

Understanding the mediated construction of a social issue

Understanding the mediated construction of a social issue. A comparative study on the presence and diversity of voices and viewpoints in immigration news.

Proefschrift voorgelegd tot het behalen van de graad van doctor in de
sociale wetenschappen: politieke wetenschappen aan de Universiteit
Antwerpen te verdedigen door

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Preface

In 2012, after I finished my Master's at the University of Amsterdam, I moved to Brussels to work in the "EU-bubble". But I was still missing the intellectual stimulation that I enjoyed so much during the Master's. So I e-mailed Knut, who was my teacher there, and asked the question that, eventually, would have changed my life: "Dear Knut, do you think I should do a PhD?" Deep inside my heart, I hoped he would answer: "Andrea: I think it's a very bad idea". But instead, he encouraged me to apply for a PhD at the University of Antwerp, his *alma mater*. And that's how, in September 2013, I started my adventure as a PhD student. This is a choice I never regretted. Sure, this PhD has cost me a lot: I lost a lot of hair, two girlfriends and countless nights of sleep. But it also gave me a lot. Most of all, I've truly developed the ability to be creative and rigorous at the same time, to think and work independently, to be resilient and accept constructive criticism. These are priceless gifts that I wouldn't have got anywhere else than in academia.

This period and the development of my brain that followed wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for one particular person: **Knut**, I want to thank you in the first place because you made this happen. You truly believed in me, to the extent that you managed to defy your deepest prejudices on Southern European immigrants like me. You are an amazing "old school" teacher, who can balance criticism and compliments, and a helpful generous person. Inside your very Flemish "shell" you have a big Mediterranean heart. If you accepted lower levels of intercoder reliability you'd be almost perfect. Together with you, I want to thank all the other "*docenten*" at the University of Amsterdam, namely **Sophie**, **Rens** and **Andreas**. Thanks to your inspiring and engaging classes I started loving this discipline – political communication –, and started considering the very remote idea of enrolling for a PhD.

However, it wasn't easy to get this PhD done and be here today in front of you all. For this, I mainly have to thank my supervisor. Dear **Peter**, I'm confident to say that you were the best "boss" I could ever have. You were always there when I needed advice, both inside and outside work. In the darkest moments of this PhD I knew I could always ask for your help, without being judged. I tried my best to challenge you – i.e. to annoy you – all the time: I convinced you to let me go for a five-month internship at the European Commission and to

let me spend a visiting period at New York University. You never said “no” to any of these unconventional proposals, you let me follow my path, fulfill my dreams and get the most out of this period. Also, thanks for hosting me in California during your sabbatical: it was a great chance to get to know your beautiful family. And thanks for the great fun during conferences and other trips. Also because of your age I’ve always considered you like an older wiser brother, the one that you respect (and sometimes fear) but you can also be open with. To put it with the Germans, I’d say you are my “*Doktorvater*” and “*Doktorbruder*” at the same time.

Even during the toughest times, I’ve always enjoyed coming to the office. I’ve always felt lucky to be part of **M²P**, my research group. **Stefaan**, **Peter Van Aelst** and **Peter Thijssen** are the academic Holy Trinity that lies behind this perfect research group. Everybody in M²P is a “good Samaritan”; everybody is happy to help each other, and there is no Judas in the group. I really want to thank all of M²P: this is not a lame technique to avoid mentioning the names of my colleagues, but is a true tribute to all these wonderful smart individuals that make up a fantastic research group. However, I want to give a special mention to my “*kantoorgenoten*”. **Edwin**, your ability to listen to people and empathize with them is legendary, it really is a wonderful talent that you have. I truly relished the opportunity to open up with you when something was bothering me. I thank you for this, I’m sure you’ll be a fantastic father. **Patrick**, I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for your help. I still remember our romantic “STATA-dates” in some random cafes or at my place in Brussels, before going out drinking. You truly have a talent for teaching. Thanks to the power of modern means of communication, I could stalk you anytime, from anywhere, with questions related to statistical models, formulas and methods. Sorry for this, but at the same time thank you, it meant so much to me. Also, and most importantly, you were a brilliant source of inspiration to strive for the highest academic standards, and a great support when I needed somebody to complain with. I know that I promised to build a statue for you in the hall of the University: I’m working on this, give me a few extra months.

Moreover, I want to thank the members of the jury. **Hilde**, your funny jokes always boosted my mood, and you’ve always provided constructive and original input for my work. Thanks a lot for this. **Professor Mancini**, the eighth chapter of the groundbreaking book you wrote with Dan Hallin was the first political communication piece I’ve ever read. I was honored to work with you and get to know you in person. Besides your undisputable qualities as an

academic, I discovered your outstanding talent as food expert. The trip to Pettino is legend: nobody will ever forget the first academic coffee break in history with a selection of local cheese, ham and red wine. **Professor Benson, Rod**, your outstanding work was a true source of inspiration for my PhD. I'll always thank you for having me at NYU: I've got the chance to spend three months in the wonderful New York City, and to meet awesome people at MCC, your department. **Professor Paulussen**, thanks for "jumping in" with such a short notice. I find your work in the journalism field really interesting, and I was happy to have you in my jury.

Finally, in line with the Italian tradition, I want to thank my family. **Mamma, papà**, a couple of weeks ago I was looking for some documents home and I found the evaluation reports from your school times: you were actually quite bad at school. Nonetheless, you managed to push my brother and I to strive for the best, both at school and professionally. It is from you that I've learnt all of the guiding values that have brought me here today. Grazie infinite – o come diceva la signora del pane al paese: "Grazie mille". **Gianluca**, we were born on the same day – with eight years difference –, and yet, we have quite different personalities. I get easily annoyed when you want to lecture me, but I would never be here now if you didn't. I still remember an e-mail that you sent me when I wanted to drop out of university and move to London to work as a waiter. That was a life-saving e-mail. Grazie di cuore anche a te and to your wonderful family, **Sara** and **Giovanni**, Gino, my beautiful nephew.

Last but not least, I want to thank everybody who's made the effort to come to my defense today. All the people from the University of Antwerp, friends from Brussels, London, New York, my flat mates, past and future colleagues at the European Commission: thanks for being here for this special day. I want to conclude by thanking "*i amissi del paese*", my friends from **Istrana**, my home village in the heart of Veneto, Italy. I love you all. Ideally, I want to dedicate this PhD to Istrana, the "boring hole" we come from. This small village doesn't have much to offer, but it has provided us with some values we'll always stick to: "*voja de lavorar e testa sue spàe*". Wherever I'll go, wherever I'll be, I'll bring a piece of Istrana in my heart.

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In recent years, the rising influx of immigrants to Europe has led to a surge in the salience of the immigration issue in public debate all over the EU. The recent Italian general elections were no exception to this trend: immigration was a core campaign issue, and prompted leaders to position themselves on the issue in order to gain votes. Silvio Berlusconi, the 81-year-old leader of Forza Italia, pledged to deport 600,000 irregular immigrants. His ally Matteo Salvini, leader of anti-immigrants party Lega, adapted Trump's slogan saying that "Italians should come first". The Italian case is not unique: in recent elections campaigns in Austria and France the immigration issue took a central place in the public debate. At the European level the issue has become increasingly divisive. On the one hand, as a response to the Syrian refugee crisis, German chancellor Angela Merkel welcomed thousands of asylum seekers, arguing that Germans "can make it". On the other hand, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán decided to build a massive fence on the border with Serbia to stop the refugee inflows. Hence, immigration has rapidly become a political priority and a crucial element of party competition (Castles, De Haas & Miller, 2013; Odmalm, 2012). Support for populist right parties, which are in favor of stricter immigration policies, steadily rose in Europe in the last decades (Mudde, 2013). The fact that more and more European citizens are concerned about immigration (as shown by Eurobarometer survey's data, see Appendix A) suggests that they attach increasing importance to this topic when casting their vote, choosing the party that more closely matches their opinion on the issue. But how do citizens form their opinion on immigration?

As observed by Walter Lippmann almost one century ago, it is remarkable *“how indirectly we know the environment in which nevertheless we live”* (Lippmann, 1922: 1). If we take a look at the world out there, we can discern a multitude of complex, global phenomena, which escape people’s direct experience. In order to get acquainted with them, the public primarily relies on the socially constructed reality created by the media (Gamson et al., 1992). The way the media forge this *“pseudo-environment”* (Lippmann, 1922: 6) is a crucial step within the process of public opinion’s formation. In fact, although opinions and attitudes are stimulated in the mediated *pseudo-environment*, human actions descending from it have consequences for the real environment (Lippmann, 1922). It is thus crucial to analyze the news content – the final outcome of the journalistic process (Carpenter, 2010) – in order to understand how an issue is covered in the news and what the public is likely to learn from it. This raises the question relative to what elements of the news content should be investigated to retrieve an exhaustive description of how an issue is constructed in the news. Journalism literature suggests that it is crucial to know *who talks in the news and what opinions, ideas or sentiments on a certain topic are therein expressed*. To put it with Benson and Wood (2015: 802), *“determining the speakers and arguments that dominate the news has long been a core task of media sociology”*. The analysis of *voice* is a central concern according to many scholars, as the ability to speak in the news is key to shape news coverage and influence public opinion (Benson & Wood, 2015; Gans, 1979, 2011; Sheafer & Wolfsfeld, 2009; Strömbäck & Nord, 2006). However, the *viewpoints* that are represented in the news – i.e. opinions, ideas, sentiments on the discussed topic – ultimately determine how an issue is represented in the news, and how the public will learn about it (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Mutz, 1998). Consistent with this, we find a great number of studies that specifically analyze how issues are framed in the media (see for example the strand of literature on the framing of EU-related topics). Hence, this dissertation starts from the assumption that pinpointing the presence of voices and viewpoints in the news is a first, fundamental step for the exhaustive analysis of how social reality has been reconstructed in the media.

Nevertheless, it is not just important to know which voices and viewpoints are present in the news; research should also gauge *the range of different voices and viewpoints media consumers are exposed to*. Although the *diversity of media content* is a central topic in communication studies and normative debates about the news, only a number of studies have

actually measured content diversity. Moreover, with a few notable exceptions (see Benson, 2009, 2013) we rarely find studies that incorporate the analysis of content diversity into a broader examination of the representation of relevant social issues in the media. Starting from the acknowledgement of this research gap, the first overarching goal of my dissertation is to *integrate the analysis of the presence of voices and viewpoints that are represented in the news with the examination of content diversity, that is the diversity of voices and viewpoints in the news coverage.*

Besides analyzing and measuring the presence and diversity of voices and viewpoints in the news, the second main goal of my research is to *understand what determines the presence and the diversity of voices and viewpoints in the news.* Because the analysis of content diversity lies at the core of this dissertation, I first shed light on the factors that can influence the diversity of voices and viewpoints in the news. Building upon studies that analyze the determinants of content diversity (Benson, 2009; Humprecht & Büchel, 2013) I present a multilevel model identifying a number of forces that shape news content diversity. Second, I investigate *the interplay between the reality “out there” and its construction in the media.* In particular, I look at the extent to which real-world key events might shape the presence and the diversity of voices and viewpoints in the news. Assuming that unexpected, dramatic events have the potential to enlarge the array of voices and the spectrum of viewpoints about the issue under discussion (Bennett, Lawrence & Livingston, 2008; Lawrence, 2001), as well as to influence the emergence of viewpoints that are presented in the news (Geiß, Weber & Quiring, 2016; Scheufele, 2006), in my work I systematically measure variation in the presence and the diversity of viewpoints and speakers in the news during and in the aftermath of key events.

Building on a comparative cross-country content analysis of the newspaper coverage of immigration in four European countries (Belgium, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom) between 2013 and 2016, the first purpose of this PhD dissertation is to provide an exhaustive, all-encompassing *description* of how this issue is portrayed in the news by integrating the analysis of the presence of voices and viewpoints in the news with the examination of the diversity of these elements of the content (see upper part of Figure 1.1, research questions 1-6). Second, in order to *explain* the construction of these elements, I try to identify the determinants of content diversity and I analyze the impact of key events on the presence and

diversity of voices and viewpoints in the news (see lower part of Figure 1.1, research questions 7 and 8).

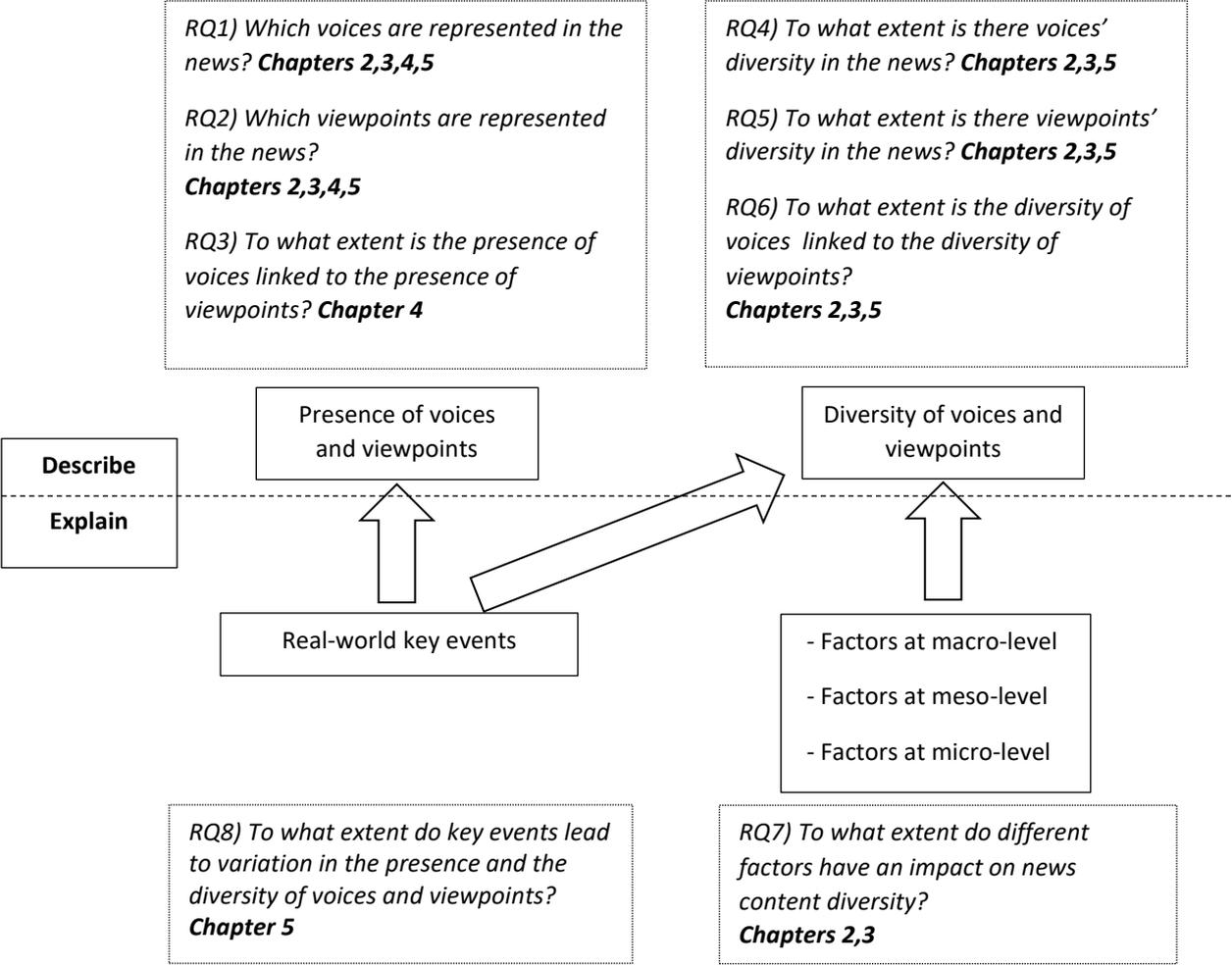


Figure 1.1 – Conceptual outline of the objectives of the PhD dissertation

In the following paragraphs of this introduction, after justifying the choice of the topic of immigration as a generalizable case-in-point, I discuss the main concepts of the dissertation, outlining the specific research questions that were set. Next, I elaborate on the inter-country differences. Finally, after presenting the country and newspaper sample, I explain the methodology that was adopted to analyze the articles, and I provide an overlook on the whole dissertation.

1.2 Immigration: An ideal case-in-point for the analysis of reality construction in the news

During the last decade, Europe has experienced an increasing influx of immigrants. According to FRONTEX, the European agency in charge of border management, between 2013 and 2014 more than 200,000 migrants (mainly Sub-saharian) tried to reach Europe through Italy, via the Mediterranean Sea¹. In 2015 – largely due to the Syrian civil war – almost 900,000 Syrian refugees entered Europe through Greece and the Balkans². At the same time, according to Eurobarometer survey's data (see Appendix A), European public opinion has manifested increasing concern towards immigration; the issue has surged to the core of the political debate, ultimately leading to a dramatic rise in media salience of the topic of immigration. But besides its relevance in the news, why is it important to know how immigration is covered in the media?

Among other phenomena of our time, immigration is a typical example of a social issue that mostly goes beyond people's direct experience. Immigration is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon (Benson, 2013), whose understanding requires legislative, historical and political considerations. It is global in nature, as it involves more than one country and different continents at once. Finally, immigration is a non-obtrusive issue: only few of us have seen migrants arriving in Lampedusa, or have followed them during their travel. Therefore, media's choices regarding the aspects of immigration that are discussed, the actors that are allowed to talk, and the viewpoints that are conveyed, become a key factor in shaping public opinion about this issue (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Mutz, 1998). This is why it is crucial to describe and understand how immigration is constructed in the news media.

Finally, in recent years we have also witnessed many unexpected, dramatic events related to immigration, like the dramatic shipwreck of an immigrant boat off the Italian island of Lampedusa in October 2013, a tragedy that caused the death of more than 300 immigrants. Also, one of the most symbolic images of immigrants' suffering was the picture of the dead body of Alan Kurdi, a Syrian kid washed ashore on a Turkish beach on 2 September 2015 while his family was attempting to reach Europe. These real-world events are extensively reported in the news and they can have an impact on the construction of the issue of immigration in

¹ See FRONTEX report at <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/central-mediterranean-route/>

² See FRONTEX report at <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/eastern-mediterranean-route/>

the news. Therefore, this study devotes extra attention to the role of these key events on news coverage.

Last but not least, I chose to focus on immigration as a paradigmatic but generalizable example of a socially relevant issue whose mediated construction influences public opinion. I will come back to the aspect of generalizability in the conclusions of this dissertation.

1.3 Describing the construction of immigration in the news: The presence of voices and viewpoints

As I stated earlier, the first main objective of this dissertation is to obtain an exhaustive description of how the socially relevant issue of immigration is portrayed in the news. The first step in order to attain this goal is to look at the presence of voices and viewpoints in the news, thereby answering to the following research questions: *(1) Which voices are represented in immigration-related news? (2) Which viewpoints are represented in the news?*

1.3.1 Presence of voices in the news

The analysis of “who talks” in the news is a central concern of journalism research, and is strictly connected to dynamics of power and representation. A number of scholars (see Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Strömbäck, 2008; Strömbäck & Esser, 2014) point to the “mediatization” of modern political debate. This means that social actors that have a stake in a politicized issue must make their voice heard in the media in order to influence public opinion. The concept of voice that I use throughout my PhD is built upon Rakow and Wackwitz’s (2004) definition of voice as an actor’s ability to be heard in the public sphere. Hence, this dissertation does not analyze the mere presence of actors in the news, but it focuses on actors that are quoted (directly or indirectly) in the news (see Hooghe & De Swert, 2009).

Many studies have thoroughly investigated which voices are the loudest in the news. On the one hand, the classic idea in the literature is that political power translates into power to talk in the news (Wolfsfeld, 2011). Drawing upon the seminal work conducted by Gans (1979), Lawrence (2001: 5) defines the predominant role of officials and other prominent social actors as news definers as the “‘official dominance’ model of the news”. Likewise, Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston (2008) observe that journalists’ overreliance on official

sources makes them vulnerable to governmental spin, and it ultimately results in the exclusion of oppositional voices and viewpoints from news content. Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) observe that the social groups who mostly need voice are those who are typically silent in the public debate. If elites are dominating the news reporting, we can expect that non-elite actors (like ordinary people and immigrants) will hardly talk in the media. However, recent work in this field suggests that journalists make increasing use of non-elite voices, i.e. quotes from ordinary people that are not affiliated to any organization (Beckers, 2018; Kurpius, 2002). Will the classic “official dominance” model hold for immigration news, or will more space be granted to the voice of ordinary people and immigrants?

In this thesis, I define an actor (individual or collective) as “speaking” when (s)he is quoted or paraphrased in a news item. We know that immigration is usually debated by a wide range of social actors that have a stake in this topic (Branton & Dunaway, 2009). Hence, the first purpose of voices’ analysis is to identify which social groups get to talk in immigration-related news. Drawing upon previous studies on the news coverage of immigration (e.g. Benson, 2013; Benson & Wood, 2015; De Swert, Schacht & Masini, 2015), as well as upon an inductive analysis of the content in the initial phase of the project, I identified 11 categories of actors that can be quoted or paraphrased as speakers, namely: *National politics, International politics, International organizations, Public agencies and organizations, Judiciary, police and military, Civil society, Religion, Business, corporate and finance, Journalists and media, Public opinion and ordinary people, Immigrants*. For each article, coders pinpointed a maximum of 10 quoted or paraphrased actors, identifying the actors’ social group (see Appendix D and E). These categories were selected because they include actors that have stake in the immigration debate. On top of this, they ensure variation in terms of power to “enter the news”, which is a central point of concern of my research.

The results of the **second and third chapter** of my dissertation show which are the most prominent voices in the reporting of immigration. Moreover, in order to analyze the role of news sources’ “power”, in the **fifth chapter** I collapsed the above-mentioned groups in broader categories that reflect their “weight” as news sources according to their institutional affiliation (following the approach adopted by Benson, 2009, 2013; Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002; Hänggli, 2012; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2016).

1.3.2 Presence of viewpoints in the news

Furthermore, the viewpoints that are expressed towards immigration have a central role in this dissertation. I start from the assumption most of the information acquired by individuals about complex social phenomena is the result of mediated experience (Mutz, 1998). This is also the case with the issue of immigration: the public is heavily dependent on the media to make sense of this multifaceted, globalised phenomenon, which mostly escape people's direct acquaintance. We know that the viewpoints that are used in the media to cover a certain topic can mould the audience's attitude on that issue (Iyengar & Kinder 1987; Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007). But what are the main viewpoints on immigration that are usually expressed in the news?

Studies on the content of immigration news conducted by Benson (2009, 2013) and Van Gorp (2005, 2006) pinpoint a number of recurrent frames that are used in the reporting. However, unlike these authors, I do not identify frames in the content as interpretative packages that define the problem, diagnose causes, and suggest moral judgements and possible remedies (Entman, 1993). Drawing from Scheufele (2006), my dissertation focuses on the analysis of viewpoints, which I conceptualize as evaluative schemas referring to the phenomenon of immigration and to its protagonists – immigrants. In specific, I look at schemas as elements that emerge in the journalistic text in the form of manifest evaluations of immigration and/or immigrants. A viewpoint can be expressed more or less explicitly (although it is quite rare to find bold evaluative statements like "Immigration is good/bad"), either by an actor or directly by the author of the news article. Based on the abovementioned studies, as well as on an inductive analysis of news articles prior to the actual coding, I chose to look for the presence of four types of distinct viewpoints:

- *Negative*: negative characterization of immigrants and/or immigration;
- *Administrative burden*: viewpoints conveying the idea that dealing with the influx of immigrants, with their relocation, etc. is a burden, and creates a number of administrative problems;
- *Victims viewpoints*: expressions that highlight the suffering of migrants, the fact that they live in harsh conditions, that they are victims of traffickers, of racism, etc.;
- *Positive*: positive characterization of immigrants and/or immigration.

In order to answer to the second research question of my PhD, throughout the chapters of this dissertation I will point out which are the most used viewpoints to cover immigration in the countries under study.

1.3.3 *The link between the presence of voices and the presence of viewpoints in the news*

The **fourth chapter** of the dissertation answers to the following research question: *(RQ4) To what extent is there a link between voices and viewpoints in the news?* The starting assumption is that social groups' hunger for media attention is not just a matter of visibility: they want to talk in the news to convey their opinions to the public. Actors talking in the media might express viewpoints directly in their quotes (see Benson & Wood, 2015; Ferree et al., 2002). However, as observed by Benson and Wood (2015) their statements often do not include any opinion: does it mean, then, that they do not have anything to say? Contrarily, as the authors argue, the presence of actors' "opinionless" statements can have an indirect impact on the presence of viewpoints in the news. I investigate this matter through the analysis of *consonance*, which I define as the simultaneous presence, in the same news item, of actors' voice and their preferred viewpoints on the debated topic. The chapter focuses on four social groups that have a major stake in the immigration debate, namely *immigrants, national authorities (national government, justice and law enforcement), pro-immigration NGOs and radical right-wing parties*. For the investigation of consonance concerning immigrants' voices, I distinguish between quotes from *individual immigrants* and from *groups of immigrants*. Extant studies suggest that positive viewpoints are more likely to be triggered by the voice of individual immigrants. This might be theoretically tracked back to a "*person positivity bias*" related to immigration (Sears, 1983). As demonstrated by Iyengar et al., (2013), individual immigrants can spark more positive reactions than groups of migrants; accordingly, one could expect that journalists will be more prone to include positive viewpoints when they quote individual immigrants, rather than when they cover anonymous groups of migrants. The **second and fourth chapter** investigate whether this expectation holds for the news coverage of immigration, i.e. if the presence of individual immigrants' voices is more likely to be associated to a more positive view of immigration, as compared to groups of immigrants.

1.4 Describing the construction of immigration in the news: The diversity of voices and viewpoints

As noted earlier, the first overarching goal of my dissertation consists in drawing an exhaustive description of how the socially relevant issue of immigration is represented in the news, in order to understand how citizens will learn about this issue. I argue that is not just important to know the voices and viewpoints readers will be exposed to, but it is also relevant to gauge how many different groups of voices and viewpoints media consumers are likely to read about. Normative theorists have stressed the importance of promoting a broad range of actors and viewpoints in the news (Baker, 2002; McQuail, 1992; Van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003). According to Napoli (1999), guaranteeing the heterogeneity of the supply of news media content is a condition for a healthy democratic debate among properly informed citizens. News content diversity becomes essential when journalists deal with complex social issues involving a plurality of different actors that are willing to put forward opposing views in the news in order to influence public opinion (Benson, 2009; Wolfsfeld, 2011). In these cases, the democratic role of the press should consist of granting a wide range of actors and viewpoints access to the news, so that the public can form its own opinion about a given issue (Benson, 2009; Gans, 1979, 2011).

Hence, it is necessary to integrate the analysis of the presence of voices and viewpoints in the news with the analysis of the diversity of these two elements in the journalistic text, thereby answering to the following research questions: *(4) Which levels of voices' diversity do we find in the news? (5) Which levels of viewpoints' diversity are there?* Since this has seldom been done in previous studies, I draw upon the notable exception of Benson's (2009, 2013) work on the news coverage of immigration in France and in the United States, in which the analysis of content diversity lies center stage, integrating the analysis of frames and actors.

1.4.1 Conceptualization and measurement of content diversity

First of all, it is important to clarify the concept of content diversity. Throughout my dissertation, I rely on van Cuilenburg's (1999) definition of content diversity as the heterogeneity of news content in terms of voices and viewpoints. This conceptualization, originally proposed by McQuail and Van Cuilenburg (1983), is similar to the one used by Baden and Springer (2015) and by Benson (2009: 406), who defines content diversity in terms of

“institutional” and *“ideological multiperspectivalness”*. Similarly, Voakes, Kapfer, Kurpius & Chern (1996) examine content diversity as the variety of news sources and the dispersion of viewpoints in the news.

Moreover, the conceptualization of content diversity differs according to the level of analysis. Diversity can be measured at the level of the single unit of information—like a television news item or a newspaper article—as the variety of different social actors and viewpoints that are represented therein. Alternatively, it can be gauged at a broader level as the evenness of the distribution of these two dimensions within a news outlet—like a television news broadcast or a newspaper—throughout a specific period of time. The difference between both levels is more than a technical measurement distinction and suggests a different way that a news consumer learns about an issue. If we focus our measurement on the article level, diversity implies that each story should give space to several types of actor and/or to multiple viewpoints. Only in this way, when reading a single news item, a reader can get a broader understanding of the issue. However, a news outlet can also guarantee content diversity by portraying different actors and viewpoints in different news items. Benson (2009, 2013) notes that this is a typical characteristic of the French “debate ensemble” form of news: for French journalists it is not the single article that matters, but the entire page, which includes, for example, an interview with the minister of immigration alongside an article telling the personal story of an immigrant family entering the country. In this case, both stories together provide the reader with multiple perspectives, while on the article level the diversity of actors and opinions is limited.

Since these measurements of content diversity yield different values, in the **third chapter** I gauge voices’ and viewpoints’ diversity both at the article and at the newspaper level. At the article level, diversity of voices and viewpoints can be operationalized as count variables corresponding, respectively, to the total number of social categories and to the total number of different viewpoints categories that are represented in an article. At the newspaper level, I propose a measurement of voices’ diversity as the evenness of the distribution of the total number of actors in the corresponding categories. The same is done for viewpoint diversity. This is calculated by means of Simpson’s standardized diversity index (D_z), a standardized calculation of Simpson’s diversity index (D) (see chapter three). While the **third chapter** maps and compares how newspapers perform in voices’ and viewpoints’ diversity

both at the article and at the newspaper level, the other studies of the dissertation focus on the measurement of content diversity at the article level.

The investigation of content diversity is crucial to shed light on the plurality of voices and viewpoints that are represented in each newspaper. Are readers likely to read quotes from a broad range of social categories and to know different opinions, or will they be exposed to a limited amount of voices – probably just that of politicians – and to one predominant view of immigration?

1.4.2 The link between diversity of voices and diversity of viewpoints

This PhD thesis also examines (7) *to what extent the diversity of voices is linked to the diversity of viewpoints in the news*. While there is little discussion that actor and viewpoint diversity are both crucial subdimensions of content diversity, the link between both has remained underexplored. Extant research on this matter has found inconsistent results. On the one hand, journalism theory supports the expectation that decisions made by journalists regarding the societal actors who “get to talk” in the reporting are key to shaping news content (Gans, 1979, 2011; Sheafer & Wolfsfeld, 2009; Strömbäck & Nord, 2006). However, a formal test of this relationship conducted by Voakes et al. (1996) shows that actor diversity does not ensure viewpoint diversity and vice versa. In the **second chapter** of my dissertation (which focuses only on the Belgian case) I formally test the hypothesis that the two dimensions are related to each other.

1.5 Explaining the construction of immigration in the news: The determinants of content diversity

The **third chapter** of this dissertation aims to answer to the following research question: (RQ6) *To what extent do different factors have an impact on news content diversity?* Mainly building on the multilevel approach to the study of content diversity proposed by Benson (2009) and Humprecht & Büchel (2013), I define a model that pinpoints the levels in which forces that shape content diversity are located. The idea, drawn from the hierarchical approach proposed by Shoemaker and Reese (1996), is that news content is embedded in multiple spheres of influence corresponding to the different levels that shape news production (Figure 2). At the micro-level, the article format—i.e. its length and type—might affect content diversity, while

at the meso-level the characteristics of the news organisation, namely its size and the preferences of its target audience, can influence actor and viewpoint diversity. Finally, at the macro-level, countries' characteristics belonging to the journalistic and issue specific dimensions are potential driving forces behind the diversity of immigration news.

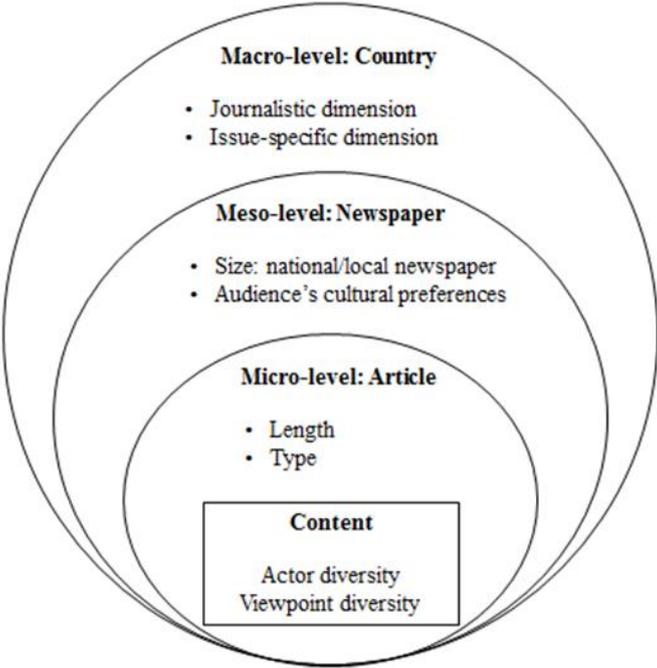


Figure 1.2 - Multilevel model of influence on content diversity

1.6 Explaining the construction of immigration in the news: The influence of key events on the presence and the diversity of viewpoints and voices

Extant journalism literature gives support to the idea that unexpected, dramatic key events might alter criteria of news selection, attracting intense media coverage and shaping future reporting on the topic they are related to (Brosius & Eps, 1995; Fishman, 1982; Kepplinger & Habermeier, 1995). According to a number of studies, key events can generate sudden waves of media coverage that go under the name of *media storms* (Boydston, Hardy & Walgrave, 2014) or *media hypes* (Vasterman, 2005). Besides their influence on issue-salience, the question is whether key events can shape the way in which a topic is covered in the news.

Studies conducted by Geiß, Weber and Quiring (2016) and Scheufele (2006) support the idea that real-world occurrences that are considered landmark in the context of a certain issue can favor the emergence of particular frames and viewpoints in the news. Moreover, work conducted by Lawrence (2001) and Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston (2008) suggest that key events might enhance the quality of deliberation in the mediated discourse, allowing a larger array of social actors to speak in the news and enabling the representation of a larger spectrum of viewpoints about the issue under discussion. The **fifth chapter** of my dissertation aims to answering to the following research question: *(8) To what extent do key events lead to variation in the presence and the diversity of voices and viewpoints in the news?* In this chapter, key events are defined as real-world occurrences related to a certain topic that become salient in the public debate and that have the capacity to spark political reactions. I identify five key events related to immigration that occurred in the period under study. This investigation puts the *nature* of a key event center stage, distinguishing between the effects stemming from events involving immigrants as victims (“tragic” key events) or as alleged perpetrators of crimes (“criminal” key events). The main hypothesis is that “tragic” key events – like the 2013 and 2015 shipwrecks of immigrants boats off Lampedusa and the death of immigrant kid Alan Kurdi in the shores of Turkey in 2015 – trigger the presence of empathetic views of immigrants as victims; on the other hand, “criminal” key events – like the Paris terrorist attacks in 2013 or the mass sexual assaults in Cologne (Germany) on New Year’s Eve in 2016 – foster the presence of negative and administrative burden viewpoints. In the **fifth chapter** I will thus test whether the news coverage is *sensitive* to exogenous real-world events (Behr & Iyengar, 1985), and whether their impact reflect the events’ nature.

1.7 Comparative design

This PhD dissertation has a European scope, and it focuses on immigration news in four countries: Belgium (with focus on Flanders, since there is no national Belgian media sphere), Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. These countries are characterized by a prominent national public debate on immigration. The comparative design of this PhD allows for the exploration of similarities and differences between countries in the construction of immigration news.

In general, I distinguish between two types of country differences: the political media system and the geographic location. The four countries’ political media systems have different

characteristics according to the Hallin and Mancini's (2004) framework: Belgium and Germany belong to the Democratic Corporatist Model, Italy to the Polarized Pluralist Model and the United Kingdom to the Liberal Model. Nevertheless, I argue that there are no strong theoretical expectations that differences in terms of media system will have an impact on the construction of immigration coverage of newspapers. Overall, I do not expect immigration reporting to significantly deviate from the "*official dominance' model of the news*" (Lawrence, 2001: 5) in the countries of the sample. This can be explained by the universally recognized power of political actors as news sources (Bennett, Lawrence & Livingston, 2008; Hallin, 1989). Drawing from the *indexing* theory (Bennett, 1990), I expect that journalists will index the news coverage of the politically salient issue immigration to the range of government debate, therefore heavily relying on statements by political actors. This idea is supported by Benson and Wood (2015), who found that political actors were the most prominent speakers in immigration news in the United States, Norway and France.

However, existing theory supports the idea that inter-country differences in term of media systems might lead to variation in the levels of content diversity across countries. Findings of a longitudinal study on the objectivity paradigm within Western press systems conducted by Esser and Umbricht (2013) suggest that levels of content diversity are likely to be lower in Polarized Pluralist media systems, as compared to Liberal and Democratic-Corporatist media systems. This hypothesis will be explored in the **third chapter** of the dissertation.

In the context of the issue of immigration the geographic location might be an important factor that influences the news. The four countries of the sample differ in terms of geographic location, with Italy being the closest nation to the Southern border between Europe and Africa. During the period under study, according to the European Union's agency Frontex, over 200,000 migrants have entered Europe by sea through Lampedusa, a tiny Italian island situated between Sicily and Libya. As observed by Cuttitta (2014: 196), the island has become the symbol of migration into Europe, as well as the "*theatre of the 'border play'*", a figurative stage in which a large array of social actors debate on migration control (De Swert, Schacht & Masini, 2015). I argue that proximity to Lampedusa can have a twofold impact on the construction of immigration news in Italy. First of all, since many tragedies causing immigrants' death have happened off Lampedusa, in the Mediterranean Sea (which has been

defined by observers as “Europe’s mass migrant graveyard”), I expect that Italian newspapers will be more likely to report on these tragic events, and will consequently be more prone to use viewpoints that depict immigrants as victims. However, as observed by Branton and Dunaway (2009) a news outlet’s spatial proximity to the border can also lead an increase in the use of negative viewpoints. Second, geographic proximity to the unfolding of events related to a certain topic is indicated by a number of studies as a factor that can lead to variation in content diversity (Choi, 2009; Martin, 1988). Contrary to the negative effect on content diversity stemming from its journalistic characteristics, geographic proximity to this relevant place for immigration —both in its real and symbolic dimensions— might correspond to a more diverse coverage of immigration in Italian newspapers. I will thus investigate the interplay between these two opposing forces in the **third chapter** of my dissertation.

In addition, I also expect that a news outlet’s geographic proximity to the places where key events unfold might enhance the impact of the latter on characteristics of news coverage. I explore whether this assumption holds in the **fifth chapter** of this PhD thesis. Do the tragic shipwrecks off Lampedusa in 2013 and 2015 lead to stronger effects in the Italian news coverage of immigration? Do the criminal events happened in Cologne (Germany) in 2016 lead to a stronger impact in German (and perhaps Belgian) newspapers, due to geographic proximity to the key event?

1.8 Methodology

1.8.1 Selection of countries, newspapers and articles

As already pointed out earlier, my work examines news about immigration in Belgium (Flanders), Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. A country-specific Boolean string was used to look for articles about immigration in online databases (see Appendix C). Following the UN International Organization for Migration’s definition of immigration, I searched articles about *the entrance and the presence of people in a country other than their country of birth with the purpose of settling down*³. This all-encompassing definition allowed me to select news related to economic migrants, refugees, arrivals at sea, the life of migrants in the host country and many-other immigration-related aspects, hence embracing the multiple dynamics of the complex and evolving phenomenon of immigration, and ensuring comparability among

³ See “Key Migration Terms” in the IOM website, <http://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

countries and across time. It is important to note that I decided to exclude the issue of integration from the scope of the study. Although strictly connected to immigration, I consider that integration is an independent theme, which deserves a separate analysis.

Regarding the newspapers' sample, I considered a total of 22 newspapers for the time-span between 1 January 2013 and 30 April 2014, with a large variation in terms of national/local scope and audiences' cultural preferences (see Appendix B). The newspapers' selection was defined in the framework of a broader interdisciplinary project that aimed at measuring the impact of media ownership concentration on news content, and is therefore influenced by the specific goals of that broader research project. For Belgium, six news outlets from Flanders, the Dutch-speaking community, were selected: *De Morgen*, *de Standaard*, *De Tijd*, *Gazet van Antwerpen*, *Het Nieuwsblad* and *Het Laatste Nieuws*. The German sample includes five titles: *Die Welt*, *Berliner Morgenpost*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*. In Italy, I selected five outlets: *La Repubblica*, *Gazzetta di Modena*, *Il Giornale*, *Il Messaggero* and *Il Mattino*. Finally, for the United Kingdom, I chose *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Sun*, *Daily Mirror*, *Manchester Evening News* and *London Evening Standard*. Moreover, I extended the selection of article to the period that goes to 1 May 2014 to 31 January 2016 for the following eight newspapers: *de Standaard*, *Het Laatste Nieuws*, *Die Welt*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, *La Repubblica*, *Il Giornale* and *The Sun*. **Chapter five** of this dissertation analyzes immigration news longitudinally in these eight news outlets (January 2013-January 2016), while **chapters three** and **four** take into consideration the entire newspapers' sample (22 titles), from January 2013 until April 2014. **Chapter two** focuses only on the Belgian case.

1.8.2 Analyses

Each national sample was coded quantitatively by native speakers⁴, following extensive training provided by myself as a single master coder (see Appendix D and E for an example of the codebook that was used). The coding was divided into two parts: the first tranche of articles (from 1 January 2013 until 30 April 2014) was coded between 2014 and 2015, while the second part (from 1 May 2014 until 31 January 2016) was analyzed by a different team of coders between 2016 and 2017.

⁴ Except for the second tranche of British articles, which was coded by Belgian students who were very fluent in English.

In order to answer to the research questions, I used a diverse set of methods. The link between the presence of voices and viewpoints was gauged by means of regression analyses (**second and fourth chapter**), and it was visualized through a correspondence analysis in **chapter four**. Moreover, I assessed differences in the levels of actor and viewpoint diversity by means of t-tests (**chapter two and three**) and ANOVAs (**chapter three**), and I investigated the determinants of content diversity with a multilevel regression analysis (**chapter three**). The same method was employed in **chapter five** to assess the impact of key events on the presence and the diversity of voices and viewpoints. In the conclusions of this dissertation, I will come back to the limitations and strengths of these methods.

1.9 Overview of the PhD dissertation

Overall, all the studies included in this dissertation aim at answering to the first two research questions regarding the description of voices and viewpoints in the news. The **second chapter** of this dissertation looks at Belgian case and proposes a comprehensive analysis of the content diversity of news on immigration (*RQ4* and *5*), at the same time evaluating the relationship between the diversity of voices and viewpoints (*RQ6*), and gauging the impact on viewpoints stemming from the presence of individual immigrants' voices (*RQ3*). The **third chapter** aims to describe voices' and viewpoints' diversity of immigration news in comparative perspective (*RQ4* and *5*), measuring these elements at the newspaper and at the article level. In this chapter I also try to identify the determinants of content diversity. Next, the **fourth chapter** investigates the link between the presence of voices and the presence of viewpoints in the news (*RQ3*) through the analysis of *consonance*, defined as the simultaneous presence, in the same news item, of actors' voice and their preferred viewpoints on the debated topic. Finally, the main goal of the **fifth chapter** is to understand the extent to which key events lead to variation in the presence and the diversity of voices and viewpoints. In the conclusion, after presenting an overview of the results, I introduce four main lessons that can be drawn and their implications for future studies on news construction. Finally, I discuss the limitations of my PhD, proposing avenues for further research.

Actor diversity and viewpoint diversity:

Two of a kind?

Chapter based on: Masini, A., & Van Aelst, P. (2017). Actor diversity and viewpoint diversity: Two of a kind? *European Journal of Communication Research*, 42(2), 107–126.

2.1 Introduction

In recent years, the diversity of media content has become a central principle and cause for concern in communication policy. Normative theorists have stressed the importance of promoting a broad range of actors and viewpoints in the news (Baker, 2002; McQuail, 1992; Van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003). According to Napoli (1999), guaranteeing the heterogeneity of the supply of news media content is a condition for a healthy democratic debate among properly informed citizens. News content diversity becomes essential when journalists deal with complex social issues involving a plurality of different actors that are willing to put forward opposing views in the news in order to influence public opinion (Benson, 2009; Wolfsfeld, 2011). In these cases, the democratic role of the press should consist of granting a wide range of actors and viewpoints access to the news, so that the public can form its own opinion about a given issue (Benson, 2009; Gans, 1979, 2011). Political communication scholars have devoted a great deal of attention to the process of news construction, particularly focusing on the factors shaping the range of actors and frames that are represented in the news content (Bennett, 1990; Bennett, Lawrence & Livingston, 2008; Sheafer & Wolfsfeld, 2009; Shoemaker and Reese, 2011). However, we argue that existing studies present two main shortcomings. First, there is little empirical research that has systematically measured the diversity of news content (but see Benson, 2009; Choi, 2009; Humprecht & Büchel, 2013). Second, authors in the field have generally neglected to examine

the relationship between the two main subdimensions of content diversity, namely actor and viewpoint diversity (for an exception, see Voakes et al. 1996).

In this study, we seek to overcome the inadequacies of existing research, proposing a comprehensive analysis of the content diversity of news on immigration from a sample of newspapers in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking community of Belgium. We chose to focus on news related to one single issue, as this will allow for an in-depth examination of content diversity. The diversity of actors and viewpoints in the news lies at the heart of our investigation. First of all, we measure actor and viewpoint diversity in each newspaper of the sample with the purpose of observing *whether the level of actor and viewpoint diversity changes according to the newspaper type (quality vs. popular)*. Second, we focus on the link between actor and viewpoint diversity, developing an innovative model that gauges *the extent to which actor diversity is related to viewpoint diversity*. Last but not least, we look at the relationship between the diversity of actors and viewpoints from another perspective, evaluating *the extent to which the presence/absence of individual immigrants in a news item results in more or less favorable viewpoints about immigration*. Finally, in the last section, we discuss the normative implications of our findings and give indications for future research on news content diversity.

2.2 Theoretical framework and hypotheses

2.2.1 Conceptualization of content diversity

Building upon the definition provided by Van Cuilenburg (1999), in our study we measure the heterogeneity of news content in terms of actor and viewpoint diversity. The diversity of actors refers to the range of category affiliations of actors who are quoted or paraphrased in the news. Communication scholars interested in content diversity have pinpointed differences in the social affiliations of news actors. In a case study of the news coverage about a law proposal in Wisconsin, Voakes et al. (1996) systematically measure the distribution of actors in the news according to institutional affiliations and status of positions. Actors are divided into four mutually exclusive categories: government, private sector, affiliated and non-affiliated. Similarly, in Benson's (2009) comparative study on immigration news in France and the United States, actor groups are distinguished according to their affiliation to diverse institutional fields. In our analysis, we follow the approach of a number of recent studies in

the political communication field (see Choi, 2009; Humprecht & Büchel, 2013) and opt for a division of actors by categories that mirror the main existing groups in society.

The second dimension – diversity of viewpoints – has been considered by different authors as being core to the concept of content diversity. Griswold (1999) intuitively notices that, although various actors might feature in a discussion about a certain issue in the news, it is ultimately the diversity of viewpoints that guarantees the democratic benefit of content diversity, providing readers with a plurality of perspectives on a given topic. In line with this, Voakes et al. (1996: 585) propose a comprehensive definition of viewpoint diversity as the range of “ideas, perspectives, attributions, opinions, or frames within a news product”. In keeping with this definition, Van Gorp (2005) analyzes the use of frames in Belgian news about the asylum issue, identifying a dichotomy between an “intruder” and a “victim” frame. In a similar way, Benson (2009) measures frame diversity in immigration-related news in France and the US, pinpointing ten frame categories which characterize the mediated debate on immigration in those countries.

2.2.2 Differences in content diversity between quality and popular news outlets

A number of studies in the field support the idea that variation in the level of content diversity might stem from differences in the editorial orientation of newspapers. According to Benson, (2009: 405), “the cultural capital of media outlets and their audiences” might be a key element in shaping news’ diversity. Following McQuail (2010), we can distinguish between “quality” and “popular” newspapers based on their editorial orientations, which are in turn reflected in specific characteristics of the content. On the one hand, quality news outlets are characterized by high levels of social and ethical awareness, which typically corresponds to more objective reporting. Benson (2009) suggests that quality newspapers are likely to promote diversity of actors and perspectives because they target more highly educated audiences, who prefer more diverse reporting (Peterson & Kern, 1996). On the other hand, popular newspapers’ coverage focuses on “human interest” stories, personalities and conflictual viewpoints (see Norris, 2000). Building on Mazzoleni’s (2003) argument that popular newspapers are more market-oriented than their quality counterparts, we would expect that the former present a ‘simpler’, less diverse content, which focuses on a narrower range of actors and viewpoints compared to quality outlets. A study conducted by Roggeband and Vliegenthart (2007) on the coverage of immigration in the Dutch press gives support to this hypothesis, showing that

quality newspapers employ more diverse frames than popular outlets, thus coming closer to the ideal of a civic forum for discussion. In line with this, the results of Benson's (2009) comparative study on immigration news in France and the US indicate that the newspapers targeting more intellectual audiences are those with the highest levels of actor and viewpoint diversity. Therefore, we formulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Quality newspapers will present higher levels of actor and viewpoint diversity than popular newspapers.

2.2.3 Relationship between actor diversity and viewpoint diversity

While there is little discussion that actor and viewpoint diversity are both crucial subdimensions of content diversity, the link between both has remained underexplored. Previous research maintains that decisions made by journalists regarding the societal actors who “get to talk” in the reporting are key to shaping news content (Gans, 1979, 2011; Sheafer & Wolfsfeld, 2009; Strömbäck & Nord, 2006). The expectation that actor diversity is related to viewpoint diversity is inspired by Wolfsfeld's (2011) view that actors compete with each other in the media arena in order to enter the news and ultimately raise their own viewpoints to influence public opinion. Also Bennett (1990) supports the notion of a strong link between actor and viewpoint diversity, noting that the “indexization” of the mediated debate on the range of opinions expressed by governmental actors ultimately limits the variety of viewpoints expressed in the news. A similar stance has been taken by Gans (1979, 2011), who has made a plea for *multiperspectival* news – that is, news that presents perspectives from diverse sectors of society. According to Gans (2011), this would only be possible if journalists enhanced actor diversity in the news, granting access also to non-elite actors, so that politicians could learn about their viewpoints.

Although previous research gives support to the idea that actor and viewpoint diversity are positively related, this link is more often suggested than actually measured. A formal test of this relationship has been conducted by Voakes et al. (1996), but the results of their study show that actor diversity does not ensure viewpoint diversity and vice versa. Therefore, it remains important to shed light on the interconnection between those two subdimensions of content diversity. Without assuming causality, we build upon the theoretical assumptions that there exists a link between actor and viewpoint diversity in the news (Bennett, 1990; Gans,

1979, 2011; Wolfsfeld, 2011), and we expect that the presence of a higher number of actor types in a news article corresponds to a more diverse range of viewpoints. Hence, we will test the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Within a news article, there is a positive relationship between actor diversity and viewpoint diversity.

2.2.4 Immigrant actors and favorability of viewpoints about immigration in the news

Finally, we seek to look at the relationship between actor and viewpoint diversity from a different angle. Specifically, we investigate the link between actor diversity and the direction of the viewpoints in the news. Drawing from Wolfsfeld's (2011) "actors' competition model", we notice that societal actors' ultimate goal is not that of adding up to diversity: Instead, they aim at influencing the overall direction of the viewpoints expressed in the news to ensure consistency with their own opinion on the issue under discussion. The same is likely to happen in the case of mediated debate on the "multifaceted and complex" topic of immigration (Benson, 2009: 403). In the news, the issue is disputed by a plurality of actors belonging to a wide range of societal groups – politicians, actors from NGOs, business, trade unions, as well as ordinary citizens and immigrants –, each determined to enter the news and mold the general direction of the viewpoints about immigration expressed therein.

However, not every type of actor has an equal chance to succeed in its attempt to determine the general perspective on immigration in the news. In line with Wolfsfeld's (2011: 0) principle that "political power can usually be translated into power over the news media", we can expect that elite actors – that is, the ones who possess political and economic power in society – will have more possibilities to attain this goal than non-elite actors. In particular, among the latter type of actors we might expect that immigrants will be among those who struggle the most to influence the direction of viewpoints in the news; due to their unaffiliated, low-status nature, they usually lack power and resources to have an impact on news content (Fujioka, 2011; Hargreaves & Perotti, 1993; Su & Conaway, 1996; Van Dijk, 1992). Nonetheless, we argue that the different ways in which immigrant actors are represented in newspaper articles have an impact on their capacity to shape news content. They can enter the news both as a collective actor, that is, immigrants as a group, and as individuals. As first suggested by a seminal study conducted by LaPiere (1934), there exists a

“person-positivity bias” related to immigration (Sears, 1983). Through a process of impression formation conditioned by people’s stronger identification with fellow human beings, it seems that individual immigrants are generally perceived more positively than immigrants as a group. In a recent study, Iyengar et al. (2013) have tested the person-positivity hypothesis in a cross-national experiment, backing up the notion that individual immigrants spark more positive reactions among the public than when represented as an impersonal group. Although our study does not test the public’s attitudes towards immigrants, we expect that, based on the person-positivity hypothesis, a similar mechanism will influence the attitude of journalists when producing news content that includes individual immigrants. More concretely, we argue that the extension of the range of active actors in the news to one specific actor category, namely individual immigrants, will lead to a more positive perspective on immigration in the articles. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 3: Articles that feature individual immigrants have a more positive view on immigration than articles without individual immigrants.

2.3 Data and methods

This study analyzes news about immigration in the main newspapers in Flanders between January 1, 2013 and April 30, 2014. The newspaper sample includes six titles: *De Morgen*, *de Standaard*, *De Tijd*, *Gazet van Antwerpen*, *Het Nieuwsblad* and *Het Laatste Nieuws*. *De Morgen* and *de Standaard* are quality newspapers, whereas *Het Nieuwsblad* and *Het Laatste Nieuws* are typical examples of popular outlets. *De Tijd*, once a purely financial news outlet, has recently increased the number of sections it deals with, becoming more similar to *De Morgen* and *de Standaard* (De Bens & Raeymaeckers, 2007). Finally, *Gazet van Antwerpen* is the local newspaper of the province of Antwerp. However, owing to the similitude of issues covered and its style of reporting, it can be considered as a popular newspaper.

The articles were retrieved from the Belgian online database Gopress. Through an elaborate search string based on Boolean operators (see Appendix C), we looked for articles about immigration, this being defined as the entrance and the presence of people in a country other than their country of birth with the purpose of settling down (drawn from the United Nations’ definition of immigration). It is important to note that we decided to exclude the issue of integration from the scope of the study. Although strictly connected to immigration,

we consider that integration is an independent theme, which deserves a separate analysis. The outcome of the first search for the whole period was further filtered, and it ultimately resulted in a final sample consisting of 642 news articles. The articles were coded quantitatively by three coders. We conducted an inter-coder reliability test using a set of randomly selected items amounting to five percent of the total sample. For the variables that we used in our study, the average of the coefficients calculated with Krippendorff's alpha is 0.65, which is an overall acceptable level of inter-coder reliability. The good quality of the coding is further supported by a very high inter-coder agreement score (Holsti's coefficient is 0.97).⁵

A maximum of 10 actors (quoted or paraphrased) were coded for each news article. Actor codes are divided into 11 categories corresponding to different groups in society (see Figure 1 in the Results section). Besides, coders indicated "views about immigration" and "characterization of immigrants" that were present in the news item. These two variables were collapsed in one single variable, which we call "*Viewpoints about immigration*".⁶ The variable consists of three categories:

- *Negative viewpoints*: Negative characterization of immigrants and/or view of immigration as a threat (e.g., immigration enhances work competition, it increases criminality, immigrants are criminals, they carry diseases, etc.).
- *Victims viewpoints*: Immigrants are portrayed as victims (e.g., immigrants are victims of traffickers, victims of racism, etc.).
- *Positive viewpoints*: Positive characterization of immigrants and/or view of immigration as an opportunity (e.g., immigration empowers work force, immigrants bring 'positive multiculturalism', etc.).

⁵ The inter-coder reliability score calculated with Krippendorff's alpha is slightly negatively influenced by the lower score for variables with a more evaluative character (such as viewpoints expressed about immigration), which are notoriously hard to code. As contended by a number of scholars (Gwet, 2002; Humprecht & Büchel, 2013), high levels of inter-coder agreement are also a valuable indicator of high reliability.

⁶ In the codebook, we coded 11 categories relative to viewpoints about immigration and immigrants. The negative viewpoints are: "immigration as a general threat", "immigration as an economic threat", "immigration as a cultural/moral/ethnic/demographic threat", "immigration as an administrative/logistic problem", "negative characterization of immigrants", "immigrants as an administrative/organizational burden". Victims viewpoints are coded as "immigrants as victims". The positive categories are: "immigration as a general opportunity", "immigration as an economic opportunity", "immigration as a cultural/moral/ethnic/demographic opportunity", "positive characterization of immigrants".

Both actor and viewpoint diversity (see Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2) are count variables measured at the level of news article. *“Diversity of actors”* was simply calculated through a count of the unique actor categories that are represented in every news item. As coders could indicate a maximum of 10 actors in a news article, this would also be the maximum score for actor diversity. Similarly, *“Diversity of viewpoints about immigration”* measures the number of unique viewpoints represented in an article, and ranges between the values zero (no viewpoints expressed in the article) and three (full range of viewpoints expressed). Our choice to study actor and viewpoint diversity on the article level, and not on the level of the newspaper, is supported by the consideration that, on average, every newspaper in our sample covers immigration with around one article per day. During the period under study, the average number of articles on immigration per newspaper ranged between 1.17 and 1.31.⁷ This means that chances are low that a reader gets a more diverse view by reading multiple articles on this topic. Additionally, when taking a closer look at the cases in which a newspaper covers immigration with more than one article on one day, we notice that the number of unique viewpoints seldom increases.⁸ Hence, by measuring the range of unique actor and viewpoint categories at the article level, we come close to the overall diversity of the news coverage on immigration that a reader is likely to find in a newspaper on a given day. Of course, during specific events that are extensively covered by a newspaper, it might be better to measure diversity at the level of the news outlet.

Moving on to the other variables of the study, the dependent variable *“Favorability of viewpoints about immigration”* (see Hypothesis 3) takes into account the direction of the viewpoints expressed in an article. It is an ordinal variable, ranging from -1 (maximum negativity of viewpoints in the news article) to +1 (highest level of positivity of the viewpoints in the news article). To build up the favorability scale, we condensed the viewpoints about immigration into a dichotomous distinction between negative viewpoints and victimization/positive ones. The number of times a certain viewpoint is presented does not matter for the calculation of the score. The favorability scale takes a value of -1 when an article features only negative viewpoints. A value of zero is assigned when no viewpoint is present, or when the

⁷ For our calculation, we did not take into account days in which no article applied. The average number of articles per day is: *De Morgen* = 1.28; *de Standaard* = 1.31; *De Tijd* = 1.18; *Gazet van Antwerpen* = 1.20; *Het Nieuwsblad* = 1,20; *Het Laatste Nieuws* = 1.17.

⁸ In particular, in the case of multiple articles on the same day, the article that appears more in the front usually expresses more viewpoints, whereas the articles that follow hardly ever express an additional viewpoint.

negative and victimization/positive viewpoint balance each other out. Finally, *“Favorability of viewpoints about immigration”* is equal to +1 when only victimization and/or positive viewpoints are expressed in an article. Also, it is important to point out that we consider ‘victimization’ at the same level of positive viewpoints about immigration. Although we recognize that the two viewpoints are substantially different, we draw from the work of Van Gorp (2005), who considers victimization as a “dramaturgic technique” used by the media to describe “people being in a situation that is due to a force that lies beyond their own actions and responsibility”, which may include, for example, poor people, the elderly and children (Van Gorp, 2005: 489). Analyzing the way in which asylum-seekers were portrayed in Belgian newspapers, he ultimately noted that they were represented in the news either as victims or “intruders”. A third, more positive characterization of immigrants as “heroes” (see also Benson, 2009) did not occur often in the news. Also in our analysis, there seems to be a focus on negative and ‘victimization’ viewpoints about immigration at the expense of fully positive viewpoints, with the former generally used to look upon immigration from a favorable perspective. Regarding the independent variable tested in Hypothesis 3, the presence of immigrant actors in the news was calculated as a dummy, with zero meaning the absence of individual immigrants in the news and one indicating their presence. For the test of both Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3, we controlled for the length of the articles, which is expressed as a count of the article’s words. We also controlled for differences between quality and popular newspapers.

In the following section, we present the results of our study. First of all, we measure the average diversity scores for each news outlet, and we assess differences in the levels of actor and viewpoint diversity between quality and popular newspapers by means of t-tests. Second, we evaluate the relationship between actor and viewpoint diversity at the article level. Considering the count nature of the dependent variable, we have to use either a Poisson or a negative binomial regression model. We tested the assumption of equidispersion, which does not hold, and therefore selected the negative binomial regression model. We exclude the choice of zero-inflated models for a theoretical reason, namely because a score of zero in our dependent variable has just one meaning. Finally, we use an ordered logistic regression to gauge the relationship between the presence of individual immigrants in the news item and the favorability of viewpoints about immigration (an ordinal variable).

2.4 Results

Before measuring content diversity, we examine the distribution of actors and viewpoints about immigration in the sample. Figure 2.1 shows the distribution of a total of 1688 actors in the different actor categories. Political actors, both national and international, dominate the news coverage (representing 32% and 18% of the total number of actors, respectively), followed by ordinary people and immigrant actors (both 11 %).

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the distribution of viewpoints about immigration in the newspapers of the sample. At a glance, the table shows that *De Morgen* and *de Standaard* are the newspapers employing the highest number of viewpoints about immigration ($N = 140$ and $N = 159$, respectively). It is also evident that *Gazet van Antwerpen* and *Het Nieuwsblad* employ relatively more negative viewpoints about immigration than *De Morgen*, *de Standaard* and *De Tijd*. The popular outlet *Het Laatste Nieuws* represents an exception, as it follows the quality newspapers' pattern in the use of viewpoints. On top of that, we note that "victimization" is the most commonly used category. Generally, the Flemish newspapers in our sample make substantially less use of a positive characterization of migrants, with the exception of *De Tijd*.

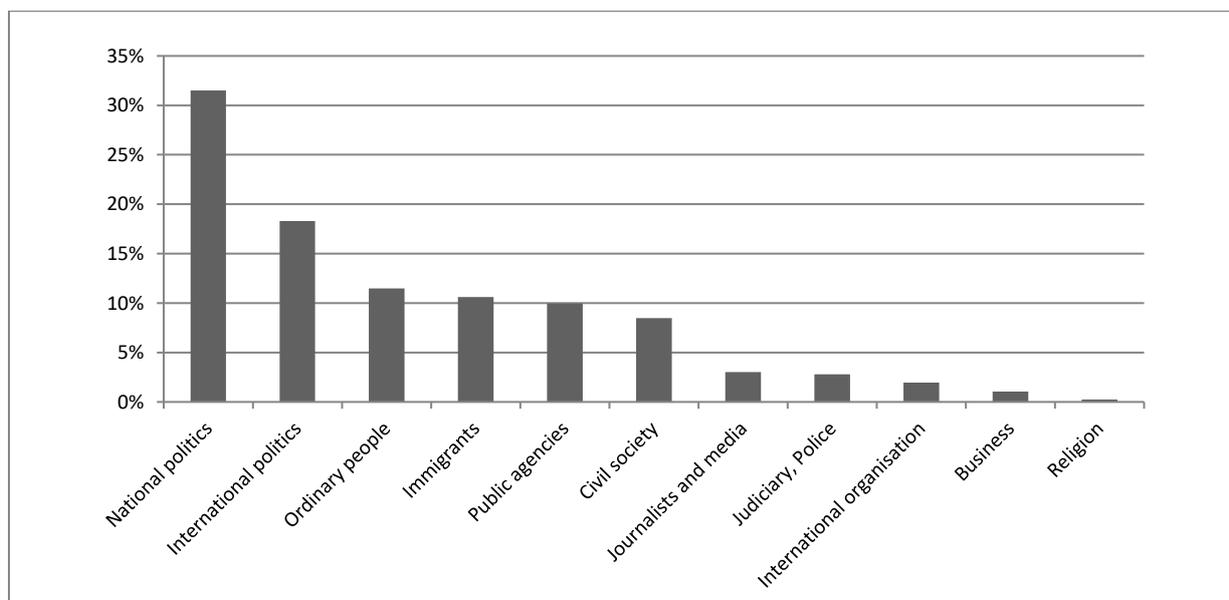


Figure 2.1 – Distribution of actors per category (N = 1688)

	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Victims</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Total (N= 100%)</u>
De Morgen*	33%	44%	22%	140
de Standaard*	35%	47%	18%	159
De Tijd*	31%	33%	36%	67
Gazet van Antwerpen**	51%	37%	12%	68
Het Nieuwsblad**	48%	50%	2%	48
Het Laatste Nieuws**	34%	54%	12%	68
<u>Total</u>	204	244	102	550

* Quality newspapers. ** Popular newspapers.

Table 2.1 – Distribution of viewpoints on immigration

In Table 2.2, we provide an overview of the differences in the levels of actor and viewpoint diversity between the newspapers of the sample. Regarding actor diversity, Table 2.2 shows that an average of less than two unique actor categories are represented in every article, except for *de Standaard*, which features slightly more than two different actor categories per news item. Given that each news outlet dedicates around one article per day to the issue of immigration, we can conclude that the average daily range of actor categories that enter the immigration debate in one single newspaper is limited to just two groups of actors. In turn, considering that the reporting is dominated by political actors (see Figure 2.1), the chances that at least one of the two quoted categories belongs to the political sphere are high, which supports the idea of a limited actor diversity in immigration news. When we compare the scores between quality and popular newspapers, we notice a difference in the average level of actor diversity ($M_{quality} = 1.85$; $M_{popular} = 1.65$). However, the results of a t-test show that this difference is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Moreover, we notice from Table 2.2 that an average of less than one unique viewpoint about immigration is represented in every article of our sample. These findings indicate a low level of viewpoint diversity, in that each news article is likely to be exclusively slanted towards one single viewpoint (negative, positive, or victims), without providing the reader with a diverse array of viewpoints. Finally, although we notice a difference between the average viewpoint diversity scores for quality and popular newspapers in our sample ($M_{quality} = 0.91$; $M_{popular} = 0.76$), the results of a t-test show that this

is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Hence, as we did not find significant differences in the levels of actor and viewpoint diversity between quality and popular newspapers, we have to reject Hypothesis 1.

Newspaper	Actor diversity	Viewpoint diversity
De Morgen*	1.87	0.98
de Standaard*	2.02	0.88
De Tijd*	1.67	0.86
Gazet van Antwerpen**	1.48	0.88
Het Nieuwsblad**	1.79	0.66
Het Laatste Nieuws**	1.67	0.75

* Quality newspapers. ** Popular newspapers.

Table 2.2 – Average diversity scores of actor and viewpoint diversity in the newspapers ($N = 642$)

Hypothesis 2 seeks to test the relationship between actor diversity and viewpoint diversity at the article level. Since we expect that the length of the article has an impact on the diversity of viewpoints expressed in the news, we control for it in the model. At the same time, by means of a dummy indicator, we control for differences between quality and popular newspapers. First of all, Table 2.3 shows that there is a significant, positive relationship between the *Diversity of actors* and the *Diversity of viewpoints* at the article level ($p < .01$). This finding gives support to Hypothesis 2: An increase in the number of actor categories present in a news item corresponds to an increase in the range of the viewpoints about immigration expressed in the article. As we expected, the effect of the length of the article on diversity of viewpoints presented in a news item is both significant and positive ($p < .01$): Longer articles will feature a larger number of viewpoints about immigration, which in turn enhances the diversity of ideas about immigration that are expressed in a newspaper on a given day. For example, we find high levels of both actor and viewpoint diversity in a reportage about irregular migrants in the US published in *de Standaard*.⁹ The article is very long (2810

⁹ “Hier is iedereen illegaal” (“Here everybody is illegal”) by Steven De Foer, published in *de Standaard* on 11 January 2014.

words, well above the average number of 650 words per article), and it features five different actor categories (politicians, civil servants, migrants, religious and ordinary people), giving space to a full array of viewpoints about immigration. Irregular immigrants are portrayed as victims who live in a clandestine way because of an unfair system, even though they work hard and behave as good citizens (positive views). The article also mentions that some migrants commit acts of violence (negative viewpoints).

Diversity of viewpoints	b(SE)	Percent change	STD Percent change
Diversity of actors (count)	.132(.04)**	14.1	14.6
Length of article	.000(.00)**	0.0	13.4
Popular-quality newspaper	-.014(.10)	-1.4	-0.7
Constant			
N	642		

* p<.05, ** p<.01

Table 2.3 – Explaining diversity of viewpoints about immigration (negative binomial regression)

Furthermore, the model shows no significant differences between quality and popular newspapers in the levels of viewpoint diversity, confirming our findings regarding the test of Hypothesis 1. Last but not least, we want to evaluate the strength of this relationship. The results indicate that, for a single unit increase in actor diversity – that is, if one more actor category is presented in a news article – the number of viewpoints presented will increase by 14.8 %. In addition, the standardized percentage change shows that the relationship between actor and viewpoint diversity is stronger than the one between length and viewpoint diversity. In fact, for a one standard unit increase in the diversity of actors, the variation in viewpoint diversity is larger than the variation corresponding to the same increase in length (14.6 versus 13.4 standard percent change). We argue that these findings indicate that the relationship between diversity of actors and viewpoints expressed in an article is substantial, thereby giving further weight to Hypothesis 2.

Finally, we narrow in on the relationship between individual immigrant actor and the favorability of viewpoints about immigration expressed in the news. In the model displayed in Table 2.4 we also add a dummy variable for the presence of immigrants as a group in the news article, and we control for the length of the article as well as for differences between quality and popular newspapers. First of all, we see that the effect of the presence of an individual immigrant actor on the direction of the viewpoints is statistically significant ($p < .01$). The coefficient tells us that if an individual immigrant “talks” in the article, we expect a 1.49-increase in the odds of the article being more favorable about migration. Therefore, we find support for Hypothesis 3. A good example of this effect is provided by articles about Navid Sharifi, an Afghan plumber who was expelled from Belgium although he was well integrated. Navid, who speaks Dutch, is very often quoted when his story is covered. His words are a powerful carrier of the idea that he is a victim of an unfair asylum policy. Hence, when he is quoted, the articles are positively oriented towards immigration: The reader gets the impression that Navid is well integrated and his expulsion is ultimately unfair. Furthermore, we do not find any significant effect of the presence of immigrants represented as a group. This is an important result, which confirms the role played by the individual nature of immigrant actors quoted in the news. For example, in an article published by *De Morgen*¹⁰ about the strictness of the asylum policies pursued by junior minister Maggie De Block, the journalist reports the slogan used by a group of Afghan asylum seekers protesting in front of the minister’s office (“What do we want? Justice!”). However, their voices do not have the power to change the overall direction of the viewpoints on immigration in the article. In fact, immigrant groups’ voices are often reported in the context of a protest and frequently juxtaposed to politicians’ utterances that are unfavorable to them.¹¹

Moreover, the model also points out that length is less crucial in predicting the direction of viewpoints than it was in predicting their diversity ($p = 0.05$). Instead, the model shows that differences in the editorial line of the newspaper are a significant predictor of the favorability of viewpoints towards immigration ($p < .01$), with popular newspapers presenting significantly more negative views on the issue compared to quality titles. This is in line with

¹⁰ “Overlopen? Me zou dat écht niet lukken” (“Pull out? It really wouldn’t work with me”) by Yves Desmet, published in *De Morgen* on 21 December 2013.

¹¹ See, for example, the articles “Broer De Block sluit zijn deuren voor Afghanen” (“De Block brother closes his doors to Afghans”, *Het Nieuwsblad*, 3 January 2014) and “Afghanen betogen tegen uitwijzingen” (“Afghans protest against expulsions”, *De Morgen*, 12 November 2013).

the distribution of viewpoints across newspapers that we observed in Table 2.1, in that popular news outlets present on average fewer positive viewpoints and more negative viewpoints than quality newspapers.

Favorability of viewpoints on immigration	b(SE)
Presence of individual immigrant actors	1.49(.24)**
Presence of immigrants as a group	.26(.36)
Length of article	.00(.00) [†]
Popular-quality newspaper	-.46(.16)**
Constant	
N	642

* p<.05, ** p<.01, [†] p = .05

Table 2.4 – Explaining the favorability of viewpoints about immigration (ordered logistic regression)

Figure 2.2, plotting the predicted probabilities, shows that the chances of an article presenting negative viewpoints about migration are much higher if there is no immigrant actor mentioned in the article – 21% versus 5%. Conversely, the chances that an article entails positive viewpoints about immigration are 31% if there is no immigrant actor present, but are 67% (more than twice as high) if an immigrant actor is present, which gives further support to our Hypothesis 3. More in general, these results indicate that the active presence of individual immigrants in the news enhances the overall positivity of the views on immigration that are expressed in a newspaper on a given day.

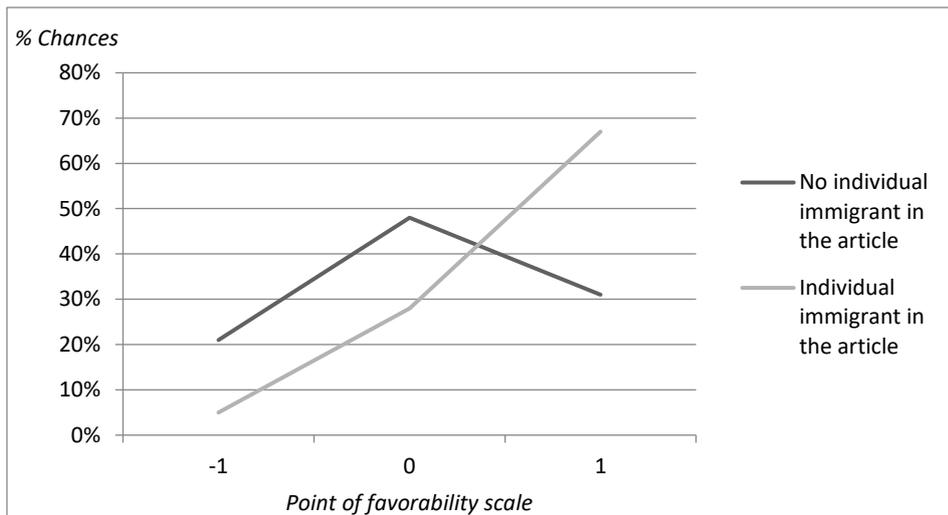


Figure 2.2 – The effect of individual immigrants in the news on favorability (predicted probabilities of the ordered logistic model)

2.5 Conclusions and discussion

Through this analysis of newspaper articles about immigration we aimed at honing in on content diversity following three main steps. First, we compared average articles' scores of actor and viewpoint diversity between news outlets. Contrary to our expectations, the results show that actor and viewpoint diversity hardly vary according to the quality or popular nature of the newspaper. Second, we focused on the relationship between actor and viewpoint diversity of articles about immigration. The results support the hypothesis that the two dimensions are strictly related to each other, showing that the representation of a larger number of actor categories in a news article corresponds to the expression of a greater variety of viewpoints in the same article, which in turn enhances the overall diversity of ideas on immigration provided by each newspaper. Finally, the analysis moved from diversity of viewpoints to favorability of viewpoints about immigration presented in the news. In particular, drawing from the person-positivity hypothesis (Iyengar et al., 2013; LaPiere, 1934; Sears, 1983) we find that the inclusion of individual immigrants in the range of actors that 'talk' in an article leads to a generally more positive perspective on immigration in the news. Last but not least, our results point out that the length of an article is a crucial predictor of the diversity of viewpoints (the longer an article, the more views on immigration will be expressed), but it is not a key element in predicting the direction of viewpoints. The latter is

better predicted by the editorial line of a newspaper, with popular titles expressing more negative viewpoints about immigration than quality newspapers.

We believe this study makes a relevant contribution to the literature on diversity of news content. First of all, we established the importance of measuring content diversity in a systematic way. Considering that each newspaper covers immigration with around one article per day, the calculation of actor and viewpoint diversity at the article level is a valid and easily interpretable indicator of the level of diversity that characterizes the coverage of immigration for each single outlet. Specifically, this study points out that immigration-related news in Belgium presents readers with a rather limited range of actors and viewpoints, ultimately failing in providing a diverse representation of the issue. Second, our results successfully challenge the idea that actor and viewpoint diversity might not be related to each other (see Voakes et al., 1996), reinforcing the assumption that actor diversity goes together with viewpoint diversity. Third, the findings of this study suggest that the presence or absence of “key actors” in news articles – in our case, individual immigrants – is significantly related to the direction of the viewpoints expressed about a particular issue in the news. Nevertheless, we must refer to some limitations of our study that might be overcome by future research in the field. The limited focus on the Flemish media system, an example of the democratic corporatist model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), might hinder the generalizability of the study. Hence, future research on the content diversity of news about immigration should adopt a comparative design to encompass countries belonging to different media systems. Moreover, news about immigration might be substantially different in countries experiencing direct, mass-scale incoming immigration flows (e.g., Italy) than in countries in which immigration rates are lower. Furthermore, this article focused on just one kind of media, namely newspapers. Considering the importance of television in priming public opinion about immigration (see Gilliam Jr & Iyengar, 2000), it would seem advisable for future studies to analyze the content diversity of TV news on migration. Finally, we did not address other potential factors that might explain differences in content diversity between newspapers. Investigating the extent to which structures of media ownership might have an influence on content diversity could be an innovative way to look at the effect of market and organizational forces on news production. In the introduction, we assumed that the diversity of news content is important to guarantee the democratic debate in a society of properly informed citizens

(Napoli, 1999; Van Cuilenburg, 2007), especially when dealing with a socially relevant issue such as migration. This study points to a number of normative implications for journalism professionals. Our results highlight the key role of journalists' gatekeeping practices at the actor level to shape news content on immigration. The first indication is that if journalists cite a wider range of social actors they can potentially give space to a broader range of viewpoints in immigration news. Secondly, it is important that they "open the news gates" to individual immigrants, often negatively represented in the news (see Crespo Fernández & Martínez Lirola, 2012; Kim, Carvalho, Davis & Mullins, 2011), as this is likely to correspond to a more positive general perspective on immigration in the news. In this sense, our study goes against the idea that the personalization of news coverage is more likely to give a biased view of reality (Bennett, 1996). However, the results indicate that a positive portrayal of immigration in the news is mostly limited to the representation of immigrants as victims. Although Van Gorp (2005) stresses the structural positive nature of the victims viewpoint – from which we also draw in our study –, it remains remarkable that potential (social, economic or cultural) benefits related to immigration are left unmentioned. The important economic and political implications of migration in the present day suggest that a more diverse representation of perspectives on the issue is needed to better reflect the inherent complexity of the phenomenon. Finally, we believe the results of our study have meaning beyond the case of immigration. If a more diverse set of actors gets access to the news, chances are higher that a wider diversity of viewpoints is addressed. In addition, our study suggests that, in particular, the presence of the weakest actors seems crucial to getting a positive or at least balanced viewpoint of the issue. This leads to similar questions about the person positivity bias in other domains. Does, for instance, the presence of individual unemployed people lead to a less negative or a more diverse type of coverage of the unemployment issue? Can we, more generally, expect that an active presence of the "underdogs in society" will lead to more positive viewpoints and more understanding of their position? Again, these are questions that require further investigation. We hope the present study can serve as source of inspiration.

Measuring and explaining the diversity of voices and viewpoints in the news. A comparative study on the determinants of content diversity of immigration news.

Chapter based on: Masini, A., Van Aelst, P., Zerback, T., Reinemann, C., Mancini, P., Mazzoni, M., Damiani, M. & Coen, S. (2017). Measuring and Explaining the Diversity of Voices and Viewpoints in the News: A comparative study on the determinants of content diversity of immigration news. *Journalism Studies*, 1-20.

3.1 Introduction

Political communication scholars generally agree that the ideal of a “multiperspectival” press – that is, a press that guarantees access to diverse sectors of society, allowing the presentation of diverse perspectives on a certain issue (Gans, 1979; 2011) – is achieved only if news media foster the diversity of their content (Baker, 2002; Napoli, 1999). As stated by Choi (2009), content diversity is ultimately an indicator of the quality of news reporting. For this reason, both the assessment of diversity and the identification of its determinants are crucial. In which ways can content diversity be exhaustively measured? Under which circumstances can one expect to find higher or lower levels of content diversity? A number of studies in the field have attempted to conceptualize and measure news content diversity (Benson, 2009; Carpenter, 2010; Choi, 2009; Humprecht & Büchel, 2013; Voakes et al., 1996). Yet, this research has proven elusive in defining and employing different measurements of content diversity and, with a few exceptions (see Benson, 2009; Humprecht & Büchel, 2013), it has neglected to investigate the factors that make the content more or less multiperspectival.

Drawing upon a comparative cross-country content analysis of the news coverage of immigration in four European countries (Belgium, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom), this study aims at systematically examining the impact of different factors on news content

diversity. According to Benson (2009: 403), the issue of immigration is suit for the analysis of variation in the diversity of news content, as it is a “*multifaceted and complex*” topic that is typically disputed by a broad range of social actors, willing to put forward their viewpoints in the news in order to influence public opinion.

The paper will proceed as follows. After having provided an exhaustive conceptualization of content diversity, we present a model to identify the factors that might shape news content diversity, and we present hypotheses on the direction of these influences. Then, we explain the methodological choices that have been made to measure content diversity and gauge the impact of the factors affecting the level of multiperspectival reporting. Finally, we present our findings and discuss them in light of the democratic role of the media.

3.2 Theoretical framework and hypotheses

3.2.1 Conceptualization of content diversity

As noted by van Cuilenburg (1999: 188), content diversity corresponds to the “*heterogeneity of media content in terms of one or more specified characteristics*”. For example, media content can vary according to the issues or the news stories that are presented (Carpenter, 2010, Humprecht & Büchel, 2013), news genres, geographic locations (Choi, 2009), etc. This study investigates the variety of two of the most important elements of news content, namely social actors and viewpoints. As noted by Benson and Wood (2015), the analysis of voices in the news is a central concern for journalism studies, in that actors’ ability to speak in the news is key to shape the debate on a certain issue. However, as the authors argue, their ability to express viewpoints on the issue under discussion is what really allows them to contribute to the framing of a topic. In the words of Griswold (1998), it is the diversity of viewpoints that can provide readers with a wide range of perspectives on a given issue. This conceptualization, originally proposed by McQuail and Van Cuilenburg (1983), it is similar to the one used by Baden and Springer (2015) and by Benson (2009: 406), who defines content diversity in terms of “*institutional*” and “*ideological multiperspectivalness*”. Similarly, Voakes et al. (1996) examine content diversity as the variety of news sources and the dispersion of viewpoints in the news.

Moreover, the conceptualization of content diversity differs according to the level of analysis. Diversity can be measured at the level of the single unit of information – like a TV

news item or a newspaper article – as the variety of different social actors and viewpoints that are represented therein. Alternatively, it can be gauged at a broader level as the evenness of the distribution of these two dimensions within a news outlet – like a TV news broadcast or a newspaper – throughout a specific period of time. The difference between both levels is more than a technical measurement distinction and suggests a different way that a news consumer learns about an issue. If we focus our measurement on the article level, diversity implies that each story should give space to several types of actors and/or to multiple viewpoints. Only in this way, when reading a single news item, a reader gets a broader understanding of the issue. However, a news outlet can also guarantee content diversity by portraying different actors and viewpoints in different news items. Benson (2009, 2013) notes that this is a typical characteristic of the French “debate ensemble” form of news: for French journalists it is not the single article that matters, but the entire page, which includes, for example, an interview with the minister of immigration alongside an article telling the personal story of an immigrant family entering the country. In this case, both stories together provide the reader with multiple perspectives, while on the article level the diversity of actors and opinions is limited.

Since these measurements of content diversity yield different values, extant studies that focus exclusively on one level convey a rather incomplete picture of the diversity of news content. This study seeks to overcome this inadequacy by mapping and comparing how newspapers perform in actor and viewpoint diversity both at the article and at the newspaper level. Also, we shed light on the relationship between measurements at both levels through the analysis of the determinants of content diversity, which is central to this paper. Do different factors have the same impact on content diversity measured at the article and at the newspaper level? To this purpose, in the next section, we introduce a conceptual model including the main factors that might influence actor and viewpoint diversity in the news.

3.2.2 Defining a Multilevel Model of Influence on Content Diversity

Although there is a long tradition of research on the diversity of news (e.g. Benson 2009; Carpenter 2010; Choi 2009; [Humprecht & Büchel, 2013; Voakes et al., 1996]), two recent journalism studies explicitly focus on the determinants of news’ content diversity. Drawing upon Bourdieu’s field theory (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992), Benson (2009) argues that content diversity of immigration-related news in France and the U.S. is shaped by the interaction of the journalistic field with the political and economic fields, as well as by features of the

journalistic field itself. Within the political field, the characteristics of the party system, along with governmental policies on press regulation and subsidies, might have an impact on content diversity. Concerning the economic field, advertising support is considered to play a key role in shaping actor and viewpoint diversity. Finally, moving to the journalistic field, the author observes that content diversity might be shaped through the formats in which news is presented, as well as by the cultural capital of newspapers and their audiences. In a more recent study on the online reporting of the “Occupy” movement, Humprecht and Büchel (2013) draw on Shoemaker and Reese’s (1996) “Hierarchy-of-Influences Model” and define a pattern to identify factors at the national and organizational level that might explain variations in content diversity. At the national macro-level, they examine the influence of the relevance of the topic, as well as that of macroeconomic variables, on content diversity. At the organizational meso-level, the authors analyze the role played by the resources of the news organization and its orientation towards quality journalism.

Building on the multilevel approach of these contributions, we aim to define a model that pinpoints the levels in which forces that shape content diversity are located. The idea, drawn from the hierarchical approach proposed by Shoemaker and Reese (1996), is that news content – the final outcome of the journalistic process (Carpenter 2010) – is embedded in multiple spheres of influence corresponding to the different levels that shape news production (Figure 3.1).

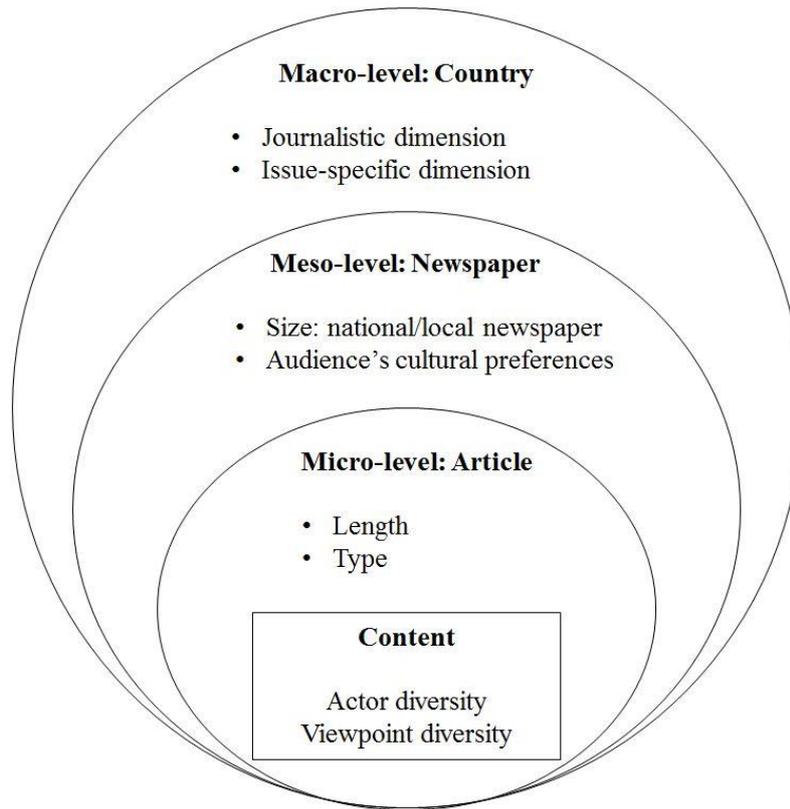


Figure 3.1 – Multilevel Model of Influence on Content Diversity

At the micro-level, the article format – i.e. its length and type – might affect content diversity, while at the meso-level the characteristics of the news organization, namely its size and the preferences of its target audience, can influence actor and viewpoints diversity. Finally, at the macro-level, countries' characteristics belonging to the journalistic and issue-specific dimensions, are potential driving forces behind the diversity of immigration news. In the following sections, we formulate hypotheses on the influence of these factors on content diversity of immigration news.

3.2.3 Influence of article's characteristics: length and type

The theoretical foundations that formal characteristics of communication might have an influence on the content go back to ancient philosophy. Plato observed that the forms of human conversation (which we can conceive in the broader sense of mediated communication) can determine the content that is expressed. As our study encompasses just one medium, namely newspapers, we do not think of "form" as medium type. Instead, we

examine the way in which information is organized and presented to the newspaper's readers (Altheide, 1985; Barnhurst & Nerone, 2001). Previous research on the deliberative quality of televised messages (Bourdieu, 1996; Postman, 1985; Sartori, 1997) concludes that television's time constraints jeopardize the articulate rational character of media discourse. Likewise, space constraints in the print press might affect content diversity: in the presence of shorter articles, the space for the expression of different social actors and arguments is reduced. This question has been explored by Humprecht and Büchel (2013), who find that the length of online news articles about the Occupy movement is a key element in allowing for higher levels of diversity. Hence, we posit the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The length of articles about immigration has a positive effect on the levels of actor diversity (1a) and viewpoint diversity (1b).

Furthermore, we argue that the type of article might also play a key role in shaping content diversity of news about immigration. Based on a deductive analysis, we distinguish between six main article types: *news reports*, *special reports*, *editorials*, *opinion articles*, *interviews* and *letters from readers*. We argue that differences in the "primary purpose" of these news types might have an impact on content diversity. On the one hand, editorials, opinion pieces, interviews and letters from readers are more *opinionated* article types that have the primary aim to convey a particular point of view (of the journalist or another agent) about the issue under discussion. On the other hand, news reports and special reports are more *informative* types that mainly provide the reader with an account of facts. When writing articles of this kind, journalists are more likely to follow the principle of objectivity, which is the "*defining norm of modern journalism*" (Patterson, 1998: 28), by promoting the representation of diverse actor and viewpoint categories. Nevertheless, we have to recognize that special reports have the specific goal to provide an in-depth account of a topic, usually by covering opposing voices and different ideas, which makes them the most suitable article type to promote content diversity. Hence, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2: Special reports about immigration enhance the levels of actor diversity (2a) and viewpoint diversity (2b), as compared to news reports. On the contrary, more opinionated news types about immigration decrease the levels of actor diversity (2c) and viewpoint diversity (2d), as compared to news reports.

3.2.4 Influence of newspaper's characteristics: size and audience's cultural capital

In order to study influences at the meso-level, we start from Reese's (2001) assumption that the news is the product of an organization that is driven by specific goals, and has a certain structure to enforce them. Simply put, at this level we consider the *capability* and the *will* of a newspaper organization to foster content diversity. Previous studies have noted a positive relationship between the newspaper's size and its capability of providing a multiperspectival reporting. Humprecht and Büchel (2013) find that the dimensions of a news organization in terms of its human resources – i.e. the number of journalists working for it – matters in enhancing content diversity. We argue that the size of a newspaper is the combination between the scope of the outlet and the dimensions of its staff, with the former often (but not always) determining the latter. Local newspapers are considered “small” because of a more limited geographical scope, which typically results in a smaller staff covering a narrower range of events at the local level. By contrast, national newspapers are “big” as they have to deal with a wider array of events and actors at the national and international level. Although there are examples of local newspapers having larger newsrooms than national ones, we expect that in general the latter will employ more journalists to cover a greater geographical scope. This is even more likely if we consider that the crisis of the media sector has hurt local news organizations the most, forcing them to impose significant staff cutbacks (Franklin and Murphy, 1998). Consequently, we expect that “big” national newspapers provide a more diverse coverage of the issue of immigration than “small” local newspapers. For example, we expect that national news outlets will rely more on foreign correspondents to enhance geographic proximity when covering key events related to immigration, or to gain direct access to the voice of international politicians (e.g. in Brussels or in Washington), thereby increasing the chances of providing more content diversity compared to local papers. Also, due to their bigger weight in the national media landscape, national outlets are usually granted a preferential channel to reach various key actors in society (experts, politicians, members of international organizations, etc.) and include more diverse opinions in the news. A formal test of the relationship between a newspaper's size – in terms of its circulation – and the diversity of its content is done by Voakes et al. (1996), but they find that smaller newspapers do not display lower levels of content diversity. Nonetheless, because these results might be biased by the local scope of their study, we still expect the following:

Hypothesis 3: Immigration news in national newspapers will have higher levels of actor diversity (3a) and viewpoint diversity (3b), as compared to local newspapers.

Furthermore, we argue that the will of a newspaper to foster content diversity depends on its editorial orientation in order to match the “*cultural capital*” of its target audience (Benson, 2009: 405). Literature on economic explanations of news construction demonstrates that newspapers are able to attract readers based on the audience’s cultural preferences (Baron, 2006; Callaghan & Schnell 2001; Gentzkow & Shapiro, 2010; Hamilton 2004). According to Peterson and Kern (1996), the “*omnivorousness*” of cultural tastes – i.e. a cultural appetite for a diverse range of cultural production – is a key characteristics of *highbrow* audiences, as opposed to the more limited range of preferences typical of *middlebrow* and *lowbrow* audiences (see the definition of Levine (1988) and DiMaggio (1991)). In line with this, Benson (2009) suggests that *elite newspapers* targeting a highbrow audience are likely to promote diversity of their content in order to match the more “*omnivorous*” predisposition of their readers, whereas *popular* newspapers targeting more middlebrow and lowbrow readers deliver a less complex, less diverse content. Consistent with this, Roggeband and Vliegthart (2007) notice that when covering immigration and integration Dutch newspapers targeting an elite audience make use of more diverse frames compared to outlets with a more popular readership. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 4: Immigration news in elite newspapers will feature higher levels of actor diversity (4a) and viewpoint diversity (4b), as compared to popular newspapers.

3.2.5 Influence of country-related characteristics: journalistic dimension and Lampedusa

Finally, this study explores inter-country variation in the levels of content diversity. Cross-national differences in news content diversity have been investigated by Esser and Umbricht (2013) within a broader longitudinal study on the objectivity paradigm within Western press systems. Their findings show that the inclusion of opposing viewpoints in political news – which is an indicator of content diversity – was the lowest in Italy, while the results for the British press are aligned with those of countries belonging to the Democratic-Corporatist model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), namely Germany and Switzerland. Furthermore, as observed by Martin (1988) and Choi (2009), geographic proximity to the key locations where an issue is unfolding enhances media’s potential to provide a diverse coverage of the topic. During the

period under study, according to the EU-agency Frontex, over 200.000 migrants have entered Europe by sea through the Italian island of Lampedusa. As observed by Cuttitta (2014: 196), the island has become the symbol of migration into Europe, as well as the “*theatre of the ‘border play’*”, a figurative stage in which a large array of social actors debate on migration control (De Swert, Schacht & Masini, 2015). Contrary to the negative effect on content diversity stemming from its journalistic characteristics, geographic proximity to this relevant place for immigration – both in its real and symbolic dimensions – might correspond to a more diverse coverage of immigration in Italian newspapers. We will thus investigate the interplay between these two opposing forces.

3.3 Data and methods

This study analyses news about immigration in a sample of newspapers in Belgium (Flanders), Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom, between 1 January 2013 and 30 April 2014. The newspaper sample includes 22 titles with a large variation in terms of national/local scope and audiences’ cultural preferences (see Appendix B). For Belgium, we selected six news outlets from Flanders, the Dutch-speaking community: *De Morgen*, *de Standaard*, *De Tijd*, *Gazet van Antwerpen*, *Het Nieuwsblad* and *Het Laatste Nieuws*. The German sample includes five titles: *Die Welt*, *Berliner Morgenpost*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*. In Italy, we selected five outlets: *La Repubblica*, *Gazzetta di Modena*, *Il Giornale*, *Il Messaggero* and *Il Mattino*. Finally, for the UK, we chose *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Sun*, *Daily Mirror*, *Manchester Evening News* and *London Evening Standard*.

Through a Boolean string, translated in every language of interest, we searched in online databases articles about immigration, this being defined as the entrance and the presence of people in a country other than their country of birth with the purpose of settling down (drawn from the United Nations’ definition of immigration). This all-encompassing search criterion allows us to grasp the different aspects of the multifaceted and evolving phenomenon of immigration, therefore ensuring comparability among countries and across time. The outcome of the first search for the whole period was further filtered, and ultimately resulted in a final sample consisting of 2490 news articles (642 for Belgium, 484 for Germany, 822 for Italy, 542 for the UK). The items were coded quantitatively by coders based in each country of the study. Extensive training was provided by a master coder in every country in which the coders’ teams were based. Intercoder reliability was tested for each country on a

10% subsample. For the variable indicating the article type, Krippendorff's alpha scores range from 0.93 to 1 in the four countries. The scores concerning the actor variables range from 0.62 to 1, with an average of 0.78, and coefficients of the variables indicating viewpoints range from 0.60 to 0.66. Because alpha is sensitive to skewed variables (as it is the case for actors and viewpoints, which present a large amount of missing values), we also calculated the percentage of intercoder agreement with Holsti's formula (Holsti, 1969). For actors, Holsti's scores range from 0.70 to 1, with an average of 0.87, while they range from 0.88 to 0.96 for the viewpoint variables (average 0.92). On top of it, we calculated intercoder reliability across countries on a smaller subsample of articles in English, with overall satisfying results.

A maximum of 10 quoted or paraphrased actors were coded in every article. Actors were identified by codes corresponding to different actor groups in society (see Figure 3.1 in the Results section). As we are mainly interested in the diversity of social groups that enter the news, all national political actors were considered as one group. In contrast with studies on political balance, we do not focus on the presence of different types of politicians, but rather on the attention for politicians versus all other type of actors that are involved in the immigration debate. Besides, coders indicated the presence of "*Viewpoints about immigration and immigrants*" in every news item. Based on existing literature on viewpoint and frames regarding immigration (e.g. Benson, 2009, 2013; Van Gorp, 2005) we distinguished between four types of distinct viewpoints, that were operationalized as dummies¹²:

- *Negative*: Negative characterization of immigrants/immigration (e.g. immigration is bad for the economy, immigrants carry diseases, they commit crimes, etc.)
- *Administrative burden*: Immigrants (or immigration) are seen as creating administrative problems (e.g. concerns about the management of the arrivals, food supply, hygiene, etc.)
- *Victims*: Immigrants are portrayed as victims (e.g. immigrants are victims of unjust government policies, traffickers, they have to deal with racism/xenophobia, etc.)

¹² *Negative* and *Positive* viewpoints derive from more fine-grained categories that were originally coded, namely "Immigration/immigrants as a general threat", "Immigration/immigrants as an economic threat", "Immigration/immigrants as a cultural/moral/ethnic demographic threat" – which were collapsed in the negative viewpoints category –, and "Immigration/immigrants as a general opportunity", "Immigration/immigrants as an economic opportunity", "Immigration/immigrants as a cultural/moral/ethnic demographic opportunity" – which were collapsed in the positive viewpoints category.

- *Positive*: Positive characterization of immigrants/immigration (e.g. immigration empowers work force, enhances “positive multiculturalism”, immigrants work hard, etc.).

Starting from these variables, we measure content diversity both at the article and at the newspaper level. At the article level, actor diversity is a count variable – ranging from 1 to 10 – corresponding to the total number of social categories that are represented in an article. Viewpoint diversity, also a count variable, corresponds to the total number of different viewpoints that are expressed in the article, and it ranges from 1 to 4. It is important to note that articles that do not feature any actor or viewpoint are excluded from the analysis. Instead of representing the lowest level of diversity, we argue that articles of this kind are neutral because all voices and views on immigration are absent. Only if an article provides at least one actor or viewpoint, it is worth analyzing how diverse the range of actors and viewpoints is. At the newspaper level, actor diversity is measured as the evenness of the distribution of the total number of actors in the corresponding categories. The same is done for viewpoint diversity. This is calculated by means of Simpson’s standardized diversity index (D_z), a standardized calculation of Simpson’s diversity index (D). Although Simpson’s measure of content diversity is sensitive to the number of categories that are included in the calculation, we keep this sensitivity to a minimum by using its standardized version, which is more suitable to compare diversity values across distributions comprising different numbers of categories (McDonald & Dimmick, 2003). The formula for Simpson’s D_z is:

$$D_z = \frac{1 - \sum p_i^2}{1 - \frac{1}{k}}$$

where p_i is the proportion in the i th category, categories = i through k is the number of categories in the distribution. Simpson’s D_z ranges from zero to one. In the case that the entire population belongs to one category (i.e. lowest level of diversity) the score would be zero. The greater the extent to which the population is evenly distributed among the categories, the closer the score will be to one.

Moving on to the determinants of content diversity, the length of an article is an ordinal variable including the values 1 = *very short* (less than 200 words); 2 = *short* (between

201 and 400 words); 3 = *medium* (between 401 and 600 words); 4 = *long* (more than 601 words). These cut-off points were established following an inductive analysis of the length of articles in each country under study. The variable “article type”, encompasses three categories: news report, special report and “opinionated news type”. The last category includes editorials, opinion pieces, interviews and letters of readers. Moreover, newspapers’ orientation towards a highbrow, middlebrow and lowbrow audience was defined based on the extant literature, as well as on national experts’ judgements. We grouped lowbrow and middlebrow newspapers together, and created a dummy variable with one category indicating elite newspapers and the other one for popular outlets. Likewise, the national/local character of a newspaper was operationalized as a dummy variable.

In the following section, we present the results of the study. Measurements of actor and viewpoint diversity at the article and newspaper level are presented and compared. Moreover, we test the influence of the different factors on content diversity. For diversity measured at the newspaper level, we test the influences of articles’ and newspapers’ characteristics separately, by means of a set of linear regressions, and we explore a pattern of intercountry differences by comparing the scores. For this test, the determinants at the article level – length and article type – are operationalized as dummy variables. The first dummy measures whether a newspaper has a majority of long or short articles. It is constructed by subtracting the sum of very short and short article from the sum of medium and long articles. Positive values show that there are more medium and long articles in the newspaper (category “*newspaper with a majority of longer articles*”). By contrast, negative values indicate that there are more short and very short articles in a newspaper (category “*newspaper with a majority of shorter articles*”). Similarly, the second dummy shows if a newspaper employs more special reports than opinionated news articles such as editorials, opinions, interviews and letters to the editor. We define special reports as articles that aim at giving insights into a specific topic, characterized by an in-depth angle on the issue, and that are generally longer than news reports. We subtracted the average of the proportions of opinionated news types from the proportion of special reports, holding the proportion of news reports constant. Positive scores indicate that this is a “*newspaper with a higher proportion of special reports*”, whereas negative scores show that this is a “*newspaper with a higher proportion of opinionated news types*”. In order to test the impact of the determinants of the article-based

measurements of diversity we have to use either a Poisson or a negative binomial regression model, because of the count nature of the dependent variables. We tested the assumption of equidispersion, which does hold, and therefore selected the Poisson regression model. Finally, to account for the clustering of the articles in countries, we add country dummies to the model.

3.4 Results

Before we test for the factors that influence content diversity, we present descriptive results of the actors and viewpoints in the news in the four countries under study. Figure 3.2 shows that the distribution of social actor categories is very similar across countries. Not surprisingly, national politicians are the most quoted or paraphrased social group in every country of the sample (ranging from 53% of total actors in Italy to 32% in Belgium). After national and international political actors, space is given in all countries to ordinary people and public opinion voices, followed by immigrants and civil society actors. The relative low presence of immigrant voices, the real protagonists of immigration news, is similar across countries, ranging from 11% of total actors in Belgium to 7% in the UK. We also note that actors from the business, corporate and finance sectors were all but visible in the news.

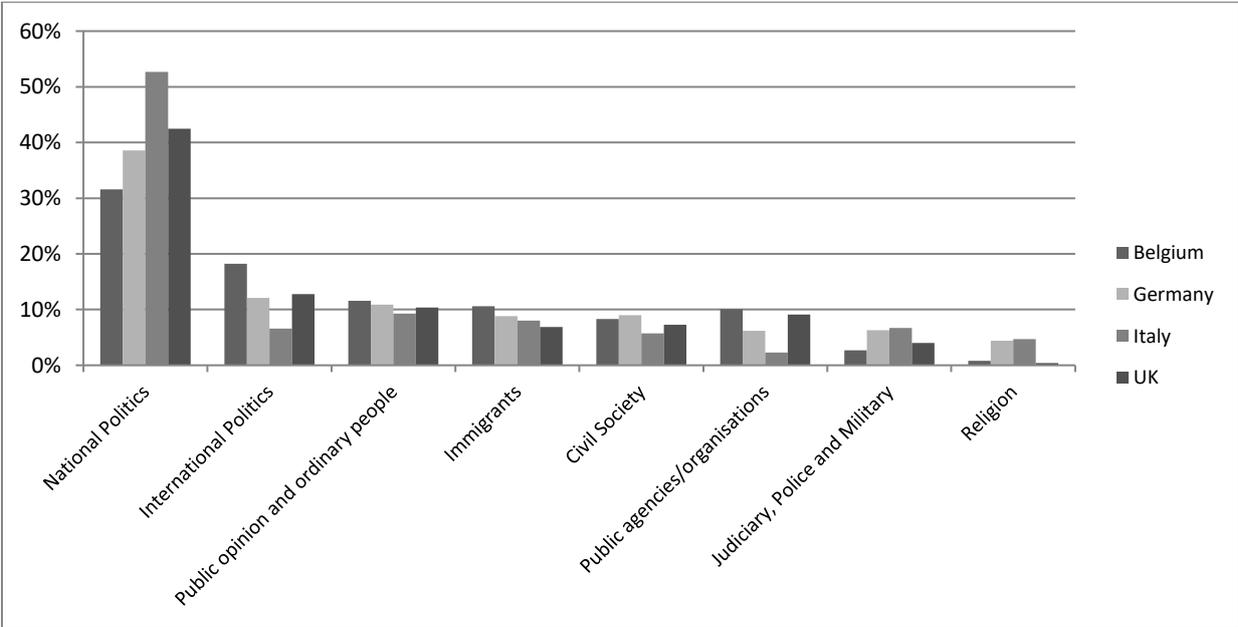


Figure 3.2 – Distribution of actor categories across countries, N = 6863 (Belgium, N = 1679; Germany, N = 1625, Italy, N = 1932, UK = 1627)

If we exclude those news items that do not feature any actor (not presented in table), each article features on average less than two social categories (N = 2138). Almost half of the articles include just one actor category (49%), while 29% feature two actor categories, 15% present three and 6% four different social categories. When articles give voice to just one type of actor (N = 1047), this is the “national politicians” category in 51% of the cases, and in 14% that of “international politicians”, whereas in just 6% of the cases immigrants are the one and only voice in an article. When the range of actors talking in an article opens up, national politicians are very likely to be included. Most of the articles that give voice to two social groups (N = 609), combine national political actors with public agencies (13%), or with civil society actors (11%), or with international political actors (also 11%). Finally, national politicians talk in combination with immigrants in 4% of the cases. Even when an article includes three different social categories (N = 317), the most recurring combinations feature national politicians: either with immigrants and ordinary people (9%), or with public agencies and ordinary people (7%), or with public agencies and civil society actors (7%).

Similarly, 65% of the articles that express viewpoints on immigration (N = 1809) present just one type of viewpoint, while 29% feature two distinct viewpoints. Only 3% of the total articles give space to three or four different viewpoints. Single-viewpoint-articles (N = 1204) mostly give space to the representation of immigrants as victims (43%). In 28% of the cases, the article is fully negatively slanted, and in 15% of the cases it just deals with the administrative problems arising from immigration. Finally, just 14% of the articles are exclusively positively slanted. The “victims” category prevails also when the article includes more than one viewpoint. When two viewpoints are presented (N = 539), we mostly find a combination of victims with positive viewpoints (30%), while fewer articles combine victims viewpoints with the view of immigration as an administrative burden (21%), or with negative viewpoints (18%). Truly balanced stories on immigration presenting both negative and positive viewpoints are rather exceptional (11%).

3.4.1 Measurements of content diversity

We now move to a closer analysis of the measurements of content diversity at both the article and the newspaper level. Our results show that newspapers include on average less than two

different actor categories per article, excluding those that have no actors ($M = 1.82$, $SD = 0.24$), which gives the idea of a rather low actor diversity. On the contrary, actor diversity scores calculated with Simpson's D_z are on average close to one ($M = 0.82$, $SD = 0.07$), which corresponds to a well-balanced distribution of social actor categories in each outlet. This seems to be at odds with the aggregate actor distribution displayed in Figure 3.2, pointing to an overrepresentation of national politicians in the news sample. However, the result is mostly driven by the evenness of the distribution of the other actor categories. If we run a robustness check by excluding national politicians from the analysis, the average Simpson's D_z score is even closer to one ($M = 0.92$, $SD = 0.03$). Moving the attention to the viewpoints, newspapers present a rather limited average of 1.36 categories per article, if we exclude those with no viewpoints ($SD = 0.11$). Nonetheless, as observed for actor diversity, D_z viewpoint diversity scores are close to 1, which means that the distribution of the four types of viewpoints is well balanced for each newspaper over the period ($M = 0.89$, $SD = 0.08$). To sum up, these findings support the first broad assumption of this paper: measurements of content diversity at different levels yield different results, and provide a different evaluation of content diversity. Nevertheless, we also find a significant positive correlation between the scores of actor diversity at the article level and D_z scores for actor diversity at the outlet level, ($r = 0.592$, $N = 22$, $p = 0.004$), and a weaker correlation between the two levels of viewpoint diversity scores, ($r = 0.473$, $N = 22$, $p = 0.026$), which suggest a moderate positive relationship between measurements of content diversity at the article and at the newspaper level. Put differently, newspapers that cover immigration in a more diverse manner within their articles also tend to score higher in their coverage as a whole.

Another suggestion that diversity measurements at the article and newspaper level might be related to each other is given by Table 3.1, which displays the variation of actor and viewpoint diversity according to different factors. In most of the cases, although differences are minimal, we detect similar effects for outlet- and article-based scores. At the micro-level, ANOVA tests show that longer articles give significantly more space to different actors and viewpoints (respectively, $F(3,2131) = 92.574$, $p = 0.000$, and $F(3,1801) = 12.743$, $p = 0.000$). Likewise, newspapers with a majority of longer articles present higher D_z scores for actor diversity and viewpoint diversity, as compared to those with a majority of shorter articles, but independent t-tests show that this difference is significant just for actor diversity ($t(20) =$

3.357, $p = 0.003$). Concerning the influence of the type of article, special reports present a significantly broader range of actors and viewpoints than news reports, and the latter score significantly higher than opinionated news types (respectively, $F(5,2113) = 38.005$, $p = 0.000$, and $F(5,1788) = 5.116$, $p = 0.000$, ANOVA tests). Similarly, newspapers in which special reports are predominant present a more balanced distribution of actor and viewpoints categories than those with more opinionated article types. By contrast, we notice that opinionated articles feature more viewpoint categories than news reports. However, for D_z scores, neither of these differences are statistically significant ($p > .10$).

Focusing on the determinants at the meso-level, Table 3.1 shows similar effects for both measurements of content diversity. National newspapers score slightly higher than local outlets in actor diversity. The results of independent t-tests indicate that this difference is significant for D_z values of actor diversity ($t(20) = 2.113$, $p = 0.047$), but not for measurements at the article level ($p > .10$). Local newspapers perform better than national ones in viewpoint diversity, but the differences are not significant for neither types of measurements ($p > .10$). On top of it, the difference between elite and popular newspaper is statistically significant for actor diversity (for article level measurements, $t(1428) = -5.422$, $p = 0.000$, for D_z scores, $t(20) = -2.541$, $p = 0.019$), and it is larger than the difference in viewpoint diversity, which is nonetheless not significant ($p > .10$). Finally, regarding the macro-level, the table shows that, for both measurements, Italian newspapers display the lowest levels of actor diversity, while UK outlets present the highest extent of viewpoint diversity. As demonstrated by ANOVA tests, inter-country differences are statistically significant for actor diversity (both for values calculated at the article level, $F(3,1805) = 2.494$, $p = 0.000$, and for D_z scores, $F(3,18) = 4.265$, $p = 0.019$), but not for viewpoint diversity (article level, $p > .05$, D_z values, $p > .10$).

		<i>Actor diversity</i>		<i>Viewpoint diversity</i>	
		<i>Average actor categories per article</i>	<i>Average D₂ actors</i>	<i>Average viewpoint categories per article</i>	<i>Average D₂ viewpoints</i>
<i>Articles' characteristics:</i> <i>Length</i>	Very short articles (N=590)	1.38	0.77	1.28	0.86
	Short articles (N=840)	1.68		1.33	
	Medium articles (N=496)	1.87	0.86	1.36	0.91
	Long articles (N=564)	2.37		1.51	
<i>Type</i>	News reports (N=1698)	1.80		1.33	
	Opinionated news types (N=523)	1.52	0.80	1.42	0.87
	Special reports (N=245)	2.57	0.83	1.51	0.89
<i>Newspapers' characteristics:</i> <i>Circulation share</i>	Local (N=731)	1.82	0.78	1.39	0.93
	National (N=1759)	1.84	0.83	1.36	0.86
<i>Audience's cultural preferences</i>	Popular (N=721)	1.63	0.78	1.34	0.88
	Elite (N=1769)	1.90	0.85	1.38	0.90
<i>Countries</i>	Articles in Belgium (N=642)	1.81	0.87	1.31	0.89
	Articles in Germany (N=484)	2.06	0.85	1.40	0.89
	Articles in Italy (N=822)	1.68	0.75	1.39	0.83
	Articles in the UK (N=542)	1.87	0.82	1.40	0.93

Table 3.1 – Mean of actor and viewpoint diversity (calculated at the article and newspaper level) per newspapers' and articles' characteristics, including cross-country variance (total articles N=2490)

3.4.2 The determinants of content diversity

We now move to a multivariate test of the determinants of actor and viewpoint diversity measured at the article level to identify the original influence of single factors while controlling for others. Model 1a (Table 3.2) shows that the article's length is significantly, positively related to actor diversity ($p < .01$). The influence of articles' types on actor diversity is in line with our expectations, in that special reports have a significantly higher level of actor diversity compared to news reports ($p < .01$), whereas opinionated article types score significantly lower than news reports in actor diversity ($p < .01$). Model 1b shows that the elite character of a newspaper has a significant positive impact on actor diversity ($p < .05$) when not controlling for article's characteristics. Moving the focus on the determinants of viewpoint diversity, Model 2a shows that long articles, and to a lesser extent, medium articles correspond to a significantly broader range of viewpoints expressed in the article (respectively, $p < .01$ and $p < .05$), while short articles do not present significantly higher viewpoint diversity levels than very short articles ($p > .10$).

	<i>Actor diversity</i>		<i>Viewpoint diversity</i>	
	Model 1a b(SE)	Model 1b b(SE)	Model 2a b(SE)	Model 2b b(SE)
National newspaper	-.006(.04)	.045(.04)	-.032(.05)	-.022(.05)
Elite newspaper	-.004(.04)	.197(.04)*	-.011(.05)	.035(.05)
<i>Length article (Ref.= Very short article)</i>				
Short article	.195(.05)**		.058(.06)	
Medium article	.358(.06)**		.142(.07)*	
Long article	.625(.06)**		.253(.08)**	
<i>Article type (Ref.= news report)</i>				
Special report	.140(.05)**		.051(.07)	
Opinionated article	-.301(.05)**		.033(.05)	
<i>Country (Ref.= Belgium)</i>				
Germany	.087(.06)	.123(.06)*	.050(.07)	.039(.07)
Italy	.165(.05)**	-.059(.05)	.182(.07)**	.052(.05)
United Kingdom	.074(.05)	.051(.05)	.091(.06)	.069(.06)
Constant	.248(.06)	.479(.05)	.122(.08)	.266(.06)
N	2490			

* p<.05, ** p<.01

Table 3.2 – Results of the multilevel regression model on actor diversity

Moving to a test of the determinants of content diversity calculated with Simpson's D_z , the results of a linear regression show that the articles' length has a significant positive effect on actor diversity ($\beta = 0.66$, $p = 0.005$), while the effect of articles' type is not significant ($p = 0.550$). However, neither articles' length, nor the type have a significant effect on viewpoint diversity (respectively, $p = 0.240$ and $p = 0.908$). Besides this, we find signs that newspapers' characteristics matter in shaping actor diversity. Elite newspapers present significantly higher actor diversity than popular outlets ($\beta = 0.44$, $p = 0.026$), and the effect stemming from the size of a newspaper on actor diversity is close to the significance level ($\beta = 0.36$, $p = 0.061$). Nevertheless, there is no significant difference between national and local newspapers in viewpoint diversity ($p = 0.105$), nor is there a significant effect related to the audience's cultural preferences ($p = 0.434$).

To sum up, at the micro-level, length matters in shaping actor diversity (both calculated at the article and newspaper level), therefore giving full support to Hypothesis 1a. However, length significantly enhances viewpoint diversity (article-based measurement) just in the case of large articles, and it is not significant for the newspaper-based viewpoint diversity measurement. Hence, we must reject Hypothesis 1b. The type of article matters in determining actor diversity measured at the article level, but it appears to be uninfluential in shaping actor diversity at the newspaper level. Also, the article's type does not have any impact on viewpoint diversity, which leads us to reject Hypothesis 2. Moving to the influences at the meso-level, the results show that the size of a newspaper, gauged by looking at its national/local geographical scope, matters in enhancing actor diversity measured at the newspaper level, but it is not significant for article-based scores. We therefore reject Hypothesis 3. Still, in line with Hypothesis 4a, we show that the orientation of newspapers towards a more highbrow audience matters in enhancing actor diversity, both for its article- and newspaper-based measurement. The elite/popular distinction, nonetheless, does not predict variation in viewpoint diversity, thus Hypothesis 4b must be rejected. In general, viewpoint diversity seems harder to explain than actor diversity.

Finally, moving to the analysis of inter-country differences, it is worth noting that immigration news in each country of the sample is mostly domestic (more than 60% of total news items in Belgium and Italy deal with domestic immigration issues, more than 80% of the articles in Germany and the UK). Hence, different aspects of the broader theme of immigration are covered in each country of the sample. In Belgium and Germany, immigration news mainly presents stories related to asylum seekers, most of them coming from Afghanistan, whereas Italian newspaper focus on the entrance of African migrants by sea through Lampedusa, as well as on their stay in detention centers. By contrast, British outlets mainly cover stories of immigrant workers from Eastern Europe, and they give more space to frauds involving immigrants (e.g. sham marriages). Nonetheless, we observe that accidents involving migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea can garner international media attention. In particular, the shipwreck of a migrant boat in Lampedusa in October 2013, causing the death of more than 300 immigrants, was widely covered by newspapers in all four countries under study.

Moreover, our results give some interesting insights into inter-country differences in terms of content diversity. When comparing articles of the same size, Table 3.2 shows that

Italian newspapers present significantly higher levels of actor diversity ($p < .01$) and viewpoints diversity ($p < .01$), whereas there are no significant differences among the other countries. A closer look to the Italian sample provides an indication that articles about Lampedusa are the most diverse. In line with the idea of Cuttitta (2014), Lampedusa is a “busy figurative stage” populated by the main actors with a stake in the immigration debate: immigrants arriving in Lampedusa after a perilous sea cross, national and EU politicians, who propose solutions to prevent the death of immigrants at sea, local politicians (like the mayor of Lampedusa, a key figure in the news), military actors from the *guardia costiera* (guardcoast) in charge of saving the migrants, often assisted by NGOs (e.g. the Red Cross). Very often, religious actors – including the Pope, who visited Lampedusa in July 2013 –, participate in the Italian mediated debate on Lampedusa, adding up to actor diversity and increasing, together with the other actors, the reporting of diverse viewpoints on immigration. Yet, the results show this “potential” of Italian newspapers to provide more content diversity remains somehow untapped: when length is not held constant, Italian newspapers present the least diverse coverage of the issue, whereas German outlets provide a significantly higher level of actor diversity ($p < .05$). Besides supporting the idea that the Italian style of reporting is less inclined to provide a diverse content (Esser & Umbricht 2013), this result suggests that length might be a crucial element through which journalists in Democratic-Corporatist countries can guarantee at least the diversity of actors talking in the news – as it is the case with German articles in our study.

3.5 Conclusions and Discussion

By measuring actor and viewpoint diversity both at the article and at the newspaper level, this study explores and tries to explain content diversity in immigration news in four European countries (2013-2014). On the one hand, we have shown that the range of actors and viewpoints represented in an article is very limited, with about half of the articles giving voice to one type of actor and two thirds presenting only one type of viewpoint. On the other hand, the measurements of content diversity at the newspaper level yield a picture of high actor and viewpoint diversity for the period under study, meaning that over a longer period of time all social actors and viewpoints get at least some attention. Hence, content diversity measurements at the article and the newspaper yield different results. Yet, as the findings show, these measurements are weakly positively correlated. Newspapers that have on

average more diverse articles also score higher on content diversity at the outlet level. But the correlation is far from perfect. This has probably to do with the diverging strategies of newspapers. While some try to provide content diversity in a single article, others provide this by spreading actors and viewpoints over multiple articles over a longer period of time.

We also find that both measurements vary according to the impact of different factors in a similar – yet not identical – way. In this sense, this paper sheds light on the conditions under which the ideal of a “marketplace of ideas” in the news can be fostered. First of all, the size of articles is a crucial factor in shaping content diversity, and particularly actor diversity: longer articles provide more space to represent a broader range of actors and viewpoints in the news, and they facilitate a more even distribution of social actor categories within the newspaper. Similarly, special reports, that provide a more in-depth account of immigration, provide more space for the representation of different actors, while the less objective nature of opinionated article types makes them less suitable to enlarge the range of actors in the articles. These article features are clearly connected to the different type of newspapers. Elite newspapers seem to cater to the “omnivorous” tastes of their target audiences with the representation of more social actors in the news, while popular outlets let a fewer categories talk. By contrast, the size of a newspaper, based on its national or local geographical scope, seems to enhance levels of actor diversity in the long term – while it has no effect on the diversity of a single article –, going against the argument of Voakes et al. (1996) that smaller news organizations present more actor diversity because they make extensive use of wire-services, which are used to contact multiple sources.

These findings seem to hold across countries – even when testing separately per each country – and suggest a more general pattern of how journalists report on immigration in Western democracies. The differences in content diversity between the four countries are minimal at best. This means that how journalists work and cover an issue such as immigration in these West European democracies is highly comparable and driven by similar news values and news routines. There is some proof that geographic proximity to the key locations where an issue is mainly unfolding (like it is the case with Italy and Lampedusa) might enhance content diversity. However, these results are sensitive to one of the main limitations of this study, namely the sample size. Further research on news content diversity should extend both the newspaper sample, in order to increase the statistical power of the test on content

diversity measurements at the newspaper level, and the country sample, so that it can further investigate cross-country differences in the levels of content diversity. Moreover, the analysis should ideally also include a broader range of media types, such as television and online news, as they are for a large part of the public important sources of information about immigration. A more fundamental challenge for further research is the need for an empirical benchmark to evaluate the diversity of news content. The normative ideal of diversity is not enough to judge when a medium presents sufficient voices or viewpoints. Probably a more in-depth study of news coverage of different media outlets can provide the necessary input.

To sum up, we conclude that at the level of a newspaper, across countries, there is an overall good performance in terms of diversity of type of actors and viewpoints. However, we have to think that they represent the distribution of actors and viewpoints in a newspaper over the period of time. In this sense, there can be cumulative benefits for a loyal newspaper reader. But on a regular day, in which on average one article on immigration is published, the reader will just be confronted with a limited number of voices and viewpoints. A closer look at the different voices that enter the news yield a somehow more negative picture of the performance of media when covering immigration. Immigrants, the main characters of immigration news, are mostly relegated to a secondary role as “silent victims”. When reading an article, the odds that the reader will hear their voice is low. Also, when viewpoints are expressed, they will mostly portray them as victims. This means that immigrants face a double challenge: they have a hard time to enter the news arena; and when they enter, they have to try to emancipate from their depiction as “helpless victims”.

Consonance and diversity of voices and viewpoints: A new paradigm to study actors' cumulative influence on viewpoints in immigration news

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4.1 Introduction

Complex social phenomena, especially when they are salient and politically relevant, are contested in the mediatized public arena by a large array of social actors, aiming to promote their preferred views on the issue under discussion (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002; Hänggli, 2012; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2016). Social groups' hunger for media attention, thus, is not just a matter of visibility: they want to talk in the news to convey their opinions to the public. Actors talking in the media might express viewpoints directly in their quotes (see Benson & Wood, 2015; Ferree et al., 2002). However, as observed by Benson and Wood (2015) their statements often do not include any opinion: does it mean, then, that they do not have anything to say? Contrarily, as the authors claim, the presence of actors' "opinionless" statements can have an indirect impact on the presence of viewpoints in the news. I argue that this indirect influence is enabled when an actor's quotes are presented in the same news item with his or her *preferred* viewpoints, i.e. with arguments and ideas that reflect the actor's position on the issue under discussion. But to what extent do actors succeed to be quoted along with their own viewpoints in the news content? The main goal of this paper is to systematically examine the co-occurrence of voices with their preferred viewpoints, which I define as *consonance*, by measuring the extent to which actors' quotes and viewpoints that reflect their typical position on a debated topic are simultaneously present in the same news

item. This study focuses on the newspaper coverage of the relevant and socially contested issue of immigration in Belgium, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom (2013-2014) as a generalizable case to investigate consonance between the presence of voices and viewpoints in the content.

However, the analysis of consonance needs to be integrated with the investigation of diversity, which reveals how many and which voices get the chance to coexist in the news with the speakers' preferred viewpoints. To this purpose, this study explores the interplay between consonance and diversity, showing that consonance coupled with low levels of diversity results in an "oligopoly" of a limited number of voices and a small range of viewpoints presented to the audience.

The paper will proceed as follows. After reviewing previous studies on the influence of actors' voices on the viewpoints represented in the news, I will formulate hypotheses on consonance between the presence of key voices and viewpoints in immigration news. Then, expectations on the interplay between consonance and diversity of voices and viewpoints will be set. Finally, after outlining the methodology of the study, I will present and discuss the findings.

4.2 Theoretical framework and hypotheses

4.2.1 Actors' success in setting viewpoints in the news: A new paradigm for evaluation

Drawing upon the constructivist approach that has been adopted by Gamson (Gamson, 1988; Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989), we know that social actors aim to shape the perception of reality by making their interpretations visible in the public sphere. Nowadays, as observed by a number of scholars (e.g. Beyeler & Kriesi, 2005; Kepplinger & Lemke, 2016), the flow of information between social groups and the audience is mostly mediated by the media, which can act as a channel for actors' spreading of ideas (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001). By giving visibility to their claims, news media allow actors to directly express viewpoints in the news. Although the reporting of their actions might also play a key role in the construction of meaning, the presence of actors' statements in the reporting – in the form of direct and indirect quotes – is of crucial importance to convey their opinions to the audience. Previous studies have tracked back the link between voices and viewpoints. Benson and Wood (2015) shed light on "who says what" in the coverage of immigration in the

United States, Norway and France (2011-2012). Similarly, Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, and Rucht (2002) pinpoint the connection between speakers and frames in news about abortion in Germany and the United States. Likewise, studies that follow the method of political claims analysis (Koopmans & Statham, 1999) focus on the direct verbal expression of political opinions by social groups.

Nonetheless, Benson and Wood (2015) observe that actors' voice in the news can also have an indirect effect on the presence of viewpoints. Even when quotes do not include any opinion, they can still trigger the presence of actors' preferred viewpoints. As the authors note, actors' views "*may be paraphrased through the journalistic voice, or might subtly shape the themes, frames, or word choice of reporters*" (Benson & Wood, 2015: 805). Therefore, it does not matter whether speakers in the news express views in a direct or indirect way: they succeed in putting forward their opinions when the presence of their quotes ensures the presence of their favorite viewpoints. I argue that actors' successful influence on viewpoints manifests itself in the content in the form of *consonance*, which is the co-occurrence of actors' voices and their favorite viewpoints in the same news item.

In order to evaluate actors' success in putting forward their preferred viewpoints on immigration in the news, this study focuses on a range of key actors participating in the mediatized immigration debate, as well as on a range of recurring views on the issue, and examines the extent to which the presence of actors' voices goes together with the presence of the viewpoint that reflect their position on immigration in the same news item.

4.2.2 Voices and viewpoints in the news coverage of immigration

Besides being an increasingly salient topic in the public agenda of many Western countries, immigration is a "*multifaceted and complex*" issue (Benson, 2009: 403), open to different interpretations and evaluations and usually debated by a wide range of social actors (Branton & Dunaway, 2009). Concerning news voices, this study focuses on four social groups that have a major stake in the national immigration debate. First, there are no doubts that *immigrants* are the "protagonists" of the immigration topic, as they are those who migrate. Second, as noted by Cuttitta (2014), a crucial role is played by state *authorities*, in the form of governmental, judicial, police and military actors, in that they set the rules on immigration and guarantee their enforcement. Third, in the context of a highly contested and politicized

public debate on immigration (Ihlen, Figenschou, & Larsen, 2015), there are actors who advocate in favor or against immigration. While the *raison d'être* of *pro-immigration NGOs* is to take the side of immigrants, *radical right-wing political parties*, especially in Europe, traditionally fulfil the opposing role of anti-immigration advocates (Benson, 2013). Indeed, studies on the news coverage of immigration demonstrate that these four groups are amongst the most prominent speakers in the news (Benson, 2013; Benson & Wood, 2015; De Swert, Schacht, & Masini, 2015).

Furthermore, a number of communication scholars have pinpointed the main views that are expressed about immigration in the media (see for example Benson, 2009, 2013; Van Gorp, 2005). Unlike the majority of existing literature, this study does not identify frames in the content as interpretative packages that define the problem, diagnose causes, and suggest moral judgements and possible remedies (Entman, 1993); the focus here is rather on manifest evaluations of immigration and/or immigrants that are usually found in the journalistic text. Specifically, I consider four recurrent viewpoints on immigration. On the one hand, immigration can be seen as a *negative* phenomenon. For example, it can be presented as a social problem (Kim et al., 2011), as a threat for the economy, national cohesion or public security (Benson, 2013). On the other hand, *positive* viewpoints are used to portray immigration as beneficial for society. For example, Benson (2013) argues that well-integrated immigrants may be represented as “heroes”, contributing to the development of the host community. Finally, besides negative and positive viewpoints, scholars note that migrants can also be presented in the news as an administrative burden, when immigrants’ arrival and relocation creates logistic problems for national authorities. Although not positive, the view of immigration as an administrative burden does not imply an ideological aversion to immigration, which is instead intrinsic to negative viewpoints. Moreover, immigrants are very often portrayed in the public debate as *victims* (Benson, 2013; Van Gorp, 2005). Specifically, they can be represented as victims of global economic inequality, as “humanitarian victims” – when their rights are not respected, or when they face dangers while travelling – or as victims of racism.

Therefore, these four social groups – *national authorities*, *immigrants*, *pro-immigration NGOs* and *radical right-wing parties* – might talk in the news, and their voice can trigger the representation of four different viewpoints on immigration – *negative*,

administrative burden, positive or those that portray migrants as *victims*. In order to evaluate their success in influencing viewpoints, though, we first have to pinpoint their preferred positions on immigration.

4.2.3 Consonance between actors' voices and their preferred viewpoints on immigration

Drawing upon the concept of “*self-interestedness of frame sponsors*” (Geiß, Weber & Quiring, 2016: 6), the overarching theoretical assumption of this study is that social actors have a preferred position regarding the topic that they debate in the media. Although actors can express a wide range of different opinions in the news, I argue that they will particularly aim to promote viewpoints that reflect their interests on the topic under discussion to influence public opinion (Wolfsfeld, 1997). Social groups' arguments and ideas on the debated issue can either imply policy measures in their favor – or in favor of the group they represent –, or they can be beneficial to them vis-à-vis voters and public opinion. In the context of the immigration debate, immigrants advocate in favor of their rights, backed by pro-immigration NGOs, typically by pinpointing situations of suffering, as well as by stressing the benefits of immigration for the host society. On the contrary, radical right-wing parties usually express negative stances on immigration, mostly driven by ideological “anti-immigration” considerations (Alonso & da Fonseca, 2012). Finally, because national authorities (governmental, justice and law enforcement actors) have the responsibility to manage the influx of immigrants, they are more likely to stress the problematic aspects connected to their reception and relocation when they talk in the media. Consistent with this, Cuttitta (2014) observes that the context of emergency connected to migrants' arrivals by sea – which was particularly evident in the period under study – provided fertile ground for the increased use of a “securitarian” discourse by national authorities, which points to the financial, logistic and organizational difficulties posed by the entry of immigrants. Previous studies on the content of immigration-related news give support to this study's main assumption that social actors have their own “preferred” position on immigration, which they put forward in the mediated debate on the issue. As observed by Benson and Wood (2015), governmental voices in US and French media mostly focus on the “law and policy” aspects of immigration, referring to problems for the authorities and society, and promoting enforcement as the main solution frame. By contrast, immigrants' voice in the news is usually audible in accounts of their past and present suffering – stories of their dangerous travel to Europe, or about their detention

in camps –, which present them as “*idealized victims*” (Ihlen et al., 2015: 832). Alternatively, immigrants’ quotes might feature news stories that portray them as “*heroes*”, that is as competent, ambitious people that can enrich the host society (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015). More specifically, I argue that the positive viewpoints are more likely to be triggered by voice of individual immigrants. In fact, we know from previous studies that there exists a “*person positivity bias*” related to immigration (Sears, 1983). As demonstrated by Iyengar et al., (2013), individual immigrants can spark more positive reactions than groups of migrants. According to this, I expect that journalists will be more prone to include positive viewpoints when they quote individual immigrants, rather than when they cover groups of migrants. Moreover, previous studies point out that the voice of pro-immigration NGOs is usually connected to positive viewpoints, or it is associated to a more empathetic characterization of immigrants as victims (Ihlen et al., 2015; Moeller, 1999, 2002). Finally, studies conducted by Benson (2009) and Benson and Wood (2015) give support to the idea that the voice of radical right-wing politicians in the news is typically associated to negative viewpoints on immigration.

Hence, the general “*consonance hypothesis*” posits that, due to the cumulative influence of actors’ voices, the association between actors’ voices and their preferred viewpoints is likely to be reflected in the media coverage of immigration. More specifically, I expect that, in a news item:

Hypothesis 1: The presence of national authorities’ voice is likely to coincide with the presence of administrative burden viewpoints on immigration.

Hypothesis 2: The presence of individual immigrants’ voice is likely to coincide both with positive viewpoints on immigration (2a) and with views of immigrants as victims (2b).

Hypothesis 3: The presence of immigrant groups’ voice is likely to coincide with views of immigrants as victims.

Hypothesis 4: The presence of pro-immigration NGOs’ voice is likely to coincide with positive viewpoints on immigration (4a) and with views of immigrants as victims (4b).

Hypothesis 5: The presence of radical right-wing parties’ voice is likely to coincide with negative viewpoints on immigration.

4.2.4 The interplay between consonance and diversity of voices and viewpoints

So far, I have hypothesized that actors' cumulative influence on viewpoints results in the consonant presence of actors and their preferred viewpoints on immigration in the news. But how many actors have the chance to speak in the news and trigger their preferred viewpoint? To tackle this problem, the relationship between consonance and diversity needs to be explored. Content diversity is considered here as the heterogeneity of voices and viewpoints presented in the news (Benson, 2009; Masini et al., 2017; van Cuilenburg, 1999). Many scholars advocate for the enhancement of content diversity, building upon the democratic pluralist ideal that the press should guarantee equal access to a wide range of social groups and reflect the spectrum of existing opinions on the topic that it covers (Gans, 1979, 2011). When consonance coexists with high levels of content diversity, a wide range of voices will be included in the news together with the viewpoints that reflect their position. Alternatively, in a situation of low content diversity just a few actors will be quoted along with their preferred viewpoints, while other voices and corresponding opinions will be left out. In other words, consonance coupled with low levels of voices' and viewpoints' diversity corresponds to an oligopoly of a few voices with the viewpoints that they "own". This matter is of particular importance when analyzing immigration news. Extant studies give support to the idea that content diversity of immigration news is very limited, often resulting in articles that quote only one social group – in most of the cases political elites – and only one set of viewpoints (e.g. Masini et al., 2017). Considering the social groups and viewpoints analyzed in this study, this leads to the expectation that a large number of news items will give space only to national authorities and their preferred viewpoints, which I assume to be referring to immigration as an administrative burden. Hence, I would expect the following:

Hypothesis 6: The most frequent association between voices and viewpoints in the news articles is likely to be the consonant combination of national authorities with administrative burden viewpoints.

4.3 Data and methods

This study analyses news about immigration in a sample of newspapers in Belgium (Flanders), Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom, between 1 January 2013 and 30 April 2014. In these countries, immigration was a salient public topic in the period under study. Although these

four countries' media systems have different characteristics according to the Hallin and Mancini's (2004) framework (with Belgium and Germany belonging to the Democratic Corporatist Model, Italy to the Polarized Pluralist Model and the United Kingdom to the Liberal Model), I expect that the findings in terms of consonance between voices and viewpoints will hold across systems. The newspaper sample includes 22 outlets that vary in terms of political orientation (see Appendix B). For Belgium, six news newspapers from Flanders, the Dutch-speaking community, were selected: *De Morgen*, *de Standaard*, *De Tijd*, *Gazet van Antwerpen*, *Het Nieuwsblad* and *Het Laatste Nieuws*. The sample for Germany includes the following five titles: *Die Welt*, *Berliner Morgenpost*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*. The Italian sample is composed of five outlets: *La Repubblica*, *Gazzetta di Modena*, *Il Giornale*, *Il Messaggero* and *Il Mattino*. Finally, for the UK, I selected *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Sun*, *Daily Mirror*, *Manchester Evening News* and *London Evening Standard*.

Articles about immigration were searched in online databases by means of country-specific Boolean strings (see Appendix C), following the broad definition of immigration adopted by the UN's International Organization for Migration as the entrance and the presence of people in a country other than their country of birth with the purpose of settling down¹³. After filtering the first results, I retrieved a final sample consisting of 2490 news items (642 for Belgium, 484 for Germany, 822 for Italy, 542 for the UK). The articles were coded quantitatively by coders based in each country of the study, who followed an extensive training provided by a master coder. I tested intercoder reliability for each country on a 10% subsample. Concerning the variable "voices", Krippendorff's alpha scores range from 0.62 to 1, with an average of 0.78. Coefficients of the variables indicating viewpoints range from 0.60 to 0.66. Due to alpha's sensitivity to skewed variables (like those for voices and viewpoints, which present a large amount of missing values), the percentage of intercoder agreement was also calculated by using Holsti's formula (Holsti, 1969). For the news voices, Holsti's scores range from 0.70 to 1, with an average of 0.87, while the scores range from 0.88 to 0.96 for the viewpoint variables (average 0.92). Additionally, I calculated intercoder reliability across countries on a smaller subsample of articles in English, with satisfying results.

¹³ See "Key Migration Terms" in the IOM website, <http://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

In order to code news voices, a maximum of 10 quoted or paraphrased actors were coded in every article. In order to be coded as voices, actors have to convey a statement (not necessarily including a viewpoint on immigration), both in a direct or indirect way. An actor is directly quoted when his or her statement appears in the text between quotes. Alternatively, he or she is indirectly quoted – or paraphrased – when his or her utterance is not reported between quotes, but rather using expressions such as, for example, “he/she said that...”, “he/she thinks that...”, “according to him/her...”. Voices were identified by codes corresponding to different actor groups in society¹⁴. For the purpose of this study, I particularly focus on direct and indirect quotes by members of the following groups:

- *national authorities*, that is the actors that are making decisions on immigration policies and laws (members of the national government), actors that are enforcing immigration laws, often deciding on single cases (members of the justice system), or actors that in charge of public security (law enforcement agencies) or of the rescuing of migrants (the military, especially the navy in the Mediterranean);¹⁵
- *individual immigrants*, i.e. a single immigrant that talks in the news (his/her name does not necessarily need to be mentioned);
- *groups of immigrants*, that is immigrants represented as a collective entity (e.g. “Refugees in the camp reported that...”, or “Mamadou, Abdou and Idrissa from Senegal said they travelled to Europe by boat”). This category does not include formally organized groups of migrants, which would otherwise be coded under the NGOs category;
- NGOs specifically advocating in favor of immigration (which I call “*pro-immigration NGOs*”);

¹⁴ Actors belonging to the following categories were coded: National politics, International politics; Immigrants (both individuals and groups), Pro-immigration NGOs; Civil society (other than pro-immigration NGOs); Judiciary, police and military; Public agencies/organizations; Public opinion and ordinary people; Business/Corporate/Finance; Journalists and media celebrities; Traffickers/Smugglers, Religion.

¹⁵ Accordingly, this category is coded as a combination of “Government actors” (a subcategory of national politicians) and “Judiciary, police and military”.

- *radical right-wing parties and their members*, defined according to their ideology and their party manifesto, especially in which concerns their position towards immigration.¹⁶

It is important to note that, in the period and in the countries under study, radical right-wing parties were not members of government coalitions. Moreover, with the exception of Italy where one of these parties was represented in the parliament (the Lega Nord), radical right-wing parties did not have any seat in the national assemblies of Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom .

Besides this, coders indicated the presence of “*Viewpoints about immigration and immigrants*” in every news item. Based on existing literature that I reviewed earlier, I distinguished between four types of distinct viewpoints:

- *Negative*: Negative characterization of immigrants/immigration (e.g. immigration is bad for the economy, immigrants carry diseases, they commit crimes, concerns about the management of the arrivals, food supply, hygiene, etc.);
- *Administrative burden*: immigration represented as an administrative/logistic problem, i.e. as bringing practical problems related to the reception and relocation of incoming immigrants (e.g. mentions of difficulties related to saving immigrants at sea, problems in reception centers related to food, hygiene, etc.);
- *Victimization*: Immigrants are portrayed as victims (e.g. immigrants are victims of unjust government policies, traffickers, they have to deal with racism/xenophobia, etc.);
- *Positive*: Positive characterization of immigrants/immigration (e.g. immigrants work hard, immigration is positive for the economy, immigrants enhance “positive multiculturalism”, etc.).

The presence of voices and the presence of viewpoints in a news article, which is the unit of analysis, is operationalized as a dummy variable. It does not matter whether an actor is coded in the news item multiple times, nor whether a certain viewpoint is reiterated. It is just

¹⁶ For the period of reference, these parties are the following. In Belgium: Vlaams Belang; in Germany: AfD, NPD; in Italy: Lega Nord, Fratelli d’Italia; in the UK: UKIP, BNP

relevant to know if a certain actor category is quoted in the article, and whether a specific viewpoint is expressed.

In the following section, the results of the study are outlined. After presenting descriptive statistics on speakers and viewpoints in the news sample, I test consonance between the presence of voices and the presence of viewpoints by means of a multilevel logistic regression – because articles are nested in newspapers, and variables at both levels are considered in the analysis –, which is run for each type of viewpoint. Moreover, a number of important control variables are added. First, we know that newspaper's political slant might influence the way in which a topic is presented in the news (Berkel, 2006). Because newspapers' adherence to a right-wing ideology – which is more adverse to immigration (Alonso & da Fonseca, 2012) –, may foster the presence of negative viewpoints, we add a dummy for newspapers' center-right or right-wing political orientation. The latter is defined based on the extant literature, as well as on national experts' judgements (see Appendix B). Second, previous studies show that unexpected *key events* (Vasterman, 2005; Kepplinger & Habermeier, 1995) might create waves of reporting and alter the way in which an issue is reported in the news (e.g. Bennett et al., 2008). During the period under study, the shipwreck of a migrant boat close to the island of Lampedusa (Italy) on 3 October 2013, in which more than 360 migrants died, was extensively covered in the news in Europe. Due to the tragic nature of the event, articles written in the aftermath of this tragedy might convey the representation of immigrants' suffering to a greater extent than articles written in routine periods. Hence, I add a dummy variable to indicate articles that have been written in the first three weeks after the Lampedusa shipwreck (from 3 October 2013 to 24 October 2013). Finally, to account for the clustering of the articles in countries, country dummies are added to the model, which also allows to control for inter-country differences in the presence of viewpoints.

Furthermore, the interpretation of the results is facilitated by the use of a correspondence analysis, which is a descriptive, exploratory technique designed to analyze the structure of a data matrix and represented it graphically in terms of points in a low-dimensional space, with the purpose of exploring associations between these two variables (de Leeuw & van der Heijden, 1988). In the correspondence analysis plot, distances between points can be interpreted directly as degrees of similarity (Yelland, 2010). Finally, I evaluate

the interplay between consonance and diversity by counting the number of different voices and viewpoints presented in every news article (excluding the articles that do not present any voice nor viewpoint), among the actors and viewpoints categories that have been presented, pointing out the cases in which there is a consonant presence of these two elements.

4.4 Results

4.4.1 Descriptive statistics: Voices and viewpoints in the news

First of all, I shed light on the presence of actors' quotes in the news. Figure 4.1 shows that the distribution of voices is very similar across nations. In every country, national authorities are the most quoted actors. Individual immigrants are more quoted than groups of immigrants. Their voice is particularly audible in Belgium – where 15% of the articles give space to their voice –, whereas it is less present in the British coverage (in 8% of articles). Finally, Figure 4.1 shows inter-country differences regarding the presence of radical right-wing voices. More specifically, the results seem to suggest that the presence of parties of this kind in the national parliament is a strong predictor of their capability to talk in the media. Radical right-wing politicians are almost invisible in Germany, and barely present in the Belgian and British coverage, but they are prominent actors in the Italian sample, where they are quoted in 15% of the articles. Hence, while in Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom these actors' absence from the national parliaments practically coincides with their exclusion from the mediatized debate on immigration, the presence of the Lega Nord in the Italian parliament seems to allow politicians of this party to be prominent voices in immigration news.

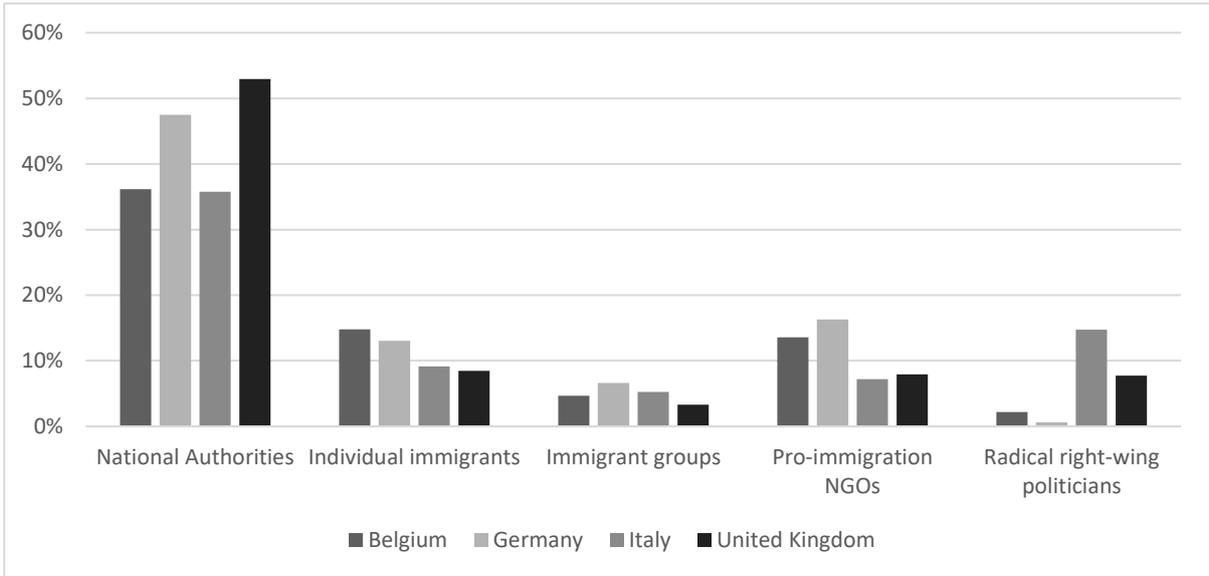


Figure 4.1 – Cross-country proportion of articles including the voice of the different actor categories (Belgium, N = 642; Germany, N = 484, Italy, N = 822, UK = 542)

I move now to Figure 4.2, showing the cross-country proportion of articles including negative, administrative burden, victims and positive viewpoints on immigration. The graph points out that viewpoints that portray immigrants as victims are the most present in every country, except for the United Kingdom, where more space is allotted to negative viewpoints. However, the British sample gives also a substantial amount of space to a positive characterization of immigration, which can be found in one quarter of the news items. By contrast, German articles focus on victims and administrative burden viewpoints (mainly present in news stories concerning problems in asylum centers), but they give less space to positive viewpoints. Finally, the fact that almost half of the Italian articles feature victims viewpoints seems to be ascribable to the numerous accounts of immigrants’ tragedies at sea, in their attempt to reach the island of Lampedusa.

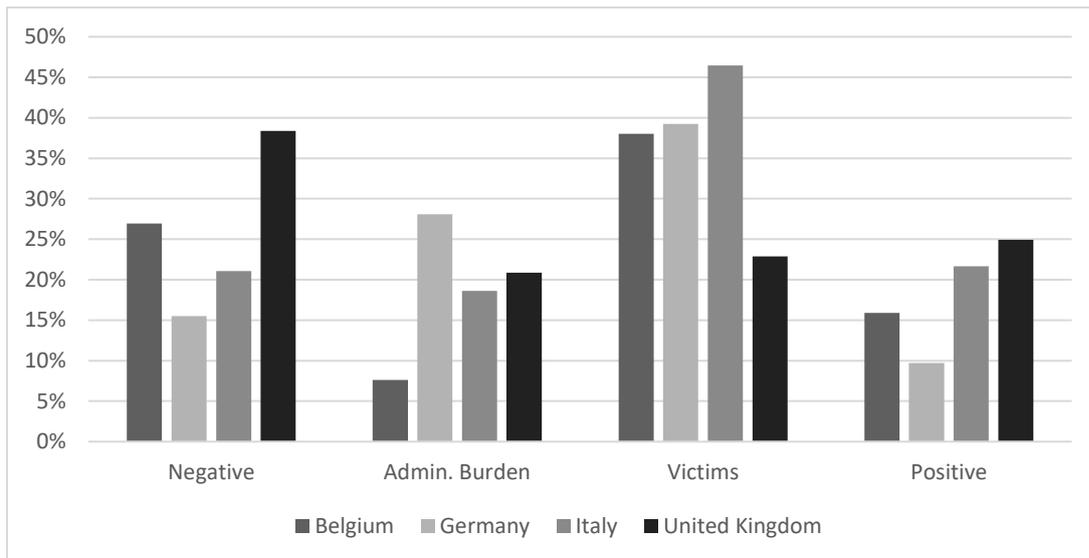


Figure 4.2 – Cross-country proportion of articles including the four viewpoints categories (Belgium, N = 642; Germany, N = 484, Italy, N = 822, UK = 542)

4.4.2 Multivariate test of the consonance hypotheses

I move now to a multivariate test of consonance between voices and viewpoints in the news. Table 4.1 provides support for the first hypothesis, as the presence of national authorities is significantly positively associated to the presence of administrative burden viewpoints on immigration (Model b). Likewise, Hypotheses 2a, 2b and 3 are confirmed: while individual immigrants' voices are significantly more likely to be related to the presence of both victimization and positive viewpoints (Model c and d, respectively), quotes by groups of immigrants are significantly more likely to be coupled with victimization viewpoints (Model c), but not with positive ones. Moreover, the results in Table 4.1 give support to Hypothesis 4b in that the inclusion of pro-immigration NGOs' voices in an article significantly coincides with the inclusion of views of migrants as victims (Model c), but not to the inclusion of positive viewpoints, which leads to the rejection of Hypothesis 4a. Table 4.1 also shows that the presence of radical right-wing parties' voices significantly increases the odds that negative viewpoints on immigration are present in the same news item (Model a). Hypothesis 5 is therefore confirmed.

Furthermore, focusing on the control variables, Table 4.1 provides an indication that newspapers with a more right-wing political orientation are less inclined to portray migrants as victims (Model c), but it does not show any significant effect regarding the presence of

negative viewpoints. Regarding the influence of the real-world context on the inclusion of viewpoints, the findings show that articles that were published in the aftermath of the Lampedusa tragedy present significantly more views of immigrants as victims (Model c), and are also less likely to characterize immigration as an administrative burden (Model b). Last but not least, the results relative to cross-country differences are in line with the descriptive results displayed in Figure 4.2, pointing out that articles in Italian newspapers are significantly more likely to entail empathetic views of immigrants as victims (at the 5% level), as compared to Belgian and British outlets. Moreover, Table 4.1 indicates that the coverage of immigration in the United Kingdom presents significantly more positive viewpoints (Model d) and significantly fewer views of immigrants as victims (Model c) as compared to the other countries. Finally, consistent with Figure 4.2, the table shows that German, Italian and British articles are more likely to include views of immigration as an administrative burden as compared to Belgian items.

	Negative	Admin.burden	Victims	Positive
	Model a b(SE)	Model b b(SE)	Model c b(SE)	Model d b(SE)
Presence of social groups				
National authorities	.130(.10)	.320(.11)**	.128(.10)	-.380(.11)**
Individual immigrants	-.090(.17)	.067(.18)	1.531(.15)**	.800(.16)**
Immigrants as a group	-.318(.26)	-.120(.26)	1.451(.23)**	-.499(.28)
Pro-immigration NGOs	-.292(.18)	.214(.17)	1.103(.15)**	-.343(.19)
Radical right-wing politics	1.160(.19)**	-.074(.21)	-.864(.21)**	-.369(.23)
Newspaper's political orientation				
(Centre-)right political orientation	.439(.31)	.204(.34)	-.546(.16)**	-.046(.28)
Real-world context				
Lampedusa tragedy (October 2013)	-.230(.16)	-.553(.18)**	1.075(.12)**	-.226(.15)
Countries (ref.=Belgium)				
Germany	-.670(.41)	1.464(.45)**	.071(.20)	-.319(.38)
Italy	-.390(.40)	1.235(.45)**	.242(.19)*	.589(.36)
United Kingdom	.390(.38)	.845(.44)*	-.518(.20)**	.769(.35)*
Constant	-1.157(.29)	-2.703(.34)	-.996(.15)	-1.790(.28)
N	2490			

* p<.05, ** p<.01

Table 4.1 – Results of the multilevel regression model on negative, administrative burden, victims and positive viewpoints

The signs of a consonant presence of voices and viewpoints in the news that are revealed in Table 4.1 are best illustrated by the correspondence analysis displayed in Figure 4.3. The figure displays a specific compartmentalization of the news voices, which are grouped in the proximity of the viewpoints they are associated with in the news (which are, in turn, positioned away from each other). Specifically, we see that the voice of the authorities is closely associated to administrative burden viewpoints, whereas the voice of radical right-wing politicians is strictly connected to negative viewpoints. In line with the findings, Figure 4.3 shows that groups of immigrants and pro-immigration NGOs are positioned in the proximity of views of immigrants as victims. Only individual immigrants are closely associated

with positive viewpoints, which reinforces the idea that migrants have more chances to be linked to positive viewpoints when they speak as individuals, rather than as a collective actor.

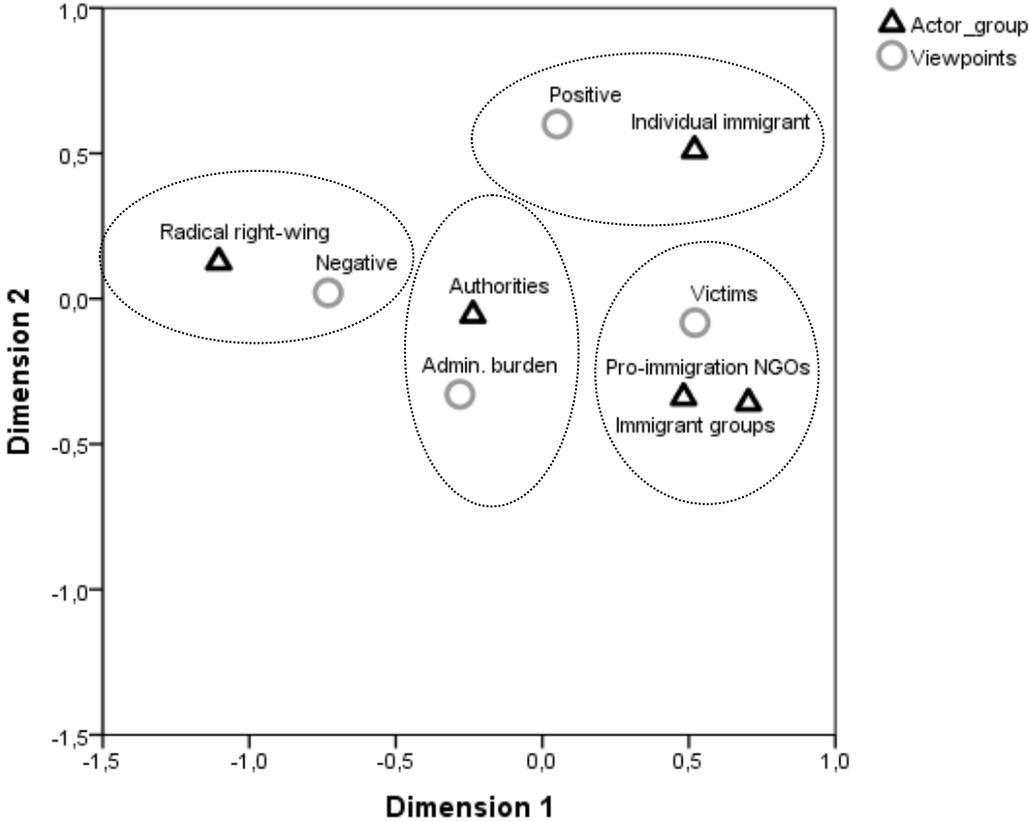


Figure 4.3 – Correspondence analysis mapping voices and viewpoints in the news

4.4.3 The interplay between consonance and diversity

Finally, I introduce the last part of this section that deals with the relationship between consonance and diversity. First of all, Table 4.2 gives support to the idea that content diversity in immigration news is low. The table shows that more than half of the articles that contain actors’ quotes (of the groups that we analyze) and that express views on immigration give space to just one category of voice and to one kind of viewpoint, while 18,5% give space to the quotes of only one group and to two different viewpoints. Articles that present two voices

and one viewpoint make up to 14,2% of the total, whereas 8,8% of them contain the quotes of two different actor groups and two different viewpoints on immigration.

<i>Nr. of different viewpoints</i>	<i>Nr. of different voices</i>			
	1	2	3	4
1	52,59%	14,2%	0,3%	0,1%
2	18,5%	8,8%	0,5%	0,3%
3	2,4%	1,0%	0,3%	0,0%
4	0,4%	0,3%	0,0%	0,0%
N = 1179				

Table 4.2 – Percentage frequencies of combination between voices and viewpoints in articles that include at least one voice category and at least one viewpoint category (N = 1179)

A closer analysis reveals that the most frequent associations are those that combine, in one article, the voice of national authorities with negative viewpoints (10,4%, respectively, N = 1179), and the voice of national authorities with victims viewpoints (9,6%, N = 1179). The third most frequent combination (6,1%, N = 1179) is the consonant association of national authorities with administrative burden viewpoints. Hence, while Hypothesis 6 cannot be fully confirmed, I find support for the idea that this is indeed one of the most recurring “bundles” of voices and viewpoints in the news. Consistent with this, among the other most frequent combinations I find that national authorities’ quotes go together with administrative burden and victims viewpoints (2,6%, N = 1179), as well as with administrative burden viewpoints and negative viewpoints (2,5%, N = 1179). Other frequently reoccurring associations combine the voices of authorities and NGOs with victims viewpoints (2,5%, N = 1179), or the voices of national authorities and radical right-wing politicians associated with negative viewpoints (1,9%, N = 1179). Hence, the findings suggest that quotes by national authorities are all but present in the most frequent combinations of voice and viewpoints, reinforcing the idea that they are key actors in the immigration coverage.

4.5 Conclusions and discussion

Overall, these findings provide support for the idea that social actors debating immigration in the media can exert a cumulative impact on the construction of meaning through their voice, triggering the presence of their preferred viewpoints on the issue in the news. This influence manifests itself in terms of consonance between actors' voices and viewpoints in the same news item. As pointed out by the correspondence analysis in Figure 4.3, as well as by the results of the regression model displayed in Table 4.1, the presence of national authorities' quotes is associated – in a news article – to administrative burden viewpoints on immigration, and the presence of radical right-wing politicians' voice comes along with negative views on this topic; on the contrary, the voice of individual immigrants is mostly connected to positive viewpoints, as well as to empathetic views of immigrants as victims. The latter viewpoints, in turn, are likely to be connected to quotes by groups of immigrants and by pro-immigration NGOs. Nevertheless, only a very limited range of actors have the possibility to talk in a news article and “bring along” their preferred viewpoints. Low levels of content diversity coupled with consonance result in a sizeable amount of news items presenting a narrow consonant selection of a single category of voices with a single consonant set of viewpoints. In most of the cases, the only audible voice is that of the most powerful actors, namely national authorities, who are likely to convey “tougher” opinions on immigration to the audience. And even when the range of voices is slightly larger, authorities seem to have a “reserved spot” in the article. This paper draws on the actor-centered assumption that consonance is the result of the cumulative influence of actors' voices (direct and indirect) on viewpoints in the news. Nonetheless, the media are not just passive providers of space for actors' spreading of information: they also have a more autonomous role in shaping the presence of voices and viewpoints in the news (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001). Hence, from this perspective, consonance might be seen as the outcome of journalists' choice to make a coherent selection of voices and viewpoints when reporting about immigration, which is consistent with the overarching journalistic objective to convey a coherent message to the audience (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). However, I argue that even if consonance is the product of journalists' practice, it might still manifest actors' indirect influence on viewpoints. Specifically, the fact that media practitioners are likely to combine speakers with their preferred positions on immigration means that actors can trigger their favorite viewpoints by being selected as speakers in the

news, even if their quotes do not include any viewpoint. Further research on this topic should distinguish between quotes that directly express viewpoints to those that do not, in order to disentangle the direct and indirect effect of actors' quotes on viewpoints.

Actors that have a stake in the immigration topic can extrapolate a lesson from the results of this study. While some of them clearly succeed in being associated with their preferred position – as it is the case for radical right-wing politicians or individual immigrants –, others partially fail. This is the case of pro-immigration NGOs, whose quotes go together with the representation of immigrants as victims, but are not significantly associated with positive viewpoints. Nevertheless, in order to succeed in setting viewpoints in the news, social groups must first get a chance to talk. The odds to get this chance, to paraphrase Wolfsfeld (2011), seem to be directly proportional to political power, in that national authorities are those who mostly get the exclusive opportunity to speak in the news. Even more importantly, this paper shows that the analysis of consonance to evaluate actors' success in influence viewpoints in the news has to be combined with the investigation of diversity. In fact, while the analysis of consonance shows the *potential* of all voices to influence viewpoints, the examination of diversity reveals how many and which actors have a real chance to talk in the news and trigger their preferred viewpoints.

Finally, this study is based on the assumption that actors that debate immigration have their own “preferred” viewpoints on the issue. Nonetheless, these preferences are not written in stone. For example, as observed by Benson (2013), labor unions in the United States were generally opposed to immigration in the 1970s, but switched to more pro-immigration positions by the end of the 1980s. Future research might therefore adopt a longitudinal approach to gauge variation in consonance between voices and viewpoints that is due to changes in actors' positions on immigration.

To sum up, this study has successfully introduced a new paradigm for the evaluation of actors' success in influencing viewpoints in mediatized public debate, based on the analysis of consonance and diversity of voices and viewpoints in the news. I hope future studies in this field will embrace this method, ideally testing the “consonance hypothesis” beyond the case of the immigration debate, in the context of other relevant social topics that involve different stakeholders and different categories of viewpoints, in order to support the generalizability of this innovative method.

Do events shape what we read? The influence of key events on the presence and the diversity of viewpoints and voices in immigration news.

5.1 Introduction

Extant journalism literature gives support to the idea that unexpected, dramatic events have the potential to put an issue on the public agenda (Fishman, 1982), sometimes creating sudden waves of media coverage that go under the name of *media storms* (Boydston, Hardy & Walgrave, 2014) or *media hypes* (Vasterman, 2005). Besides their impact on the salience of an issue, to what extent do these key events have an influence on news content? This research question has largely remained unanswered. Work conducted by Lawrence (2001) and Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston (2008) suggest that key events might enhance the quality of deliberation in the mediated discourse, allowing a larger array of social actors to speak in the news and enabling the representation of a larger spectrum of viewpoints about the issue under discussion. Moreover, studies conducted by Geiß, Weber and Quiring (2016) and Scheufele (2006) give some indications that key events can determine which viewpoints are represented in the news, but they do not investigate their influence on news voices. This study aims to bring together and develop these strands of literature by *systematically measuring variation in the presence and the diversity of viewpoints and voices in the news coverage of immigration in the aftermath of key events related to this issue.*

We adopt a longitudinal comparative approach and analyze newspaper articles about immigration in Belgium, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom during a three-year time span (1st January 2013 – 31st January 2016). Within this period, we can discern several immigration-related key events, which allow to examine variation in the presence and the diversity of voices and viewpoints compared to routine periods. Our work introduces two innovative

aspects. First, it puts the *nature* of a key event center stage, distinguishing between the effects stemming from events involving immigrants as victims or as alleged perpetrators of crimes. Second, in studying the variation in voices and viewpoints following key events, it examines the moderating role of news outlets' characteristics, in particular their political orientation and the cultural preferences of their target audience.

5.2 Theoretical framework and hypotheses

5.2.1 Definition of key event

An event (from Latin *evenire*, to result, to happen) is something that happens in the real world. As noted by Galtung and Ruge (1965) in their seminal study on news values, there are millions and millions of events happening every day in every corner of the world. Some of them become known by the public because they meet certain news values that make them suitable to be covered by the media. Extant communication literature has defined key events because of their capability to create waves of media coverage (e.g. Fishman, 1982; Brosius & Eps, 1995; Kepplinger & Habermeier, 1995). In this paper, alternatively, we argue that an event has to fulfill two interdependent criteria in order to be defined as “key”, namely *salience* and *political relevance*. First of all, a key event is *salient* within the mediated public debate on a certain topic, although it does not necessarily have to generate a sudden wave of media coverage. Its salience is mainly due to features of unexpectedness (it happens suddenly, it is not planned) and drama (it has strong dramatic elements, for example it involves victims and/or crimes). However, according to our definition, an event becomes “key” also because it is *politically relevant*, that is when it has political implications for the issue under discussion and is likely to spark political reactions. Salience and political relevance are both necessary characteristics for an event to be considered as “key” but, taken separately, they are not sufficient to define an event as such. For example, the death of popstar Michael Jackson in 2009 was certainly a very salient event in the media, but it did not spark political reactions (if we exclude politicians' statements about his decease) and cannot thus be considered as a key event according to our definition. On the other hand, the opening of an infringement procedure by the European Commission against a member state has important political implications, but it lacks elements of unexpectedness and drama that make it salient in the public debate.

5.2.2 *The impact of key events on the presence of viewpoints in the news*

A vast array of early communications studies debunk the idea that media coverage is a “mirror-image” of reality (Lang & Lang, 1953; Halloran, Elliott & Murdock, 1970; Noelle-Neumann & Mathes, 1987). Nevertheless, to put it with Behr and Iyengar (1985), news reporting is in fact *sensitive* to real-world events and conditions. In particular, extant literature suggests that key events – i.e. sudden, unexpected and dramatically charged occurrences that are related to a broader theme – might have an impact on media coverage. As already mentioned, studies conducted by Fishman (1982), Brosius and Eps (1995) and Kepplinger and Habermeier (1995) demonstrate that after a key event takes place, the amount of news items related to the event-specific issue increases dramatically, and journalists seem to be more likely to open the gates to news stories about similar topics. But besides salience, does the way in which an issue is covered change during and in the aftermath of key events? While a number of studies suggest that this is the case (see Boomgaarden & De Vreese, 2007), research that systematically investigates this matter is rather scarce. Work conducted by Scheufele (2006) provides a coherent analysis of the mechanism underlying viewpoints’ variation after key event. The author starts from the assumption that there exist schemata – i.e. cognitive patterns that organize categories of information on an object or on the relationships between them (Scheufele, D.A. 2000; Scheufele, B., 2003) – that are established in newsroom discourse. These news schemata might be activated by the occurrence of a key event; their activation by journalists, in turn, manifests itself in the news content in the rise of frames and viewpoints that are in line with these schemata. For example, an event involving the death of one or more individuals is likely to trigger a “victim-schema” that is established in the newsroom; the adoption of the latter, in turn, leads to the emergence of “victim-viewpoints” in the news content, that is opinions, ideas and points of view, uttered by the journalist or another agent, that depict the affected individuals as victims and express empathy towards them. Scheufele (2006) finds that key events favor the *emergence* of frames that are in line with newsroom schemata during so-called “periods of orientation”, lasting two weeks after the key event. By contrast, our study aims at measuring shifts in the *intensity* of viewpoints’ presence in the aftermath of key events, as compared to routine periods.

Drawing from Bertram Scheufele’s work, we know that the objective characteristics, i.e. the *nature* of a key event matters, in that it activates corresponding newsroom schemata

that become manifest in the journalistic content. Unlike Scheufele (2006)'s study, research that aims to evaluate the impact of their nature on the presence of viewpoints must consider different kinds of key events. The unfolding of immigration-related events in Europe during the last few years provides an ideal case-in-point to overcome this limitation. On the one hand, we have witnessed many *tragic key events involving the death of immigrants*, especially maritime disasters that took place in the Mediterranean Sea. On the other hand, we also observe *key events involving immigrants as suspected perpetrators of crimes*, either in the context of terrorism, or in relation to other offenses. These two types of key events refer to the same subjects (immigrants) and to the same theme (immigration), but present opposing features – mainly concerning the evaluative dimension of subjects and themes. Their occurrence might therefore activate different schemata that are rooted in the newsroom discourse about immigration. Because schemata are visible in the journalistic text in the form of frames and viewpoints (Scheufele, 2006), previous studies on immigration news content allow us to pinpoint immigration-specific viewpoints that are likely to emerge in the aftermath of each of the two types of key events. Based on the existing literature (e.g. Benson, 2009, 2013; Masini et al., 2017; Van Gorp, 2005), we argue that criminal key events involving immigrants as alleged perpetrators might enhance the presence of *negative viewpoints* that stress the negative effects of immigration, as well as of *administrative burden viewpoints*, referring to immigrants or immigration as creating practical problems that governments need to solve. On the other hand, *victims viewpoints*, which portray immigrants as victims and describe their suffering, expressing empathy towards them (Van Gorp, 2005), are more likely to rise in relation to tragic key events. Hence, because we expect that journalists are likely to adopt viewpoints that fit the activated newsroom schemata right after a key event took place, we formulate the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: In the aftermath of criminal key events there is a surge in negative (1a) and administrative burden (1b) viewpoints, as compared to routine periods.

Hypothesis 2: In the aftermath of tragic key events there is a surge in victims viewpoints, as compared to routine periods.

5.2.3 *The impact of key events on the diversity of viewpoints and voices in the news*

Theory suggests that the diversity of viewpoints and voices in the news might also be affected by the occurrence of key events. Drawing upon the seminal work conducted by Gans (1979), Lawrence (2001: 5) defines the predominant role of officials and other prominent social actors as news definers as the “‘official dominance’ model of the news”. According to Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston (2007), journalists’ overreliance on official sources makes them vulnerable to governmental spin, and it ultimately results in the exclusion of oppositional voices and viewpoints from news content. However, the authors argue that exogenous, unexpected key events have the potential to undermine this *status quo*, enlarging the range of viewpoints and voices that are reported in the news. Bennett and his co-authors point to the news coverage of Hurricane Katrina as a paradigmatic example of critical reporting that originated in the aftermath of a sudden, catastrophic event. To put it in their words, this key event caught government officials and their spin machine by surprise, creating a “no-spin zone” that allowed critical voices to access the news and challenge the dominant narrative. Analogously, Lawrence (2001) argues that dramatic, unplanned key events – like the infamous beating of Rodney King by police officers – can challenge this model of “official dominance”, allowing marginalized social groups to be heard by the public.

While there seems to be agreement on the potential of key events to enlarge the range of social actors speaking in the news, hypotheses on the impact of these events on the diversity of viewpoints are diverging. Building upon our previous arguments on the effects on the presence of viewpoints, one could expect that key events lead to a “monopoly” of a very limited number of viewpoints that correspond to the newsroom schemata activated by the event. Consistent with this, Scheufele (2006) finds that one dominant frame emerges in the news during “periods of orientation” after key events. Nevertheless, a study conducted by Geiß, Weber and Quiring (2016) on the impact of key events on frame competition goes against this idea, in that they find that the collapse of Lehman Brothers – a key event related to the broader theme of the economics – fostered the emergence of a diverse range of frames in German news on economic issues. Geiß and colleagues contend that the nature of the key event, and specifically its connection to economic themes, stimulates frame competition, because of the availability of opposing ideas brought forward by social groups with competing interests. We claim that also key events connected to the “*multifaceted and complex*” issue

of immigration (Benson, 2009: 403), which is typically disputed among different social groups that are motivated by diverging goals, have the potential foster the diversity of viewpoints in immigration-related news, and we therefore set the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3: In the aftermath of criminal key events there is a surge in the diversity of viewpoints (3a) and voices (3b), as compared to routine periods.

Hypothesis 4: In the aftermath of tragic key events there is a surge in the diversity of viewpoints (4a) and voices (4b), as compared to routine periods.

5.2.4 The moderating effect of newspaper's political orientation and audience's cultural preferences

So far, our discussion has focused on the *sensitivity* of media coverage to exogenous, real-world events. However, we know from social constructionist studies (e.g. Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gamson, Croteau & Hoynes, 1992; Molotch & Lester, 1974) that the news is a product of journalistic professionals who are subject to the logic and dynamics of the news organizations they work for, and is therefore largely influenced by socio-economic characteristics of the latter (Epstein, 1973; Tuchman, 1973). Drawing upon this, we argue that the impact of key events on the characteristics of news content is likely to be moderated by factors that are located at the level of news outlet. In particular, studies on economic explanations of news construction suggest that news media aim to cater to the preferences of their target audience (Groseclose & Milyo, 2005). On the one hand, newspapers might aim to attract readers by adhering to a certain political ideology. Newspapers' political orientation might result into a biased news content, which gives emphasis to voices and views that are consonant with the political preferences of their readers (Berkel, 2006; Kahn & Kenney, 2002; Gentzkow & Shapiro, 2006). Consistent with this, a number of studies find that newspapers oriented towards a right-wing audience favor a more negative representation of immigration (KhosraviNik et al., 2012; Matthews & Brown, 2012). This, in turn, might influence the impact of key events on the presence of viewpoints in the following ways:

Hypothesis 5: The surge in negative and administrative burden viewpoints that we expect to see in the aftermath of key events involving immigrants as suspected

perpetrators is likely to be higher in newspapers adhering to a center-right ideology, as compared to outlets with other political orientations.

Hypothesis 6: In correspondence of tragic key events, we expect the increase in victims viewpoints to be less strong in newspapers adhering to a center-right ideology than titles oriented to the political center or center-left.

On the other hand, news organizations can adopt a particular editorial orientation in order to match the “*cultural capital*” of their target audience (Benson, 2009: 405). In specific, we distinguish between *highbrow* audiences, characterized by a more diverse cultural appetite (Peterson & Kern, 1996), and *middlebrow* and *lowbrow* audiences, with more limited cultural tastes (Levine, 1988; DiMaggio, 1991). Consistent with this, *elite newspapers* targeting a highbrow audience are more likely to promote a diverse content that matches the “omnivorous” tastes of their readers, while *popular newspapers* targeting middlebrow and lowbrow audiences will feature a less diverse, simpler content (Benson, 2009). Research by Roggeband and Vliegenthart (2007) shows that the coverage of immigration in Dutch elite newspapers presents higher levels of frame diversity. Similarly, findings of a comparative study on immigration news that we conducted show that voices’ diversity is higher in elite media outlets (Masini et al., 2017). Therefore, we expect that the elite or popular character of a newspaper will moderate the impact of key events on the diversity of viewpoints and voices in the news:

Hypothesis 7: During and in the aftermath of key events (both of “tragic” and “criminal” nature) the expected surge in the diversity of viewpoints and voices is likely to be higher for elite newspapers, as compared to popular ones.

5.3 Data and Methods

5.3.1 Selection of countries, newspapers and articles

This study examines news about immigration in Belgium (Flanders), Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom, between 1 January 2013 and 31 January 2016. These countries are characterized by a prominent national public debate on immigration, and they belong to different media-political systems (Hallin & Mancini 2004). The newspaper sample includes 8 titles, ensuring intra- and inter-country variation in terms of political orientation and

audiences' cultural preferences. For Belgium, we selected *de Standaard* and *Het Laatste Nieuws*. According to Van Gorp (2005) the first is a quality newspaper, historically catholic and therefore oriented towards the political center. The second title targets a lowbrow audience, and is instead rather conservative (Bilterey & Desmet, 2010). The German sample includes two newspapers that cater to highbrow readers, namely *Die Welt* and *Der Tagesspiegel*. As observed by Brinks (2007), *Die Welt* is a conservative news outlet, while *Der Tagesspiegel* belongs to the left-liberal tradition. In Italy, we analyzed articles from *La Repubblica* and *Il Giornale*. Among other scholars, Brondi and colleagues (2014) note that the political orientation of these titles is starkly diverging: *La Repubblica* is a center-left newspaper and *Il Giornale*, which is owned by the Berlusconi family, is oriented to the center-right. Even though they both have a broadsheet format and are equally focusing on political issues, an inductive analysis of the content and the language used by these newspapers lead us to conclude that *La Repubblica* is targeted to more highbrow readers, whereas *Il Giornale* targets a more middlebrow audience that has a preference for provocative headlines and bolder language, especially against political opponents. Finally, for the UK, we selected items from *The Independent* and *The Sun*. Carvalho and Burgess (2005) observe that the first newspaper caters to a well-educated, highbrow readership, but has no declared left or right political line, which allows us to place it at the center of the political spectrum. On the contrary, *The Sun* is a typical "red-top" newspaper, with a lowbrow, right-wing orientation.

A country-specific Boolean string was used to search articles about immigration in online databases (see Appendix C). Following the United Nations' definition of immigration, we searched articles about *the entrance and the presence of people in a country other than their country of birth with the purpose of settling down*. This all-encompassing definition allows us to grasp the multiple aspects of the complex and evolving phenomenon of immigration, ensuring comparability among countries and across time. After filtering the outcome of the first search, we retrieved a total of 3977 news items (1058 for Belgium, 928 for Germany, 1037 for Italy, 954 for the UK). Each national sample was coded quantitatively by native speakers, following extensive training provided by a single master coder¹⁷. The coding was divided into two parts: the first tranche of articles (from 1 January 2013 until 30

¹⁷ Except for the second tranche of British articles, which was coded by Belgian students who were very fluent in English.

April 2014) was coded between 2014 and 2015, while the second part (from 1 May 2014 until 31 January 2016) was analyzed by a different team of coders between 2016 and 2017. Concerning the first part, we tested intercoder reliability for each country on a 10% subsample. The average Krippendorff's alpha score for the coding of voices is 0.78, while for variables indicating viewpoints the average inter-country score is 0.63. Intercoder reliability was also calculated across countries on a smaller subsample of articles in English, with overall satisfying results. For the second part, we directly tested for intercoder reliability on a 5% subsample of articles in English, since all coders were very fluent in this language. Krippendorff's alpha score concerning the coding of voices is 0.69, whereas the average of the coefficients relative to viewpoints variables is 0.62. Taking into account that alpha is sensitive to skewed variables – as it is the case for voices and viewpoints, which present many missing values –, and that the nature of viewpoint variables is rather interpretative, we can consider these results as overall satisfying.

5.3.2 Dependent variables: Presence and diversity of voices and viewpoints

For every news article, coders indicated the presence of “*Viewpoints about immigration and immigrants*”. Drawing on extant studies that analyze viewpoints and frames about immigration (e.g. Benson 2009, 2013; Van Gorp 2005) we identified four types of distinct viewpoints on the issue that are commonly expressed by news media:

- *Negative*: Immigrants/immigration are negatively characterized (e.g. because they are bad for the economy, they carry diseases, they are criminals, etc.);
- *Administrative burden*: View of immigrants (or immigration) as creating administrative problems (e.g. mass arrivals lead to logistics problems like hospitality, food supply, hygiene, etc.);
- *Victims viewpoints*: Immigrants are represented as victims (e.g. victims of unjust government policies, human traffickers, victims of racism/xenophobia, etc.);
- *Positive*: Immigrants/immigration are characterized positively (e.g. as empowering work force, or as fostering multiculturalism, immigrants work hard, etc.).

Moreover, for each article, coders pinpointed a maximum of 10 quoted or paraphrased actors. For each of them, they assigned a code that identifies the actors' social group, choosing

among: *National politics, International politics, International organizations, Public agencies and organizations, Judiciary, police and military, Civil society, Religion, Business, corporate and finance, Journalists and media, Public opinion and ordinary people, Immigrants*. As we conceive the power of different actors to speak in the news as a function of the actor groups' institutional affiliation (Benson, 2013; Ferree et al., 2002; Gans, 1979; Wolfsfeld, 2011), we collapsed the above-mentioned groups in broader categories that reflect their "weight" as news sources according to their affiliation. The most powerful group is that of *political actors* (composed by the categories national politics, international politics and public agencies under political control), who are usually the "primary definers" of the news (Hall et al., 1978), and benefit from a symbiotic relationship with journalists. At the second place, we have *state authorities* – institutional actors belonging to the judicial system, law enforcement agencies and military, plus other state agencies –, followed by semi-political *international organizations* (like the United Nations, for example, or the International Organization for Migration). After them, we consider a less authoritative, non-political *civil society* category, a broad group that includes NGOs, as well as other non-political actors belonging to religious, business and media organizations. Finally, at the bottom of our scale of power, we have the *unaffiliated actors* of our study, which are ordinary people and immigrants.

The main dependent variables of the study are *presence of viewpoints, diversity of viewpoints* and *diversity of voices*, which are measured at the article level. The presence of negative, administrative burden and victims viewpoints in a news article is operationalized as a dummy variable (0/1), indicating whether the specific category is manifest in the article content (no matter how many times). Diversity of viewpoints and voices are count variables that measure how many different viewpoints categories (from zero to four) and how many different categories of speakers (from zero to five) are present in the news item.

5.3.3 Independent variables and selection of key events

Furthermore, the independent variables of the study are operationalized as dummies (0/1) indicating *whether an article is written in the aftermath of a key event or during a routine period*. Drawing on Scheufele's (2006) "orientation periods" we consider articles that are published within the two weeks following a key event as written in the aftermath of the event.

For the purpose of this study we consider five key events related to immigration which occurred during the time frame of the analysis. Besides fulfilling characteristics of unexpectedness, drama and political relevance for the topic of immigration, news stories related to these events were salient in the coverage of immigration in the weeks after they took place in all countries of our sample (see Table 5.1). On the one hand, three dramatic shipwrecks that led to the death of immigrants can be defined as key events of tragic nature. On 3rd October 2013, over 360 immigrants lost their lives after their boat capsized in the Mediterranean sea, off the Italian island of Lampedusa. Under similar circumstances, on 19th April 2015, around 800 immigrants died in the worst disaster involving immigrants at sea. Both stories received considerable media attention, and they represented more than half of the total number of articles about immigration during the two weeks after the event took place. Some months later, on 2nd September 2015, another shipwreck off the Turkish shores led to the death of Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old boy escaping from the Syrian war with his family. Although the death of Alan hit the headlines of media all over the world, this story did not dominate the news coverage of immigration. During the two weeks after the tragic event occurred, the story made up to 15% of the total number of immigration-related articles of the sample. Accounts of Angela Merkel's decision to host an unlimited number of Syrian refugees, as well as stories on Hungarian government building a fence to stop immigrants' influx were also prominent in the coverage of immigration during those days. On the other hand, the terrorist attacks in Paris on the night of 13th November 2015 and the Cologne New Year's Eve's mass sexual assaults in January 2016 qualify as "criminal" key events involving immigrants as alleged perpetrators. The fact that two Iraqi immigrants – who apparently entered Europe with the flow of refugees from Syria – were reported to have taken part to the Paris attacks led to public discussion on the connection between terrorism and immigration. Similarly, immigrants were held responsible for the series of sexual assaults in Cologne, fostering widespread public indignation. Both stories were salient in our sample, representing respectively 37% (Paris attacks) and 31% (Cologne sexual assaults) of the total items.

	<i>Belgium</i>	<i>Tot.</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Tot.</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Tot.</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>Tot.</i>
<i>Lampedusa 2013</i>	21%	24	42%	24	79%	61	45%	20
<i>Lampedusa 2015</i>	54%	28	43%	28	52%	56	76%	21
<i>Alan Kurdi</i>	12%	36	6%	36	16%	61	20%	100
<i>Paris attacks</i>	13%	22	14%	22	92%	12	57%	21
<i>Cologne assaults</i>	21%	59	36%	59	42%	38	16%	19

Table 5.1 – Cross-country percentage of articles related to each key event on the total of articles of the sample published in the two weeks after the event took place

Finally, in order to analyze the moderating effect of newspaper’s characteristics, we consider the outlet’s orientation towards a highbrow, middlebrow or lowbrow audience based on the extant literature and on national experts’ judgements. By grouping together lowbrow- and middlebrow-oriented newspapers, we created a dummy variable with one category indicating *elite newspapers* (targeting a highbrow audience) and the other one for *popular outlets* (targeting readers with lowbrow and middlebrow preferences). Likewise, we operationalize the political orientation of newspapers as a variable including the categories *center-left*, *center* and *center-right*.

5.3.4 Analyses

In the following section we outline the results of the study. After providing descriptive statistics on the dependent variables, we proceed to the testing of the hypotheses. In order to assess the influence of key events on the presence of viewpoints in the reporting we use a multilevel logistic model, which accounts for the nesting of articles within newspapers, whose characteristics we take into consideration. Furthermore, in order to test the impact of key events on the diversity of viewpoints and voices in the news we have to use either a Poisson or a negative binomial regression model, because of the count nature of the dependent variables. Since the assumption of equidispersion holds, we selected the Poisson regression

model, adding a control variable for the length of articles. Finally, to account for the clustering of the articles in countries, we add country dummies to both models.

5.4 Results

5.4.1 Descriptive statistics: Viewpoints and voices in the news

Figure 5.1 shows striking inter-country similarities concerning the presence of viewpoints in immigration news articles. In particular, we note that viewpoints portraying immigrants as victims are the most present in each country of the sample (except for Italy), while a substantial smaller percentage of news items include positive viewpoints. Taken separately, negative and administrative burden viewpoints are less prominent than victims viewpoints (with the exception of Italian articles, which feature a higher proportion of negative viewpoints). However, there are higher chances that a news item gives space to negative perspectives on immigration – either fully negative or in terms of a burden – rather than to empathetic or positive views on the phenomenon.

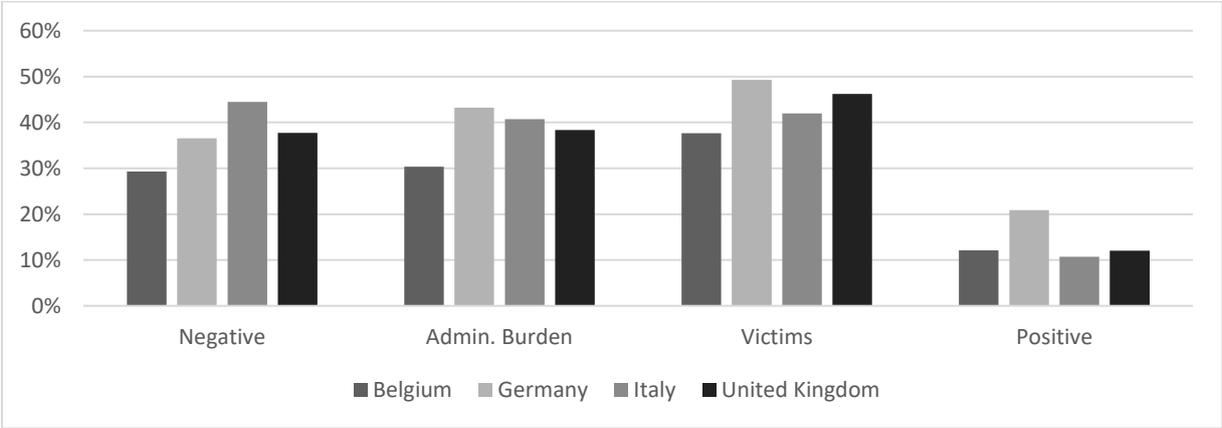


Figure 5.1 – Cross-country proportion of articles including negative, administrative burden, victims and positive viewpoints (Belgium, N = 1058; Germany, N = 928, Italy, N = 1037, UK = 954)

Additionally, Figure 5.2 gives support to the idea that newspapers with a center-right political orientation present a more negative coverage of immigration. The graph indicates that these newspapers have a higher proportion of articles including negative and administrative burden

viewpoints, as compared to center and center-left news outlets. The latter, in turn, are impressively similar in terms of viewpoints' presence.

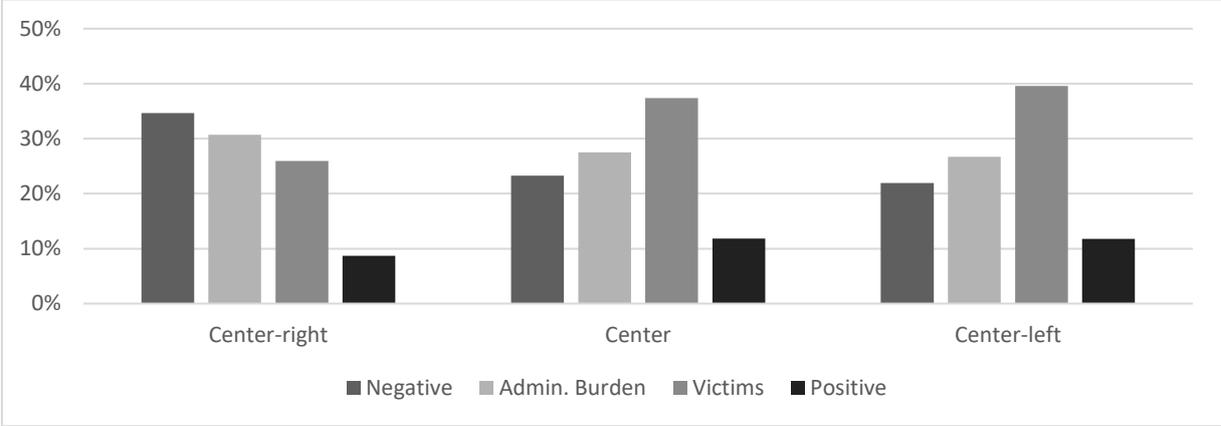


Figure 5.2 – Proportion of articles including negative, administrative burden, victims and positive viewpoints according to newspaper’s political orientation (Center-right, N = 2337; Center, N = 1453, Center-left, N = 1469)

Figure 5.3 displays the variation in the proportion of articles presenting a specific viewpoint in the aftermath of key events for each country of the sample. At a glance, we notice a general increase in the presence of victims viewpoints in correspondence with the tragic 2013 Lampedusa shipwreck. Between the routine period and the weeks right after the key event the sheer amount of articles including victims viewpoints increases by 55% in Belgium ($\chi^2(1) = 5.543, p = 0.019$), by 65% Germany ($\chi^2(1) = 3.884, p = 0.049$), by 83% in Italy ($\chi^2(1) = 17.002, p = 0.000$) and by 138% in the United Kingdom ($\chi^2(1) = 6.181, p = 0.013$). A similar pattern can be discerned in in the case of the 2015 Lampedusa shipwreck: however, unlike in the 2013 tragedy, victims viewpoints appear to “monopolize” the news coverage to a lesser extent, in that administrative burden also find considerable space. In the aftermath of the key event we discern a surge in the amount of articles featuring victims viewpoints in Germany (by 78%, $\chi^2(1) = 12.415, p = 0.000$), the United Kingdom (by 80%, $\chi^2(1) = 14.217, p = 0.000$) and Belgium (by 72%, $\chi^2(1) = 7.624, p = 0.006$), but not in Italy. Nonetheless, the pattern seems to be slightly different for the third tragic key event related to the death of Alan Kurdi. While the proportion of articles presenting victims viewpoints rises in the United Kingdom and in Italy in the two weeks after the event took place (respectively by 58%, $\chi^2(1) = 29.055, p = 0.000$, and by 84%, $\chi^2(1) = 7.908, p = 0.005$), it decreases in the Belgian sample (by 7%, $\chi^2(1) = 5.527, p = 0.019$)

and in German articles (by 24%, not significant). Focusing now on “criminal” immigration-related key events, Figure 5.3 shows a rise in the proportion of articles with negative viewpoints in Germany in the aftermath of the Paris terrorist attacks (by 51%, $\chi^2(1) = 3.671$, $p = 0.055$), as well as in Italy (46% sheer rise, not statistically significant). However, it is in the UK that we have the highest surge in the presence of negative viewpoints, namely by 255% ($\chi^2(1) = 31.322$, $p = 0.000$). On top of this, the amount of articles featuring administrative burden viewpoints increases in the United Kingdom by 57% in the aftermath of the key event ($\chi^2(1) = 6.895$, $p = 0.009$), and so it does in Germany (by 51%, not significant). Finally, the analysis of viewpoints’ presence variation right after the Cologne sexual assaults indicates that a surge in the proportion of articles including negative viewpoints in Germany – the country where the event happened (75% increase, $\chi^2(1) = 22.486$, $p = 0.000$) and in Belgium (by 35%, not significant), is counterbalanced by a general decrease in the presence of administrative burden viewpoints (by 48% in Belgium, $\chi^2(1) = 3.941$, $p = 0.047$; by 41% in Germany, $\chi^2(1) = 9.660$, $p = 0.002$; by 49% in Italy, $\chi^2(1) = 3.647$, $p = 0.056$; by 51% in the United Kingdom, $\chi^2(1) = 5.770$, $p = 0.016$).

Moving the focus on the presence of voices in the news, Figure 5.4 shows a similar pattern across countries. We note that political actors are by far the most quoted speakers in the sample, with around 60% of articles giving space to their voice in each country. Unaffiliated actors are the second most quoted speakers in the sample (except for Belgium, where state authorities are slightly more quoted), finding space in around 30% of the articles in Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom, and in 22% of the items in Belgium. Finally, while civil society and state authority actors are allotted a similar amount of news attention across countries, international organizations’ voices are all but invisible in the reporting.

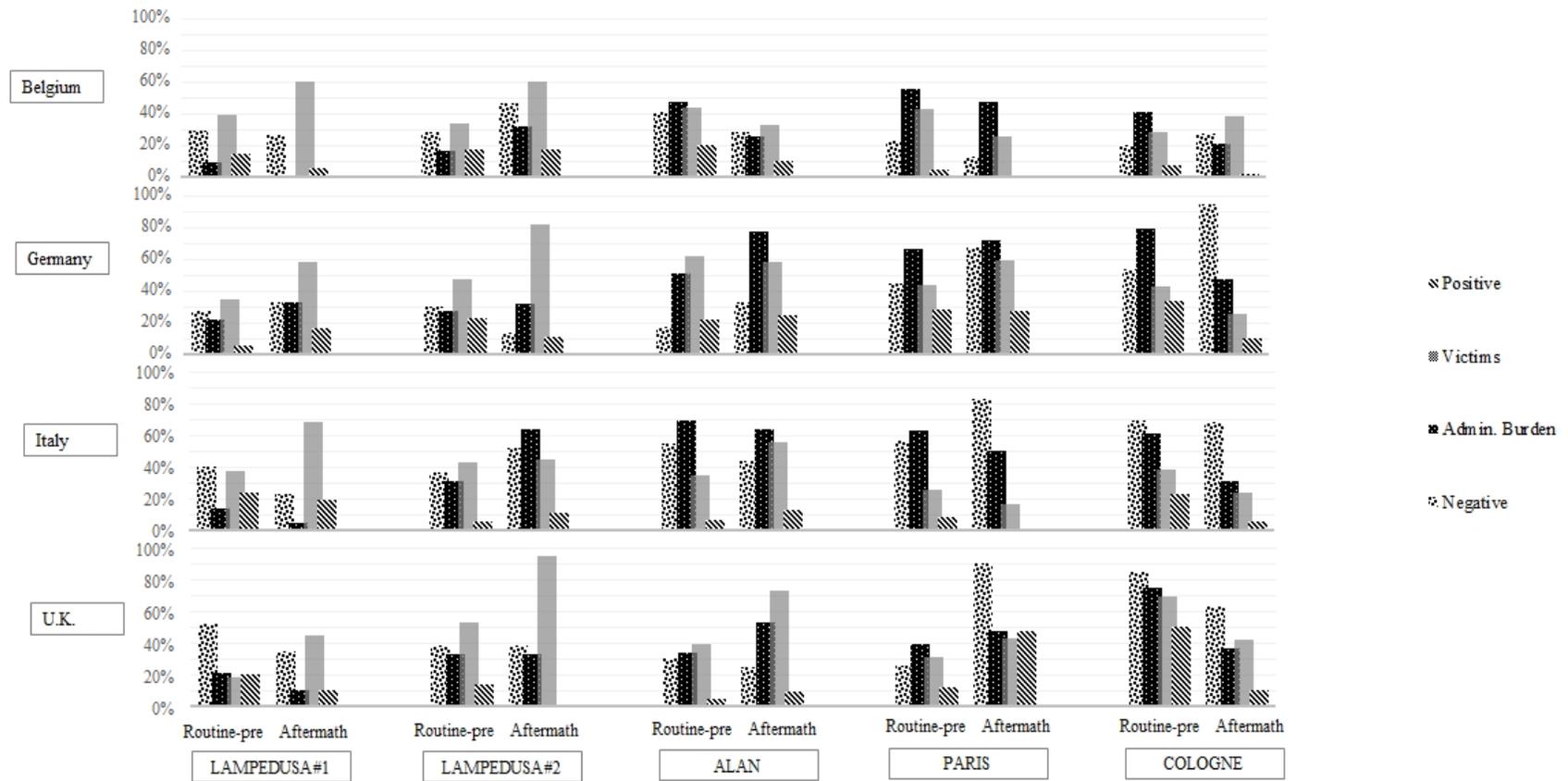


Figure 5.3 – Percentage of articles including negative, administrative burden, victims and positive viewpoints in correspondence of key events for each country of the study (Belgium, N = 1058; Germany, N = 928, Italy, N = 1037, UK = 954)

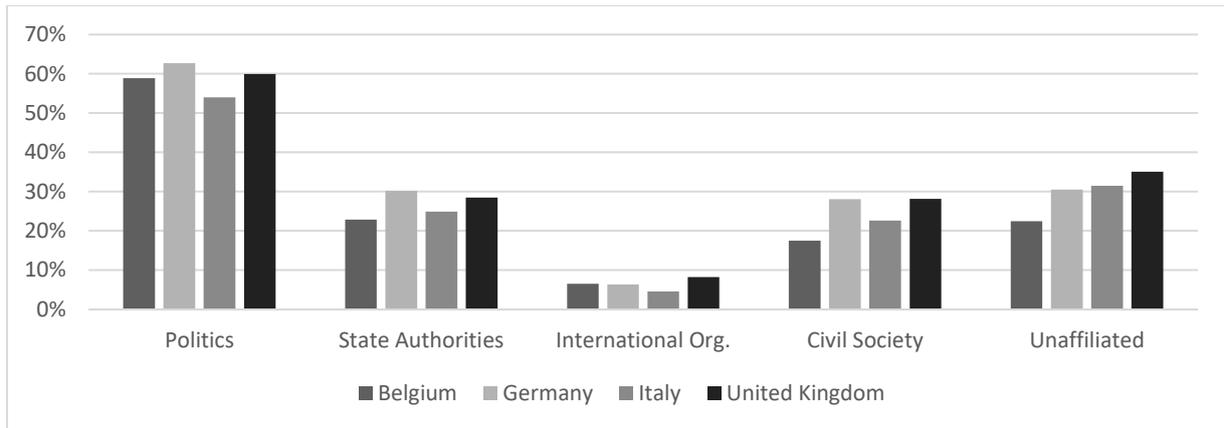


Figure 5.4 – Cross-country proportion of articles including quotes of actors belonging to politics, state authorities, international organizations, civil society or unaffiliated (Belgium, N = 1058; Germany, N = 928, Italy, N = 1037, UK = 954)

5.4.2 Descriptive statistics: Diversity of viewpoints and voices in the news

We focus now on the range of viewpoints and voices that are represented in the news. On average, each article includes 1.32 viewpoint categories and 1.45 categories of speakers (including items that present no viewpoint and articles with no quoted actors). Considering the discrete nature of the variables, this means that each news item represents a rather narrow array of viewpoints and voices, mostly limited to one single category. In order to navigate this section, we must remember that the length of an article is a strong predictor of content diversity (see Masini et al., 2017). This assumption is important in explaining differences between elite and popular newspapers. While, on average, elite outlets have higher levels of viewpoints' (1.35 categories versus 1.27 for popular titles) and voices' diversity (1.57 versus 1.19 different categories of speakers), we must consider that elite newspapers are significantly longer than those published by popular outlets.

Table 5.2 shows how the range of viewpoints and voices in the news expands or shrinks in correspondence with key events. We control for length by running separate analyses for short (less than or equal to 400 words), medium (between 401 and 600 words) and long articles (equal to or more than 601 words). Concerning viewpoint diversity, we notice that the range of viewpoints expands in the aftermath of a tragic key event for all

article’s sizes. For long articles, the difference in viewpoint diversity between routine periods and the weeks during a tragic key event is statistically significant ($t(1158) = -1,947, p = 0.050$). During “criminal” key events, the range of viewpoints expands (except for short articles), and this surge is again significant in the case of long articles ($t(1036) = -3.158, p = 0.002$). Moving the attention to the diversity of voices, Table 5.2 points to a reversed pattern: after both kinds of key events take place, the range of quoted speakers decreases (with the exception of short articles). In particular, this decline is statistically significant for long articles between routine periods and the aftermath of “criminal” key events ($t(128.99) = 3.876, p = 0.000$). A closer look at the data reveals that, in these periods, there is a surge in the proportion of articles giving space just to the category of politicians.

		Routine periods	Aftermath Tragedies	Aftermath Crimes
Diversity of viewpoints	<i>Short</i>	0.97	1.01	0.94
	<i>Medium</i>	1.36	1.51	1.46
	<i>Long</i>	1.62	1.75*	1.92**
Diversity of voices	<i>Short</i>	1.06	1.00	1.09
	<i>Medium</i>	1.59	1.53	1.51
	<i>Long</i>	1.89	1.72	1.41**

Table 5.2 – Average number of viewpoints’ and voices’ categories represented in a news item across periods, controlling for the length of the articles (N = 3977). * significant difference with routine periods, $p < .05$, ** significant difference with routine periods, $p < .01$

5.4.3 Multivariate test of the hypotheses

Our multivariate test of the hypotheses begins with the analysis of the impact of key events on the presence of negative, administrative burden and victims viewpoints in news articles on immigration (see Table 5.3). *Model a* indicates that there is a general surge in negative viewpoints in the aftermath of key events involving immigrants as alleged perpetrators, which gives support to Hypothesis 1a. Nonetheless, we note in *Models c* and *d* that administrative burden viewpoints do not significantly rise in the aftermath of events of this kind, and we

must therefore reject Hypothesis 1b. Moving on to the analysis of victims viewpoints, *Models e* and *f* give support to Hypothesis 2: after tragic key events involving the death of immigrants there is a surge in victims viewpoints. On top of this, we note that the presence of negative viewpoints significantly decreases in the aftermath of these events. Also, while the likelihood of finding victims viewpoints is generally higher in articles written in center-left newspapers (*Model e*), we do not discern any moderating effect on the presence of victims viewpoints during tragedies descending from newspapers' political orientation (see *Model f*). The same can be observed for negative viewpoints (*Models a* and *b*): articles written in newspapers with a center-right political orientation are more likely to present negative viewpoints on immigration. Although the interaction coefficient is significant ($p < .05$), *Model b* shows that the general surge in negative viewpoints in correspondence with "criminal" key events is still significant, and we cannot therefore talk of a moderating effect of a newspaper's political orientation. Finally, political orientation of a newspaper does not lead to any significant effect on administrative burden viewpoints, and we can thus reject Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6. In which concerns the control variables, we find signs of significant differences in the presence of negative viewpoints in German articles, and in the presence of administrative burden viewpoints in British news items.

Moving on to the analysis of the impact of key events on content diversity (Table 5.4), *Model a* shows that the range of viewpoints expressed in a news article does not significantly expand in the aftermath of key events (of both nature), which leads to the rejection of Hypotheses 3a and 4a. Moreover, against our expectations, elite newspapers present significantly lower levels of viewpoints' diversity than popular outlets (*Model b*). Concerning the diversity of voices, *Model c* shows that the occurring of key events has a significant negative effect on the range of actors' quotes, which goes against Hypothesis 3b and 4b. In particular, our data show a surge in the amount of article giving exclusive space either to politicians or to state authorities actors in the two weeks after a criminal key event took place. *Models c* and *d* also show that elite newspapers feature significantly higher levels of voices' diversity. Nevertheless, when we add the interaction coefficient in *Model d* shows that elite newspapers are less likely to present different voices in the aftermath of "criminal" key events, as compared to popular news outlets. In other words, *Model d* shows that elite newspapers have more actor diversity than popular outlets in routine periods (as shown by

the significant “elite” dummy), but in the aftermath of crimes this difference disappears, with popular newspapers becoming even more diverse, as the interaction coefficient shows. A closer look at the data reveals that articles written in popular newspapers in the aftermath of “criminal” key events are more likely than elite newspapers to combine different voices together. In particular, popular news outlets seem to give more space to unaffiliated speakers in combination with other more powerful categories, like politicians or state authorities. Hence, we do not find support for the positive moderating effect of a newspaper’s orientation towards an elite audience, and we reject Hypothesis 7. Finally, we see that the article’s length, as expected, has a significant positive effect on content diversity. Moreover, holding the other variables of the model constant, the findings show that German, Italian and British articles have lower levels of viewpoint diversity than their Belgian counterparts.

	Negative		Admin. Burden		Victims	
	Model a b(SE)	Model b b(SE)	Model c b(SE)	Model d b(SE)	Model e b(SE)	Model f b(SE)
Key events						
Aftermath Tragedies	.132(.10)	-.136(.10)	.080(.10)	.081(.10)	.746(.10)**	.743(.11)**
Aftermath Crimes	1.253(.14)**	1.033(.18)**	.159(.14)	.220(.19)	-.493(.15)*	-.493(.15)**
Newspapers' political orientation						
(Centre-)left political orientation					.820(.31)**	.818(.31)**
(Centre-)right political orientation	.649(.20)**	.615(.21)**	.177(.13)	.185(.14)		
(Centre-)left * aftermath tragedies						.009(.22)
(Centre-)right * aftermath crimes		.588(.30)*		-.131(.27)		
Countries (ref.=Belgium)						
Germany	-.405(.20)*	-.414(.21)*	-.129(.13)	-.128(.13)	.051(.22)	.051(.22)
Italy	-.008(.20)	-.005(.21)	-.227(.13)	-.228(.13)	-.355(.22)	-.355(.22)
United Kingdom	-.313(.20)	-.309(.21)	-.331(.13)*	-.332(.13)*	.283(.27)	.283(.27)
Constant	-.562(.23)	-.545(.23)	-.251(.15)	-.255(.15)	-.546(.27)	-.546(.27)
N	3977					
Media Outlets	8					

* p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 5.3 – Results of the multilevel regression model on the presence of viewpoints

	Viewpoints' Diversity		Voices' Diversity	
	Model a b(SE)	Model b b(SE)	Model c b(SE)	Model d b(SE)
Key events				
Aftermath Tragedies	.062(.04)	.070(.07)	-.077(.04)*	-.175(.08)*
Aftermath Crimes	.096(.05)	-.057(.12)	-.129(.06)*	.077(.11)
Audience's cultural orientation				
Elite newspapers	-.107(.03)**	-.115(.04)**	.180(.04)**	.175(.04)**
Elite * aftermath tragedies		-.013(.08)		.133(.09)
Elite * aftermath crimes		.199(.13)		-.268(.13)*
Article's characteristics				
Article's length	.268(.02)**	.267(.02)**	.244(.02)**	.244(.02)**
Countries (ref.=Belgium)				
Germany	-.095(.03)**	-.095(.03)**	-.144(.03)**	-.143(.03)**
Italy	-.080(.03)**	-.079(.03)**	-.069(.03)*	-.072(.03)*
United Kingdom	-.101(.03)**	-.100(.03)**	.075(.03)*	.072(.03)*
Constant	-.073(.05)	-.068(.05)	-.166(.05)	-.161(.05)
N	3977			
Media Outlets	8			

* p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 5.4 – Results of the multilevel regression model on the diversity of viewpoints and voices

5.5 Conclusions and Discussion

Overall, this study confirms our expectation that the news coverage is *sensitive* to exogenous real-world events (Behr & Iyengar, 1985). In particular, we have provided systematic evidence that sudden, dramatic and relevant key events have an impact on the characteristics of news

content, and especially on the presence of viewpoints. Our results seem to support Scheufele's (2006) idea that the occurring of a key event can activate specific newsroom schemata, which in turn lead to the extensive adoption of viewpoints that are consistent with the nature of the triggering event (as well as of similar events that are more likely to be reported following the key event). The findings indicate that newspapers make a greater use of victims viewpoints in correspondence with key events involving the death of immigrants. This effect is largely driven by the 2013 Lampedusa shipwreck (and by the similar shipwreck of 2015 to a lesser extent), a tragic key event of great magnitude that also leads to a "monopoly" of victims viewpoints in the coverage of immigration during and in the aftermath of the event itself. A comparison between the strength of this effect and the weaker impact on victims viewpoints that we found for the key event relative to the death of three-year-old Alan Kurdi sheds further light on the dynamics of this influence, and particularly on its relationship with the salience of the news story. On the one hand, because stories about the two tragic Lampedusa key events get almost exclusive media attention, as they do not coincide with other important immigration-related events (see Table 5.1). On the other hand, the death of Alan Kurdi occurs at the peak of the so-called 2016 European refugee crisis, simultaneously with other relevant events; hence, stories related to this events become less salient in the media. In particular, the coverage of immigration in the aftermath of the event focuses on the political reactions to the crisis – partially fostered by the death of Alan –, with stories on Angela Merkel's announcement to host a limitless number of refugees ("*Wir schaffen das*" – "We can make it") dominating the news. While we still can discern a rise in victims viewpoints stemming from stories related to the tragic key event, we also see the rise of administrative burden viewpoints expressing concerns about the efficacy and sustainability of Merkel's plan. Similarly, the "criminal" key events that we considered – the Paris terrorist attacks and the Cologne mass sexual assaults – did not fully dominate the reporting on immigration after they took place. While they overall fostered a surge in negative viewpoints in the aftermath of the event, they were not able to "push out" competitive views on the topic. Hence, we find indications of a direct relationship between the salience of key events in the news and the magnitude of their impact on the presence of viewpoints. Future research on this topic should shed further light on this matter.

Nevertheless, the results regarding the impact of key events on news content diversity are mixed. On the one hand, the results show that the occurring of key events has no significant effect on viewpoints' diversity. On the other hand, we found contrasting indications regarding the effects on voices' diversity. Contra Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston (2008), it seems that after key events news media restrict the range of quoted actors, turning to more authoritative sources – namely politicians and state authorities – that usually deal with those extraordinary situations. However, the results indicate that popular newspapers (targeting middlebrow and lowbrow audiences) give space to a larger array of social voices during and in the aftermath of “criminal” key events.

Furthermore, our findings reveal that newspapers' political orientation matters in defining the presence of viewpoints in immigration news. In line with our expectations, center-right newspapers are more likely to include “tougher” views on this topic, while center-left outlets favor a representation of immigrants as victims. However, we do not find signs that characteristics in terms of political orientation moderate the impact of key events on the presence of viewpoints. Moreover, the elite character of a news outlet, i.e. its orientation towards a highbrow audience, has a negative influence on the chances that different viewpoints are reported in correspondence with key events, but it corresponds to higher levels of voices' diversity in their aftermath. Nonetheless, after criminal key events take place popular newspapers give voice to a broader range of voices as compared to elite newspapers.

Finally, the generalizability of our findings might be limited by a number of elements. First of all, the study focuses on one type of media (newspapers), while we know that immigration is extensively covered by television and online media. Second, the narrow scope of the newspapers' sample (two outlets per country) hinders our capability to draw a representative picture of the reporting of immigration for each country. Nonetheless, we have tackled this problem by considering influential leading national newspapers, as well as by ensuring variations in political orientation and audiences' cultural preferences. Third, the country sample should ideally be extended to more than four countries, ideally encompassing important extra-European cases like the United States. These limitations notwithstanding, we argue that this study gives a relevant contribution to the field, by providing a systematic analysis of the impact of key events on news content. Our results integrate previous findings

on the influence of key events on the salience of an issue (Brosius & Eps, 1995; Kepplinger & Habermeier, 1995), showing that these events can also modify the way in which a topic is portrayed in the news. On top of that, we find support to the idea that the intrinsic nature of a key event matters in defining its influence on the presence of viewpoints in the news. But do key events related to other issues have the same effects? In order to know this, further research should replicate our test on the media coverage of other socially relevant and multifaceted phenomena – like global warming, for example –, in order to fully grasp the potential of key events to shape what we read.

Conclusions

6.1 Conclusions

The overarching purpose of this PhD was to exhaustively analyze news about immigration in Belgian, German, Italian and British newspapers. To attain this goal, I have developed an innovative paradigm that integrates the analysis of the presence of voices and viewpoints in the news with the analysis of content diversity, at the same time aiming to identify the factors that have an impact of these elements of the journalistic text.

In this concluding chapter I first present an overview of the results corresponding to each of the research questions. Then, I introduce four main lessons that can be drawn and their implications for journalism literature that analyzes the mediated construction of socially relevant issues. Finally, I discuss the limitations of my PhD, proposing indications for further research in this field.

6.2 Overview of the results

Throughout the whole dissertation, I have described the presence of voices and viewpoints in immigration news (*RQ1* and *RQ1*). The results regarding voices' presence are in line with previous studies on the news coverage of immigration (e.g. Benson & Wood, 2015; De Swert, Schacht & Masini, 2015; Van Gorp, 2005), in that they show that politicians (both national and international) are the most prominent voices in every country under study, followed by ordinary people, immigrants and civil society actors. Concerning the presence of viewpoints, the findings in chapter four and five tell us that the portrayal of immigrants as victims is the most recurring in the news, while positive viewpoints are all but present in the news items. Taken separately, negative and administrative burden viewpoints are less prominent than victims viewpoints. However, since they both contribute to describe immigration as a matter of concern, it is important to note that their joint presence is also salient in the news coverage

of this phenomenon, as recently observed by Jacobs, Damstra, Boukes & De Swert (2018). While inter-country differences are limited, chapter five provides strong support for the idea that the political orientation of a news outlet has a strong impact on the presence of viewpoints. The findings confirm the expectation that newspapers with a center-right political orientation present a more negative coverage of immigration, whereas center and center-left outlets seem to favor a representation of immigrants as victims. Moreover, in the fourth chapter, the investigation of *consonance* (RQ3) reveals a pattern of association between actors' voices and their "preferred" viewpoints on immigration. In specific, national authorities' quotes are likely to be presented jointly with administrative burden viewpoints on immigration, whereas the presence of radical right-wing politicians' voice is mostly linked to negative viewpoints. On the contrary, victims viewpoints are likely to be connected to quotes by groups of immigrants and by pro-immigration NGOs. On top of this, according to the findings in chapter two and four, there seems to exist a positive effect on viewpoints related to the presence of individual immigrants' voices in the news: when quotes by an individual immigrant are included in the article, immigration is more likely to be represented in a positive way.

The description of content diversity (RQ4, RQ5 and RQ6) lies center stage in the second and in the third chapter of my dissertation. Overall, the findings suggest that the amount of different voices and viewpoints that are represented in each newspaper article is rather limited. Readers are mostly likely to find quotes of one social category – in most of the cases a politician –, and they will probably be exposed to just one view on immigration. However, as shown in chapter three, different operationalizations and measurements of content diversity lead to different pictures of the heterogeneity of text's elements. Concretely, we see that the measurement of content diversity at the newspaper level yields high levels of voices' and viewpoints' diversity for the period under study, meaning that over a longer period of time all social actors and viewpoints get at least some attention. Finally, at least in the Belgian case (see chapter two), I find evidence that diversity of voices and diversity of viewpoints are related to each other, in that a broader of voices corresponds to a broader range of viewpoints in the same article.

As part of the research goal to understand what drives the construction of immigration news, the third chapter of this PhD sheds light on the determinants of content diversity (RQ7).

The results indicate that the size of an article – operationalized as the number of words – is a crucial factor in shaping content diversity, and particularly the diversity of voices: longer articles provide more space to represent a broader range of voices and viewpoints in the news, and they facilitate a more even distribution of social actor categories within the newspaper. This finding is also supported by the results in chapter two. Similarly, special reports seem to enhance content diversity, and so does the elite character of a newspaper, although these findings are refuted in the Belgian case (see second chapter). I also find that national newspapers present higher levels of actor diversity in the long term, as compared to local outlets; but the geographic scope of a newspaper does not seem to matter in shaping the diversity of a single article. The investigation of explanatory factors of content diversity also points out that inter-country differences are minimal at best, while there is some proof that geographic proximity to the key locations where an issue is mainly unfolding (as in the case of Italy and Lampedusa) might foster the heterogeneity of reporting.

Last but not least, the results in chapter five give support to the idea that real-world key events have an impact on immigration news (*RQ8*). In specific, we find evidence that their nature matters: “tragic” key events involving the death of immigrants foster the presence of viewpoints portraying immigrants as victims, while newspapers are more likely to present negative viewpoints during “criminal” key events where immigrants are perpetrators of crimes. On the other hand, the findings regarding the impact of key events on news content diversity are mixed. While the effects of key events on the range of viewpoints are not significant, the results in chapter five provide indications that during key events news media restrict the range of quoted actors, turning to more authoritative sources – namely politicians and state authorities – that usually deal with those extraordinary situations.

6.3 Main lessons that can be drawn and implications for journalism research and journalism practitioners

I believe that four main lessons can be drawn from this research. I will summarize them, and discuss their implications for journalism research.

First of all, as I expected, the findings suggest that *(1) immigration news is sensitive to the power of social groups that are debating about the topic*. Borrowing a metaphor used by Schattschneider (1960), we can say that the chorus of voices that sings in European

immigration news has a strong “political accent”. The news coverage of this topic features the voice of politicians center stage. A result that is not only in line with previous studies on immigration news, but is also consistent with the classic idea in journalism literature that political power translates into power to talk in the news (Wolfsfeld, 2009). In this sense, immigration reporting does not represent an exception to the “‘official dominance’ model of the news” (Lawrence, 2001: 5). Nonetheless, at the aggregate level, more “popular” voices are also given a considerable amount of space. Newspapers include a large number of quotes from immigrants and ordinary citizens, thereby confirming the idea that journalists make increasingly use of popular voices (Beckers, 2018; Kurpius, 2002). But even if the voice of immigrants can be heard by the public, the media still predominantly represent them as powerless victims. Alternatively, immigrants are likely to be depicted as a threat or as an administrative concern, while they are seldom portrayed in a fully positive light. This confirms Van Gorp’s (2005) observation that there exists a dichotomous view of immigration in the news, either negative or in terms of victimization of immigrants, with the latter being the most positive way to represent this phenomenon. But can victims viewpoints really be considered as a “surrogate” of positive viewpoints? According to Lugo-Ocando (2014) and other critical scholars, viewpoints of this nature are often used in the news to describe human beings with detachment, as passive “objects of pity” (Lister, 2008) that are unable to speak for themselves, within the description of a “*decontextualized phenomenon in which manifestations rather than causes are at the centre of the stories*” (Lugo-Ocando, 2014: 58). Future research should aim at addressing this crucial point, clarifying whether the suffering of immigrants is put on display to fully empathize with them, or merely to sell more newspapers.

Nevertheless, it seems that individual immigrants have a chance to trigger positive viewpoints when they are allowed to talk. The innovative analysis of *consonance* that I introduced in my PhD shows that the presence of an individual immigrant’s voice increase the odds that the news item includes positive views on immigration, whereas quotes by groups of immigrants do not have the same effect. Hence, this seems to support the broader idea that less powerful actors have a chance to be portrayed more positively when they are quoted as individual exemplars. While traditional research on exemplification focuses on the effects of audience’s exposure to individual exemplars (Iyengar et al., 2013; Zillmann, 2006),

my study paves the way for future studies on the impact of individual underdogs' voice on news content. Ideally this strand of research should shed light on the mechanism behind this influence, examining whether there is a "person positivity bias" that drives journalists to use more positive viewpoints when they quote less powerful individuals, but not when they cover them as a group. Also, future studies should test the generalizability of this finding beyond the case of immigration. Does the voice of individual homeless people, for example, spark more positive viewpoints on the issue of homelessness when it is reported in the news? Is a similar effect triggered by the voices of ordinary citizens who are protesting against the gentrification of their neighborhood?

However, we must keep in mind that the analysis of consonance points to a *potential* of less powerful actors to influence the presence of viewpoints in the news. My thesis shows that this potential can in fact remain untapped. Immigrants and other less powerful groups have limited chances to speak in the news due to the fact that the range of voices and viewpoints included in a news article on immigration is usually very low. Instead of presenting a "choir" of voices and a broad "repertoire" of viewpoints, articles mostly feature a "soloist", coupled with a monotonous view on the debated issue. Not surprisingly, the "soloist" is very often a politician and the single presented view is that of immigrants as powerless victims. Hence, we can draw a second important lesson: *(2) news' sensitivity to power is exacerbated in a context of low content diversity*. When content diversity is low, powerless actors' voices – and their preferred viewpoints – are likely to be silenced, while more powerful actors will still make their voice heard. On the other hand, the findings show that content diversity is higher when measured at the level of a news outlet – thus giving the idea that there is a balanced representation of voices and viewpoints' categories throughout time. But since immigration in the period under study was covered with an average of one article per day in each newspaper, the results support the idea that the average news consumer is exposed – on a daily basis – to low levels of content diversity.

Regarding this point, my research points to a third relevant lesson: *(3) content diversity is sensitive to the size of a news item*. In other words, size matters: the longer a news article, the broader will be the range of voices and viewpoints that have access to the mediated debate on a certain topic. As much as this finding might seem trivial and quite tautological, it brings about important implications in light of the recent expansion of digital channels of

news consumption (Fletcher, Radcliffe, Levy, Nielsen, & Newman, 2015; Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013). In 2014, the Associated Press has recommended its journalists to keep their stories between 300 and 500 words, and so did its competitor Reuters. Besides being more easily editable by increasingly understaffed newsrooms (Lewis, Williams & Franklin, 2008), the Associated Press observes that shorter articles are also less likely to bore readers, especially when they read the news on mobile devices¹⁸. Short news stories appear to be more suitable for online reading, which has been found to be rather fast and superficial (Ackerman & Goldsmith, 2011; Mangen, Walgermo & Brønneck, 2013¹⁹). If stories become increasingly shorter – especially online – there will be less and less room for different voices and viewpoints, and this would be especially detrimental to the least powerful actors of society.

The last important lesson that can be drawn from my PhD is that *(4) immigration news is sensitive to real-world circumstances*. Most importantly, relevant and dramatically charged events – which I define as key events – have an impact on the opinions and ideas that are reported in the news. While this thesis provides some evidence that the reality out there has an impact on the construction of news, further research should investigate whether variation in the presence of viewpoints due to a key event translates into a shift in public opinion. For example, it would be interesting to know whether the rise in victims viewpoints in the reporting following the tragic Lampedusa shipwreck corresponded to a surge in public's empathy towards immigrants, and whether this effect was mediated by the salience of stories related to the key event (see Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007).

The four lessons that I have just presented can be a cause for reflection also for media practitioners. It appears that Gans' (2011) plea for multiperspectival news has remained unheard, at least at the level of a single news article. Journalists seem to be able to grant a more equal access to the news to voices and viewpoints in the long term – although political actors remain largely predominant –, but they perform less well when writing a single article. We are thus far from the ideal of news pluralism, defined by Ferree and colleagues (2002) as

¹⁸ “New Associated Press guidelines: Keep it brief”, by Paul Fahri, The Washington Post. Online at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/new-ap-guidelines-keep-it-brief/2014/05/12/f220f902-d9ff-11e3-bda1-9b46b2066796_story.html?utm_term=.36c1fcd6feef

¹⁹ However, as noted by Kruikeimeier, Lecheler and Boyer (2018), the findings on the reading of online news are mixed

the representation of a broad range of speakers from different social fields and of a diverse range of viewpoints. More specifically it seems that reporters, almost 40 years after the invention of the famous “tango” metaphor (Gans, 1979), are still largely dependent on powerful political sources when reporting about a socially relevant issue like immigration. In other words, the findings of my dissertation show that the mediated debate on immigration is still “indexed” to the range of political debate. Hence, in order to get closer to the pluralistic ideal, journalists should broaden the range of voices and opinions in a single article, so that the average media consumer is exposed on a daily basis to a larger number of social actors and to different opinions. The first, concrete way for journalists to enhance content diversity is to write longer articles that can grant space to different voices and viewpoints. On top of this, I argue that journalists should pay more attention to individual immigrants, which are ultimately the real protagonists of immigration news. Besides enlarging the range of voices in the news, the results show that their inclusion in the news is also likely to be coupled with a more positive perspective on the issue that is all but lacking in the reporting.

From a comparative perspective, I conclude that the results of my PhD regarding the presence and the diversity of voices and viewpoints are highly similar across countries. While I was not expecting stark variation stemming from differences in the characteristics of media systems, I find weak evidence that the coverage of immigration is sensitive to spatial proximity to the border (Branton & Dunaway, 2009). Closeness to the Southern European border increases content diversity in Italian newspapers (but just when controlling for the length of articles), and it seems to correspond to an extensive use of negative and victims viewpoints. Despite this result, differences between countries are minimal. Does this go against the idea of news’ sensitivity to the real-world environment? I argue that this is not the case, mainly because of two reasons. First, I notice a (subtle) process of Europeanization of the national mediated debate on immigration (Gerhards, 2001). Even though the “pressure” of immigrants’ arrivals is higher in the Southern states of the EU (especially in Italy and Greece), the suppression of borders following the Schengen Agreement enables the mobility of migrants across the continent, often fueled by their desire to reach Northern European countries – like Germany and Sweden – where the economy and social security are in better shape. Hence, immigration is a phenomenon that has the potential to affect a large number of member states, posing similar challenges. This became clear at the peak of the Syrian

refugee crisis in 2015: asylum seekers firstly enter Europe through Greece, but they were eventually heading to Germany crossing Balkan and Central European countries (including Croatia, Slovenia and Hungary). All of these countries have experienced difficulties related to the reception of migrants; in all of them a debate concerning the impact of their arrival has arisen. Moreover, the whole European public has been exposed to the suffering of immigrants, symbolized by the iconic picture of the dead body of Syrian kid Alan Kurdi, which rapidly spread around the world. The mediated debated on immigration in European countries, therefore, is likely to discuss a similar set of opinions and ideas about the inflow of immigrants to EU. Yet, in the news, international politicians, European institutional actors and international organizations – like the United Nations or the UNHCR – are overshadowed by national politicians, who are the most quoted actors in every country of this study. This finding is an indication that, in Western media system, the construction of news about politicized issues is still primarily defined by national authorities, as Stuart Hall and colleagues observed 40 years ago (Hall et al., 1978). Only future studies on the relationship between elite sources and the press will be able to tell if, as a result of increased globalization of socially relevant issues, international politicians and EU actors will take over as journalists' partners in their figurative *tango* with sources (Gans, 1979).

6.4 Limitations and avenues for further research

Finally, I point to a number of limitations of this PhD. The first one concerns the choice of media type to analyze. Especially nowadays, socially relevant issues are covered and discussed in multiple platforms, including television, online media and social media. While the characteristics of newspaper coverage are still representative of the mediated construction of an issue, further research should ideally pinpoint differences and similarities in the presence and diversity of voices and viewpoints across media types. Second, as I pointed out in the introduction, the newspaper sample was designed in the framework of a broader project with peculiar research goals (namely the analysis of the impact of media ownership concentration on content diversity). This resulted in the exclusion of relevant news outlets from the analysis, as it is the case for the prominent German tabloid *Bild Zeitung*, whose coverage of immigration should be investigated by future studies in this field. Nonetheless, I examined a considerable number of titles for each country, which ensured variation in the popular/elite and national/local character of the newspapers, and which resulted in a fairly

large sample of news articles. The third limitation refers to the coding of news articles. Throughout my PhD, I have closely witnessed the challenges of a manual content analysis in multiple countries, particularly with regard to the reliability of the coding. The results of inter-coder reliability tests that I conducted in my work are not particularly high, especially in which concerns the most interpretative variables, such as the presence of viewpoints. Future studies adopting the methodology of content analysis might perhaps turn to automatic content analysis to increase the quality of the findings. However, this should not happen at the expenses of validity: while automatic sentiment analysis, for example, is an increasingly developed method, I claim that viewpoints are complex element of the text whose valid detection needs a certain degree of interpretation, which might in turn hinder reliability. While low reliability scores are not desirable, I have experienced that this is, to a certain extent, “a price to pay” to seek the higher possible level of validity.

Nevertheless, I argue that this PhD dissertation provides a valuable contribution to the literature on the mediated construction of socially relevant issues, and it can give guidance to future studies on this topic. Its added value mainly lies in three aspects. First of all, my work draws upon the assumption that it is important to know whether media consumers are exposed to “multiperspectival” news (Baker, 2002; Gans 2011; McQuail, 1992; Van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003) Hence, it proposes a replicable paradigm for the analysis of the representation of social phenomena in the news that integrates the investigation of the presence of voices and viewpoints with the examination of the diversity of these elements in the content. To this purpose, it provides an in-depth analysis of the different measurements of the diversity of voices and viewpoints (see chapter three), pointing out the conceptual differences but also the relationship between them – which is the second innovative aspect brought about by this PhD. Further studies on the mediated construction of social phenomena can draw on this examination to choose the measure of content diversity that better suits the research questions they pose. Third, this thesis is not limited to the description of the content in terms of presence and diversity of voices and viewpoints, but it also aims to explain the factors that might have an influence on these components. In order to attain this goal, I have outlined a multilevel model of the determinants of content diversity (chapter three) that aims at systematically pinpointing the elements that might have an impact on the heterogeneity of the content. While the results show that not every factor that was considered leads to a

significant effect, I argue that this multilevel approach for the understanding of dynamics of influence on the content – which I primarily drew from Benson (2009) and Humprecht & Büchel (2013) – can be a source of inspiration for researchers that will tackle the same research puzzle. Finally, because immigration is a paradigmatic example of a socially relevant topic whose mediated construction plays a key role in the process of public opinion formation, further studies will be able to replicate the research design that was used here, taking the media coverage of another socially and politically relevant topic as a case in point. For example, scholars might be interested in the construction of the issue of unemployment in the media: they can map the most prominent voices and viewpoints in news about this issue, assessing whether the “official dominance’ model of the news” (Lawrence, 2001: 5) holds; they can then measure the diversity of voices and viewpoints, investigating whether media consumers are exposed to multiperspectival news. Also, future research might replicate the multilevel test of the determinants of content diversity, and it can similarly analyze the impact of key events related to this issue – for example big national strikes – on the characteristics of news content. In short, it would be good to compare the presence and diversity of actors and viewpoints across multiple issues.

Finally, my PhD has focused exclusively on the content of the news. Still, I argue it can be useful for both studies on news production and studies on news effects. First, is the analysis of content adequate to explain how journalists report on immigration? Certainly, as observed by Shoemaker and Vos (2009), content analysis should be integrated by different research methods (like surveys, observations or experiments) in order to shed light on journalistic routines, as well as characteristics of individual reporters, that have an impact on the construction of immigration in the news. In this sense, future studies that aim to examine journalists’ decision-making process when reporting on socially and politically relevant issues should investigate newsroom’s dynamics and observe the criteria underlying reporters’ selection of voices and viewpoints. Second, in order to understand whether characteristics of media coverage have any effect on what citizens learn on immigration, it is necessary to complement the analysis of content with the investigation of public’s attitudes on this topic (see Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007, 2009; Jacobs et al., 2018). Although the analysis of news content has its limitations, it is a crucial starting point to investigate the process of news construction and examine its potential impact on public opinion. For example, the presence

of voices and viewpoints in the news is the final outcome of journalists' decisions (Carpenter, 2010). As such, it can give insights into the mechanism of news production. The results of this dissertation show that reporters in each country tend to give space to the same, narrow range of politically powerful actors and the same, narrow range of viewpoints on immigration. Moreover, the analysis of *consonance* (chapter four) reveals that journalists are likely to coherently bundle voices and viewpoints when they write on immigration. Thanks to its comparative design, this thesis has pinpointed the existence of a universal pattern of news production, which is subject to the dynamics of power but, at the same time, is sensitive to real-world events. Moreover, through the analysis of content, it has concretely shown which newsroom's decisions might enhance or hinder content diversity. Similarly, research that aims at evaluating the impact of media coverage on public opinion cannot overlook a deep examination of the characteristics of news content. How can we determine the role of media in shaping the public's attitudes on immigration if we do not know how exactly the media report on this topic? My study, for instance, suggests that it is very important to distinguish between the article level and the newspaper level when testing the potential effects of content diversity on citizens' perceptions and attitudes. To sum up, while the focus of this dissertation on the content of immigration news might appear limited, I have shown that it provides valuable insights into the process of news construction, and provides fertile ground for future studies that aim to investigate the influence of immigration news coverage on public opinion. Content analysis might not be sufficient to thoroughly investigate how journalists make their decisions when reporting on immigration, however, it is a crucial step to understand the mediated construction of a social issue like immigration, which is for many citizens an "abstract" phenomenon, but nonetheless bears real social and political consequences.

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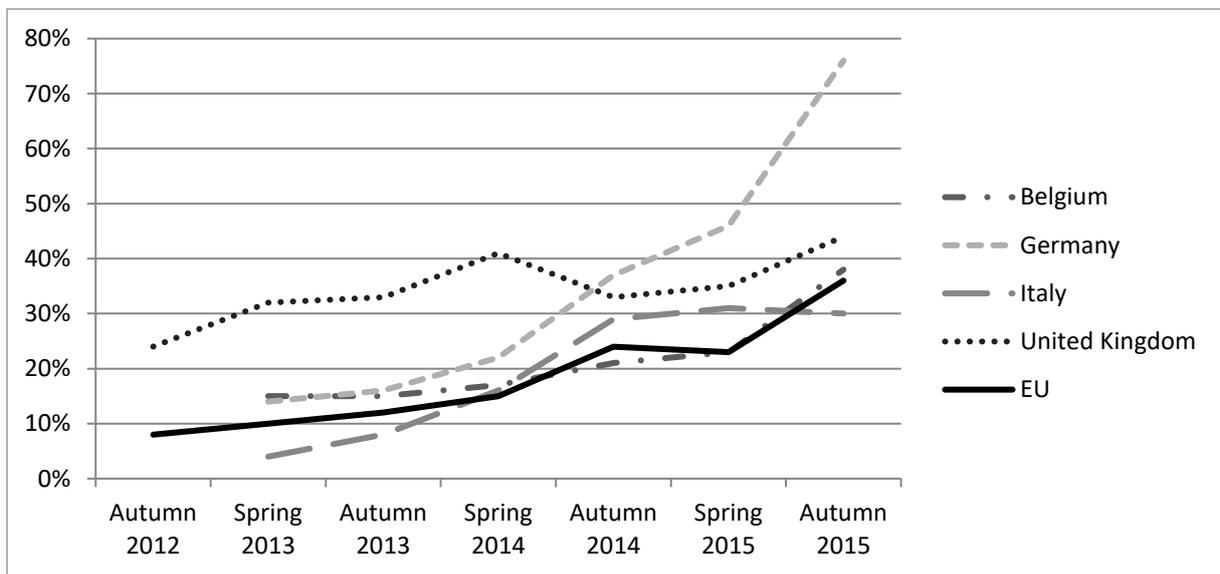
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Appendices

Appendix A – Percentage of citizens considering immigration as a concern (source: Eurobarometer survey)



Appendix B – Newspaper sample’s characteristics

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Audience’s cultural orientation</i>	<i>Geographical scope</i>
De Morgen	Belgium	Elite (Highbrow)	National*
de Standaard	Belgium	Elite (Highbrow)	National*
De Tijd	Belgium	Elite (Highbrow)	National*
Gazet van Antwerpen	Belgium	Popular (Middlebrow)	Local
Het Nieuwsblad	Belgium	Popular (Middlebrow)	National*
Het Laatste Nieuws	Belgium	Popular (Middlebrow)	National*
Die Welt	Germany	Elite (Highbrow)	National
Berliner Morgenpost	Germany	Elite (Highbrow)	Local
Der Tagesspiegel	Germany	Elite (Highbrow)	National
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Germany	Elite (Highbrow)	National
Stuttgarter Nachrichten	Germany	Elite (Highbrow)	Local
La Repubblica	Italy	Elite (Highbrow)	National
Gazzetta di Modena	Italy	Popular (Middlebrow)	Local
Il Giornale	Italy	Popular (Middlebrow)	National
Il Messaggero	Italy	Elite (Highbrow)	National
Il Mattino	Italy	Elite (Highbrow)	Local
The Times	UK	Elite (Highbrow)	National
The Independent	UK	Elite (Highbrow)	National
The Sun	UK	Popular (Lowbrow)	National
Daily Mirror	UK	Popular (Lowbrow)	National
Manchester Evening News	UK	Popular (Middlebrow)	Local
London Evening Standard	UK	Popular (Middlebrow)	Local

* Since Belgium has no national papers that cover the whole bilingual country, we label outlets that cover the whole Flemish media landscape as national. These newspapers have higher interests for federal issues, and they clearly have a broader scope compared to more local newspapers – like Gazet van Antwerpen –, which are usually the newspapers of a region (province).

Appendix C – Search string (in English. Search strings in the other languages were modelled on this search string in English)

Immigr* OR migr* OR (immigr! OR migr!) w/10 (foreign* OR reunificat* OR illegal* OR irregul* OR undocumented OR smuggl* OR traffic* OR detainee OR expel* OR expulsion OR slumlord) OR diaspora OR refoulement OR (sham AND marriage) OR repatriate* OR resettle* OR asylum OR refugee OR (reception centre) OR (processing centre)

Appendix D – Codebook (example for Belgium)

FILTER1: Does the article have anything to do with the topic of immigration?

1. Identification

Coder ID: NN (Your initials)

Date: The date the article was published:

Year = YY

Month = MM

Day = DD

Media Outlet: In which media outlet was the articles published:

Print media: Flanders

111. De Standaard

112. Het Laatste Nieuws

Article's headline (and subheadline, if present)

Headline (+subheadline):

Visibility and prominence

VIS1: Page number of the story

VIS2: Number of words of the news item

Journalistic genre

GENRE: The news article is a:

1. news report = news item mainly reporting about an event that is chronologically close to the date of publication

2. documentary = article which aims at giving insights into a determinate topic. It can also cover an event in deeper; in any case, the event is not necessarily chronologically close to the date of publication
3. interview = genre in which the journalist (interviewer) asks questions to the interviewee
4. editorial, news analysis written by a journalist = a journalist aims at writing in depth about a topic; he/she gives his/ her own opinion about a topic
5. opinion article NOT written by a journalist = a person (NOT a journalist) gives his/ her opinion on a certain topic, usually as an expert/ a person with knowledge on that topic
6. letters of readers = news item in which a reader of a newspaper (from the general public, but also a professional/ an expert) gives his/ her opinion about a certain topic

Foreign news

FOREIGN: Is the article foreign news, i.e. an accounts of facts happening outside the national territory? Y/N

2. Issues/ Stories

ISSUE: The issue/story that is dealt with in the article. The article is about immigration, but what is it more specifically about?

1=Entrance of migrants/refugees: stories related to the entrance of migrants/refugees, accounts of their journeys, accidents. Stories that are about the MOVEMENT of migrants.

2=Camps/detention centers: stories about the Calais' "jungle", Eidomeni, etc. Idea that migrants are STUCK in the camps.

3=Asylum applications/Reception in Europe/Relocation: "refugee welcome" stories, political debate on the relocation of migrants in the EU, "Wir schaffen das"

4 = Security and crime: Report on crimes committed by immigrants in the host country, from petty crimes to terrorism (also when they are suspected of illegal acts or crimes in which immigrants are victims (excluding "trafficking/ smuggling of immigrants"). Also, New Year's Eve's attacks in Cologne discussed in the framework of Germany hosting refugees.

5 = Economic aspects/ Labour: Reference to economic aspects of immigration. E.g. migrant workers, illegal immigrant workers, impact of immigrants on the economy of the host country, etc.

6 = Trafficking/smuggling of immigrants: Reference to illegal practices carried on by criminal individuals/groups to let immigrants into the host country.

7 = Education/School: Stories of immigrants going to school/university/etc. /Articles about the education of immigrants

8 = Others

3. Actors

The analysis will distinguish between different actors that feature news concerning immigration. **Actors have to be coded in the order they appear in the article.** Your context unit is the full news story, not including prior knowledge or links with earlier or later articles.

- **Definition of an actor**

- *Basic rules*

Actors are: "Individuals/organisations indicated by name (Merkel) or function/description (German's Chancellor) that are quoted or paraphrased"

Quoted actor → signaled by presence of quotes " "

Paraphrased actor → expressions like "according to", "says", "thinks", - explicit reference to somebody's words/thoughts or the position of an actor. But NO deliberations/decisions by courts, institutions, documents/reports published by institutions, etc.

- *Same actors and synonyms*

The same actor should only be coded once – although she/he/it/they may appear at several places and with different functions in the story (also in the form of a **synonym** – e.g. "Merkel" and "the German Chancellor" are the same actor). If more than one code applies to one actor, choose the most specific one (e.g., a farmer is not to be coded as ordinary citizen, but as member of a professional group).

- *Journalists and columnists*

Journalists are actors only if they are interviewed, reported about, or used as sources. "I" or "We" (e.g. "I think" or "we are") in a column or commentary does not establish the author as an actor

ACTORCODE: see actor appendix (**Appendix E**)

ACTORFUNCT: Actor's function/ description (given in the news article)

Give formal position of actor if mentioned (E.g. Hollande = President of France; Karel De Gucht = EU Commissioner; Ingrid Pira= the mayor of Mortsel; Anne Van Lancker = head of Vluchtelingenwerk). In case of immigrants or ordinary people write down the exact

description of the actor used in the article, in particular their group belongings (E.g. Family Smith, living in an immigrant neighborhood; Ahmed, Syrian father of three kids, ...)

REPEAT THESE VARIABLES FOR ALL ACTORS ; max 10 (take first ten actors)

IMMIGRATOR: Is there any immigrant actor represented in the news item as a whole (can be active/passive – individual/group)?

VERY IMPORTANT RULE: An immigrant actor is considered as represented in the news item ONLY IF there is also a reference to his geographic origin!

0 = No

1 = Yes

IMMIGRAREGION: Country/area of origin

- Middle East (other than Turkey. E.g.: Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan etc.) Y/N
- Eastern Europe (EU and non-EU countries, former “Eastern bloc” – socialist and communist countries. E.g. Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Russia, Albania, Macedonia, Ukraine, etc.) Y/N
- Southern Europe (Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal) Y/N
- Europe in general (f.e. EU migrants) Y/N
- North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya) Y/N
- Africa (other than Northern Africa) Y/N
- Turkey Y/N
- Asia (E.g. India, China, Bangladesh, Philippines, etc. NOT Asian countries like Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan ,etc.) Y/N
- Southern and Central America Y/N
- Caribbean (Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, etc.) Y/N
- Other Y/N

RELIGION: References to religion of migrants

- Muslim
- Christian
- Buddhist
- Hinduist

- Other
- None

4. Viewpoints

In our analysis of viewpoints expressed in news about immigration, we will aim at evaluating, in every news item, the presence of:

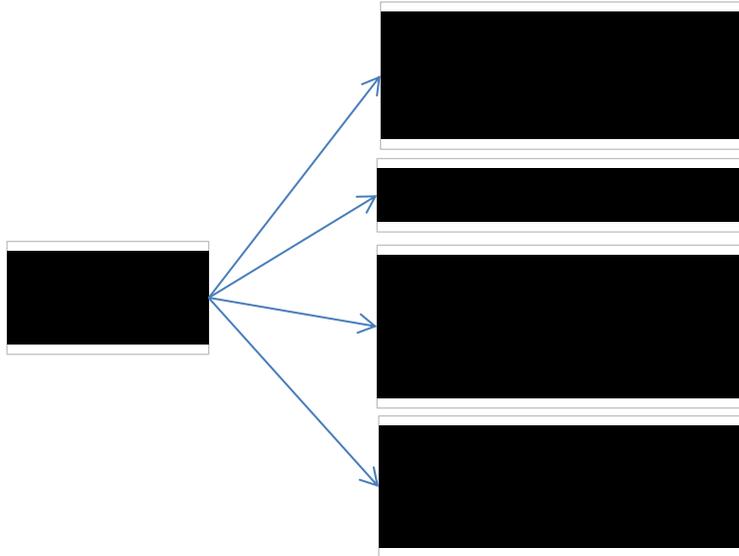


Figure 1. Scheme analysis viewpoints

(NOT mutually exclusive: for each view : 0=No, 1=Yes)

N.B.: If the same viewpoints is expressed more than once, you just need to indicate its presence once

NEGATIVE: Immigration/immigrants as a threat (**generally**, without specifying why)

ECONOMIC NEGATIVE: immigration/immigrants as an economic threat (=bringing **negative economic consequences** e.g. immigration increases work competition for local population, rise of unemployment immigration represents a burden for social security system, etc.)

CULTURAL NEGATIVE: immigration/immigrants as a cultural/moral/ethnic/demographic threat (=bringing **negative non-material consequences** e.g. quality at schools goes down, immigration changes the “original character” of society - f.e. “islamisation” of society, etc.), loss national culture, loss “purity” ethnicity, etc.)

SECURITY NEGATIVE: immigration/immigrants as a security threat e.g. immigration leads to increase of criminality, terrorism, immigration creates problems with capacity of prisons, etc.

ADMIN BURDEN: immigration as an administrative/logistic problem (=bringing **practical/pragmatic problems of logistics/organisation** e.g. where “put” immigrants, how to manage the arrivals, problems related to food, hygiene, etc.)

GLOBALIZATION VICTIMS: migrants are victims of global economy or business practices, poverty which is a by-product of globalisation

VICTIMS AT HOME: migrants have to escape because in their home country they face war, persecution, because their countries are affected by corruption; they are victims of poverty that comes from domestic factors

VICTIMS WHILE TRAVELLING: travel accidents, horrible travel conditions, idea that they risk their lives

VICTIMS AFTER THE JOURNEY: bad conditions in detention centres, victims of racism/xenophobia, victims of bad laws of host countries, etc.

POSITIVE: Immigration as an opportunity (**generally**, without specifying why)

ECONOMIC POSITIVE: immigration as an economic opportunity (=bringing **positive economic consequences** e.g. immigration empowers work force, provides work force for “dirty, dangerous,

CULTURAL POSITIVE: immigration as a cultural/moral/ethnic/demographic opportunity (=bringing **positive non-material consequences** e.g. immigration enhances “positive multiculturalism”, contributes to tackling ageing population, immigration improve public moral, also expressions like “Immigrants contribute to our community”, etc.)

6. Causes

CAUSES: Are the broader/structural causes of immigration discussed in the article? (f.e. war in Syria, poverty in Africa, persecutions, violence in the home country, etc.)

0 = No

1 = Yes

Appendix E – Actors' codebook (example for Belgium)

General rule: categories include both the institutions and the individuals working in these institutions (unless explicitly mentioned)

1) NATIONAL POLITICS (100-220)

N.B. The following actors' codes include also **staff** of the actors (Including civil servants and public administration.) Use the same code for Minister/Ministry and Department within a Ministry.

- **Governmental actors: Flemish and federal level (Belgium)**

100) The Belgian government (also: Cabinet)

101) The Flemish government (also: Cabinet)

102) Belgian Prime Minister

103) Flemish Prime Minister (and Minister van Economie, Buitenlands Beleid, Landbouw en Plattelandsbeleid)

104) Belgian minister (or junior minister) of immigration (also: Ministry/ Department of immigration - or member of this department) = Staatssecretaris voor Asiel en Migratie en Maatschappelijke Integratie (Including Kabinet van Minister of kabinetsmedewerker)

105) Other member of the national (Belgian) government or other Ministry/Department

106) Other member of the Flemish government or other Ministry/Department

107) Other regional government (Walloon/Brussels/German-speaking) or member of such a government (including Ministry/Departement)

- **National Parties and Members (not members of government)**

110) CD&V

111) Party leader

112) Member of Parliament (Belgian/Flemish/European) from CD&V

113) Other members of CD&V

120) OpenVLD

121) Party leader | 122) Member of Parliament (Belgian/Flemish/European) from OpenVLD

123) Other members of OpenVLD

- 130) sp.a
- 131) Party leader
- 132) Member of Parliament (Belgian/Flemish/European) from sp.a
- 133) Other members of sp.a

- 140) Vlaams Belang
- 141) Party leader
- 142) Member of Parliament (Belgian/Flemish/European) from Vlaams Belang
- 143) Other members of Vlaams Belang

- 150) N-VA
- 151) Party leader
- 152) Member of Parliament (Belgian/Flemish/European) from N-VA
- 153) Other members of N-VA

- 160) Groen
- 161) Party leader
- 162) Member of Parliament (Belgian/Flemish/European) from Groen
- 163) Other members of Groen

- 170) pvda
- 171) Party leader
- 172) Member of Parliament (Belgian/Flemish/European) from pvda
- 173) Other members of pvda

- 180) Ecolo
- 181) Party president
- 182) Member of Parliament (Belgian/Walloon/European) from Ecolo
- 183) Other members of Ecolo

- 184) MR
- 185) Party president
- 186) Member of Parliament (Belgian/Walloon/European) from MR
- 187) Other members of MR

- 188) PS
- 189) Party president
- 190) Member of Parliament (Belgian/Walloon/European) from PS
- 191) Other members of PS

- 192) CdH
- 193) Party president
- 194) Member of Parliament (Belgian/Walloon/European) from CdH
- 195) Other members of CdH

199) Other political parties/members of other political parties in Belgium (Code as much as possible former politicians/ministers as members of their party)

200) The Belgian Parliament (Kamer) (or a Committee within it)

201) The Flemish Parliament (or a Committee within it)

- **Local Politics**

210) Mayor or local politician of a city/ town/ village (also municipalities as an actor: e.g. Antwerp decided to close the detention center; also other Administrative staff municipalities or other local entities like OCMW)

- **The Royal family**

220) The Belgian Royal family/ member of the Belgian Royal family

2) INTERNATIONAL POLITICS (230 – 260)

- **Governmental level:**

- Governments/heads of governments/members of government – also previous governments and countries as synonym for government (E.g. “Germany has decided to ...”) **FROM:**

230) Central-North European countries: Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway, the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, Austria, **plus Switzerland**

231) Southern European countries: France, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Malta, Cyprus

232) Eastern EU countries: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia, ...

233) G-20 major economies countries – excluding EU countries (USA, Canada, South Africa, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Turkey, Australia)

234) Other countries

- **EU institutions**

240) The EU (also synonyms: the Eurozone, ‘Europe has decided ...’ etc.)

241) European Commission

242) President of the EU Commission: Jean-Claude Juncker

243) Commissioner Avramopoulous

244) Commissioner Mogherini

245) Commissioner Stylianidis

246) Other Commissioners

247) European Council

248) President of the Council: Donald Tusk

249) European Parliament and Members of the European Parliament

250) President of the EU Parliament: Martin Schulz

251) ECB (European Central Bank)

252) Other EU institutions (EU Council, Committee of Regions, EESC, etc.)

N.B.: ECJ (European Court of Justice) is coded under judiciary!

- **Other international political actors**

260) Other international political actors (foreign MPs, embassies and ambassadors, ..., etc.)

3) INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS (270 – 273)

Only intergovernmental organisations

270) United Nations – **also its agencies**, like UNHCR, UNICEF, ...

271) Economic-financial international organisations (e.g. World Bank, IMF, International Labour Organisation, **NOT international trade unions...**)

272) International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

273) Other

4) JUDICIARY SYSTEM, POLICE AND MILITARY (280 – 282)

Both national and international level

280) Judiciary system (e.g.: Belgian Houses of Justice, Law courts, Higher courts, European Court of Justice, European Court of Human Rights, The Supreme Court of the U.S., public prosecutors, individual judges, juries, etc.)

281) Police, security agencies and other law enforcement agencies (e.g.: police, **secret services**, etc.)

282) Military (army, NATO, etc.)

5) PUBLIC AGENCIES/ (SEMI) PUBLIC ORGANISATIONS (290 – 293)

Both national and international level

290) Public agencies – both dependent and independent from the Government - specifically dealing with migrants and immigration related fields – e.g. border control; asylum requests

For Belgium: Dienst voor Vreemdelingen Zaken, Federaal Migratie Centrum, Commissaris generaal voor vluchtelingen en staatlozen, Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (FEDASIL), etc.

291) Institutes of Statistics and other public research organisations (Statistics Belgium, StatBel.)

292) Other public agencies (Belgium: Vlaamse Belastingdienst, DG Sociale Inspectie, Vlaams Agentschap Zorg en Gezondheid, Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding)

293) Educational institutions (Universities, schools, etc. – N.B. Academics, professors, researchers, deans)

6) CIVIL SOCIETY (300 – 306)

Both national and international level

300) NGOs and action groups specifically dealing with migration, pro-minority rights organisations, antiracist organisations, organisations for general solidarity, human rights and welfare (e.g. Vluchtelingwerk Vlaanderen, Belgisch Comité voor Hulp aan Vluchtelingen, Association pour le droit des étrangers (ADDE), Aide aux personnes déplacées, International Migration Organisation, Migrants' Rights International, Social Platform, European Platform for Migrants' Workers Rights, Minderheden Platform, Jongeren tegen racisme, European Network Against Racism, Sant'Egidio/Vereniging voor Solidariteit, Red Cross, Amnesty International, Terre des Hommes, Oxfam, etc.)

301) Trade unions (including international federations of trade unions)

302) Racist and extreme right organisations and groups (includes vague descriptions such as "skinheads" or "right-wing extremists")

303) Radical left organisations and groups (includes vague descriptions such as "Autonomous" or "left-wing groups", as well as radical left organisations)

304) Think tanks

305) Minority organisations that defend rights of specific group (E.g.: Turkse Unie van België, Association Marocaine des laureats de Belgique , etc.)

306) Other types of civil society actors

7) RELIGION (310 – 312)

310) Catholic church (incl. The Vatican, the pope, local priest...)

311) Islamic institutions (Imam, Islamic council, ...)

312) Other types of religious institutions (e.g. Orthodox church, Rabbi, ...)

8) BUSINESS/CORPORATE/FINANCIAL SECTOR (320 - 321)

Both national and international level

320) Big companies or business people, CEOs, managers, board members, shareholders, etc. (including banks, financial corporations and public companies) **N.B. With big companies we mean: NO local businesses = 422)**

321) Agencies and financial markets (e.g. president of stock market, rating agency...)

9) JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA CELEBRITIES (330 – 331)

Both national and international level

330) Journalists used as actors that are quoted and paraphrased (E.g. journalist used as expert on immigration, Investigative journalist talking about human trafficking, ...)

331) Actors, singers, writers, famous sportsmen, other kinds of celebrities, etc.

10) IMMIGRANTS (400 – 401)

Individual immigrant actors vs. immigrant group actors

You will code an actor as *“individual immigrant actor”* if the active subject in the news item is, f.e.: *“an immigrant”*, *“Altin, immigrant from Albania”*, *“Ana Laura, who came from Portugal 5 years ago”*, etc. You will code an actor as *“immigrant group actor”* if the collective active subjects in the news item are: *“immigrants”*, *“a group of immigrants from Senegal”*, *“Albanians who arrived in Belgium 5 years ago”*, *“two immigrant children”*, *“five immigrant women”*, etc.

If you find two or more individual active actors in the news item, you will code them separately.

N.B. An organized group of immigrants (with a specific name) has to be coded as a specific minority organization.

The variables are:

400) Individual immigrant

401) Immigrant group (e.g. family, group of Afghan immigrants, ...)

11) CRIMINALS (410)

410) People belonging to criminal organizations, crooks, traffickers in people, etc.

12) PUBLIC OPINION AND ORDINARY PEOPLE (420 – 422)

420) Public opinion as poll respondents (e.g. 90% of Brits are in favour of stricter immigrant rules)

421) General public (e.g. ordinary citizens, voters, people living in particular neighbourhoods in cities, local workers, local people with foreign origin, etc.)

Abstract

Especially during the last decades, immigration has become a highly contested and politicized issue. Immigration is nowadays a political priority and a crucial element of party competition. The fact that more and more European citizens are concerned about immigration suggests that they attach increasing importance to this topic when casting their vote, choosing the party that more closely matches their overall view on the issue. But how do citizens form their opinion on immigration? In this PhD, immigration is taken as a paradigmatic example of a complex socially relevant phenomenon that is mostly experienced by the public in a mediated way. The majority of citizens rely on mediated accounts of immigrants entering the country and staying in asylum centers; people are dependent on the media to understand where immigrants come from, why they move and what are the consequences of immigration for the host society. Hence, the dissertation starts from the assumption that it is crucial to analyze how the issue of immigration is covered in the media, as this is likely to mold citizens' perceptions and opinions on this topic. By means of a content analysis of the newspaper reporting on immigration in Belgium (Flanders), Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom (2013-2016), this thesis has the broader aim to provide a replicable framework for the analysis of news about socially relevant issues.

This PhD dissertation proposes an innovative way to investigate the news coverage of immigration. First of all, it draws upon the idea that it is not just important to describe which social groups are quoted in the news and which views on immigration are represented, but it is also crucial to understand how many different actors and how many different opinions on the topic the public is exposed to. To this purpose, the analysis of the voices and viewpoints that are presented in the news is integrated with the examination of content diversity, defined as the heterogeneity of voices' and viewpoints' categories in the reporting. Second, the thesis aims to explain how immigration news is constructed by pinpointing the factors that have an impact on content diversity, and finally by studying the influence of real-world key events on the presence and diversity of voices and viewpoints in the reporting.

The results show that national politicians dominate the reporting on immigration in every country of the study, while quotes of other actors' categories are less present. Although

to a substantially lesser extent, unaffiliated voices – namely those of immigrants and ordinary people – are also fairly well represented in the news, while international organizations are almost inaudible. Regarding the presence of viewpoints, the dissertation gives support to the idea that immigration is mainly depicted in a dichotomous way in all of the four countries under study, either by stressing its negative consequences, or by pointing out the suffering of migrants. By contrast, fully positive viewpoints that highlight the benefits of immigration or that portray immigrants as heroes find way less space. Last but not least, the innovative analysis of *consonance* that was introduced in this PhD thesis provides evidence of a link between voices and viewpoints, in that actors' quotes are often presented together with viewpoints that are in line with the actors' "preferred" opinion on immigration. Most importantly, the findings show that individual immigrants' quotes are likely to "bring along" positive viewpoints on immigration, while quotes by groups of immigrants do not have this potential.

Moreover, the analysis of content diversity is heavily dependent on the level of analysis. On the one hand, this dissertation shows that diversity at the article level is rather low, with less than two actors' categories and less than two viewpoints' categories represented within a single news article. On the other hand, when content diversity is measured at the level of the news outlet, the results show that the distribution of voices and viewpoints is well balanced. In other words, readers will be exposed to a very limited amount of different voices and viewpoints on the issue of immigration when reading a single news article, but in the long term they can expect a diverse distribution of these elements of the text. This dissertation shows that the size of a news article is a significant predictor of the levels of content diversity, especially concerning the diversity of voices. The latter is also higher in special reports – i.e. an in-depth article on immigration –, as well as in articles that are written in *quality* newspapers, oriented towards a more highbrow audience. In which concerns inter-country differences, Italian newspapers seem to provide a more diverse coverage of immigration than their Belgian, German and Italian counterparts, but just when comparing articles of the same length. In actual fact, Italian articles are shorter than those in the other countries, and less diverse when length is not controlled for.

The investigation of the impact of key events related to immigration on news construction reveals that in the aftermath of these sudden, dramatic and politically relevant

occurrences there is a surge in the presence of viewpoints that reflect the nature of the key event. Specifically, tragic key events that involve immigrants as victims lead to a significant surge in the representation of the suffering of migrants, whereas “criminal” key events that involve immigrants as alleged perpetrators of crimes spark a significant rise in views of immigration as a threat. Nonetheless, key events do not seem to enlarge the range of voices and viewpoints in the news. On the contrary, the results of this thesis show that journalists tend to give space to a more limited amount of social actors in the aftermath of these events.

The dissertation concludes that immigration news is sensitive to the power of social groups that are debating about the topic. This suggests that national politicians are still the “primary definers” of the news, and journalists are still dependent on them as news sources. Also, the findings stress that news’ sensitivity to power is exacerbated in a context of low content diversity, meaning that when content diversity is low, powerless actors’ voices – and the viewpoints that they usually bring along – are likely to be silenced, while more powerful actors will still make their voice heard. In order to enlarge the range of voices and viewpoints in the news, journalists could give more space to the voice of individual immigrants, who are the real “protagonists” of immigration and who can offer a view of the phenomenon that goes beyond the usual “negative-victims” dichotomy. Alternatively, as diversity is sensitive to the size of a news item, journalists could write longer article that provide adequate space for the representation of a fuller range of voices and opinions. Besides being subject to the dynamics of political power, this thesis concludes that immigration news is also sensitive to real-world circumstances, and especially to dramatic key events that unfold suddenly and that are politically relevant. These conclusions can be generalized to the four countries of the study, as the results in terms of presence and diversity of voices and viewpoints are strikingly similar. In this sense, this PhD thesis points to the existence of a convergence in the reporting of immigration across Europe: immigration, a phenomenon that is of interest for the whole EU, is represented with similar characteristics by the media in different European countries.