothesis 7 that anxiety can be evoked by both pro- and con-arguments and that it does not have a direct effect on attitudes.

As frames have an effect on both attitudes and emotions, and emotions have an effect on attitudes, the analysis has so far shown that two of the requirements for emotions to mediate the framing effects are met. However, a third requirement is that if the emotional reactions are mediating variables, the direct effect of the issue frames should be smaller after control for emotions as we assume that part of its effect passes through the emotional reactions. In order to examine this, the effect of the pro-frame on attitude in models 1 and 2 in table 6.2 can be compared. This comparison shows that the effect of frames on attitudes is substantially smaller, and after the inclusion of emotions the effect becomes insignificant. This indicates that the emotional reactions mediate the effect of the two issue frames. The inclusion of emotions in the model also enhances our understanding of people's attitudes. Model 2 can account for more than 16 percent of the variation in the dependent variable which is a significant increase in the explained variance.¹⁰

Table 6.2: Impact of frame and emotions on the attitude toward private health care

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	0,428 (0,025)	0,446 (0,033)***	0,455 (0,027)***	0,443 (0,034)***
Pro-argument	0,083 (0,034)*	-0,004 (0,033)	0,070 (0,032)*	0,010 (0,032)
Enthusiasm		0,446 (0,069)***		0,377 (0,068)***
Aversion		-0,195 (0,107) [†]		-0,147 (0,104)
Anxiety		-0,168 (0,122)		-0,063 (0,120)
Considerations in favor			0,073 (0,019)***	0,046 (0,019)*
Considerations against			-0,127 (0,019)***	-0,099 (0,019)***
Adjusted r ²	0,013	0,163	0,151	0,226
N	366	366	366	366

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS-regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is attitude toward private health care ranging from 0 (against private health care) to 1 (in favor of private health care). Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Considerations are the number of considerations listed by participants and range from 0 to 5. The argument against private health care is the excluded category. [†] p < 0,10. * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.

¹⁰ A part of this increase in the explained variance is due to the correlation between predispositions and emotions. Predispositions are likely to affect people's emotions towards people on welfare, but due to the experimental design, any differences in the emotions between experimental groups should be a result of the different frames. In table 6.2, the effect of emotions on attitudes captures both the impact of frames through emotions and the impact of predispositions through emotions. But even if predispositions are included in model 1, the inclusion of emotions still leads to a significant increase in the explained variance.

The causal step method indicates that enthusiasm and aversion mediate framing effects which yields support for the first three hypotheses to be tested in this chapter. Due to problems with the causal step method, I also tested the hypothesis using the bootstrapping method.¹¹ The bootstrapping analysis confirms that emotions mediate the effect of frames on attitudes. The results based on the bootstrapping method show that anger and enthusiasm mediate the effect of frames on attitudes while anxiety does not (anger is significant using a 90 percent level of confidence while enthusiasm is significant using a 95 percent level of confidence). Both the causal step method and the bootstrapping method yield support to the hypothesis that anger and enthusiasm mediate the effect of frames on attitudes.

So far it has been established that emotions can mediate the effect of the different frames examined. The conclusions are in line with results of prior studies that have examined emotions as potential mediators of framing effects, but the findings also extend our knowledge by examining issue specific frames. The claim is that frames can have an effect through an emotional and a cognitive route. While we have seen that emotions can be mediators, we do not yet know whether they also improve our understanding of how frames have an effect when compared to the traditional mediators and how the affective and cognitive mediators are related. Therefore, it is necessary to

¹¹ The causal step strategy is widely used in the literature and provides easily interpreted results. The present analysis reports results of this method when testing the hypothesis concerning mediation. However, the strategy has obvious shortcomings in relation to testing specific effects of multiple mediators. The problem with the causal step strategy is that it does not directly test the indirect effect and does not produce a point estimate or standard error of the mediation effect (Preacher and Hayes, 2008, 882). It has been suggested that the indirect effect of the two frames on attitudes can be quantified by using the product of the unstandardized regression coefficients for the a and the b paths (MacKinnon, Fairchild, and Fritz, 2007: 601). This approach has been criticized for having low power and for suffering from high Type 1 error rates. The casual step approach is therefore supplemented with a bootstrapping approach. A test of mediation based on a bootstrapping approach has been suggested as an alternative to the product-of-coefficients approach. Bootstrapping is a non-parametric re-sampling procedure (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). By re-sampling and estimating the indirect effects several thousand times, an empirical approximation of the sampling distribution of the indirect effect is produced which can be used to construct confidence intervals of indirect effects. Stimulation studies have demonstrated that this method is superior to other methods of testing mediation (see for instance Williams and MacKinnon, 2008). In the analysis, bootstrapping point estimates of the indirect effects and 90 or 95 percent bias corrected and accelerated confidence intervals for those estimates (95 percent bca CI) are calculated using 5000 bootstrapping samples. The point estimates can in other words be interpreted as the specific indirect effect of a mediator.

examine hypothesis 10 about emotions being placed next to the cognitive mediators in the causal chain, and that the inclusion of emotions can improve our understanding of framing effects.

To test this question, model 3 in table 6.2 includes two measures of the number of considerations in favor of and against private health care listed by participants in the two experimental groups. The results show that the considerations listed clearly affects attitudes. However, this is not sufficient to be mediators. Frames also need to affect the types of considerations, which is not the case (the results of the analysis are not shown). The pro frame does lead to fewer considerations opposed to private health care but the effect is insignificant. The pro-frame has no effect on the positive considerations. Bootstrapping confirms that the considerations themselves do not mediate the effect with a 90 percent bias corrected confidence interval. Finally, by comparing models 1 and 3, it also becomes clear that the inclusion of considerations do not reduce the direct effect of frames substantially.

The final model in table 6.2 includes both the affective and the cognitive mediators. A comparison of models 2, 3 and 4 can give a hint about the causal relationship between the two types of mediators. The different mediators steal some explanatory power from each other. The effect of enthusiasm and anger are substantially reduced after the inclusion of the cognitive variables, and enthusiasm is the only emotion that continues to be significant. It could suggest that emotions are further back in the causal chain and partly mediated by cognitive considerations. However, the effect of arguments in favor of private health care is also reduced. It is therefore more likely that the different mediators are placed next to each other and simply steal explanatory power from each other. Bootstrapping analysis shows that enthusiasm is the only mediator to significantly mediate framing effects after the inclusion of both types of mediators. Model 4 explains significantly more of the variance in the dependent variable than any of the other models. This indicates that both the cognitive and affective mediators improve our understanding of people's attitudes to private health care. However, since the cognitive mediators do not mediate the effect of frames in neither the models 3 nor 4, these results are only tentative.

From a theoretical perspective, the inclusion of emotions is only interesting if our understanding of the process underlying framing effects on attitudes is improved. A comparison between model 4 and a model without emotions shows that the inclusion of emotions significantly improves our ability to explain the variance in the dependent variable compared to the traditional framing model that only includes cognitive mediators. In the health care study, the inclusion of emotions seems to have improved our under-

standing of the process underlying framing effects on attitudes in comparison with the traditional cognitive model.

On the basis of the analysis above, the conclusion is that emotions – and especially enthusiasm – are mediators of the framing effect on attitudes. Frames fail to have a significant impact on cognitive mediators and these do therefore not mediate any effect of frames. The emotional variables consequently are the main mediators of the effects which a bootstrapping analysis confirms. It is difficult to assess the mediators' position in the causal chain when only the affective mediators are significant, and the conclusion on the last research question is only tentative. The analysis indicates, however, that the different mediators are not just measures of the same mental processes as both groups add to the explained variance in attitudes towards private health care.

6.2.2 Asylum study

The asylum study does not include a control group so it is necessary to establish the reference group for the analysis when examining the effect of frames. In the asylum study, there are two pro- and two con-frames. Thus, there are two ways to conduct the analysis. The effect of pro- and con-frames can be examined by using the two groups receiving opposing arguments as reference group. Or the effect of frames can be assessed by examining episodic pro-frames with episodic con-frames and thematic pro-frames with thematic con-frames.

The following reports the results from the first approach for two reasons. Firstly, part of the focus in this chapter is on whether emotions are equally important mediators in both episodic and thematic frames. By having a common reference group, it is possible to directly compare the role of emotions as mediators of the effect of both types of frames. Secondly, the approach with a common reference group makes it possible to compare the results of this study with the later analysis of the welfare study.

Table 6.3 presents the results of the analysis of con-frames in the asylum study while the results of the pro-frames can be found in table 6.4. Before examining the role of emotions as mediators, it is necessary to establish that there is a framing effect on attitudes. The first column in table 6.3 shows the effect of the two con-frames on attitudes. Both the episodic and thematic con-frames are successful in making people more opposed to letting the rejected asylum seekers stay in Denmark. The effects of both frames are significant and there is no great difference in the size of their effect. Table 6.4 presents the results of the pro-frames, and it is not surprising that the effect of

these two frames mirrors the effect of the con-frames and therefore is successful in making people more in favor of letting the rejected asylum seekers stay.

Emotions as Mediators

After having established that the different frames have an effect on attitudes, it is possible to examine whether emotions mediate this effect. If emotions are mediators, they must have an impact on attitudes. Model 2 in tables 6.3 and 6.4 presents the effects of emotions on the attitudes towards letting asylum seekers stay. The effects of emotions on attitudes are as expected: Anger has a strong negative impact which means that people who feel angry are more likely to be against letting the asylum seekers stay whereas compassion has the opposite effect and makes people more in favor of letting the

Table 6.3: The impact of mediators and con-frames on the attitude toward expelling asylum seekers

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Constant	0,452 (0,022)***	0,290 (0,045)***	0,448 (0,075)***	0,295 (0,051)***	0,304 (0,079)***
<i>Con-frames</i>					
Thematic	-0,102 (0,038)**	-0,020 (0,035)	-0,092 (0,033)**	-0,067 (0,033)*	-0,037 (0,031)
Episodic	-0,101 (0,040)*	0,036 (0,039)	-0,108 (0,034)**	-0,064 (0,034)†	-0,019 (0,036)
<i>Emotions</i>					
Anger		-0,270 (0,071)***			-0,126 (0,067)†
Sympathy		0,296 (0,064)***			0,127 (0,063)*
Anxiety		0,101 (0,063)			0,056 (0,057)
<i>Importance of considerations</i>					
Safety of asylum seekers			0,214 (0,066)**		0,093 (0,065)
Limit the number of residence permit			-0,242 (0,060)***		-0,156 (0,057)**
Individual circumstances			0,117 (0,058)*		0,062 (0,053)
The economy and welfare			-0,146 (0,061)*		-0,059 (0,057)
<i>Content of considerations</i>					
Positive consequences				-0,174 (0,069)*	-0,124 (0,064)†
Negative consequences				0,554 (0,059)***	0,353 (0,060)***
Adjusted r ²	0,033	0,246	0,282	0,289	0,415
N	247	247	247	247	247

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. The dependent variable is the attitude toward expelling asylum seekers which is coded from 0 (opposed to letting the asylum seekers stay) to 1 (in favor of letting the asylum seekers stay). Mediator variables are coded from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions, greater perceived importance or greater approval of negative or positive consequences, respectively. The reference group is the two groups receiving pro-arguments. † p < 0,10; * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.

asylum seekers stay. Both effects are highly significant among both con- and pro-frames and the results provide support for hypothesis 6.

The second hypothesis concerns the impact of anxiety on attitudes. The expectation is that the effect of anxiety will not be directional as an effect of anxiety is primarily expected on the process of decision-making rather than on the decision itself. As predicted, anxiety is the only emotion which has no significant impact on attitudes in both tables, which then provides support for hypothesis 7.

The next hypothesis directly tests if emotions mediate the effect of both episodic and thematic frames. So far the analysis has shown that frames affect emotions and emotions affect attitudes. In order to state that emotions are mediators, the final requirement is that the effects of frames are reduced when emotions are included in the model. This requirement can be tested by comparing models 1 and 2 in tables 6.3 and 6.4. First, the results show that the effect of both pro- and con-frames is substantially reduced after the inclusion of emotions and the frames no longer have a significant effect on attitudes. Together with the findings from chapter 5 and the analysis above, this provides support for the hypothesis that emotions mediate the effect of both episodic and thematic frames on attitudes.

The comparison between models 1 and 2 can also show whether the inclusion of emotions actually increases our understanding of framing effects. In both tables 6.3 and 6.4, it is obvious that model 2 explains far more of the variance in the dependent variable than the model without emotions. In other words, the inclusion of emotions significantly increases our ability to explain why people vary in their opinions on the issue of whether asylum seekers should be allowed to stay or not. The analysis of both con- and pro-frames consequently supports all the hypotheses connected with research question 3. These findings are supported in a bootstrapping analysis in which anger and compassion mediate framing effects while anxiety does not.

The analysis of the asylum study consequently supports hypotheses 6, 7 and 8. Anger and compassion have the expected effects on attitudes and mediate the effect of both thematic and episodic frames. As expected, anxiety does not have a directional effect and does therefore not mediate framing effects. In accordance with the argument for examining mediators in general, the analysis also shows that we are significantly better at predicting people's attitudes when taking their emotional reactions into consideration. Despite the general view that emotional engaging frames must be stronger than less emotional engaging frames, it is not possible to conclude that thematic frames in general are weaker than episodic frames. Among the pro-

frames, the episodic frame is the stronger one while there is no difference between the con-frames.

Table 6.4: The impact of mediators and pro-frames on the attitude toward expelling asylum seekers

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Constant	0,351 (0,023)***	0,294 (0,042)***	0,348 (0,078)***	0,232 (0,049)***	0,270 (0,080)**
<i>Pro-frames</i>					
Thematic	0,084 (0,038)*	-0,009 (0,035)	0,109 (0,033)**	0,054 (0,032)†	0,035 (0,033)
Episodic	0,119 (0,038)**	0,004 (0,037)	0,090 (0,034)**	0,079 (0,033)*	0,025 (0,033)
<i>Emotions</i>					
Anger		-0,258 (0,071)***			-0,121 (0,066)†
Sympathy		0,288 (0,064)***			0,122 (0,063)†
Anxiety		0,104 (0,063)			0,058 (0,057)
<i>Importance of considerations</i>					
Safety of asylum seekers			0,216 (0,066)**		0,095 (0,065)
Limit the number of residence permit			-0,243 (0,060)***		-0,157 (0,057)**
Individual circumstances			0,117 (0,058)*		0,068 (0,053)
The economy and welfare			-0,148 (0,061)*		-0,062 (0,057)
<i>Content of considerations</i>					
Positive consequences				-0,177 (0,069)*	-0,122 (0,065)†
Negative consequences				0,552 (0,059)***	0,354 (0,060)***
Adjusted r ²	0,036	0,240	0,282	0,290	0,415
N	247	247	247	247	247

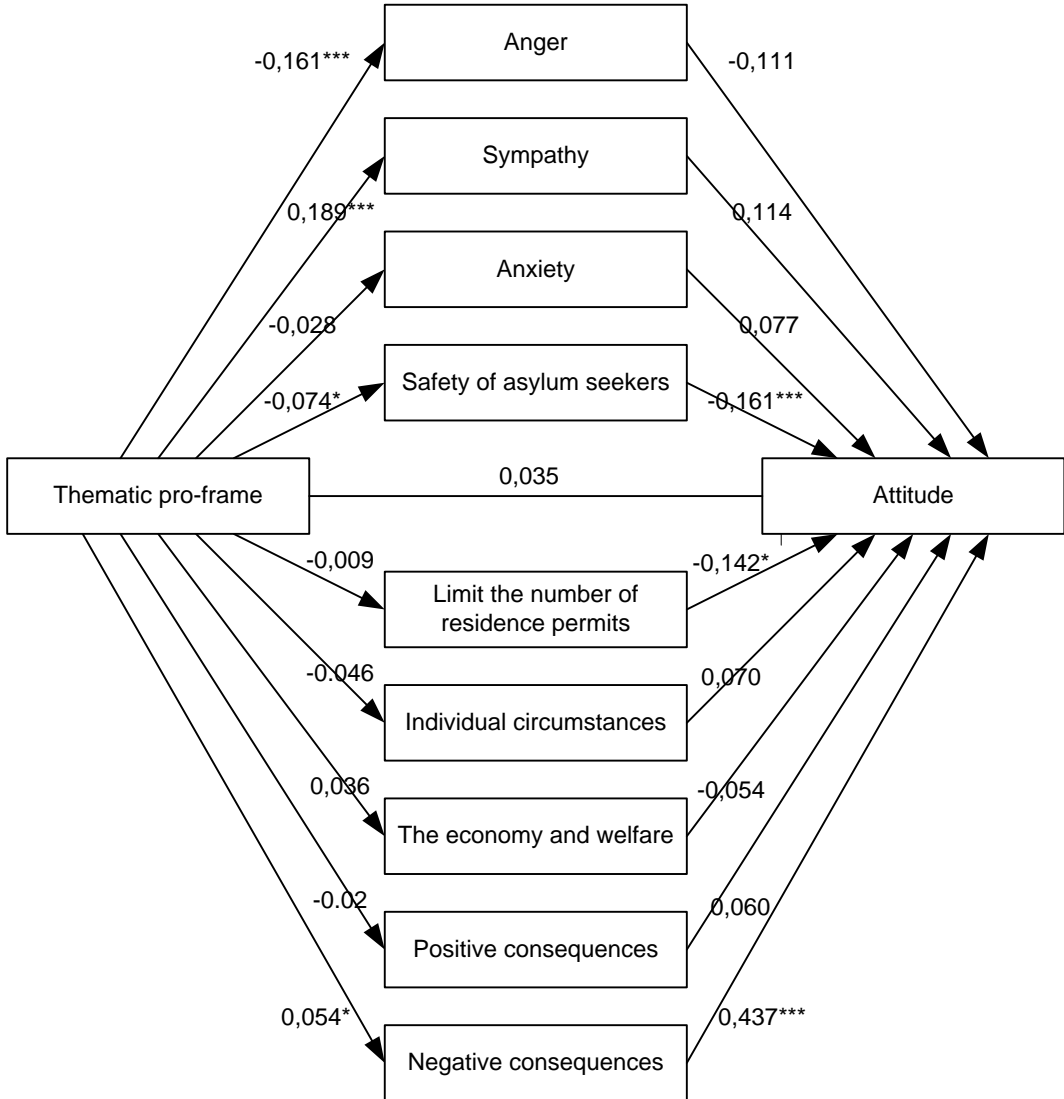
Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. The dependent variable is the attitude toward letting rejected asylum seekers stay (ranging from 0 = opposed to letting them stay to 1 = in favor of letting them stay). Mediator variables are coded from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions, greater perceived importance or greater approval of negative or positive consequences, respectively. The reference group is the two groups receiving con-arguments. † p < 0,10; * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.

The Relationship between Affective and Cognitive Mediators

So far focus has exclusively been on affective mediators. Now the focus shifts to the relationship between these mediators and the traditional cognitive mediators. To assess the role of the traditional mediators, it is first necessary to establish that cognitive mediators actually mediate the framing effect. The first requirement is whether the frames affect the different mediators significantly. The effects of the different frames on the mediators are illustrated in figures 6.2 to 6.5 below. Based on these figures, it is clear that the frames do not have a great effect on the type of considerations that people believe are important when discussing the problem with rejected asylum seekers. It is

only the consideration about the safety of the asylum seekers that are affected by the frames. The frames consistently affect the participants' view on the likelihood of negative consequences of the case handling of rejected asylum seekers. As expected, the pro-frames – focusing on the safety of rejected asylum seekers – significantly increase the likelihood of people reporting that the handling is likely to have negative consequences. The con-

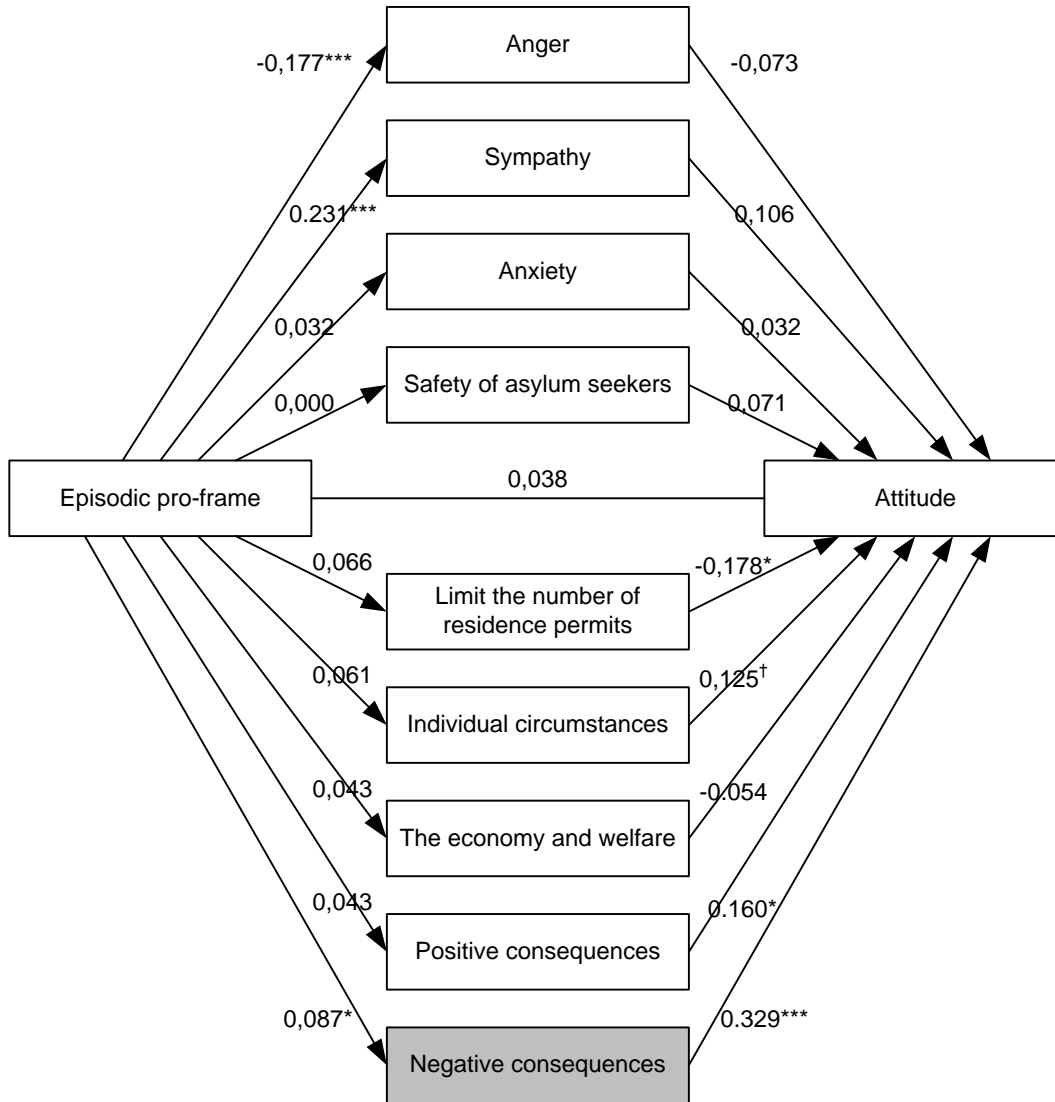
Figure 6.2: Direct and indirect effects of the thematic pro-frame in the asylum study



The figure displays unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. The reference group is the groups receiving con-arguments. The dependent variable is the attitude toward expelling asylum seekers which is coded from 0 (opposed to letting the asylum seekers stay) to 1 (in favor of letting the asylum seekers stay). Mediator variables are coded from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions, greater perceived importance or greater approval of negative or positive consequences, respectively. A bootstrap estimation was used to examine whether there are any significant mediators of framing effects. None of the examined mediators were significant according to a 95 percent bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval. Number of bootstrap resamples: 5000. N= 185. † p < 0.1; * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.

frames – arguing that the rejected asylum seekers are not prosecuted – reduce the likelihood of people believing that the case handling will have negative consequences.

Figure 6.3: Direct and indirect effects of the episodic pro-frame in the asylum study

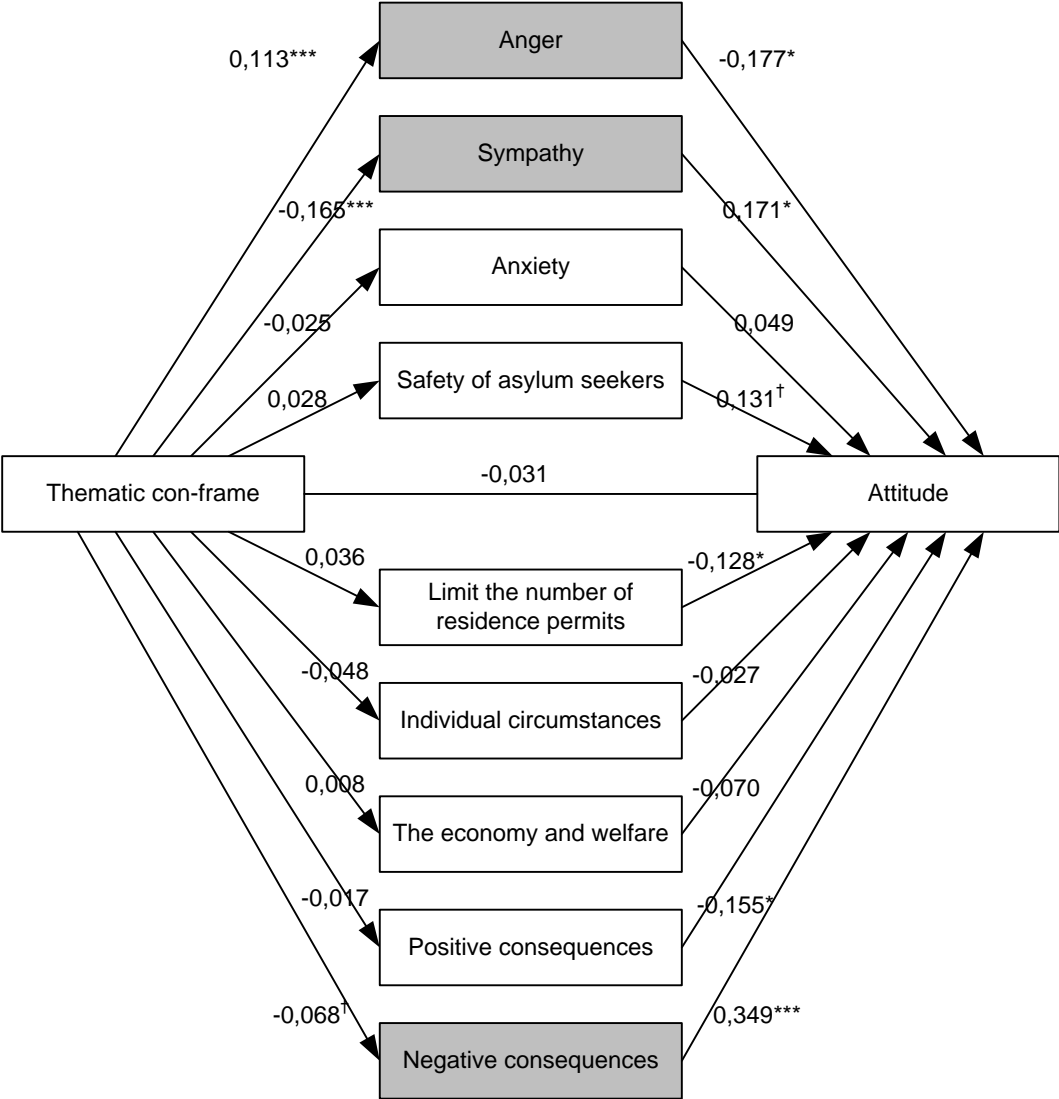


The figure displays unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. The reference group is the groups receiving con-arguments. For coding, see figure 6.2. The shaded box is a significant mediator of framing effects according to a 95 percent bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval. Number of bootstrap resamples: 5000. N= 180. † $p < 0,1$; * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$.

The second requirement is that the different considerations must have an impact on attitudes. To test this, the two groups of mediators are included in two separate models in tables 6.3 and 6.4. Models 3 and 4 in the two tables show that both groups of cognitive variables have significant effects on attitudes in both pro- and con-frames and that the direction of effects is as expected. Believing that expelling people will have negative consequences

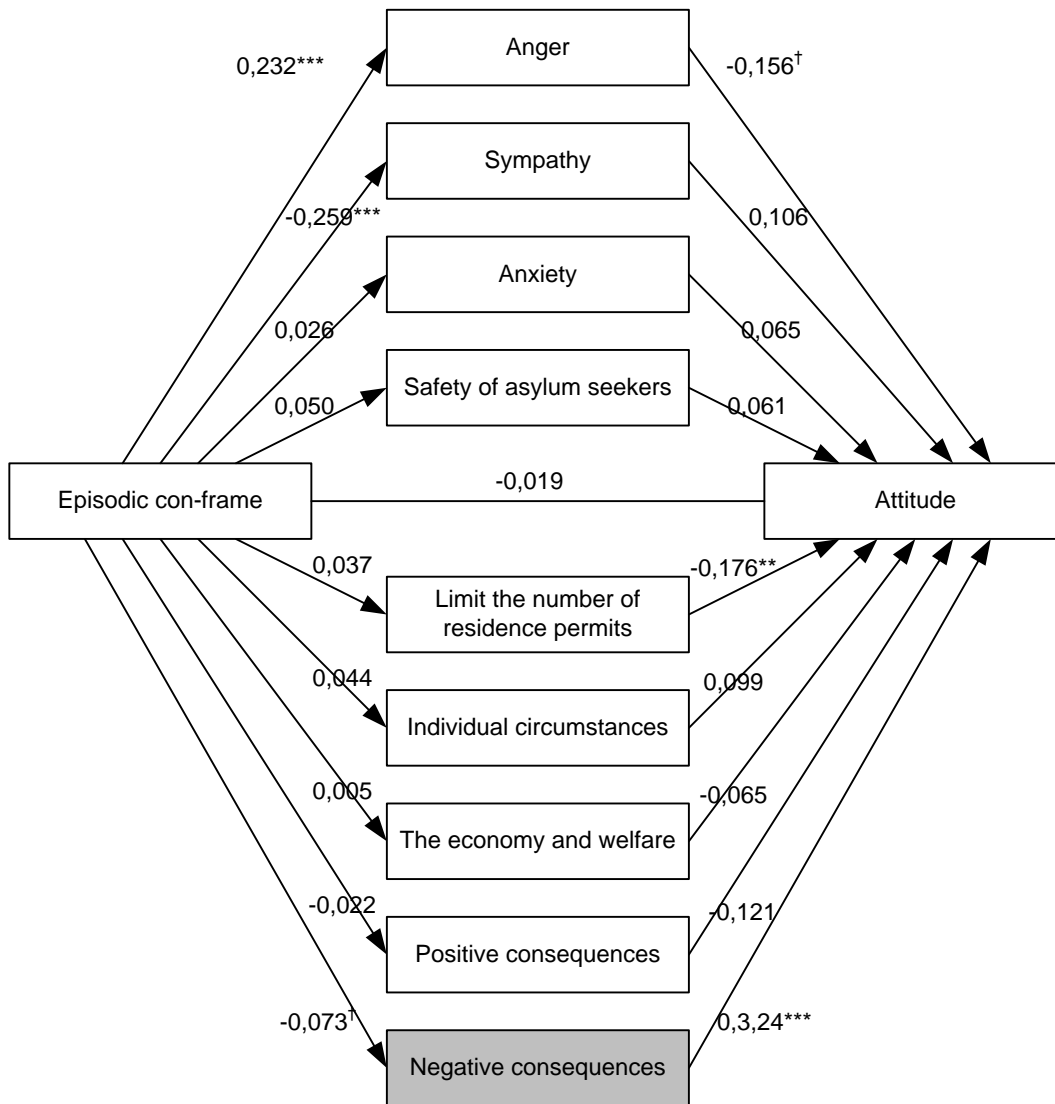
makes people more in favor of letting the asylum seekers stay just as the considerations focusing on the well-being of the asylum seekers. The positive consequences of expelling the asylum seekers and the considerations focusing on the economy have the opposite effects. All the cognitive mediators meet the second requirement for being mediators. But considerations focusing on the negative consequences are the only variable which meets both the first and second requirement and is thus also the only variable that is a potential mediator of framing effects.

Figure 6.4: Direct and indirect effects of the thematic con-frame in the asylum study



The figure displays unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. The reference group is the groups receiving pro-arguments. For coding, see figure 6.2. The shaded boxes are significant mediators of framing effects according to a 95 percent bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval. Number of bootstrap resamples: 5000. N= 192. † p < 0.1; * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.

Figure 6.5: Direct and indirect effects of the episodic con-frame in the asylum study



The figure displays unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. The reference group is the groups receiving pro-arguments. For coding, see figure 6.2. The shaded box is a significant mediator of framing effects according to a 95 percent bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval. Number of bootstrap resamples: 5000. N= 184. † $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$.

By including the two groups separately in models 3 and 4 it is also possible to test the third requirement: Can the inclusion of cognitive mediators reduce the direct effect of frames on attitudes? The inclusion of the four different considerations does not weaken the effect of the con-frames – instead the effect of the episodic con-frame becomes slightly stronger. The inclusion of positive and negative consequences is more successful in reducing the size of the direct effect of the con-frames and the direct effect also becomes less significant. This indicates that the considerations measuring the content of considerations (being either positive or negative consequences) are better at mediating the framing effect than the four variables measuring the impor-

tance of different considerations. Not surprisingly, we find the same picture among the pro-frames, but here the thematic frame becomes stronger after the inclusion of the four considerations.

Based on the analysis so far, it is possible to conclude that most of the cognitive mediators do not really mediate the effects of frames on attitudes. They are important variables in explaining people's attitudes, but the frames are not able to significantly change people's assessment of the importance of the different considerations. It is only the content of people's considerations that can mediate the framing effect.

Since the cognitive mediators fail to mediate the effect of frames, it is difficult to make strong conclusions about whether the type of frame has an effect on the type of mediator and the placement of these mediators in the causal chain. From figures 6.2 to 6.5 it is possible to make a crude assessment of whether the cognitive mediators are better to mediate the thematic than the episodic frames. Figures 6.2 to 6.5 also illustrate the impact of the different mediators on attitudes. They thus provide an overview of which of the different variables that meets the two first requirements for being a mediator of framing effects. Results of a bootstrapping analysis are also illustrated. From these figures, it is clear that only anger, compassion and negative consequences meet the two first requirements. But both thematic and episodic frames are mediated by negative consequences, anger and compassion, and there is no basis for arguing that the type of mediator depends on the type of frames. The bootstrapping analysis actually shows that emotions only mediate the thematic con-frames which is contrary to the traditional view where thematic frames are expected to be less likely to be mediated by emotions than the episodic frames. All in all, hypothesis 9 has therefore not been rejected so far.

The final hypothesis in this chapter is whether the affective and cognitive mediators are placed side by side in the causal chain and whether emotions can improve our understanding of framing effects. In order to compare the different mediators, both the cognitive and emotional mediators are included in model 5 in tables 6.3 and 6.4 and a comparison of the different models in these two tables can give a hint about the answer to this question. First, a comparison of models 1 to 4 shows that model 2 (where only emotions are included) is the only model in which all the frames cease to have a significant direct effect. This means that emotions mediate a greater part of the effects of frames than the cognitive mediators. This is also in line with the analysis above showing that the different frames fail to have a strong impact on the traditional mediators.

Secondly, a comparison of models 2 to 5 shows that the effect of both emotions and cognitive mediators are substantially smaller after the inclusion of the affective and cognitive mediators in the same model. Nothing suggests that either emotions or cognitive mediators are further back in the causal chain. Anger, sympathy and some of the cognitive mediators also still have a significant effect on attitudes, and the cognitive and affective mediators are therefore not totally interchangeable measures.

Whether the affective mediators improve our understanding can be assessed by examining the amount of variation in the dependent variable that can be explained in the different models. Both groups of cognitive mediators increase the explained variance substantially, but model 5 which includes all the different mediators explains far more of the variance on the dependent variable than any of the other models. Even if the final model is compared to a model including only the two types of cognitive mediators, emotions still significantly increase the amount of the variance in attitudes that can be explained by the traditional cognitive model of framing effects.

Taken together, the findings above suggest that not all of the effect of emotional reactions is attributable to the cognitive variables. Some of the effect of emotions disappears after control for the cognitive variables which was expected as they are linked to some degree because they are reactions to the same frames. But the fact that they remain significant and contribute significantly to the explained variance means that the cognitive and emotional mediators can be viewed as being next to each other in the causal chain. The conclusion of the final hypothesis is that the two types of mediators are correlated but that both contribute to our understanding of the framing process.

Summary: Asylum study

The asylum study consequently provides support for all the five hypotheses examined. Anger and compassion affect attitudes in the expected direction and mediate both thematic and episodic frames. Anxiety, however, has no significant effect on attitudes and does not mediate framing effects.

Only one of the cognitive mediators actually turned out to significantly mediate framing effects. Emotions seem to be more important mediators of framing effects than cognitive mediators. The two types of mediators are not simply interchangeable, and the inclusion of the emotional mediators significantly improves our ability to predict people's attitudes towards letting the asylum seekers stay.

6.2.3 Welfare study

In the welfare study, the control group is the natural reference group for the analysis of whether emotions mediate framing effects. While the test of the first research question can be conducted using the control group as reference group, a problem arises when examining whether the traditional cognitive mediators mediate the effect of frames. The problem is that the frames have no significant effect on any of the traditional cognitive mediators when the control group is the reference group. Thereby these variables fail to meet the first requirement for being mediators of framing effect. Given the fact that the measures of the cognitive mediators are almost identical to measures used in prior studies this is surprising.

In most studies examining the effect of cognitive mediators, the analyses are mostly done without control groups and often with one-sided tests. To give the cognitive mediators a fair test, the reference group is changed. In line with prior studies examining the traditional mediators, the following analysis will use all the frames with opposing arguments as reference group. In this way, the analysis will be comparable to prior studies examining cognitive mediators and comparable to the analysis of the asylum study. By having a common reference group for all the arguments in each direction, it is also still possible to compare the different types of frames. It also means that it is necessary to conduct separate analyses for each frame.

Before turning the attention towards the hypotheses, it is necessary first to test whether there actually is an effect of the different frames on attitudes. The results of the analysis with the control-group as reference group is reported in table 6.5. Model 1 in this table shows that the pro-frames make people more in favor of removing the ceiling on welfare, and the con-frames make people more against removing the ceiling on welfare. The effects of all the frames are significant except for the thematic con-frame which barely has an effect at all. This is problematic since no framing effect can be mediated by emotions on this particular frame. The reason is not that the thematic frames in general are the weakest because the thematic pro-frame is stronger than both the weak and strong episodic pro-frames. A possible reason could be that the thematic con-frame is the only con-frame directly saying that the current ceiling on welfare benefits has actually resulted in more people finding jobs. The other con-frames do not in the same way relate to the status quo but rather argue in favor of lowering the ceiling further. Fortunately, it is possible to examine the hypotheses on five other frames including a strong thematic pro-frame, and it is therefore still possible to assess wheth-

er the effect of both thematic and episodic frames can be mediated by emotions.

Emotions as Mediators

Chapter 5 showed that frames affect emotions which were the first requirement for emotions being mediators. To test whether emotions can mediate the framing effect found above, it is also necessary to examine whether emotions have an effect on attitudes. Model 2 in table 6.5 shows that this is the case: In line with the results in the asylum study, anger is highly significant and negative which means that anger leads to less support for removing the ceiling on welfare. Compassion is also significant and positive. As expected, compassion increases support for removing the ceiling on welfare benefits. Consequently, hypothesis 6 is confirmed.

Surprisingly, anxiety also has a highly significant effect on attitudes, and the hypothesis that anxiety does not have a directional effect is therefore not confirmed in the welfare study. The effect of anxiety is substantially smaller than the effect of both compassion and anger, and it is interesting that the effects of anxiety and anger are in opposite directions despite their similar valence. The coefficient of anxiety is positive which means that anxiety – just like compassion – makes people more in favor of removing the ceiling on welfare. Therefore, the welfare study supports the assumption that the feeling of anxiety must be distinguished from other negative emotions.

The crucial question is, however, whether emotions also mediate some of the effect of frames on attitudes. A comparison of the first and second model can give us a hint of whether this final requirement for mediation is met in the welfare study. The direct effect of the pro-frames on attitudes is substantially lower after the inclusion of the emotions. Whereas the episodic pro-frames cease to have a significant direct impact on attitudes, the effect of the thematic frame is still significant. Together with the results above and the results from chapter 5, this indicates that some of the effect of pro-frames is mediated through emotions. So far hypothesis 8 is supported.

When examining the direct effect of con-frames on attitudes, the results are more surprising. After the inclusion of emotions, the thematic con-frame is still insignificant while the episodic con-frames are even more significant than in model 1. However, the direct effects of the episodic con-frames have changed direction: After control for emotions, the episodic con-frames now have a significant positive impact on attitudes. After inclusion of emotions, the direct effect of frames arguing against the removal of the ceiling on welfare is now increasing support for removing the ceiling on welfare.

Table 6.5: The effect of frames and emotion on attitudes to the ceiling on welfare benefits

	Model 1		Model 2	
Constant	0,552	(0,019)***	0,449	(0,019)***
Thematic pro-frame	0,106	(0,026)***	0,064	(0,020)**
Weak episodic pro-frame	0,081	(0,026)**	0,032	(0,020)
Strong episodic pro-frame	0,095	(0,026)***	0,030	(0,020)
Thematic con-frame	-0,020	(0,026)	-0,010	(0,019)
Weak episodic con-frame	-0,059	(0,027)*	0,073	(0,021)***
Strong episodic con-frame	0,071	(0,027)**	0,088	(0,021)***
Anger			-0,517	(0,027)***
Compassion			0,320	(0,024)***
Anxiety			0,111	(0,020)***
Adjusted r2	0,060		0,491	
N	1431		1431	

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is attitudes to the ceiling on social security which are coded to range from 0 (against removing the ceiling on social security) to 1 (in favor of removing the ceiling on social security). Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Reference group is the control group. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$.

The change of direction is a result of the indirect effect through emotions being stronger than the direct effect of frames on attitudes. If the differences between the control group and the episodic con-frames on the emotional variables are removed, the episodic con-frames cease to have the expected effect and instead end up having a contrast effect. The effects of the con-frames are therefore also mediated by emotions, and thus hypothesis 8 is confirmed in all the five frames having a framing effect.

By examining how much of the variance in the dependent variable the two models can explain, it is also obvious that the inclusion of emotions in the model significantly and substantially increase the amount of variation that can be explained. In model 1, the different frames only explain 0,060 of the variance. After the inclusion of emotions in model 2, the explained variance increases to 0,491.

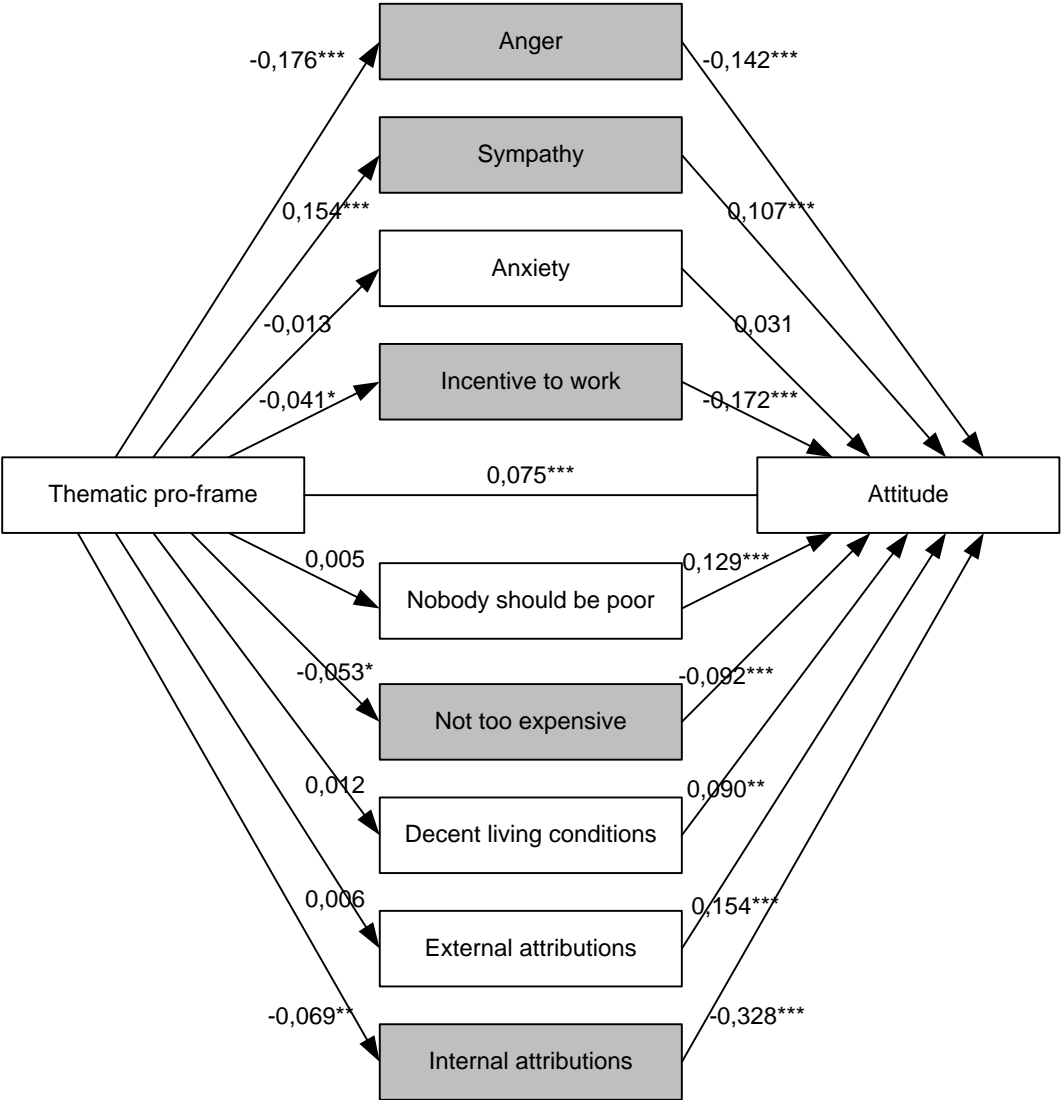
The welfare study consequently supports two out of three hypotheses tested so far. Anger and compassion have the expected effect on attitudes and also mediate the effect of the five frames that have a framing effect on attitudes. The hypothesis that anxiety does not have a directional effect on attitudes was not confirmed.

The Relationship between Cognitive and Affective Mediators

In order to examine the relationship between the traditional cognitive and new emotional mediators, it is first, once again, necessary to examine if the cognitive mediators can mediate the effect of frames at all. As stated in the beginning of the welfare study analysis, the study of the cognitive mediators makes it necessary to change the reference group to frames in the opposite direction. Tables 6.6 and 6.7 show the results of the stepwise regression analysis for the frames in each direction. The first two models examine the effect of frames and emotions. Given the new reference group, the results are stronger than the results reported in table 6.5, but the overall conclusions are similar to the ones described above.

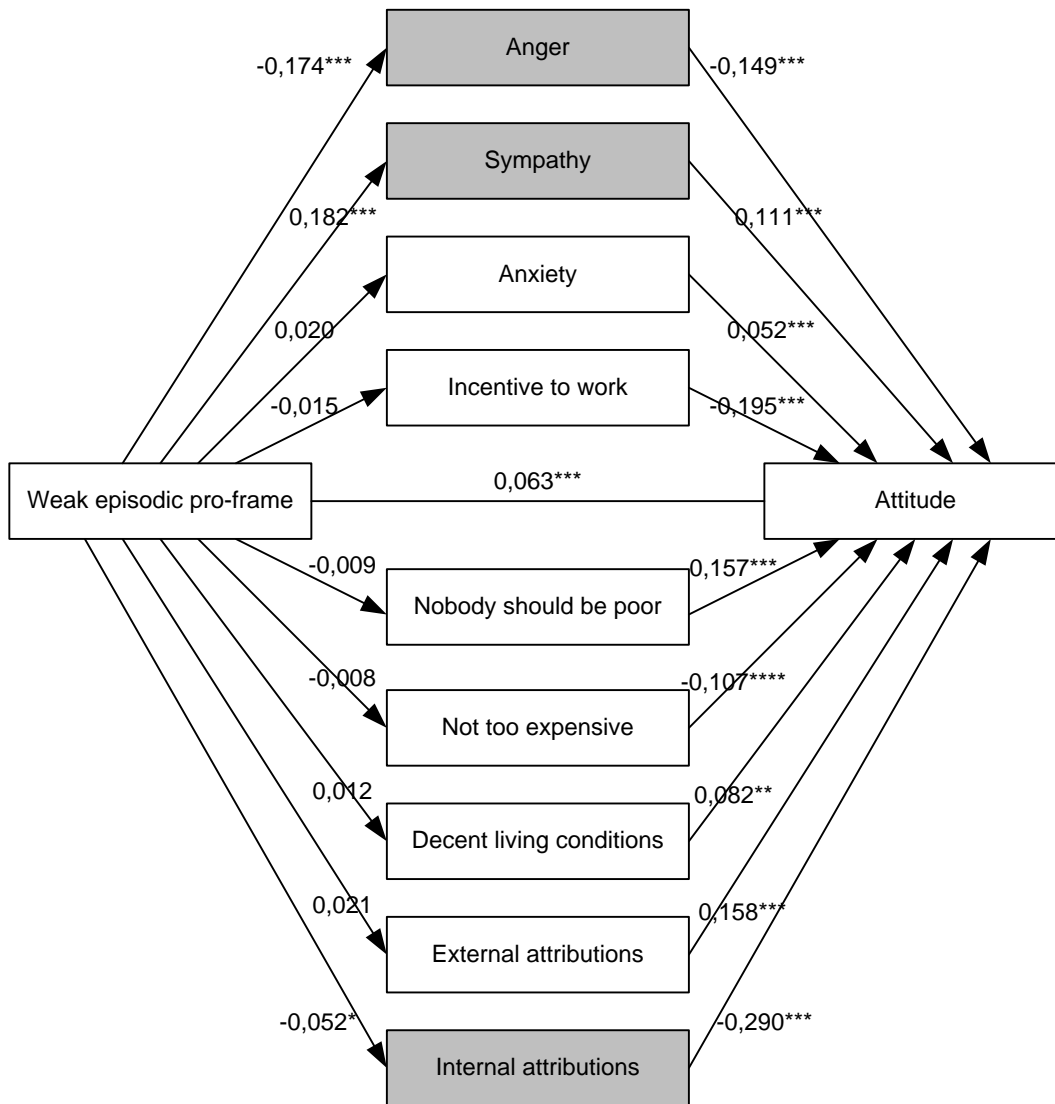
If the cognitive mediators mediate the effect of frames, the frames should have an effect on these mediators. Figures 6.6 to 6.11 illustrate the effect of frames on the different mediators and their subsequent effect on attitudes. While the different frames consistently have an effect on anger and sympathy, the figures illustrate that the frames fail to affect many of the traditional cognitive mediators even after the change of reference group. Surprisingly enough, the strong episodic con-frame affects most of the cognitive mediators. While most of the frames affect the internal reasons for being on welfare benefits, only the strong episodic con-frame has an effect on external reasons. Only the thematic pro-frame and the strong episodic frames affect the importance of the different considerations.

Figure 6.6: Direct and indirect effects of the thematic pro-frame in the welfare study



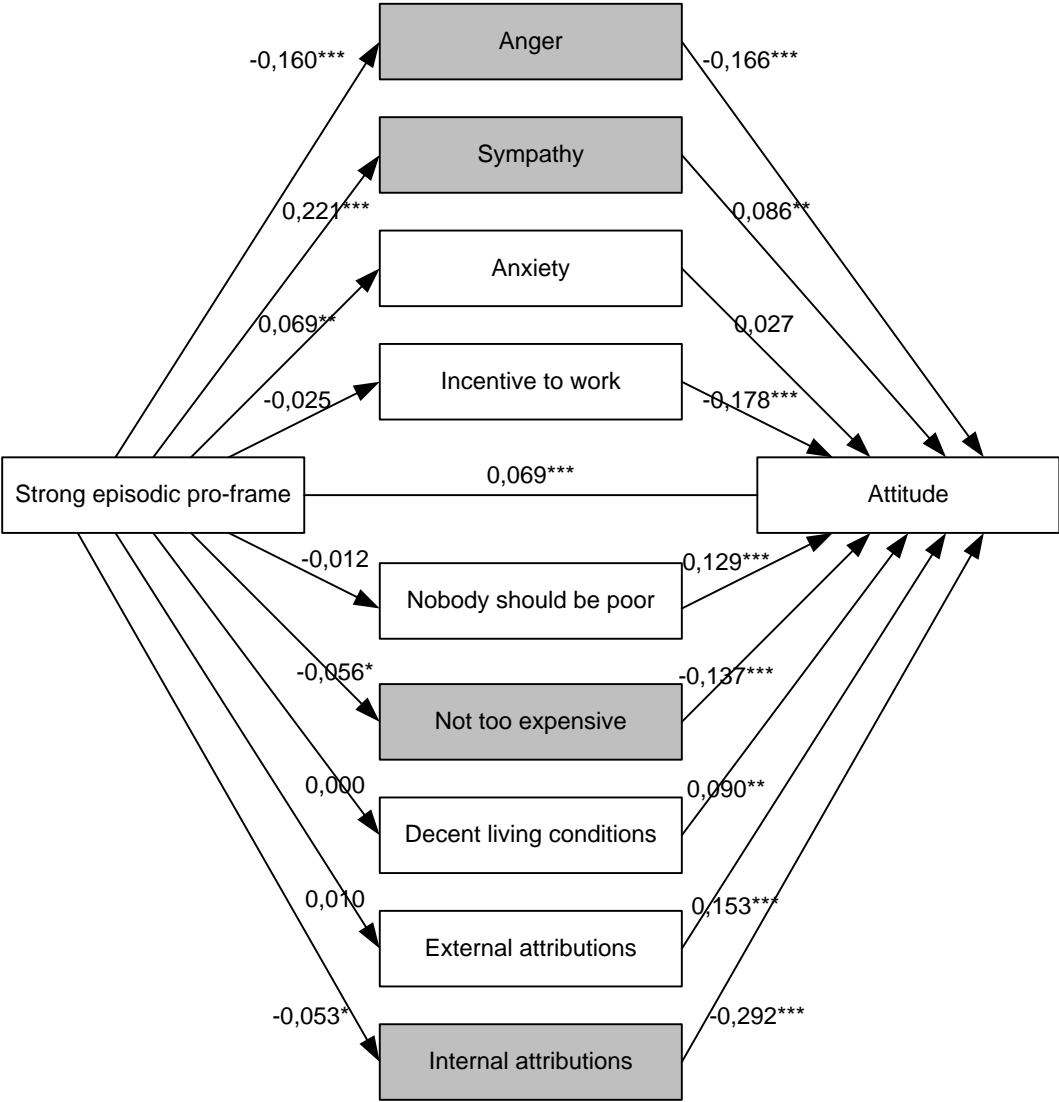
The figure displays unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. All variables are coded from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions, greater perceived importance, greater approval of internal or external attribution or more in favor of removing the ceiling on social security, respectively. The reference group is the groups receiving con-arguments. The shaded boxes are significant mediators of framing effects according to a 95 percent bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval. Number of bootstrap resamples: 5000. N= 805. * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.

Figure 6.7: Direct and indirect effects of the weak episodic pro-frame in the welfare study



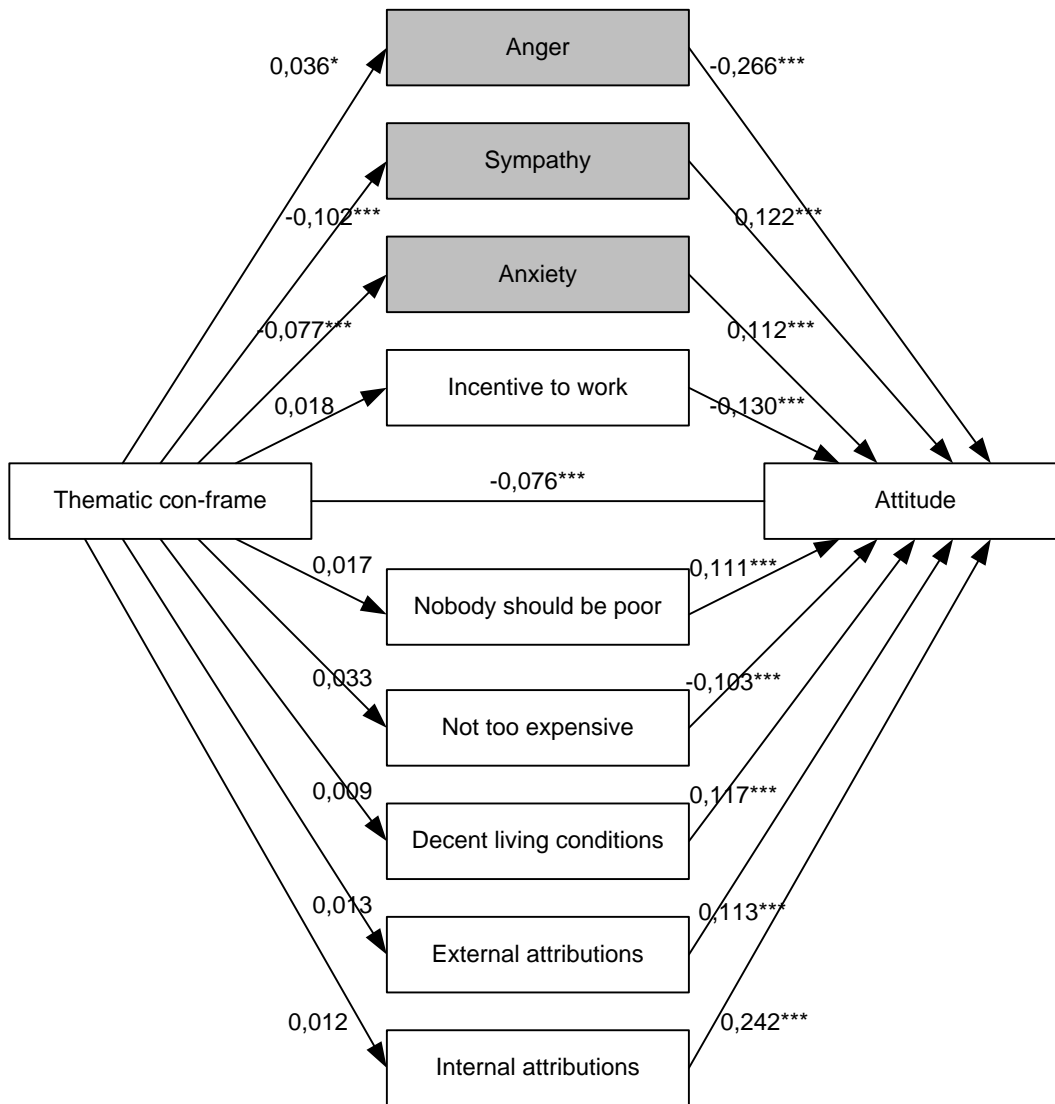
The figure displays unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. For coding, see figure 6.6. The reference group is the groups receiving con-arguments. The shaded boxes are significant mediators of framing effects according to a 95 percent bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval. Number of bootstrap resamples: 5000. N= 805. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$.

Figure 6.8: Direct and indirect effects of the strong episodic pro-frame in the welfare study



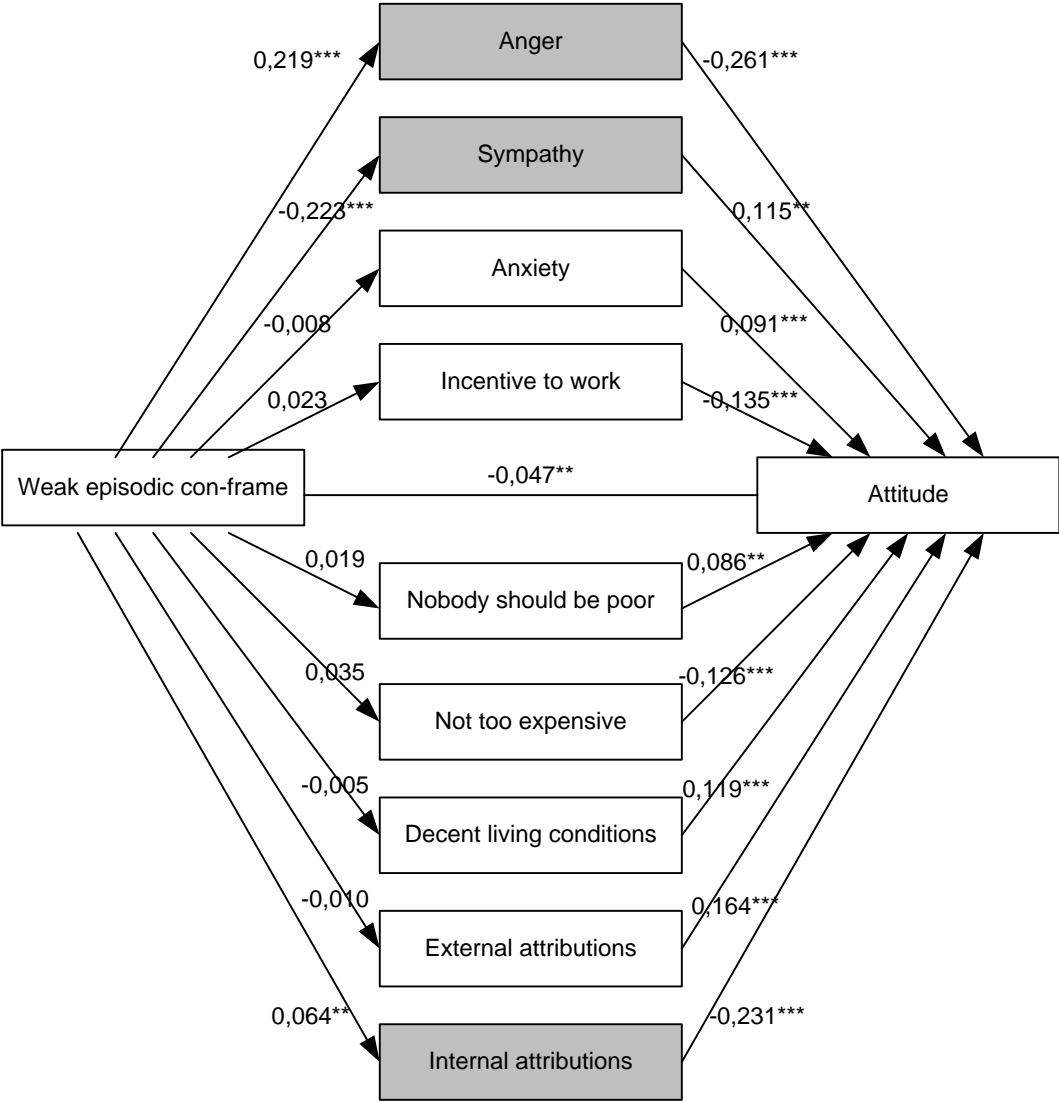
The figure displays unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. For coding, see figure 6.6. The reference group is the groups receiving con-arguments. The shaded boxes are significant mediators of framing effects according to a 95 percent bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval. Number of bootstrap resamples: 5000. N= 802. * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.

Figure 6.9: Direct and indirect effects of the thematic con-frame in the welfare study



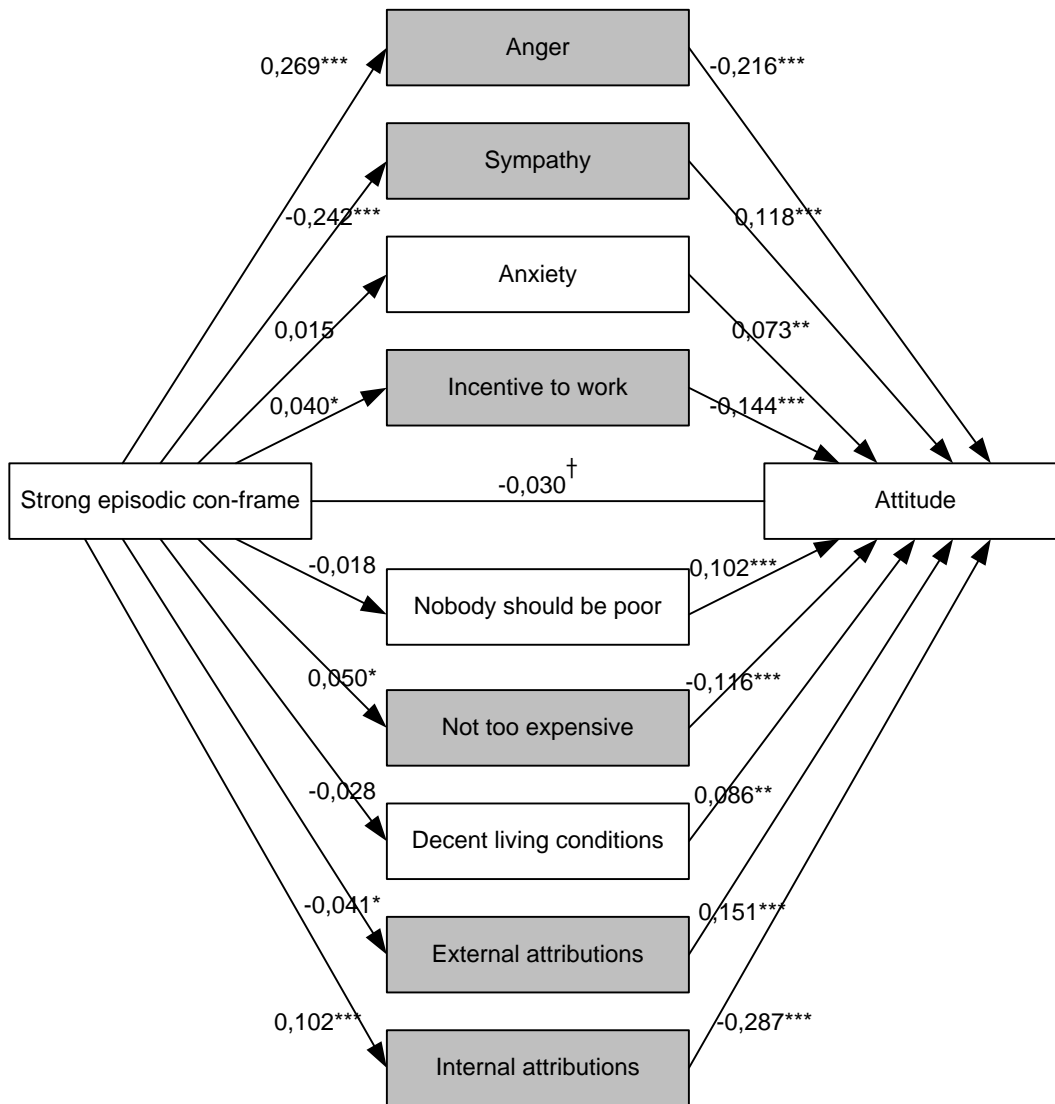
The figure displays unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. For coding, see figure 6.6. The reference group is the groups receiving pro-arguments. The shaded boxes are significant mediators of framing effects according to a 95 percent bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval. Number of bootstrap resamples: 5000. N= 837. * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.

Figure 6.10: Direct and indirect effects of the weak episodic con-frame in the welfare study



The figure displays unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. For coding, see figure 6.6. The reference group is the groups receiving pro-arguments. The shaded boxes are significant mediators of framing effects according to a 95 percent bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval. Number of bootstrap resamples: 5000. N= 799. † p < 0.1; * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.

Figure 6.11: Direct and indirect effects of the strong episodic con-frame in the welfare study



The figure displays unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. For coding, see figure 6.6. The reference group is the groups receiving pro-arguments. The shaded boxes are significant mediators of framing effects according to a 95 percent bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval. Number of bootstrap resamples: 5000. N= 824. † p < 0,1; * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.

An impact of frames on the cognitive mediators is not enough to establish that these variables mediate the framing effect. The mediators must also have a significant effect on attitudes. From figures 6.6 to 6.11 it is clear that all the mediators have significant effects on attitudes. This means that the variables measuring considerations and reasons for being on welfare benefit are all relevant for people's decisions – but it does not necessarily mean that these variables can mediate the effect. Of all the cognitive mediators, only the variable measuring internal reasons mediates the effects of most of the frames. It is the only cognitive variable that meets the two first requirements for being mediators across the different types of frames. The importance of

the consideration about providing incentive for people to work and the importance of the consideration concerning the size of the expenditures of the government can only mediate the strong episodic and thematic pro-frame. These results are supported by a bootstrapping analysis.

Table 6.6: The effect of pro-frames and mediators on attitudes

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Constant	0,502 (0,011)***	0,486 (0,018)***	0,526 (0,031)***	0,599 (0,023)***	0,568 (0,031)***
Thematic pro-frame	0,153 (0,021)***	-0,023 (0,016)	0,232 (0,015)***	0,110 (0,015)***	0,068 (0,013)***
Weak episodic pro-frame	0,132 (0,021)***	-0,009 (0,016)	0,125 (0,015)***	0,094 (0,015)***	0,057 (0,013)***
Strong episodic pro-frame	0,144 (0,021)***	-0,009 (0,017)	0,123 (0,015)***	0,109 (0,015)***	0,059 (0,014)***
<i>Affective mediators</i>					
Anger		0,482 (0,029)***			0,187 (0,026)***
Sympathy		0,301 (0,027)***			0,112 (0,023)***
Anxiety		0,125 (0,022)***			0,064 (0,018)***
<i>Importance of considerations</i>					
Incentive to work			0,314 (0,025)***		-0,157 (0,023)***
Nobody should be poor			0,277 (0,029)***		0,123 (0,025)***
Not expensive			-0,285 (0,022)***		-0,117 (0,020)***
Living conditions			0,233 (0,027)***		0,098 (0,024)***
<i>Content of considerations</i>					
External				0,330 (0,026)***	0,149 (0,026)***
Internal				-0,589 (0,020)***	0,281 (0,024)
Adjusted r ²	0,066	0,485	0,535	0,564	0,670
N	1218	1218	1218	1218	1218

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is attitudes to the ceiling on social security which are coded to range from 0 (in favor of removing the ceiling on social security) to 1 (against removing the ceiling on social security). Mediator variables are coded from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions, greater perceived importance or greater approval of internal or external attribution, respectively. Reference group is the groups receiving con-frames. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$.

In models 3 and 4 in tables 6.6 and 6.7, the two groups of cognitive mediators are included separately in order to examine the third requirement: Whether the cognitive mediators mediate any part of the effect of the different frames on attitudes towards the ceiling on welfare benefits. These models show that the cognitive variables do not mediate the total effect of the different frames since the direct effect of all the frames continue to be significant in both models. When comparing the different models in tables 6.6 and 6.7, it becomes clear that model 2 with only the emotional variables is the

only model in which the significance of the direct effect of frames disappears. As in the asylum study, emotions are consequently mediating a greater part of the direct effect than the traditional cognitive mediators.

Table 6.7: The effect of con-frames and mediators on attitudes

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Constant	0,644 (0,011)***	0,496 (0,019)***	0,649 (0,031)***	0,704 (0,023)***	0,631 (0,031)***
Thematic con-frame	-0,111 (0,021)***	-0,053 (0,016)***	-0,103 (0,015)***	-0,108 (0,014)***	-0,082 (0,013)***
Weak episodic con-frame	-0,153 (0,023)***	0,029 (0,018)†	-0,140 (0,016)***	-0,112 (0,015)***	-0,056 (0,015)***
Strong episodic con-frame	-0,167 (0,021)***	0,044 (0,017)*	-0,129 (0,015)***	-0,093 (0,015)***	-0,033 (0,014)*
<i>Affective mediators</i>					
Anger		-0,517 (0,029)***			-0,207 (0,027)***
Sympathy		0,306 (0,027)***			0,116 (0,023)***
Anxiety		0,113 (0,022)***			0,059 (0,018)**
<i>Importance of considerations</i>					
Incentive to work			-0,313 (0,025)***		-0,156 (0,023)***
Nobody should be poor			0,277 (0,029)***		0,120 (0,025)***
Not expensive			-0,285 (0,022)***		-0,113 (0,020)***
Living conditions			0,232 (0,026)***		0,095 (0,023)***
<i>Content of considerations</i>					
External				0,331 (0,027)***	0,150 (0,025)***
Internal				-0,590 (0,020)***	-0,280 (0,024)***
Adjusted r ²	0,069	0,495	0,536	0,564	0,672
N	1218	1218	1218	1218	1218

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. For coding, see table 6.6. Reference group is the group receiving pro-frames. * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.

A comparison of the different models in tables 6.6 and 6.7 also shows that while emotions are able to mediate both the thematic and episodic frames, the cognitive mediators mediate more of the effect of the strong episodic frames while they hardly mediate any of the effect of the other frames. So far the analysis has only examined the type of mediators that mediate the effect of episodic and thematic frames. But it is also possible to assess the importance of the different mediators. Table 6.8 presents point estimates of the different indirect effects through each of the mediators. A comparison across the different frames indicates that the kind of frame does not affect the importance of the different mediators of the framing effect: The strongest mediator of the effect of each frame is an emotion and in all the frames (except

for the strong episodic con-frame and the thematic pro-frame) the second most important mediator is also an emotion. Hypothesis 9 arguing that the type of frame does not affect the type or importance of mediators is thus confirmed.

Table 6.8: Point estimates of the specific indirect effect through each of the mediators

	Con-frames			Pro-frames		
	Thematic	Weak episodic	Strong episodic	Thematic	Weak episodic	Strong episodic
Anger	<u>-0,010</u>	-0,058	-0,058	0,025	0,026	0,027
Compassion	-0,012	<u>-0,025^a</u>	-0,029 ^a	0,017	<u>0,021</u>	<u>0,019</u>
Anxiety	-0,009					
Internal		-0,015 ^a	<u>-0,029^a</u>	<u>0,023</u>	0,015	0,015
External			-0,006 ^{a,b,c}			
Incentive to work			-0,006 ^{a,b,c}	0,007 ^{a,c}		
Not expensive			-0,006 ^{a,b,c}	0,005 ^{a,b,c}		0,008 ^a

Note: Table entries are bootstrapping point estimates of the specific indirect effect through each of the mediators in the different experimental groups. Numbers written in bold are the strongest mediators and numbers underlined are the second largest mediators. In the analysis, all potential mediators are included but the table only shows the relevant mediators. Number of bootstrap resamples: 5000. a Significantly different from anger, b Significantly different from compassion, c Significantly different from internal attributions.

Finally, in order to examine the placement of the different mediators in the causal chain, the final model in tables 6.6 and 6.7 includes both the affective mediators and the two groups of cognitive mediators. By examining the coefficients of the three different kinds of mediators in models 2, 3 and 4 in tables 6.6 and 6.7 with the coefficients in model 5 (after control for all mediators), it is possible to assess where in the causal chain the different mediators are placed. If the effect of emotions disappears after control for the more cognitive mediators, the effect of emotions is mediated by the cognitive mediators. If, on the other hand, the effect of the cognitive mediators disappears after control for emotions, the cognitive mediators are placed first in the causal chain and emotions are mediators of these cognitive mediators.

As tables 6.6 and 6.7 illustrate, the effect of all the mediators on attitudes remain significant in model 5 where all mediators are included. The coefficients are smaller after control for the other variables and the variables consequently steal explanatory power from each other. But it is not possible to state that any of them are mediated by the others since they all continue to have a direct effect on attitudes and because the effect of all the potential mediators is diminished. These results suggest that the different mediators

are placed side by side in the causal chain which supports hypothesis 10. It is also interesting, that the effect of all the con-frames – including the thematic frame – have the opposite effect after control for all the mediators. Once again this suggests that indirect effects through the mediators are stronger than the frames' direct effects.

Finally, by comparing the amount of variance in the dependent variable, explained in the different models, it is also clear that the inclusion of emotions improves our ability to explain the variance in the dependent variable. Even though the different mediators to some extent explain the same variation in the dependent variable, the emotional variables significantly improve our ability to predict people's attitudes towards the ceiling on welfare benefits compared to a model consisting only of the two groups of cognitive mediators. The inclusion of emotions consequently improves our understanding of framing effects compared to the traditional framing models.

Summary

The analysis of the welfare study provides support for most of the hypotheses tested in this chapter. First, the hypotheses that anger and enthusiasm would have an effect on attitude and that these emotions would mediate the effect of frames were supported. The analysis found that anxiety has a clear effect on people's attitudes to the ceiling on welfare benefits, and therefore there was no support for hypothesis 7 stating that the effect of anxiety would not be directional.

When examining the relationship between the cognitive and affective mediators, the analysis showed that different types of frames did not affect the type of mediators mediating the effect. At least, all frames were mediated by emotions, although there was a small tendency for the cognitive mediators to mediate a bigger part of the strong episodic frames. The analysis also showed that nothing suggests that the effects of emotions can simply be attributed to the cognitive mediators – or the other way round. The size of the effect of all of the mediators is smaller after the inclusion of the other mediators, which suggests that they are placed side by side in the causal chain. Finally, the analysis showed that our ability to explain variance in attitudes towards the ceiling on welfare benefits were significantly improved by including emotions in the traditional model of framing effect.

6.3 Conclusion

The focal point of this chapter was to examine the main proposition of this dissertation stating that emotions can be mediators of framing effects. After examining the different hypotheses in all three studies, it is now possible to conclude whether they are supported across the different studies. Generally speaking, the results of the different studies support each other. All the studies strongly support hypothesis 6 since anger, compassion and enthusiasm have clear directional effects on attitudes, and the directions of the effects are as expected.

The findings concerning hypothesis 7 about anxiety are more inclusive. While both the health care study and the asylum study support the hypothesis that anxiety will not have an effect on attitudes, this is not the case in the welfare study. However, the effect of anxiety on attitude is substantially smaller than the effect of compassion and anger and has the opposite effect of anger despite their shared valence. The distinctive role of anxiety is emphasized by the fact that anxiety is only found to mediate the effect of the thematic pro-frame in the welfare study. Anxiety does not mediate the effect of any of the other frames in the three studies which clearly illustrates that anxiety is different from the other emotions. While the support for the specific hypothesis about the effect of anxiety is mixed, it is clear that anxiety should be distinguished from the other emotions examined. The next chapter will examine the special role of anxiety in more detail.

Anger, compassion and enthusiasm are significant mediators in all studies. This strongly supports the hypothesis that emotions can mediate the effect of all frames. It can consequently be concluded that emotions are mediators of both episodic, thematic and issue specific frames. Prior studies have not been able to properly assess the role of emotions as mediators of thematic frames. By showing that thematic frames are also mediated by emotions, the asylum and welfare study extends our knowledge by proving that the role of emotions as mediators is not only confined to frames which are especially emotionally engaging. The analysis of all three studies also demonstrated that when taking people's individual emotional reactions to the frames into account, it is actually possible to explain much more of the variance in the dependent variable than if we only focus on the overall effect of frames themselves.

This chapter also examined whether the inclusion of emotions actually improved our understanding of the effect of the different frames. This was done by examining whether emotions were also important mediators after the inclusion of the traditional cognitive mediators. The analysis in the asylum

study did not show any differences across episodic and thematic frames in the importance of the different mediators. In the welfare study the findings suggest that while emotions were important mediators of both episodic and thematic frames, the cognitive variables surprisingly seemed to be more important in explaining the effect of the episodic frames.

Finally, the chapter examined the causal relationship between the different mediators. In none of the studies did the findings suggest that emotions and cognitive mediators are simply interchangeable variables. While the different mediators naturally steal some explanatory power from each other, the direct effect of the different mediators does not disappear after control for the other mediators. The inclusion of emotions significantly increases the explained variation in the dependent variables in all three studies and show that we improve our understanding of people's different reactions by including emotions in the model.

This chapter extends our knowledge by first testing whether the conclusions of prior studies could be verified in new studies with different types of frames. Second, it also extends our knowledge by testing directly whether the inclusion of emotions improves our understanding compared to the traditional framing models with only cognitive mediators.

The findings in this chapter also have implications for our understanding of the role of emotions. First, as emotions are mediators, the effect of frames on emotions found in the last chapter is not just an inconsequential by-product of framing effects. The traditional view on emotions suggests that emotional appeals lead people to use emotions as reasons for actions and attitudes and thereby distract people from relevant reasons (Govier, 2005: 197, 198-199). However, the findings suggest that frames including emotional appeals do not lead to a different processing of information. In the welfare study, the strongest episodic frames even seem to lead to more cognitive processing. The ability to evoke strong emotions is in other words not the same as distracting people from cognitive processing. Finally, the ability to evoke strong emotional reactions is not equal to having a strong effect on attitudes because episodic frames do not consistently have a stronger impact on attitudes even though they have the strongest impact on emotions.

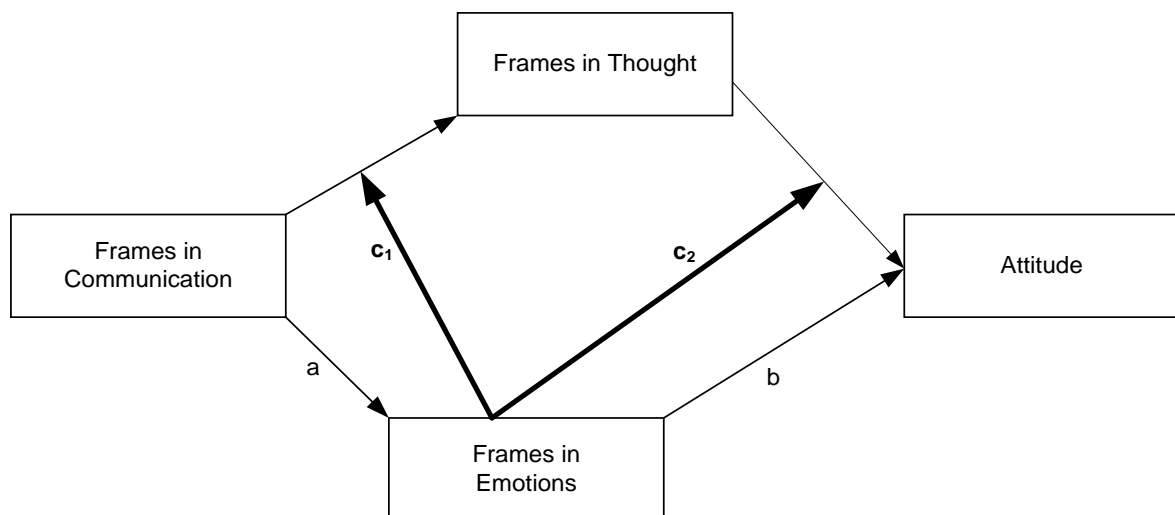
This chapter has shown that emotions are important variables in explaining how issue frames in general are able to affect citizens' attitudes. There is in other words support for the first proposition presented in chapter 3. The next chapter will focus on the second proposition about whether framing effects will vary across individuals according to their emotional reactions.

Chapter 7

Do Framing Effects vary According to Individuals Emotional Responses

Until now, the focus has been on the first core proposition presented in chapter three. The fact that emotions mediate framing effects improves our general understanding of the way that frames have an effect on attitudes. This chapter will turn to the second proposition and examine whether emotions can also explain differences in the effect of frames among individuals.

Figure 7.1: The theoretical model of the relationship between issue frames, emotions and attitudes



The effect of emotions can condition the general impact of frames on attitudes. But the effect of emotions can also condition the more specific relationships between frames, mediators and attitudes. In the theoretical model in figure 7.1, this is illustrated by the arrows marked by c. Emotions can both condition the effect of frames on the cognitive mediators and condition the effect of these mediators on attitudes. The research questions linked to this second core proposition is the following:

RQ 5: Do emotional reactions affect the persuasiveness of frames

RQ 6: Can emotions have an impact on the use of different mediators?

In answering these questions the focus can either be on the intensity of emotional reactions or on the type of emotional reaction. The chapter will first focus on the effect of the intensity of the mediating emotions: Anger, compassion and enthusiasm. The question which will be examined is whether

frames have a stronger effect on opinions if they evoke stronger emotions. The main part of the chapter, however, will focus on the importance of the type of emotional response. The focus will especially be on the effect of anxiety. Anxiety has more or less consistently popped out as not being a mediator of framing effects. But even though anxiety has not played a significant role up till now, it is nevertheless a very important variable for our understanding of framing effects because it is assumed to be the key to understanding why people differ in their susceptibility to frames. As in the previous chapters, the starting point for this chapter is the development of hypotheses which can be tested in the final part of the chapter.

7.1 Testable Hypotheses

If emotions are mediators of framing effects, it is straightforward to expect that the intensity of the emotional reactions will affect how effective the frames are in influencing people's evaluations. The general view on emotional appeals at least seems to assume that the intensity of the emotional reactions affects the persuasiveness of emotional reactions. As the review in chapter 3 illustrated, there is only one study examining the question of how the intensity of emotional reactions can affect the persuasiveness of frames (Aarøe, 2011). This study consequently provides new and important knowledge about how the intensity of emotional reactions can have an impact on framing effects on attitudes. But replication is the strongest test of the reliability of a result. The first hypothesis to be tested in this chapter will consequently examine whether emotional engaging frames such as episodic frames are perceived as being stronger than thematic frames.

H11: Frames evoking strong emotions are perceived as being stronger than frames evoking few emotions.

The hypothesis above focuses on people's perception of what constitutes a strong frame. The next hypothesis will test whether these perceptions of the impact of intensity of emotional reactions are confirmed when examining the actual effect of the intensity of emotional reactions. In line with the prior study of this question, the expectation is that the effect of especially the episodic frames will depend in part on the intensity of emotional reactions.

H12: The stronger the emotional reaction, the stronger effect will episodic frames have

The hypothesis above only focuses on the impact of the intensity of emotional reactions. The only study that has actually examined the hypothesis

above, has unfortunately, not examined the effect of anxiety. This is problematic, since prior studies show that anxiety is a potentially important emotion. This leads to the question about whether the type of emotions influences the effect of frames. Anxiety has namely been suggested as an emotion with different effects than other emotions. The assumption about the specific effects of anxiety is linked to insights from the affective intelligence perspective which has a special focus on the feeling of anxiety. According to this approach, the feeling of anxiety is supposed to stop on-going actions and direct attention to the event evoking anxiety. One of the assumed consequences of anxiety is therefore that people will reconsider their attitudes and search for more information that can lessen the uncertainty.

On the basis of the theory of affective intelligence, anxious people are in other words expected to be less certain of their original attitudes. As a result, they are likely to pay more attention and be more willing to accept the arguments that are presented to them in the experimental stimuli. One direct implication of anxiety is therefore that the effect of frames will be greater when people feel anxious:

H13: Anxiety increases the impact of frames

In many studies examining the effect of anxiety, the focus is only on whether anxiety has an effect or not. However, by examining the process through which anxiety has an effect, it is possible to directly test the theoretical argument of why anxiety differs from the other feelings examined. The assumptions underlying this effect of frames are that anxiety increases uncertainty and subsequently the wish for more information. This results in the following hypothesis:

H14: Aversion and enthusiasm will increase people's confidence in their existing information while anxiety will have a negative effect

H15: Anxiety will increase people's wish for more information while aversion and enthusiasm will have a negative impact.

The two hypotheses above are linked to the research question about whether emotions affect the process of decision making. On the basis of the theory of affective intelligence, it is further expected that the decision making processes are more directly affected by emotions. Traditionally, emotions have been viewed as a threat to decision making. In light of this view, it could be assumed that emotions would have a negative impact on the degree of deliberation. However, the prediction is quite the opposite. The affective intelligence perspective assumes that anxiety increases the degree of deliberation and it thereby becomes a crucial emotion for our understanding

of the complexity of the decision making. If people deliberate more actively about an issue it is also likely to affect the use of cognitive considerations. A final hypothesis is therefore that anxiety will increase the use of cognitive considerations. This hypothesis can be stated in two different ways according to the way, the considerations are measured in the different studies. In the healthcare-study, anxiety is assumed to affect the number of considerations that people can list since anxious people are assumed to have thought more about the issue. In the two remaining studies, anxiety is predicted to increase the importance of considerations as mediators.

H16a: Anxiety will increase the number of considerations that people can list while enthusiasm and aversion will have the opposite effect.

H16b: Anxiety increases the use of cognitive mediators

While the two last chapters have more or less ignored anxiety, the hypotheses above show that anxiety is nonetheless a potentially central emotion to our understanding of individual differences in framing effects. Table 7.1 provides an overview of the hypotheses to be tested in this chapter.

Table 7.1: An overview of the research questions and hypothesis

RQ 5: Do emotional reactions affect the persuasiveness of frames	
H11	Frames evoking strong emotions are perceived as being stronger than frames evoking few emotions.
H12	The stronger the emotional reaction, the stronger effect will episodic frames have
H13	Anxiety increases the impact of frames
RQ 6: Can emotions have an impact on the processes of decision making?	
H14	Aversion and enthusiasm will increase people's confidence in their existing information while anxiety will have a negative effect
H15	Anxiety will increase people's wish for more information while aversion and enthusiasm will have a negative impact.
H16a	Anxiety will increase the number of considerations that people can list while enthusiasm and aversion will have the opposite effect.
H16b	Anxiety increases the use of cognitive mediators

7.2 Analysis

The research question testing the importance of the intensity of emotional responses can be tested in all three studies. The hypotheses concerning the importance of anxiety on people's information seeking can on the other hand only be tested in two of the studies since the welfare-study does not include the necessary measures for testing the hypothesis.

The analysis is divided into two parts according to the two research questions. The first part therefore examines the importance of emotions on the

persuasiveness of frames. The two hypotheses focusing on the impact of intensity of emotional reactions and the type of emotional reactions cannot be tested independently and will therefore be tested in the same models. The second part focuses on the effect of emotions on the process of decision making.

7.2.1 Do emotional reactions affect the persuasiveness of frames

Hypothesis 11 tests the general view that emotional engaging frames are stronger than less emotional engaging frames. The hypothesis can first be tested in a general way. Chapter five showed that episodic frames evoke stronger emotional reactions than thematic frames, and the general implication of the hypothesis is therefore that episodic frames in general should be perceived as stronger than thematic frames. This claim can be tested in both the asylum-study and the welfare-study and the results of both studies are presented in table 7.2. As expected, episodic frames are on average perceived as being stronger than the thematic frames in the asylum-study. This result is supported by the same analysis in the welfare-study. The right side of table 7.2 shows that the strong episodic frames are judged to be stronger than both the thematic and weak episodic frames. There consequently seem to be support for the hypothesis in both studies. The weak episodic frames are, however, perceived as being weaker than the thematic frames. This difference is not significant, but it nevertheless suggests that episodic frames are only perceived as being strong if they are very emotional engaging.

Table 7.2: Perceived strength of thematic and episodic frames in the asylum- and welfare-study

	Asylum study			Welfare study		
	Thematic	Episodic	Mean difference	Thematic	Episodic	Strong episodic
Perceived strength	0,384	0,452	-0,068*	0,549	0,529	0,593 ^{a,b}
N	140	134		408	391	411

Note: Table entries on the left side are the mean perceived strength of frames in experimental groups and the differences between the group means in the asylum-study. Table entries on the right side are the mean perceived strength of frames in the experimental groups in the welfare-study. Perceived strength is coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate a stronger frame. * $p < 0,05$. ^a=significantly different from the thematic frames, $p < 0,01$. ^b=significantly different from the weak episodic frames, $p < 0,001$

In order to test whether this difference in the perceived strength can be attributed to the strength of emotional reactions, it is necessary to examine

whether the emotional reactions actually affect the perceived strength of the frames. This claim is not focusing on differences between different frames but rather on differences among participants with different emotional reactions. The question can therefore be examined in all three studies. Table 7.3 shows that the perceived strength of the frames in the healthcare-study depends on the emotional reactions. As expected, a feeling of enthusiasm increases the perceived strength of the pro-frame. Among the readers of the con-frame, it is anxiety which increases the perceived strength. These results indicated that the perceived strength depends on the extent to which people react with the targeted emotions.

Table 7.3: The impact of emotions on perceived strength of frames in the healthcare-study

	Con-frames		Pro-frames	
Constant	0.416	(0.026)***	0.460	(0.030)***
Anger	-0.025	(0.102)	0.007	(0.115)
Enthusiasm	0.080	(0.071)	0.207	(0.066)**
Anxiety	0.296	(0.118)*	-0.122	(0.128)
Adjusted r ²	0.083		0.051	
N	184		186	

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. The dependent variable is the perceived strength of frames which is coded from 0 (weak) to 1 (strong). Pro frames argue in favor of private healthcare. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. *p < 0,05; **p < 0,01; ***p < 0,001.

Table 7.4 shows the results from a similar analysis in the asylum-study. Once again, the results suggest that the different frames are judged to be strong especially when people feel the emotions the frames were designed to evoke. In the con-frame, the feeling of sympathy therefore increases the perceived strength. In the pro-frames, on the other hand, anger significantly increases the perceived strength while people feeling sympathy perceives the frame to be significantly weaker. As in the healthcare-study, anxiety also increases the perceived strength of the con-frame but has no effect on the perceived strength of the pro-frame.

In the welfare-study, the results also confirm the general assumption that strong emotional reactions mean that the frames are also effective in their ability to affect attitudes too. Table 7.5 shows that if people feel the intended emotional reactions, they also perceive the different frames as being strong. In other words, the feeling of sympathy increases the perceived effect of

con-frames, while anger increases the perceived strength of pro-frames. Once again, anxiety has an effect in the con-frames but not the pro-frames.

Table 7.4: The impact of emotions on perceived strength of frames in the asylum-study

	Con-frames	Pro-frames
Constant	0,255 (0,064)***	0,393 (0,064)***
Thematic frame	-0,038 (0,038)	0,012 (0,044)
Anger	-0,118 (0,110)	0,337 (0,099)***
Sympathy	0,189 (0,098)†	-0,276 (0,097)**
Anxiety	0,310 (0,101)**	-0,021 (0,091)
Adjusted r^2	0,189	0,232
N	138	126

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. The dependent variable is the perceived strength of the frames which is coded from 0 (weak) to 1 (strong). Pro frames argue in favor of letting the asylum-seekers stay in Denmark. The reference group is the two groups receiving episodic frames. † $p < 0,10$; * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$.

The results in table 7.4 show that the intensity of the targeted emotions seem to be important for people's judgment of the strength of the frames, while not-intended emotions tend to lower the perceived strength of the frames.

Table 7.5: The impact of emotions on perceived strength of frames in the welfare-study

	Con-frames	Pro-frames
Constant	0,479 (0,028)***	0,472 (0,032)***
Weak episodic frame	-0,055 (0,020)**	-0,049 (0,026)†
Strong episodic frame	0,053 (0,020)**	-0,044 (0,026)†
Anger	-0,156 (0,048)***	0,283 (0,049)***
Sympathy	0,086 (0,041)*	-0,048 (0,046)
Anxiety	0,178 (0,036)***	0,021 (0,039)
Adjusted r^2	0.179	0.101
N	593	572

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. The dependent variable is the perceived strength of the frames which is coded from 0 (weak) to 1 (strong). Pro frames argue in favor of removing the ceiling on welfare benefits. The reference group is the thematic frames. † $p < 0,10$; * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$.

So far the analysis has confirmed that it is a widespread assumption that emotional engaging frames are perceived as stronger than frames evoking few emotional reactions. The next hypothesis, however, tests whether emotional reactions really do increase the effectiveness of frames.

Table 7.6 examines the effect of emotions on the persuasiveness of the frames in the healthcare-study. The intensity of emotional reactions does not have a big effect the persuasiveness of the issue-specific frames. The coefficients of anger and enthusiasm are in the opposite direction than expected. This means that the feeling of a strong feeling of enthusiasm towards private healthcare does not increase the effect of the pro-frame but on the contrary diminishes the effect. However, only the interaction between the pro-frames and enthusiasm is significant and the results should therefore be interpreted cautiously.

Table 7.6: The impact of emotions on the effect of frames in the healthcare-study

	Attitudes toward private health care	
Constant	0.029	(0.078)
Pro-frame	0.070	(0.055)
Anger	-0.193	(0.149)
Enthusiasm	0.523	(0.110)***
Anxiety	-0.072	(0.172)
Pro-frame x anger	0.032	(0.209)
Pro-frame x enthusiasm	-0.252	(0.139)†
Pro-frame x anxiety	0.002	(0.239)
Economic value dimension	0.521	(0.094)***
Adjusted r ²	0.244	
N	348	

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is attitude toward private health care ranging from 0 (negative) to 1 (positive). Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Pro-frames are arguing in favor of private healthcare. The reference group is the con-frame. † p < 0.10; * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.

Table 7.7 shows how the emotional reactions affect the persuasiveness of the different frames in the asylum-study. The expectation is that if people feel the targeted emotions, the effect of the frames on attitudes will be greater. In other words, if people feel anger while reading the frames trying to evoke anger, the effect of these frames on attitudes will be greater. However, among the con-frames the opposite result appears. While anger was expected to increase the effect of the episodic pro-frames, the significant

positive coefficient of the interaction term shows that people become more in favor of letting the asylum-seekers stay in Denmark. Those who react with strong anger while reading the con-frames are therefore less affected by the episodic frame. Among the pro-frames, the coefficient of the interaction between the episodic frames and the feeling of compassion is negative which is the opposite of the expected effect. In both con- and pro-frames, the targeted emotions do not increase the persuasiveness of frames.

The finding that strong emotional reactions decrease the effect of the episodic pro-frame is surprising given the results of prior studies showing that the stronger emotional reactions increases the effect of episodic frames (Aarøe, 2011). Fortunately, it is possible to examine the same question in the welfare-study where a control-group is the reference group.

Table 7.7: The impact of emotions on the effect of frames in the asylum-study

	Con-frames		Pro-frames	
Constant	0.377	(0.080)***	0.369	(0.072)***
Thematic	-0.061	(0.102)	-0.084	(0.094)
Episodic	0.051	(0.101)	0.176	(0.115)
Anger	-0.342	(0.116)**	-0.073	(0.095)
Sympathy	0.270	(0.101)**	0.299	(0.092)**
Anxiety	0.168	(0.103)	-0.042	(0.090)
Thematic x anger	0.188	(0.181)	-0.208	(0.185)
Thematic x sympathy	0.093	(0.168)	0.160	(0.158)
Thematic x anxiety	-0.131	(0.176)	0.141	(0.172)
Episodic x anger	0.335	(0.177)†	-0.421	(0.200)*
Episodic x sympathy	-0.023	(0.159)	-0.322	(0.181)†
Episodic x anxiety	-0.318	(0.159)*	0.298	(0.170)†
VH	-0.142	(0.065)*	-0.141	(0.065)*
Adjusted r^2	0.252		0.257	
N	246		246	

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the attitude to expelling asylum seekers out of the country, and the variable is coded to range from 0 (opposed to letting asylum seekers stay) to 1 (in favor of letting asylum seekers stay). Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Con-frames are arguing against letting asylum seekers stay. The reference group is the groups receiving the opposite frames. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$.

Table 7.8 shows that the results of both the pro-frames and con-frames in the welfare-study mirror the results found above. Anger does not increase the effect of the strong episodic con-frames. On the contrary, anger significantly decreases the persuasiveness of the con-frames, since the coefficient of the interaction term is positive. Among the pro-frames, the same effect of is found for compassion. The effect of both the strong episodic pro-frames is significantly lower among those who report that they feel high compassion towards people on welfare benefits. This consequently confirms the result found in the asylum-study and the healthcare-study.

Table 7.8: The impact of emotions on the effect of frames in the welfare-study

	Con-frames		Pro-frames	
Constant	0.545	(0.043)***	0.520	(0.040)***
Thematic	0.032	(0.058)	0.051	(0.055)
Weak episodic	0.145	(0.062)*	0.036	(0.057)
Strong episodic	0.154	(0.060)*	0.194	(0.063)**
Anger	-0.527	(0.087)***	-0.537	(0.080)***
Compassion	0.347	(0.067)***	0.358	(0.062)***
Anxiety	0.130	(0.061)*	0.125	(0.056)*
Thematic x anger	-0.006	(0.117)	0.013	(0.115)
Thematic x compassion	-0.057	(0.096)	-0.064	(0.087)
Thematic x anxiety	-0.052	(0.083)	0.078	(0.081)
Weak episodic x anger	0.149	(0.115)	0.073	(0.113)
Weak episodic x compassion	-0.115	(0.093)	-0.143	(0.095)
Weak episodic x anxiety	-0.170	(0.085)*	0.126	(0.084)
Strong episodic x anger	0.269	(0.106)*	-0.188	(0.112) [†]
Strong episodic x compassion	-0.065	(0.091)	-0.292	(0.096)**
Strong episodic x anxiety	-0.288	(0.081)***	0.080	(0.083)
Left-right placement	-0.234	(0.028)***	-0.184	(0.026)***
Adjusted r ²	0.506		0.549	
N	712		719	

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is attitudes to the ceiling on social security which are coded to range from 0 (against removing the ceiling on social security) to 1 (in favor of removing the ceiling on social security). Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. Pro-frames are arguing in favor of setting a ceiling on social security. The reference group is the control group. * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.

The fact, that the episodic frames in both the asylum-study and the welfare-study are perceived to be stronger than the thematic frames mean that the

results above cannot be a result of the episodic frames being viewed as unrealistic or weak.

The results above do not confirm the findings of a prior study which found that the persuasiveness of episodic frames depends on the intensity of the emotional reactions (Aarøe, 2011). There can be two reasons for this difference. First, the reason can be that the effect of the emotional reactions is not a simple linear relationship in which stronger emotions are automatically increasing the persuasiveness. Instead the effect of emotions could perhaps be strongest at the medium level of activation while stronger emotions are so strong that people become more aware of them and try to 'correct' their attitudes. According to this line of thinking, the differences between the different studies can be a result of differences in the ability of the episodic frames to evoke strong emotions. However, another reason could be that this project includes the feeling of anxiety. Since the only negative emotions examined by Aarøe (2011) are the effect of anger and disgust, the potential effect of anxiety might have contaminated the measure of anger. Why the feeling of anxiety can have an impact will be examined next.

While the analysis of hypothesis 12 above examined whether the intensity of the feelings of anger and compassion increases the persuasiveness of the episodic frames, the next hypothesis examines the impact of anxiety. The expectation is that anxiety has no directional effect but only functions to increase the effect of the different frames on attitudes. In the healthcare-study, this is not the case. The interaction between anxiety and the pro-frame in table 7.6 is insignificant, and anxiety does therefore not have an impact on the effect of neither the pro-nor the con-frame.

In the asylum-study, on the other hand, the hypothesis is confirmed. In table 7.7 the interaction between anxiety and the episodic con-frames is negative and significant which means that people who feel anxious are more affected by this frame and therefore become even more opposed to letting the asylum-seekers stay in Denmark. Likewise, the positive and significant interaction between anxiety and the episodic pro-frames shows that the effect of the episodic pro-frame is strongest among those who feel most anxious.

In the welfare study, table 7.8 shows that the interaction between anxiety and the strong and weak episodic con-frame is significant. The coefficient is negative which means that a person reading the con-frame and feeling anxious are more affected by the frame than a person feeling low anxiety. Among the pro-frames, the interactions between frames and anxiety are positive which is expected. However, the effect is not significant. In the wel-

fare-study, the hypothesis is therefore only confirmed in the weak and strong episodic con-frame.

The hypothesis that anxiety increases the effect of frames is consequently only supported among episodic frames. Among thematic frames and issue-specific frames, anxiety does not have an effect on people's susceptibility to framing effects. Among the six episodic frames examined, anxiety increased the effect of four and the directions of the coefficients of the interactions term were in the expected direction in all six. Why it is only the episodic frames that are affected by anxiety is unclear. One reason could be that the episodic frames were successful in evoking a stronger level of anxiety on average.

7.2.2 Can emotions have an impact on the use of the different mediators?

On the basis of the theory of affective intelligence, the feeling of anxiety will make people reconsider their habits and consequently also their attitudes. As a result, anxiety is assumed to engage people in conscious deliberation while enthusiasm and aversion are expected to lead people to react without active deliberation. Anxious people will accordingly have less confidence in their opinions and seek more information in order to settle this uneasiness. To examine these assumptions, predictions about the effect of emotions on the participants' feeling of having sufficient information and their wish for more information were constructed in hypothesis 14 and 15.

The first hypothesis is that people who feel enthusiasm or aversion will have more confidence in their opinions and consequently feel that they know enough about the topic to make a decision. As table 7.9 illustrates, enthusiasm and aversion have a significant and positive impact on the feeling of having sufficient information in the healthcare-study. As anticipated, anxiety has a negative impact but the effect is not significant. The confidence in the sufficiency of one's existing information is, however, likely to be influenced by people's political interest given that people with high political interest are expected to know more per se. Therefore, model 2 in 7.8 controls for political knowledge but this variable does not have a significant effect and does not influence the impact of emotions. Since enthusiasm and aversion increase people's confidence while anxiety reduces people's confidence in their existing level of information, hypothesis 14 is supported. The hypothesis is also tested using the bootstrapping method and these results suggest that enthusiasm and aversion mediate the effect of the arguments

on people's confidence in their existing information. These conclusions are not affected by the control for political knowledge.

Table 7.9: The effect of emotions on the feeling of having sufficient information in the health-care study

	Model 1		Model 2	
Constant	0,292	(0,033)***	0,293	(0,038)***
Pro-argument	0,006	(0,033)	0,006	(0,034)
Enthusiasm	0,285	(0,068)***	0,285	(0,068)***
Aversion	0,364	(0,108)***	0,364	(0,108)***
Anxiety	-	0,103 (0,124)	-0,103	(0,124)
Political knowledge			-0,004	(0,045)
Adjusted r^2	0,083		0,081	
N	374		374	

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS-regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. The argument against private health insurance is the excluded category. † $p < 0,10$. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$.

According to the theory of affective intelligence, both anxiety and enthusiasm would make people more interested in politics. But only anxiety should motivate people to actually learn more about politics because anxiety reduces people's confidence in their opinions. According to hypothesis 15, anxiety will increase people's wish for more information while aversion and enthusiasm will have a negative impact. This hypothesis is supported by the results in Table 7.10. As expected, anxiety is significant and increases the wish for more information while aversion has no effect. The effect of enthusiasm is marginally significant and positive which fits the expectation that enthusiasm increases the general interest. Once again, model 2 controls for the effect of political knowledge since the wish for more information can be a result of a general trait. As expected, political knowledge has a positive impact on the wish for more information but as model two illustrates, the effect of anxiety is unaffected by the control for political knowledge. The weak effect of enthusiasm disappears, however. Since anxiety increases peoples' desire for more information, hypothesis 15 is supported. In accordance with the results based on the causal step approach, the analysis using the bootstrapping shows that anxiety is a significant mediator of the effect of the ar-

gments on people's desire for more information. As in the causal step approach, these results are not affected by the control for political knowledge. The analysis based on bootstrapping therefore gives the same results as the analysis based on the causal step approach.

Table 7.10: The effect of emotions on the wish for more information in the healthcare-study

	Model 1		Model 2	
Constant	0,422	(0,030)***	0,376	(0,035)***
Pro-argument	0,041	(0,031)	0,047	(0,031)
Enthusiasm	0,112	(0,063)†	0,097	(0,063)
Aversion	0,017	(0,100)	0,013	(0,099)
Anxiety	0,291	(0,114)**	0,294	(0,114)**
Political knowledge			0,106	(0,041)*
Adjusted r^2	0,053		0,067	
N	363		363	

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS-regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. The argument against private health insurance is the excluded category. † $p < 0,10$. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$.

In the asylum-study, it is also possible to test the hypothesis above. The results of this analysis are presented in table 7.11. In line with the results in the healthcare-study, anxiety also significantly increases the wish for more information in the asylum-study. As expected, anger, on the other hand, has a negative impact while enthusiasm has no significant effects. The control for political knowledge does not have an impact on the effects of emotions. Both the asylum-study and the healthcare-study consequently confirms hypothesis 15.

Table 7.11: The impact of emotions on the need for more information in the asylum-study

	Con-frames				Pro-frames			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
Constant	0.358	(0.057)***	0.359	(0.061)***	0.441	(0.055)***	0.440	(0.059)***
Thematic	0.064	(0.044)	0.064	(0.044)	-0.100	(0.045)*	-0.100	(0.045)*
Episodic	0.103	(0.048)*	0.103	(0.048)*	-0.060	(0.046)	-0.060	(0.046)
Anger	-0.156	(0.089)†	-0.156	(0.089)†	-0.147	(0.088)†	-0.147	(0.089)†
Sympathy	0.062	(0.082)	0.062	(0.082)	0.055	(0.081)	0.055	(0.082)
Anxiety	0.311	(0.078)***	0.311	(0.079)***	0.312	(0.078)***	0.312	(0.079)***
Knowledge			-0.001	(0.057)			0.002	(0.057)
Adjusted r ²	0.074		0.070		0.074		0.070	
N	265		265		265		265	

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS-regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. *** p < 0,001.

In the healthcare-study, it is possible to test hypothesis 16a stating that emotions affect the number of considerations that people can list. The expectation is that anxiety starts a more rational process, and as a consequence of this, people should be able to list more considerations while enthusiasm and aversion will have the opposite effect. As table 7.12 illustrates, this seems to be the case since anxiety significantly increases the number of considerations that people can list. Aversion on the other hand, significantly reduces

Table 7.12: The effect of emotions on the number of considerations in the healthcare-study

	Model 1		Model 2	
Constant	0,606	(0,112)***	0,173	(0,121)
Pro-argument	-0,025	(0,116)	-0,006	(0,110)
Enthusiasm	0,224	(0,238)	0,108	(0,224)
Aversion	-0,836	(0,384)*	-0,927	(0,361)*
Anxiety	1,758	(0,437)***	1,759	(0,411)***
Political knowledge			1,084	(0,148)***
Adjusted r ²	0,041		0,152	
N	411		411	

Note: Table entries are unstandardized OLS-regression coefficients. Emotional responses are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions. The argument against private health insurance is the excluded category. * p < 0,05; *** p < 0,001.

the number of considerations that the people list while enthusiasm is positive but insignificant. These results yield support to the hypothesis stating that the more cognitive route is dependent on the affective route. More political aware participants might in general be able to list more considerations. Political knowledge is therefore included in model 2 but the conclusions about the effects of emotions are the same.

In the asylum-study and the welfare-study it is on the other hand possible to examine hypothesis 16b about whether anxiety increases the importance of the different mediators. In order to test this hypothesis, it is necessary to divide the participants into two groups according to how anxious they feel and subsequently compare the two different groups. In order to assess the importance of the different mediators, the results of this analysis based on bootstrapping analysis are shown in table 7.13.

Table 7.13: The effect of anxiety on the importance of different mediators in the asylum-study

	Con-frames				Pro-frames			
	Thematic		Episodic		Thematic		Episodic	
	Low anxiety	High anxiety	Low anxiety	High anxiety	Low anxiety	High anxiety	Low anxiety	High anxiety
Anger	-0.012	-0.019	-0.025	-0.023	0.004	0.020	0.003	0.038
Sympathy	-0.016	-0.060	-0.015	-0.103	0.006	0.110	0.012	0.063
Positive consequences	0.002	0.003	0.000	0.013	0.001	-0.001	-0.005	-0.011
Negative consequences	-0.018	-0.032	-0.000	-0.046	-0.001	0.060	0.026	0.026
Safety of asylum seekers	0.014	-0.000	0.028	0.016	-0.022	-0.000	-0.019	-0.019
Limit the number of residence permits	0.002	-0.033	0.009	-0.035	-0.014	0.035	0.001	0.043
Individual considerations	-0.001	0.004	0.009	-0.018	-0.001	0.010	-0.004	0.036
The economy and welfare	0.005	-0.005	0.009	-0.004	-0.013	-0.001	-0.004	-0.009
N	113	79	104	80	121	77	98	82

Note: Table entries are point estimates of the specific indirect effects of the different mediators. The dependent variable is the attitude toward expelling asylum seekers which is coded from 0 (opposed to letting the asylum seekers stay) to 1 (in favor of letting the asylum seekers stay). The reference group is the two groups receiving the opposite arguments. The shaded areas are the mediators that are significant according to a 95% bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval. Number of bootstrap resamples: 5000.

Table 7.13 provides a crude picture of the size of the indirect effect through the different mediators. The analysis does not provide a direct test of whether the differences are significant but the results can nevertheless indicate whether any differences exist. Generally speaking, very few of the variables are significant mediators. While only one cognitive mediator is significant among all the participants scoring low on anxiety, one or two are significant among the more anxious. More cognitive mediators are therefore significant among the most anxious participants but this is mainly due to absence of significant mediators among the less anxious. These findings suggest that anxiety increases the importance of the cognitive mediators. Since the participants are divided according to their level of anxiety, the number of participants in each group is limited and the results are consequently uncertain.

Table 7.14: Point estimates of the indirect effect through the different mediators among the con frames in the welfare-study

	Con-frames					
	Thematic		Weak episodic		Strong episodic	
	Low anxiety	High anxiety	Low anxiety	High anxiety	Low anxiety	High anxiety
Anger	0.001	-0.021	-0.016	-0.077	-0.016	-0.089
Compassion	-0.007	-0.017	-0.008	-0.040	-0.014	-0.039
External	0.002	0.003	0.011	-0.009	0.003	-0.012
Internal	0.008	-0.008	0.016	-0.048	0.014	-0.070
Incentive to work	0.004	-0.005	0.012	-0.010	0.014	-0.013
Nobody be poor	0.013	-0.005	0.012	-0.005	0.015	-0.009
Not expensive	0.001	-0.007	0.010	-0.014	0.009	-0.015
Living conditions	0.013	-0.001	0.013	-0.004	0.015	-0.005
N	358	479	323	476	329	495

Note: Table entries are point estimates of the specific indirect effects of the different mediators. All variables are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions or more important considerations. The reference group is the groups receiving pro frames. The shaded areas are the mediators that are significant according to a 95% bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval. Number of bootstrap resamples: 5000.

Fortunately, it is possible to examine the same hypothesis in the welfare-study. Table 7.14 and 7.15 shows the results of the con-frames and the pro-frames, respectively. In contrast to the study above, many of the variables are significant mediators of the different frames. The general picture is consequently less clear. Among the pro-frames, however, the number of significant cognitive mediators of framing effects is general speaking higher among the more anxious participants. Among the con frames the results are the oppo-

site. The traditional mediators are slightly more often significant mediators of framing effects among the less anxious respondents. The hypothesis is therefore only supported in pro-frames.

Table 7.15: Point estimates of the indirect effect through the different mediators among the pro frames in the welfare-study

	Pro-frames					
	Thematic		Weak episodic		Strong episodic	
	Low anxiety	High anxiety	Low anxiety	High anxiety	Low anxiety	High anxiety
Anger	0.006	0.036	0.004	0.037	0.004	0.043
Compassion	0.009	0.025	0.004	0.035	0.009	0.026
External	-0.003	0.009	-0.002	0.010	-0.003	0.006
Internal	-0.007	0.052	-0.019	0.046	-0.023	0.045
Incentive to work	-0.008	0.015	-0.013	0.010	-0.016	0.011
Nobody be poor	-0.006	0.008	-0.020	0.013	-0.024	0.008
Not expensive	-0.003	0.016	-0.010	0.008	0.002	0.013
Living conditions	-0.007	0.001	-0.012	0.002	-0.018	0.003
N	359	446	341	464	330	472

Note: Table entries are point estimates of the specific indirect effects of the different mediators. All variables are coded to range from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate stronger emotional reactions or more important considerations. The reference group is the groups receiving con frames. The shaded areas are the mediators that are significant according to a 95 percent bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval. Number of bootstrap resamples: 1000.

In contrast to the general view on emotions, the results in table 7.15 seem to indicate that emotions can increase cognitive processing. The analysis is, however, not a strong test of the hypothesis and the conclusions are therefore unsure.

7.3 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter examines one of the central questions in framing theories. Understanding why people differ in their susceptibility to framing effects is important from a theoretical perspective. But the question is important from a political perspective since this question touches upon the important question of how to get the greatest effect of political messages on attitudes.

First, the chapter has shown that while the perceived strength of the different frames is dependent on the intensity of the emotional reactions, the actual impact of frames on attitudes is not a simple relationship between the strength of the emotional reactions. In line with the general view, frames with strong emotional appeals are in other words perceived to be stronger than frames with no clear emotional appeals and the effect of the different frames did also vary according to people's individual emotional reactions. Contrary to the findings in prior studies and the common view on emotional appeals, strong emotional reactions on targeted emotions seem to reduce the effect of episodic frames. This finding can on the one hand suggest that strong emotional appeals can have a contrast effect because people become aware of their emotional reactions. On the other hand, the findings can indicate that emotions are only capable of affecting people's attitudes to a certain degree: Those who feel a high level of anger are according to this line of thought less affected by frames trying to evoke anger. Regardless of the interpretation, the results show that the effect of strong emotional reactions on attitudes is not simply increasing the effect of frames and therefore are strong emotional appeals not always an effective way of making a message stronger.

Even though the chapter shows that emotions are not making frames more persuasive per se, the findings also point to anxiety as an emotion that can affect the persuasiveness of frames. The chapter shows that anxiety has this effect because anxiety in contrast to the other emotions leads to lower confidence in existing information about the political question and as a result increases the wish for more information about the topic.

Finally, the chapter extends the role of emotions by showing that they also affect the type of mediating process. In line with the theoretical expectations, anxiety increases deliberation which can be seen in more cognitive considerations and greater part of the framing effect passing through the cognitive route. While these results are only preliminary, they nevertheless point to new important ways that emotions can change our understanding of framing effects.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

The thesis began by arguing that theories on framing effects are central to our understanding of the interplay between the political elites and the public opinion. The aim has been to improve our understanding of this central concept and thereby improve our understanding of the dynamics of public opinion.

My claim is that emotions are important political variables that the framing literature need to take into account. The importance of emotions is not a new argument. As early as in 1993, Kinder wrote "... an understanding of political life requires attention to both reason and to emotion" (Kinder, 1993: 279), and for many years, the literature on decision-making and vote choice has pointed to the important role of emotions. Nevertheless, emotions have not been included in studies of framing effects. My aim has been to bring the literature on framing effects up to date with the literature on decision-making and vote choice.

More specifically, the main claim has been that emotions are a mediating variable of framing effects and that the effects of issue frames depend on the emotional reactions they can evoke. The findings presented in chapters 5, 6 and 7 support this claim. This chapter will first summarize and discuss the empirical findings and then discuss the further theoretical and practical implications of these findings. The discussion will clarify on what aspects this thesis has extended prior studies of the role of emotions in framing and consequently also extended our knowledge about framing effects and the role of emotions. Finally, the normative question about the role of emotions in politics will be discussed.

8.1 Summary and Discussion of Empirical Results

Based on three theories on emotions, a theoretical model was developed in chapter three which was tested in chapters 5, 6 and 7. Each of these chapters focused on specific aspects of the general model. In this section, the results are combined and conclusions about the overall model are formed.

First, the analysis in chapter 5 shows that frames have an effect on people's emotional reactions even when the frames themselves are not particularly emotional in their appearance or in their content. By showing that frames can have an impact on emotions without specific emotional appeals

and on central political questions, the dissertation broadens the potential impact of emotions to all types of political messages and not just to specific emotional political messages.

Second, the findings in chapter 5 suggest that it is possible to control the type and intensity of emotional reactions by constructing messages fitting into specific appraisal patterns. The dissertation thereby provides a general framework which can be used in the construction of other emotional appeals. The findings also show that the distinction between episodic and thematic frames does not sufficiently capture the variation in the ability to evoke emotions.

In chapters 6 and 7, the analysis shows that the impact of frames on emotions is not just an interesting relationship with no further consequences. On the contrary, the emotional reactions proved to have an effect of attitudes and information seeking. More specifically, the results lend support to the hypothesis that the effect of frames is partly mediated by people's emotional reactions. Framing effects can in other words take both an emotional and a cognitive route, but the emotional route seems to be the most important one. Unlike other studies, the analysis could also illustrate that cognitive and emotional mediators are not just interchangeable variables, since the cognitive and affective mediators explain different parts of the variation in the dependent variable. As the dissertation examines topics central to Danish politics, the dissertation also illustrates that the effect of emotions is not limited to issues of secondary importance on which people could be expected to have less information, use cursory decision-making and as a consequence be more easily manipulated.

Based on the findings of the dissertation, the emotions examined can be divided into two main groups: Anxiety in one group and all the rest of the emotions in the second. While framing effects are mediated by anger, enthusiasm and sympathy, anxiety has a more indirect effect – but nonetheless an important effect. Anxiety is identified as an important moderator of framing effects and is a central emotion in the understanding of the differences between individuals. The analysis shows that the persuasiveness of frames increases when people are anxious. The type of mediators central to people's decision-making also seem to depend on anxiety since the effect of frames was more likely to pass through the cognitive mediators when people were anxious. All of these effects are highly interesting from a political perspective, and anxiety is therefore a politically interesting emotion.

I also examined why anxiety has this moderating effect. The analysis shows that emotional reactions affected people's perceptions of their level of information and their need for more information. In other words, the disser-

tation not only shows that anxiety has an effect on the persuasiveness and the mental processes, but also why anxiety has this affect.

Table 8.1 gives an overview of the main propositions, research questions and hypotheses that the thesis set out to study. The table also shows in which studies, the hypotheses were tested and whether these studies could confirm or reject these hypotheses. As the table illustrates, across the different studies there is support for all but one hypothesis. Replication is the strongest test of the reliability of results and the fact that most of the hypotheses can be tested and confirmed in at least two studies increases the trust in the findings. Taken together, the different analyses give reasons to believe that emotions should be considered as an important variable in framing effects, and therefore confirms the claim that including emotions in framing models can help us to improve our understanding of framing effects. Models based only on cognitive variables and mechanisms therefore overlook a central variable in decision-making processes.

Table 8.1: Overview of propositions, research questions, hypotheses and support for hypothesis in the three studies

Proposition	Research Question	Hypotheses	Health-care	Asylum	Welfare
	Message factors: Framing effects on emotions				
Framing effects are at least in parts mediated by emotions	RQ 1: Can emphasis frames evoke different emotions?	H1: Frames with cues fitting the appraisal pattern of anger will evoke anger, while frames with cues fitting the appraisal pattern of compassion will evoke compassion.		x	x
		H2: Positive valenced issue specific frames will evoke enthusiasm, while negative valenced issue specific frames will evoke anger.	x		
		H3: Both negatively and positively valenced frames will evoke anxiety	(x)	(x)	x
	RQ 2: How and why do frames differ in how emotional engaging they are	H4: Episodic frames will evoke stronger anger and compassion than thematic		(x)	x
		H5: Episodic frames with clear cues (Strong episodic frames) will evoke stronger emotions than frames with less clear cues (weak episodic frames).			x
	How: Emotions as mediators				
	RQ 3: Does the type of frame affect the type of mediators?	H6: Anger will make people more opposed while enthusiasm and compassion will make people more in favor	x	x	x
		H7: Anxiety will not directly influence attitudes.	x	x	-
		H8: Emotions will be mediators of framing effects regardless of the type of frame	x	x	x
	RQ 4: What is the relationship between emotions and the cognitive mediators	H9: Emotions are just as important in thematic frames as in episodic		x	x
		H10: Emotions can be placed next to the cognitive mediators in the causal chain	(x)	(x)	(x)
	Who: Individual variations in the effects of frames				
Framing effects will vary across individuals according to	RQ 5: Does the intensity of the emotional reactions affect the persuasiveness of	H11: Emotional engaging frames are perceived as being stronger than frames evoking few emotions.		x	x
		H12: The stronger the emotional reaction, the stronger effect will frames have	-	-	-

their emotional reactions	frames	H13: Anxiety increases the impact of frames	-	x	x
	RQ 6: Can emotions have an impact on the use of the different mediators?	H14: Aversion and enthusiasm will increase people's confidence in their existing information as opposed to anxiety	x		
		H15: Anxiety will increase people's wish for more information as opposed to aversion, sympathy and enthusiasm	x	x	
		H16a: Anxiety will increase the number of considerations that people can list while enthusiasm and aversion will have the opposite effect.	x		
		H16b: Anxiety increases the use of cognitive mediators		(x)	(x)

Note: The shaded areas mean that the hypotheses could not be tested in these studies. 'x' means that the hypothesis is confirmed, (x) means that the hypothesis is partly supported or that the analysis can only indirectly test the hypothesis, and '-' means that the hypothesis was not supported.

8.2 How does the Thesis Improve Our Understanding of Framing Effects

The model of framing effects presented in chapter 2 had a very cognitive nature since mediators as well as individual and contextual moderators had cognitive elements. The inclusion of emotions as mediators consequently has clear theoretical implications for our understanding of framing effects.

The inclusion of new mediators naturally provides new answers to the question of how frames have an effect. Framing effects can take both a cognitive route and an emotional route since the new affective mediators supplement rather than replace the traditional cognitive mediators. The inclusion of both cognitive and affective mediators naturally leads to the question whether these variables really can be separated. This question is important: If the effect of one of the suggested mediators is simply attributable to the effect of the other, then the inclusion of emotions as mediators will not significantly increase our theoretical understanding of framing effects. The inclusion will instead only improve our analytical models by providing a better and more reliable measure of the same process. Theories on emotions have discussed the relationship between emotions and cognition at great length. The literature seems to agree that you cannot have one without the other, and the findings in chapters 6 and 7 show that emotions and cognition certainly are related and partly depend on each other. But the findings also suggest that the two types of mediators represent two separate processes. While the different types of mediators steal explanatory power from each other, they continue to have a significant impact on attitudes and significantly improve the amount of explained variance in the dependent variable. Based on these results, the claim – that the affective mediators and the cognitive mediators can both contribute to our understanding of how frames have an effect – is supported.

The understanding of other central theoretical questions is also affected by the inclusion of emotion. The dissertation has not only introduced a new important mediator, but has also found an important moderator of framing effects. Anxiety is namely found to be important for our understanding of why some people are more affected by a frame than others. Anxiety has been found to condition the effects of frames in earlier studies, but the dissertation extends our knowledge by showing that anxiety evoked by frames themselves is strong enough to bring about these effects and by linking anxiety to political important variables such as information seeking.

Finally, the inclusion of emotions also points to new contextual moderators. If emotions are important for the effect of frames, the next question is why frames differ in type and intensity of emotional reactions. Well-known contextual moderators such as party cues can certainly be central in answering these questions. But new contextual moderators also become important which the findings concerning the degree of fit with certain appraisal patterns illustrate.

The implications of including emotions go beyond just extending how frames can have an effect and why people react differently to these frames. Furthermore, the inclusion of emotions change our general understanding of framing effects because it paves the way for examining new variables and relationships. One way the inclusion of emotions changes the understanding of framing effects is for instance by letting the mediators vary across issues, frames and individuals. The question whether the type of frame affects the importance of the cognitive or the affective route is one example.

The questions of how frames can affect the type and intensity of emotions evoked, how the type of emotion affects the kind of impact on attitudes, and when framing effects take a cognitive or affective route are all results of the inclusion of emotions in the model of framing effects. It would certainly not be obvious to examine these questions in the traditional model of framing effects but they are obvious questions in a model including emotions. The questions consequently illustrate why the theoretical inclusion of emotions have far-reaching theoretical implications.

8.3 How Does the Thesis Extend Prior Studies

As the review in chapter 3 illustrated, some studies have examined the impact of emotions on the effect of political communication. There are three general approaches in which emotions have been included in models of political communication. In framing studies, emotions have primarily been examined as moderators, but emotions have also lately been suggested as mediators. Finally, appeals to specific emotions such as fear appeals have been studied in the persuasion literature. This section will return to these studies and briefly discuss how the thesis more specifically has extended these studies and thereby our knowledge about the role of emotions in framing models.

The dissertation extends the two studies examining the mediating role of emotions substantially. First, the dissertation examines the whole causal chain in three different studies and shows that the results are robust across different issues, participants, frames and research designs. The dissertation is

the first study able to compare the affective and cognitive mediators in the same studies which is an important step in testing the overall theoretical model. It makes it possible to extend the two prior studies by presenting and testing hypotheses about the internal relationship between emotions and the traditional cognitive mediators.

Moreover, the dissertation has improved our knowledge about when emotions matter. By showing that both issue-specific and thematic frames are mediated by emotions, the dissertation has established that emotions are central to our general understanding of framing effects and not just to our understanding of strong emotional appeals.

The dissertation has extended existing studies by showing that the differences between thematic and episodic frames do not capture the full extent to which the intensity of emotional reactions can be affected. Since weak and strong episodic frames differed in the intensity of evoked emotions, the dissertation illustrated the need for a more general understanding of why frames differ in how emotionally engaging they are. The dissertation suggested and tested whether a framework based on the insights from appraisal approaches could form such a theoretical basis.

Most studies of framing effects including emotions have focused on the effect of induced emotions or moods. Naturally, these studies have mainly focused on the moderating role of emotions and consequently also focused on the effect of anxiety. The dissertation extends these studies by showing that other emotions can mediate framing effects and that anxiety evoked by frames themselves is strong enough to have a moderating effect. But the thesis also extends the theoretical understanding of the impact of anxiety. As the thesis suggests that framing effects can take two different routes, anxiety is given the ability to affect the weight of the different mediating processes.

The dissertation also extends prior studies in emotional appeals by examining the general impact of emotions on political issues. Most of these studies only focus on one emotion at a time. For instance, a large part of the literature has focused on fear appeals and consequently only on the effect of anxiety. Anxiety is certainly an important political emotion, but it is the general impact of emotions that are really interesting. The findings show that emotions differ in their origins, in their effects, and consequently in their theoretical roles. An understanding of the general impact of emotions and their role in framing models must include a broader spectrum of emotional reactions instead of just anxiety. If the dissertation had only focused on anxiety, the mediating role of emotions would not have been found. Whereas anxiety might be important in explaining why frames differ in their effects, it is the other emotions that are important in the understanding of the basic process

leading to framing effects. That emotions have differential effects are in many ways the crux of the matter and had the dissertation only focused on appeals to one specific emotion, this effect would have been more difficult to show.

The dissertation finally extends studies of fear appeals in two ways. First, studies of fear appeals have mainly been conducted on health campaigns while few have examined political questions. Second, the dissertation shows that all messages can evoke fear which means that anxiety is an important emotion in political life in general and not only to our understanding of messages that appeal to anxiety. This conclusion would not have been possible in a set up examining only fear appeals. If the dissertation had chosen a typical fear appeal, as the empirical case for testing the theoretical model, the importance of anxiety would simply not have been discovered. Thus, the dissertation extends studies of fear appeals by showing that all the emotions examined are important and that the effect of anxiety is not only limited to specifically constructed fear appeals.

This dissertation consequently extends prior studies because it has examined a wide spectrum of emotions and because the research design has allowed emotions to both mediate and moderate framing effects. This dissertation has taken a crucial step in the development of a general theoretical model and in the testing of this model.

8.4 Political Implications

From a political perspective, emotions are mainly interesting if they can be used strategically. As the effect of emotions depends on the specific type of emotion in question, it becomes interesting whether it is possible to control the type of emotional reactions that people experience. The results in chapter 5 showed that it is possible to make certain emotional reactions more likely by framing the issue with the appraisal patterns of specific emotions in mind. These results pave the way for political parties' strategic use of emotions – an implication which would give many political commentators and analysts the shivers.

With the strategic use of emotions in mind, anxiety becomes an important emotion because it makes people more susceptible to political messages. While the effect of frames only passes through other emotions, anxiety is actually able to boost the effect of frames. The other emotions are of course still central because they point to message factors that can increase the effects of frames by evoking stronger emotional reactions. But the emotion of anxiety can provide the extra bit of effect that all politicians seek. By affect-

ing the desire for more information, the impact of anxiety also has an influence on future information seeking. This means that anxiety can continue to have an effect in the long run and can stimulate interest in specific political questions.

As anxiety is such an important emotion from a political perspective, the question naturally arises why parties cannot just construct messages that fit specifically to the appraisal patterns of anxiety. That would seem as the ultimate persuasive message. The various campaigns of fear and scare tactics used by political parties and the amount of studies in fear appeals show that this is a widely held view.

But anxiety is a treacherous emotion. The findings show that the emotion itself only affects the processes of decision-making and not the output of this decision-making directly. A feeling of anxiety can lead people to become either more in favor of or more opposed to a political suggestion depending on the type of information they are presented with. In the studies above, the anxiety increases the persuasiveness of the political messages but these studies completely control the type of information given to the participants. The impact of anxiety in real life situations might not be just as simple. While anxiety is quite likely to make people more receptive to political communication in real life situations, the chances of meeting messages conveying other arguments are much higher here than in the experimental situation. Even though anxiety can explain why people react differently to frames, it is in other words more difficult to predict its consequences because the effects are contingent.

The feeling of anxiety can also be treacherous because the effect of the moderate level of anxiety in my studies might not be comparable to the higher level of anxiety likely to occur in specifically constructed fear appeals. Theories on fear appeals have at least suggested that the effect of fear is non-monotonic with diminishing effects and perhaps even contrast effects at high levels of anxiety.

The results presented in chapter 7 also show that very high levels of anger and sympathy actually lead to smaller persuasive effects. Bigger is in other words not always better: A big emotional reaction can backfire and politicians should be cautious about trying to evoke strong emotional reactions. All in all the results suggest that the persuasive effect of emotions might be biggest if the reaction is subtle.

8.5 Future Research Questions

The inclusion of emotions in the model leads us towards many new important variables and relationships to examine, and this dissertation has only been able to touch upon a few. Our knowledge about the impact of emotions is still very limited, and the results point to new interesting questions.

First of all, people are not likely to react with the same emotional reactions to the same information. For instance, someone who has never heard an argument before might react differently than a person who has encountered the argument several times. The likelihood that people accept emotional cues and react accordingly can perhaps also depend on the extent to which these resonate with existing values or information about the topic. More knowledge is needed about why people react with different emotions to the same information, and why some experience stronger emotional reactions than others.

The inclusion of affective mediators also leads to a question about whether some people are more likely to use one route instead of the other or are more likely to react on the basis of their emotions than others. Does the importance of an issue for the individual or people's general political engagement for instance have an impact on these two processes? Or does the gender have an impact since women are traditionally perceived as more emotional? Political knowledge is also a potentially important variable since the effect of emotions has often been viewed as being opposed to the use of cognitive abilities. These potential moderators of the different processes are interesting areas of further work.

The traditional individual moderators of framing effects are likely to be part of the explanation to why there are individual differences. Given the fact that only two studies have examined emotions as mediators, there are no studies of the role of the traditional moderators in a model where emotions are included as mediators. The focus of this dissertation has been on establishing the fundamental causal relationship between frames, emotions and attitudes, and the dissertation has therefore not been able to shed light on how the traditional moderators can be included in the model. Studies of how the traditional moderators affect the effect of mood or induced emotions hint that the traditional moderators of framing effects can also be important to the understanding of the type of emotional reactions and the subsequent effect of these emotions on attitudes. These studies have focused on predispositions (Gross and D'Ambrosio, 2004; Gross and Brewer, 2007; Kuvaas and Kaufmann, 2004; Albarracín and Kumkale, 2003), political awareness (Brader, 2006: 103; Isbell and Ottati, 1996, Isbell and Wyer, 1999, De Martino,

et al., 2006), and political engagement (Huddy and Gunthorsdottir, 2000: 762). Even though these studies disagree on the specific conclusions, they nevertheless suggest that the traditional mediators can, theoretically, be included in the model. This also indicates that the new model including emotions is in keeping with the results provided based on the traditional model of framing effects which increases the confidence in the theoretical and empirical value of the model.

This dissertation has suggested that the appraisal approach and more specifically emotional cues can be important message factors to include. However, other factors are also likely to affect the evoked emotions. The grouping of arguments of different positions could perhaps lead to more anxiety among some and perhaps more polarization on other types of emotions. More knowledge is therefore needed about the factors influencing emotional reactions.

Additional studies in the effects of emotions are also needed in order to test whether the effect of emotions are nonmonotonic. If the effect of emotions is strongest at the moderate level of activation this has implications for our understanding of what a strong frame is. Finally, the effect of other types of emotions should be explored.

8.6 Final Conclusion

Should we be worried about the effect of emotions? When discussing the impact of emotions in politics, the implication is often that any influence of emotions is problematic and should be avoided. This view stems from the general view that sees emotions and cognition as polar opposites.

In this dissertation, the view on emotions has been challenged in several ways. Firstly, the dissertation shows that it does not make sense to lump all emotions together and discuss the *general* role of emotions in politics. The findings show that emotions vary greatly in their effects and are in line with theories on emotions which have emphasized the differential effect of emotions. It is therefore necessary to divide the conclusions about the impact of emotions in politics according to the type of emotions in question.

Secondly, when examining the effect of specific emotion, the findings show that emotions and cognition are not diametrically opposed. Instead, emotions are closely linked to the conscious and cognitive processes. Anxiety increases the wish for more information and also seems to increase the likelihood that people will engage in cognitive decision processes.

Finally, the findings show that emotions not only influence political life when emotionally engaging debates take place. As all the frames examined

evoked emotions, emotions most likely have an effect no matter how the political debate is shaped. Consequently, it is not possible to ensure 'rational' deliberation by not using emotional appeals. Emotions are a natural and all-pervading element of politics.

The overall conclusion in this dissertation is therefore in many ways encouraging to those who worry about the devastating impact of emotion and emotional appeals on the political debate and public opinion. Emotional appeals are not characterized with a different processing than less emotionally engaging messages. An increased use of emotional appeals does not lead to a worse democratic debate and decision-making. On the contrary, emotions can sometimes increase the degree of deliberation and political interest.

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Appendix A: Healthcare-study

The experimental stimuli

A shared introduction

In the public debate, the massive increase in treatments in private hospitals is discussed. The increase is among other things a result of the fact that employers can take out a private health insurance to their employees which is tax-free. This means that employees do not have to pay tax of the insurances and at the same time, the employer can deduct the cost of the premiums as business expenses.

Pro-argument:

There has been some debate about this question. The way too long waiting lists of public hospitals mean that the public sector is not able to ensure quick and good treatment. Therefore some people think that it is a good thing that many people can receive free treatments on private hospitals nowadays. By receiving some patients, the private hospitals can namely help cutting the waiting lists in the public sector. The private hospitals thereby ensure quicker treatment for everybody.

The private health insurance can therefore be considered as a positive development: The employers take a social responsibility for their employees and at the same time they help solving the problem with waiting lists in the public sector.

The private health care can therefore give greater personal freedom and create a healthy competition in the health care market.

Con-argument:

There has been some debate about this question. Some fear that private hospitals will eliminate the equal access to treatment in the health care system. A person with private health insurance can jump the queue by being treated in the private sector. But not everybody has equal opportunity to be covered by a private health insurance. Pensioners, unemployed and public employees are obvious examples of people who are worse off than people

with private health insurance. If you do not have insurance, you just have to stay on the waiting list.

Moreover, the private health care may increase the waiting lists in the public sector. The reason for this is that private hospitals can attract public hospital staff by offering them higher wages, and thereby they increase the problems in the understaffed public sector and consequently make the waiting lists even longer.

Private health insurance can therefore distort the Danish health care system because sick people no longer have equal opportunities.

Measurement

Measures of attitudes towards private healthcare

Attitudes towards private healthcare is measured on a 5-point scale and recoded to range from 0 (against) to 1 (in favor).

- “Now comes some political statements which you may think of as a discussion between two persons, A and B. Which view is closest to your own? It is discussed the question about whether to outsource tasks handled by the welfare state, for instance hospitals. A says: We should to a greater extent outsource tasks handled by the welfare state. - B says: Tasks handled by the welfare state should continue to be handled by the public sector in the same degree as today. (1: totally agree with A to 5: Totally agree with B).”

Measures of economic values:

- Now comes some political statements which you may think of as a discussion between two persons, A and B. Which view is closest to your own?
- First a question about living standards and incomes. A says: The differences in living standards and incomes are still too great in our country. - B says: The levelling of incomes has gone far enough. Those income differences that still remain should largely be maintained. (1: totally agree with A to 5: Totally agree with B)
- In politics one should strive to give everybody the same economic conditions, no matter what their education and employment is. (1: Disagree to 5: Agree)
- In order to create progress and prosperity in the society, one has to accept a certain amount of inequality. (1: Disagree to 5: Agree)

- Because people have different abilities, it is natural to accept some inequality. (1: Disagree to 5: Agree)
- High incomes ought to be taxed more strongly than they are today. (1: Disagree to 5: Agree)
- A certain amount of inequality is acceptable since people differ in their efforts or contributions. (1: Disagree to 5: Agree)
- Many public activities could be made both better and cheaper if left to private firms

Political awareness

Here are some questions about politics. There are many complicated questions in politics so remember that it is always possible to answer “don't know”.

- “Which political parties are in the governing coalition?”
- “Among the Danish political parties, some more than others support immigrants and refugees. Do you think The Social Liberals are more or less supportive?”
- What party do you believe, Connie Hedegaard belongs to?
- “Some political parties attach greater importance than others to immediate tax cuts. Do you think The Conservative Party is among those attaching greater or lesser importance to tax cuts?”
- “Among the Danish political parties, some more than others support sending troops to Iraq. Do you think The Red-Green Alliance is more or less supportive?”
- “Among the Danish political parties, some more than others support privatization of the public sector. Do you think The Liberals are more or less supportive?”

The answers were combined into an index and recoded to range from 0 (low) to 1 (high).

Perceived strength

The index measuring perceived strength consists of two questions measured on a 5-point scale. The index is recoded to range from 0 (weak) to 1 (strong).

- “How strong do you think the arguments in the text were” (“1= very weak” to “5 = very strong)
- “How well did the text argue for its position” (“1= not well at all” to “5 = very well”)

Confidence in existing information

- Did you feel that you had enough information to make up your mind about the question about private healthcare?

Appendix B: Asylum-study

Experimental Stimuli

A shared introduction (all frames)

The law permits asylum seekers to remain in Denmark if they are personally persecuted. If they are not personally persecuted, they will be rejected and sent back to their country of origin.

After a series of rulings by the flygtningecævn, the debate has flared. You will now be presented with a short extract from a letter to the editor from his debate. It is important, that you read the whole extract before you move on.

Thematic pro-frame

I believe that it is wrong to send rejected asylum seekers back to their country of origin.

I saw a study in the television the other day, which showed that many areas in the countries of origin are so unsafe that it is not possible to guarantee the safety of the rejected asylum seekers. It is not enough to take into consideration whether the rejected asylum seekers are *personally* persecuted. If the countries of origin are so unsafe as the study shows, then it does not matter whether the rejected asylum seekers are personally persecuted or not, because they would still be in danger when they return.

It is not right to send people back if their safety is at risk.

Episodic pro-frame

I believe that it is wrong to send rejected asylum seekers back to their country of origin.

The other day I saw a little girl in a TV- program who in a tearful voice described her country of origin in this way: "I only know it from tv, where you only see death and destruction." She came to Denmark five years ago as a small child, but she and her mother will be sent back according to the authorities. " My uncle back home tells me that dead bodies are often lying in the streets", she said with a frightened expression. Not surprisingly the girl also explained that she had nightmares every night about hers and her mother's future. How can we send such a poor little girl back to a country, which she does not know and where she does not speak or understand the language?

It is not right to send people back if their safety is a risk.

Thematic con-frame

I believe that the rejected asylum seekers should be sent back to their country of origin.

I saw a study in the television the other day, which showed that most areas in the countries of origin are so safe that there is only a small risk for people sent back. Those people, who claim that the areas are unsafe, forget that it has been investigated by Danish authorities – and rejected. Often it is more the case that people have fled poor economic conditions rather because they are in danger. We cannot help all the people in the world who are unhappy with their economic situation.

The rejected asylum seekers can be sent back without problems, because they are not in danger and they are only here for economic reasons.

Episodic con-frame

I believe that the rejected asylum seekers should be sent back to their country of origin.

The other day I saw a TV-programme, in which a young rejected asylum seeker complained and said that "I will tell everyone back home how selfish you Danes are." He did not want to go back, because he "could not have fun, get a job or economic help back home", he explained. He was not persecuted, even though he had told the authorities that he was. On the contrary, he admitted that he had been on holiday back home. He did not speak Danish, so it is very likely that he would not be able to get a job in Denmark. The only reason why he would like to stay was probably only so that he can exploit our welfare state here in Denmark. People, who are not persecuted, but only come here to exploit our welfare and generosity, should not be given permission to remain in Denmark.

The rejected asylum seekers can be sent back without problems, because they are not in danger and they are only here for economic reasons.

Measurement

Attitudes to sending rejected asylum-seekers back

The index measuring attitudes to letting the rejected asylum-seekers stay consists of two questions measured on a 7-point scale (" -3 = strongly disagree to "3 = strongly agree). The index is recoded to range from 0 (in favor of sending them back) to 1 (against sending them back).

"To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements"

- Rejected asylum-seekers should always be repatriated
- We have an obligation to help rejected asylum-seekers

Importance of considerations

“In the discussion of what to do with rejected asylum-seekers, different considerations can be taken into account. How important do you think the following considerations are?” The responses were measured on a 7-point scale (1 = “Not at all important consideration”; 7 = “Very important consideration”) and recoded to range from 0 to 1. The four considerations were:

- show consideration for whether the rejected asylum-seekers are in danger
- show considerations for limiting the number of permanent residence permits
- show considerations for individual circumstances
- show considerations for not placing strains on Denmark’s economy and welfare society

Content of considerations

“In your opinion, what might be the consequences of Denmark’s handling of rejected asylum-seekers? The consequence of the Danish handling of cases is...” Subsequently came a list of different consequences which was to be rated on 7-point scales (1 = “Not at all likely”; 7 = “Very likely”). These answers were combined into two indexes (positive and negative consequences) and recoded to range from 0 (not likely) to 1 (very likely).

Positive consequences

- That only people in need obtain a permanent residence permit
- That we reject asylum-seekers if they only come because of our welfare benefits
- that we do not bogged down by asylum-seekers

Negative consequences

- that many are not granted asylum even though they ought to
- that rejected asylum-seekers are repatriated even though their life is in danger
- that the rulings of the public authorities show no humanity

Left-right placement

A respondent's self- placement on a 11-point left/right ideological scale where 0 indicates left and 10 indicates right (recoded to 0-1).

Political awareness

Here are some questions about politics. There are many complicated questions in politics so remember that it is always possible to answer "don't know".

- Which political parties are in the governing coalition?"
- "Among the Danish political parties, some more than others support immigrants and refugees. Do you think The Social Liberals are more or less supportive?"
- What party do you believe, Lars Barfoed belongs to?
- How many opt-outs do Denmark have in EU

The answers were combined into an index and recoded to range from 0 (low) to 1 (high).

Perceived strength

The index measuring perceived strength consists of two questions measured on a 7-point scale. The index is recoded to range from 0 (weak) to 1 (strong).

- "How strong do you think the arguments in the text were" ("1= very weak" to "7 = very strong)
- "How well did the text argue for its position" ("1= not well at all" to "7 = very well)

Wish for more information

The index measured wish for more information consists of three questions measured on a 7-point scale. The index is recoded to range from 0 (no wish) to 1 (strong wish).

- Would you like to learn more about the arguments in favor of issuing a residence permit to rejected asylum-seekers?
- Would you like to learn more about the arguments against issuing a residence permit to rejected asylum-seekers?
- Would you like to learn more about the arguments against the issue in general?

Appendix C: Welfare-study

Experimental Stimuli

Except for the control group, the frames have the same structure, but the content varies according to the valence and the rhetoric types:

1. A shared introduction (all groups)
2. Introduction to the text (Control group, con- and pro-frames)
3. The experimental stimuli (either thematic, weak episodic, or strong episodic)
4. Ending (con- and pro-frames)

Each of these elements can be found below.

A shared introduction (all groups)

Now we will turn to some questions about the ceiling on welfare benefits. Setting a ceiling on welfare benefits means that the welfare benefits automatically drop to a smaller amount when people have been on welfare for six months.

Control-group

In the political debate during the last couple of weeks, arguments in favor and against the ceiling on welfare benefits have been discussed.

Experimental Stimuli: Pro-frames

Introduction (all pro-frames)

In the political debate during the last couple of weeks, the ceiling on welfare benefits has been criticized by many. Now you will be presented with a short extract from a letter to the editor from his debate. It is important, that you read the whole extract before you move on.

Thematic Pro-frame

I believe that it was a mistake to introduce the ceiling on welfare benefits. On TV the other day, I heard about a study which showed that many of those who are affected by the ceiling have actually tried to get a job. They just haven't been able to get one because they don't have the right qualifications. In other words, the only consequence of the ceiling on welfare benefits is

that a weak group is made even weaker and thereby their chances of getting a job are reduced even more. The result is greater inequality in society and more people being dependent on welfare benefits.

Weak Episodic Pro-frame

I believe that it was a mistake to introduce the ceiling on welfare benefits. On TV the other day, I saw a program about a mother who was affected by the ceiling even though she had applied for positions. She couldn't get a job and therefore her economy was under pressure. Her family could no longer afford the most basic items: "I don't have money to buy Christmas presents to my children for", she told. But families should not worry about whether Christmas presents can be afforded.

Strong Episodic Pro-frame

I believe that it was a mistake to introduce the ceiling on welfare benefits. On TV the other day, I saw a program about a single mother who was affected by the ceiling even though she had applied for several positions. She couldn't get a job because of a workplace injury and this had disastrous consequences for her economy. Her family could no longer afford the most basic items. Despite the cold, the children had to wear cheap shoes from Føtex and she couldn't afford birthday parties. "My children have asked me whether Santa Claus would come this year", she told, and that would break any mother's heart. Small children should not worry about grown-up stuff like economy and whether Christmas presents can be afforded.

Ending (All Pro-frames)

Therefore, I believe that we should get rid of the ceiling because it hurts the weakest people in society.

Experimental Stimuli: Con-frames

Introduction (all con-frames)

In the political debate during the last couple of weeks, the ceiling on welfare benefits has been supported by many. Now you will be presented with a short extract from a letter to the editor from his debate. It is important, that you read the whole extract before you move on.

Thematic con-frame

I believe that it would be very wrong to get rid of the ceiling on welfare benefits. On TV the other day, I saw a study which showed that more people

have found regular work after the ceiling was enacted. At the same time, the study showed that there are still many who are not really trying to get a job. We cannot afford to have many people passively receiving benefits from the government. Consequently, we need to reduce the income of this group because that is the only strategy that works.

Weak Episodic con-frame

I believe that it would be very wrong to get rid of the ceiling on welfare benefits. On TV the other day, I saw a program about someone receiving welfare benefits. "I don't miss having a job", he told. Therefore, he had only applied for a few jobs. He had quickly lost the few jobs he had had. His explanation was "I have difficulties meeting on time and going to work every day". It does not make sense that society needs to pay for people doing nothing. And the only way to affect people like him is to reduce their income.

Strong Episodic con-frame

I believe that it would be very wrong to get rid of the ceiling on welfare benefits. On TV the other day, I saw a young guy receiving welfare benefits. "I don't want to get a job. I will rather relax with my friends and play computer", he told. Therefore, he had not applied for a single job. He had quickly lost the few jobs he had had. His explanation was "I have difficulties getting up in the morning and I don't really bother to go to work every single day". It does not make sense that society needs to pay for young, healthy men doing nothing and just sponge off the state. And the only way to affect people like him is to reduce their income.

Ending (all con-frames)

Therefore, I believe that we should keep the ceiling because it is the only way that we can force people into getting a job.

Measures

Attitudes to the ceiling on welfare benefits

The index measuring attitudes to the ceiling on welfare benefits consists of four questions measured on a 7-point scale (" -3 = strongly disagree to "3 = strongly agree). The index is recoded to range from 0 (against removing the ceiling) to 1 (in favor of removing the ceiling).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements

- "the ceiling on social security should be abolished"

- “the ceiling on social security is an effective way of getting people a steady job”
- “the ceiling on social security is a good idea”.
- It is a good idea to cut down social benefits after 6 months.

Importance of considerations

“Thinking about the welfare benefit rates, which considerations are in your opinion important? How important do you think the following considerations are?” The responses were measured on a 7-point scale (1 = “Not at all important consideration”; 7 = “Very important consideration”) and recoded to range from 0 to 1. The four considerations were:

- “There should always be an incentive for people to take a job instead of receiving welfare benefits”
- “Nobody is to live in poverty”
- “Government expenditures on welfare benefits should not be too expensive”
- “Unemployed should have benefit rates making it possible to maintain a decent standard of living conditions.”

Content of considerations

“In your opinion, what might be the reason for some people to receive welfare benefits? A lot of people receive welfare benefits . . .” Subsequently came a list of different explanations which was to be rated on 7-point scales (1 = “Not at all important explanation”; 7 = “Very important explanation”). These answers were combined into two index (internal and external attribution) and recoded to range from 0 (not important) to 1 (very important).

Internal attribution items:

- “. . . because welfare benefit rates are so generous that people have no incentive to find a job”
- “. . . because they lack proper moral standards and ability to pull themselves together”
- “. . . because they need to learn not to be a burden to society”
- “. . . because they don’t do enough in order to find a job and get on with their lives.”

External attribution items:

- “. . . because even if they really try to get on with their lives, some people simply fail to succeed on today’s labor market”

- "... because some people just have bad luck"
- "... because the country's economy does not provide the right conditions for people to find a job."

Left-right placement

A respondent's self- placement on a 11-point left/right ideological scale where 0 indicates left and 10 indicates right (recoded to 0-1).

Political awareness

"Finally, here are some questions about politics. There are many complicated questions in politics so remember that it is always possible to answer "don't know".

- "Which political parties are in the governing coalition?" (list of parties given)
- "Among the Danish political parties, some more than others support immigrants and refugees. Do you think The Social Liberals are more or less supportive?" ("1 = less supportive", "2 = neither nor" and "3 = More supportive")
- "Some political parties attach greater importance than others to immediate tax cuts. Do you think The Conservative Party is among those attaching greater or lesser importance to tax cuts?" ("1 = less importance", "2 = neither nor" and "3 = More importance")
- What party do you believe, Connie Hedegaard belongs to? (list of parties given)

The answers were combined into an index and recoded to range from 0 (low) to 1 (high).

Perceived strength

The index measuring perceived strength consists of two questions measured on a 7-point scale ("-3 = strongly disagree to "3 = strongly agree). The index is recoded to range from 0 (weak) to 1 (strong).

"To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements"

- "The arguments in text were very strong"
- The text provided strong arguments for its position"

English Summary

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the first chapter I set out the fundamental issue this thesis deals with. The starting point of the thesis is to analyze how political communication affects people's political views. Previous research has shown that the interpretation and presentation (i.e. framing) of political topics have significant impact on people's attitudes to political issues. We know surprisingly little, however, about how frames have such an effect.

The general consensus is that emotions are important for influencing the effect political messages have. We assume that people are gripped by their emotions and that the emotions themselves thereby become a basis for opinions and actions. An appeal to emotions has therefore been seen as an effective way of making a message more powerful, because emotions marginalize reason. The fact that emotions have extensive impact on people's opinions has often been described as a problem in a democracy. Ideally, debates in a democratic society should be governed by reason, and reason should keep emotions under control.

Analyses of political communication also emphasize the importance of emotions. Similarly, studies of decision-making have shown that emotions are central for our ability to make decisions despite the general view that our decisions should ideally not be affected by our emotions.

It is therefore clear that the general consensus about emotions as well as studies of political messages and decision-making processes all show that emotions are indeed important to understand the effect of political communication. This important topic still remains, however, a topic that framing literature has failed to take up. This thesis will analyze the importance of emotions in the effect of political communication and analyze whether the inclusion of emotions will improve our understanding of the effect that framing has.

Chapter 2: Framing Theories

The fundamental argument in this thesis is that emotions are necessary to understand how frames have an effect. To examine this argument, however, it is necessary to investigate how framing theories have traditionally explained the effect of frames. Chapter 2 therefore outlines the traditional theories.

Because there are various types of frames, this thesis only focuses its analysis on so-called *emphasis frames*. In an emphasis frame, certain aspects of a political issue are emphasized whereas other aspects are ignored. A framing effect arises when the emphasis in the communication of a political issue has an impact on peoples' opinions. An emphasis frame can either be connected to the specific political topic (*issue-specific frame*) or have characteristics common to several political topics (*generic frames*). Both types of frame are relevant for our understanding of the effect of political messages.

In explaining the effect of frames, traditional framing theories have emphasized peoples' considerations about the political topic in question. Framing theories presume that people's standpoints are determined by the average of all considerations for and against the issue. According to traditional theories, frames have an effect by influencing either the contents of these considerations, the accessibility of the individual consideration or the applicability of the various considerations. Peoples' different reactions to frames are explained by referring to peoples' different predispositions and different political awareness. There has been limited study of why certain frames are more powerful than others, but the credibility of sources and the relationship to fundamental cultural predispositions may be significant.

By focusing on considerations and by using a relatively mathematical decision-making model, the traditional framing theories have a very cognitive approach. At the end of this chapter, these traditional theories are criticized for their one-sided focus on cognitive elements. Based on studies of political communication and decision-making, it appears that emotions are a potentially important variable, which may have been overlooked in theories and studies of framing effects. Chapter 3 examines how emotions can be included in this traditional model of framing effects.

Chapter 3: The Theoretical Model

Chapter 3 introduces the theoretical background for the thesis. The fundamental argument is that emotions are mediators of framing effects in a similar way to considerations in the traditional theories. Emotions are also expected to be part of the explanation why frames affect people in different ways. These two fundamental arguments have a series of implications for our understanding of the effect of frames and raise a number of new research questions.

Firstly, by introducing emotions as mediators we need to understand how frames affect emotions. This involves studying both whether frames are able

to affect peoples' emotions and whether it is possible to control which emotions are activated and the intensity of these emotional reactions. Secondly, by introducing a new type of mediator, I also raise the question of the nature of the relationship between the two types of mediators and whether emotions can mediate the effects of all frames. Finally, it is also important to understand what effects emotions have on peoples' opinions. Both the intensity of people's emotional reactions and the type of emotions can have an effect. This can have an impact on the effect of frames on opinions and on the importance of various mediators.

The limited number of studies of the impact of emotions on framing effects has not been able to give an adequate response to these questions. It is therefore necessary to consider in greater detail the effect of emotions with reference to the extensive literature on emotions. This chapter therefore introduces a theoretical definition and limitation of the concept of emotion. It then presents conclusions from three central understandings of emotions. The first is the *appraisal* approach. This approach explains emotional reactions by looking at peoples' evaluation of a situation on a number of parameters. These different evaluations lead to different emotions, because each emotion is connected to a certain pattern in the evaluations. Then the *affect as information* understanding is introduced, which perceives emotions as information which can become part of the decision-making process and in this way influence peoples' opinions directly. Finally the *affective intelligence* approach is considered. This argues that anxiety is a special emotion because it does not affect opinions directly but instead affects decision-making processes. These three approaches make up the theoretic frame for the understanding of emotions in the thesis and it is therefore in these three approaches that the answers to the questions above are to be found.

Chapter 4: Design

In chapter 4 the research design for the thesis is presented. The main claims of the dissertation are analyzed in three different studies. One study analyzes views on private hospitals (the healthcare-study). The second study analyzes attitudes to unsuccessful asylum seekers (the asylum-study). The third and final study analyzes attitudes to limiting social security payments (welfare-study). The studies are different in a number of ways - they use different topics, participants, types of frames, collection methods and different measures for central variables. But all three studies use the experimental method as this is the most appropriate method to study the causal model, which was presented in chapter 3. The chapter also presents the considerations behind the

construction of the various frames and the choice of emotions. In the health-care-study the effect of issue-specific frames is analyzed and the relevant emotions are considered to be anger, enthusiasm and anxiety. The asylum- and welfare-studies analyze the effect of stories focusing on individual cases (episodic frames) and stories which have a more general social angle (thematic frames). The relevant emotions in these studies are anger, sympathy and anxiety. Finally, the advantages and disadvantages of various measurements for emotions and considerations are discussed at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 5: The Effect of Frames on Emotions

Chapter 5 focuses on the effect of frames on emotions. The chapter discusses whether frames are in general capable of affecting peoples' emotions and whether it is possible to control the intensity and type of emotional reaction.

The first step is to work out a number of hypotheses which can be the starting point for an empirical analysis of the research questions. Based on the theoretical approaches discussed in chapter 3, the chapter formulates five hypotheses. The analysis shows that there is evidence for all of the hypotheses and that all frames have an effect on emotions. The frames, which were designed to evoke anger and sympathy, have the anticipated positive effect on these emotions. In the healthcare-study the positive frames have a positive effect on enthusiasm, as expected, whereas the negative frame leads to more anger. At the same time the results show, as expected, that the effects on frames on anxiety are independent of the direction of the argument. In other words, it is possible to some extent to control peoples' emotional reactions. It is even possible to vary the intensity of emotional reactions. The way of doing this is to let information in the text vary in accordance with the patterns of appraisals which create certain emotions - in line with the appraisal-approach.

Chapter 6: Emotions as Mediators

The analysis is continued in chapter 6, which seeks to clarify whether emotions are indeed mediators of framing effects. Once again, hypotheses are formed regarding the effect of emotions on opinions and the relationship between traditional mediators and emotions.

As anticipated, the analysis shows that anger, enthusiasm, and sympathy have a direct effect on peoples' opinions. The expectation in relation to anxiety is, however, that this emotion will not have a direct effect, and this is

confirmed in the health- and asylum-studies. In the welfare-study this hypothesis is not confirmed. The analysis shows, however, that it is anger and enthusiasm/sympathy which mediate the effect of all types of frames. Emotions are therefore equally important for the understanding of specific, thematic and episodic frames. In relation to these, the traditional cognitive mediators are not as important mediators of framing effects.

Finally the analysis also shows that in comparison to the traditional model, emotions contribute to our understanding of how frames affect peoples' opinions. Consequently, there is nothing to suggest that emotions and the traditional considerations are merely two different measurements of the same underlying process.

Chapter 7: The influence of Emotions on the Effect of Frames

This chapter analyses whether emotions also determine how strong an effect frames have on peoples' opinions. Traditionally it has been thought that if a text creates a powerful emotion, then this text will have an equally strong effect. The analysis confirms that people also perceive frames, which creates stronger emotions, to be more powerful. The analysis of the real effect of intensive emotions paints, however, another picture. Here it becomes clear that intense anger and sympathy in several instances actually weaken the effect of the episodic frames in the asylum- and welfare-studies. In other words people, who react in accordance with the intended emotions, are less affected. This result may be due to the fact that emotions primarily have an effect if people are not conscious of them.

Based on the affective intelligence approach it was to be expected that anxiety would reinforce the effect of frames. This hypothesis was confirmed in the episodic frames in the asylum- and welfare-studies. Although anxiety does not mediate framing effects, the analysis therefore indicates that the effect of episodic frames will be reinforced when people feel anxiety.

The analysis continues to consider whether the impact of various mediators is affected by the type of emotion. Again it was expected that anxiety would have a special effect. Anxiety is understood to be a sign that people have been presented with information which is in conflict with their existing knowledge. In theory this should cause people to reconsider their opinions and seek new information, which can reduce their uncertainty surrounding their opinions. The analysis confirms that all emotions except for anxiety strengthen the feeling of having sufficient information. As expected it is the feeling of anxiety which increases the desire to obtain further information. At the same time the analyses also indicate that the cognitive mediators have

greater effect if people feel anxiety. Chapter 7 consequently shows that anxiety is an important factor for our understanding of why frames vary in their effects.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The results of the analysis show that emotions play a central role for our understanding of framing effects. This thesis shows that emotions mediate all types of frames. If the thesis had only shown emotions to be relevant in frames with strong appeal to emotions, the theoretical as well as practical consequences of the results would have been limited. Since emotions are clear mediators of all the studied frames, it is clear that emotions are relevant for our understanding of framing effects generally. This thesis therefore contributes new insights on how frames generally have an effect.

By setting up a theoretical model to investigate how the type and intensity of emotional reactions can be controlled, this thesis also contributes to our understanding of what factors in the frame itself are important. The thesis also further develops existing studies and knowledge by analyzing the relationship between traditional mediators and emotions. Finally, the analysis shows that the effect of emotions is more complicated than generally understood. Intense emotions do not automatically entail powerful framing effects. By analyzing anger, sympathy/enthusiasm and anxiety, the thesis has also been able to show that emotions have different effects. Whereas the other emotions act as mediators, anxiety is a moderator of framing effects.

This thesis has only been able to study a relatively small part of the many questions caused by the introduction of emotions into the study of framing effects. Further studies are therefore necessary to understand fully the role of emotions in framing effects.

Kapitel 1: Introduktion

I det første kapitel bliver den grundlæggende problemstilling præsenteret. Afhandlingen vil undersøge, hvordan politisk kommunikation har en effekt på folks holdninger. Tidligere forskning har vist, at fortolkninger og vinklinger (såkaldt *framing*) af politiske sager har stor betydning for folks holdninger til disse politiske spørgsmål. Men vi ved overraskende lidt om, hvorfor og hvordan disse vinklinger af budskaber har en effekt.

Den generelle opfattelse er, at følelser er vigtige for effekten af politiske budskaber. Vi antager, at folk bliver grebet af deres følelser, og at følelser dermed i sig selv bliver grundlag for holdninger og handlinger. Appeller til følelser bliver derfor også betragtet som en måde at gøre et budskab stærkere på, fordi følelser sætter fornuften ud af spil. Netop fordi følelser antages at have stor indflydelse, så bliver de ofte opfattet som et demokratisk problem. Ideelt set skal den demokratiske debat derfor være styret af fornuften, og fornuften skal holde følelser under kontrol. Undersøgelser af politisk kommunikation understreger også følelsernes vigtighed. Disse undersøgelser viser, at politikerne ofte appellerer til følelser. Endelig viser studier af beslutningstagning, at følelser er helt centrale for vores evne til at træffe beslutninger. Selvom idealet i mange beslutningsprocesser er at holde følelser uden for indflydelse, så viser studier altså, at realiteterne er det modsatte: følelser er nødvendige for at kunne træffe en beslutning.

Dermed peger både den generelle opfattelse af følelser, politikernes brug af følelser og undersøgelser af følelsers betydning for beslutningstagning på, at følelser er vigtige for at forstå effekten af politisk kommunikation. Alligevel er følelser mere eller mindre fraværende i framing litteraturen. Denne afhandling vil undersøge følelsernes rolle i effekten af politisk kommunikation og undersøge om inddragelsen af følelser kan forbedre vores forståelse af hvordan framing har en effekt.

Kapitel 2: Framing teorier

Det grundlæggende argument i afhandlingen er, at følelser er nødvendige for at forstå, hvordan frames har en effekt. Men for at undersøge det er det nødvendigt at forstå, hvordan framing teorier traditionelt har forklaret effekten af frames. I kapitel 2 skitseres derfor de traditionelle teorier.

Fordi der findes vidt forskellige typer af frames, er det nødvendigt at begrænse afhandlingen til kun at undersøge såkaldte *emphasis frames*. I et

emphasis frame bliver der lagt vægt på nogle aspekter af et politisk spørgsmål mens andre aspekter bliver ignoreret. En framing effekt opstår, når vægtningen i formidlingen af et politisk problem påvirker folks holdninger. Et emphasis frame kan både være knyttet til det specifikke politiske emne (*issue-specific frames*) eller have karakteristika som går på tværs af forskellige politiske emner (*generic frames*). Begge typer af frames er relevante for vores forståelse af effekten af politiske budskaber.

Når traditionelle framing teorier forklarer, hvordan frames har en effekt, så spiller folks overvejelser omkring emnet en central rolle. Framing teorier antager nemlig, at folks holdninger bliver bestemt af gennemsnittet af de overvejelser for og imod, som de kan komme i tanke om. Traditionelle teorier forklarer dermed framing effekter ved, at frames påvirker enten indholdet af overvejelser, tilgængeligheden af de enkelte overvejelser eller vægtningen af de forskellige overvejelser. Forskelle i folks reaktioner på frames forklares ved at folk har forskellige værdier og forskellig forståelse af politiske spørgsmål. Viden omkring hvorfor nogle frames er stærkere end andre er begrænset, men kilders troværdighed og forhold til grundlæggende kulturelle værdier kan have en betydning.

De traditionelle framing teorier har med deres fokus på overvejelser og deres brug af en forholdsvis matematisk beslutningsmodel en meget kognitiv natur. I slutningen af kapitlet kritiseres dette ensidige fokus på det kognitive. På grundlag af studier af politisk kommunikation og beslutningstagning lader det til, at følelser er en potentiel vigtig variabel, som er blevet mere eller mindre overset i teorier og studier af framing effekter.

Kapitel 3: Teoretisk model

I kapitel tre bliver den teoretiske ramme for afhandlingen præsenteret. Det grundlæggende argument er, at følelser er mediatorer af framing effekter på linje med overvejelserne i de traditionelle teorier. Følelser forventes yderligere at være en del af forklaringen på, hvorfor frames påvirker folk forskelligt. Disse to grundlæggende argumenter har en lang række af implikationer for vores forståelse af effekten af frames og leder frem til en række nye spørgsmål.

For det første betyder introduktionen af følelser som mediatorer, at det bliver vigtigt at forstå, hvordan frames har en effekt på følelser. Det er både et spørgsmål om, hvorvidt frames overhovedet kan påvirke folks følelser. Men det er også et spørgsmål om, hvorvidt det er muligt at kontrollere, hvilke følelser folk reagerer med og intensiteten af disse følelsesreaktioner. For det andet foranlediger introduktionen af en ny type af mediatorer til spørgsmå-

let, hvad forholdet mellem de to typer af mediatorer er, og om følelser kan mediere effekten af alle frames. Endelig bliver det vigtigt at forstå, hvilke effekter følelser har på folks holdninger. Både intensiteten af folks følelsesreaktioner og typen af følelse kan have en effekt. Det kan både have indflydelse på effekten af frames på holdninger men også på betydningen af de forskellige mediatorer.

De få studier af følelsers betydning for framing effekter er ikke i stand til at give fyldestgørende svar på disse spørgsmål. Det er derfor nødvendigt at søge viden omkring effekten af følelser i den kæmpe litteratur omkring følelser. Dette kapitel introducerer derfor en teoretisk definition og afgrænsning af begrebet følelse. Herefter præsenteres indsigter fra tre centrale forståelser af følelser. Først præsenteres fra *appraisal* tilgangen. Denne tilgang forklarer følelsesreaktioner ud fra folks evalueringer af en situation på en række parametre. Disse forskellige evalueringer leder frem til forskellige følelser, fordi hver følelse er knyttet til bestemte mønstre i evalueringerne. Derefter præsenteres indsigter fra *affect as information* forståelsen, som ser følelser som information der kan indgå i beslutningsprocesser og dermed kan påvirke folks holdninger direkte. Endelig præsenteres *affective intelligence* tilgangen, som argumenterer for, at ængstelse er en speciel følelse, fordi den ikke påvirker holdninger direkte men i stedet påvirker beslutningsprocesser. Det er disse tre tilgange, der danner den teoretiske rammer for forståelsen af følelser i afhandlingen og det er hermed i disse tre tilgange at svarene på spørgsmålene ovenfor skal findes.

Kapitel 4: Design

I kapitel 4 præsenteres afhandlingens forskningsdesign. Afhandlingens problemstillinger bliver undersøgt i tre forskellige studier. Et studie undersøger holdningen til private hospitaler (sundhedsstudie). Et studie undersøger holdninger til afviste asylansøgere (asylstudie). Og endelig undersøger det sidste studie holdninger til loftet over kontanthjælp (Kontanthjælpsstudiet). Studierne adskiller sig fra hinanden på en lang række af punkter i og med at de benytter forskellige emner, deltagere, typer af frames, indsamlingsmetoder og forskellige mål for central variable. Fælles for alle tre studier er dog det eksperimentelle design, da det er den bedste metode til at undersøge den kausal-model, som blev præsenteret i kapitel 3. Kapitlet præsenterer også overvejelserne bag konstruktionen af de forskellige frames og valget af følelser. I sundhedsstudiet undersøges effekten af issue-specific frames og de relevante følelser vurderes til at være vrede, entusiasme og ængstelse. I asylstudiet og i kontanthjælpsstudiet undersøges effekten af historier, der fokuse-

rer på individhistorier (*episodiske frames*) og historier, der har en mere generel samfundsmæssig vinkel (*tematiske frames*). De relevante følelser i disse studier er vrede, sympati og ængstelse. Endelig bliver fordele og ulemperne ved de forskellige mål for følelser og overvejelser bliver diskuteret i slutningen af kapitlet.

Kapitel 5: Effekten af frames på følelser

Fokus i kapitel 5 er på effekten af frames på følelser. De overordnede spørgsmål, der behandles i dette kapitel, er, hvorvidt frames generelt er i stand til at påvirke folks følelser, og hvorvidt det er muligt at kontrollere intensiteten og typen af følelsers reaktioner.

Det første skridt er imidlertid udformningen af konkrete hypoteser, der kan danne udgangspunktet for en empirisk undersøgelse af de generelle forskningsspørgsmål. På grundlag af de teoretiske tilgange præsenteret i kapitel 3 formuleres derfor fem hypoteser. Analysen viser, at der er støtte til alle hypoteserne, og at alle frames har en effekt på følelser. De frames, som blev designet til at fremprovokere vrede og sympati, har derfor den forventede positive effekt på henholdsvis vrede og sympati. I sundhedsstudiet har det positive frame som forventet en positiv effekt på entusiasme mens det negative frame fører til mere vrede. Samtidig tyder resultaterne på, at effekten af frames på ængstelse som forventet er uafhængig af retningen på argumentet. Det er med andre ord muligt til en vis udstrækning at kontrollere folks følelsesreaktioner. Endelig er muligt at variere intensiteten af følelsesreaktionerne. Det kan gøres ved at informationerne i teksten varierer i graden af overensstemmelse med de mønstre af overvejelser, som ifølge appraisal-tilgangen leder frem til bestemte følelser.

Kapitel 6: Følelser som mediatorer

Analysen fortsættes i kapitel 6, hvor fokus er på, om følelser virkelig er mediatorer af framing effekter. Endnu gang opstilles der konkrete hypoteser omkring effekten af følelser på holdningerne og omkring forholdet mellem de traditionelle mediatorer og følelser.

Analysen viser, at vrede, entusiasme og sympati som forventet har en direkte effekt på folks holdninger. Forventningen til ængstelse derimod var, at denne følelse ikke ville have en direkte effekt, hvilket bliver bekræftet i sundhedsstudiet og i asylstudiet. I kontanthjælpsstudiet bliver denne hypotese dog ikke bekræftet. Analysen viser imidlertid, at det er vrede og entusiasme/sympati som medierer effekten af alle typer frames. Følelser er dermed lige vigtige i forståelse af issue-specific, tematiske og episodiske frames. De

traditionelle kognitive mediatorer er derimod ikke lige så vigtige mediatorer af framing effekter.

Endelig viser Analysen at i forhold til den traditionelle model, så bidrager følelser til vores forståelse af, hvordan frames har en effekt på folks holdninger. Der er således ikke noget, der tyder på, at følelser og de traditionelle overvejelser blot er to forskellige mål af den samme underliggende proces.

Kapitel 7: Følelsers indflydelse på effekten af frames

I det sidste analysekapitel bliver det undersøgt, om følelser også har betydning for, hvor stor en effekt frames har på folks holdninger. Den traditionelle opfattelse er, at jo stærkere følelser, en tekst frembringer, jo stærkere må denne tekst virke. Analysen bekræfter, at folk også opfatter frames, der frembringer stærke følelser, som værende stærkere. Men analysen af den reelle effekt af intense følelser giver dog et andet billede. Her viser det sig, at intens vrede og sympati i flere tilfælde faktisk svækker effekten af de episodiske frames i asylstudiet og i kontanthjælpsstudiet. Med andre ord: Dem, der reagerer med de tilsigtede følelser, bliver mindre påvirket. Dette resultat kan skyldes, at følelser primært har en effekt, hvis folk ikke er direkte bevidste om dem.

På grundlag af affective intelligence tilgangen er det til gengæld forventet, at ængstelse skal forstærke effekten af frames. Denne hypotese bliver bekræftet i de episodiske frames i asylstudiet og i kontanthjælpsstudiet. Mens ængstelse altså ikke medierer framing effekter, så tyder det på, at effekten af episodiske frames bliver forstærket, når folk føler ængstelse.

Analysen fortsætter med at undersøge, om typen af følelse har indflydelse på betydningen af de forskellige mediatorer. Igen forventes det, at ængstelse vil have en særlig effekt. Det skyldes, at ængstelse antages at være et udtryk for, at folk er blevet præsenteret med information, som er i strid med deres eksisterende viden. I teorien skulle det få folk til at stoppe op, tage deres holdninger op til genovervejelse, og søge ny information, som kan reducere deres usikkerhed omkring deres holdninger. Analysen bekræfter, at de øvrige følelser i modsætning til ængstelse styrker følelsen af at have tilstrækkelig information. Og som forventet er det ængstelse, som øger ønsket om at få ny information omkring emnet. Samtidig tyder analyserne også, at de kognitive mediatorer betyder mere, hvis folk føler meget ængstelse. Kapitel 7 viser således, at ængstelse er en vigtig følelse for vores forståelse af, hvorfor frames varierer i deres effekter.

Kapitel 8: Konklusion

Samlet set viser analyserne i afhandlingen, at følelser spiller en central rolle i forståelsen af framing effekter. Afhandlingen viser, at følelser medierer alle typer af frames. Hvis følelser kun havde været relevante ved frames med stærke følelsesappeller, så ville de teoretiske såvel som praktiske implikationer af afhandlingens resultater være begrænsede. I og med at følelser er klare mediatorer af alle de undersøgte frames, så er følelser relevante for vores forståelse af framing effekter generelt. Afhandlingen bidrager derfor med ny viden om, hvordan frames generelt har en effekt.

Ved at opstille en teoretisk skabelon for, hvordan typen og intensiteten af de følelsesmæssige reaktioner kan kontrolleres, bidrager afhandlingen også til vores forståelse af, hvilke faktorer i selve framet, som har betydning. Men afhandlingen udbygger også eksisterende studier og viden ved at undersøge forholdet mellem de traditionelle mediatorer og følelser. Endelig viste analyserne, at effekten af følelser måske er mere kompliceret, end mange tror. I hvert fald er intense følelser ikke nødvendigvis lig med stærke framing effekter. Ved at inddrage både vrede, sympati/entusiasme og ængstelse, har afhandlingen også været i stand til at påvise, at følelser har forskellige effekter. Hvor de andre følelser fungerer som mediatorer, så var ængstelse i stedet en moderator af framing effekterne.

Men afhandlingen har kun været i stand til at undersøge en lille del af de mange spørgsmål, som inkluderingen af følelser i framing effekter giver grundlag for. Der er derfor brug for flere studier af følelsers rolle i modeller af framing effekter.