



News that matters for the casualties of nuclear accidents

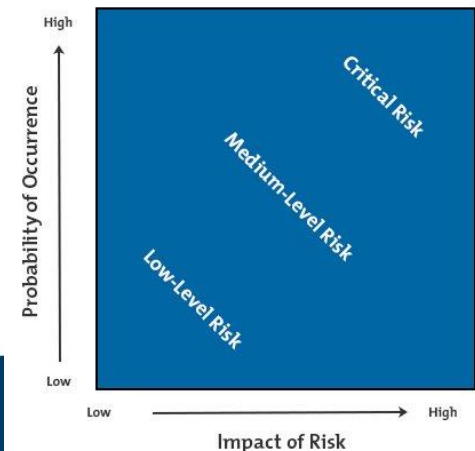
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Research problem

- Which kind of individuals show feelings of solidarity towards casualties of a nuclear accident happening abroad?
 - Solidarity = 'feelings of mutual acceptance, cooperation and mutual support in time of need (Banting & Kymlicka, 2017)
 - Nuclear accident: Fukushima Daiichi
 - Relevance: International agencies and individual donor countries depend on stock of public solidarity





Existing theory

- International comparisons point out that it's all about distance (eg. Latane, 1981; Latré, Perko & Thijssen, 2017)
- However cross-sectional research stress important individual differences as well (see overview Nussbaum, 2013)
 - 1) Perceived seriousness of the accident
 - 2) Perceived self-inflictedness of the accident
 - 3) Sense of experiential overlap or similarity of the vulnerability probability
 - 4) Empathy



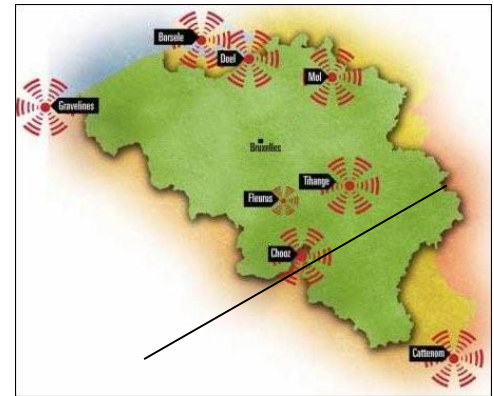
Theoretical challenge

- In need of intermediary studies linking broad international comparative research with in-depth case studies
- Inspiration: Issue framing theory
 - Episodic versus thematic framing (Iyengar & Kinder, 1991, 'News that matters')
- The importance of media context as an antecedent of individual psychometric perceptions
 - The mediation of distant suffering (Boltanski, 1999; Scott 2014; Chouliaraki, 2013)
 - Media dependency is especially salient for nuclear accidents (Müller & Thurner, 2017)



The interesting case of the federal state of Belgium

- Contexts: Flanders (FL) & Wallonia (WA)
- At first sight, Belgium is a least likely case to find significant contextual differences
 - Distance from Fukushima is analogous
 - Nuclear Energy policy is analogous
- However,
 - Media system is different
 - WA: French vs. FL: Dutch speaking
 - Differences in regional political landscape
 - WA: Social-democratic vs. FL: regional nationalist





Methodology - Data

- Stratified CAPI Survey
 - SCK•CEN Barometer (Turcanu C. and Perko T., 2013)
 - 1002 Computer Assisted Personal Interviews
 - August - September 2013
- Media Content Analysis
 - All Fukushima-related content published in two Belgian newspapers: De Standaard (Flanders) and Le Soir (Wallonia)
 - 260 articles published during the two months following the Fukushima accident (11 March 2011 to 11 May 2011)



Dependent Variable

- Scale - Feelings of solidarity

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Scale Items Solidarity

| | N | Min | Max | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-----|-----|-----|------|----------------|
| People living in the vicinity of nuclear power plants must deal by themselves with the consequences when an accident happens. | 934 | 1 | 5 | 2,12 | 1,245 |
| The inhabitants of countries having nuclear power plants on their territory must deal by themselves with the consequences of nuclear disasters. | 933 | 1 | 5 | 2,64 | 1,319 |



Regression Analyses

| Contextual Explanation of Solidarity feelings with the victims of the Fukushima accident Comparing the Flemings and Walloons in Belgium | | | | | |
|--|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | | Model 0 B (SE) | Model 1 B (SE) | Model 2 B (SE) | Model 3 B (SE) |
| INDIVIDUAL FACTORS | Age | -0.009* (0.004) | -0.012** (0.004) | -0.013** (0.004) | -0.011** (0.005) |
| | Level of education (1: Higher education; 0: Other) | 0.537** (0.161) | 0.417** (0.162) | 0.434** (0.161) | 0.467** (0.165) |
| | Degree of urbanisation (1: City; 0: Other) | -0.500** (0.170) | -0.441** (0.170) | -0.428** (0.170) | -0.442** (0.171) |
| | Empathy | 0.084*** (0.019) | 0.080*** (0.019) | 0.079*** (0.019) | 0.050* (0.020) |
| | Region (1: Wallonia; 0: Flanders) | -1.546*** (0.149) | -1.472*** (0.149) | -1.695*** (0.170) | -1.580*** (0.177) |
| | | | | | |
| MEDIA ATTENTION | Persistence (1: Enduring; 0: Only after accident) | | 0.794*** (0.169) | 0.483* (0.204) | 0.358° (0.213) |
| | Persistence X Region | | | 0.949** (0.353) | 0.813* (0.365) |
| BASIC PERCEPTIONS | Seriousness of accident | | | | 0.119° (0.062) |
| | Self-inflictedness | | | | 0.118* (0.049) |
| | Similarity of vulnerability | | | | 0.692*** (0.164) |
| R² | | 0.18 | 0.21 | 0.22 | 0.25 |
| N | | 764 | 758 | 758 | 694 |

Fixed control: Living in the vicinity of a nuclear installation – not significant



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Robust contextual effect with an unexpected sign



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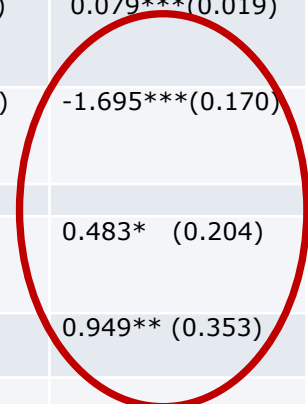
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News that matters

- Preliminary findings:
- News coverage weeks following Fukushima
- In Wallonia much more 'domestic framing'

| Newspaper/ Region | News with episodic ^a (domestic) framing % | News with thematic ^b (Japanese) framing % |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| De Standaard (Flanders) | 11% (16/143) | 57% (81/143) |
| Le Soir (Wallonia) | 21% (24/117) | 52% (61/117) |



News that matters

- Preliminary findings:
- News coverage weeks following Fukushima
- In Wallonia much more 'domestic framing'
- Difference oriented??? (further research necessary)

| Newspaper/ | News with | News with |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| Specific attention for the national stakes involved in the accident | | |
| De Standaard (Flanders) | 11% (16/143) | 57% (81/143) |
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Conclusion

- Context matters: Flemish respondents feel more solidary with the casualties of Fukushima
- Solidarity with distant suffering is mediated by domestication of the news in the weeks following the accident
- Notably news framing concentrating on the local stakes seems detrimental for solidary
- Future research: focus difference framing; focus on coverage in popular newspapers; on television