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A Longitudinal Analysis of Immigration Television News and the Actors Speaking in it

Although immigration always has been an issue of political debate, the 2015 European migrant crisis led to an enormous increase in attention from policymakers and news media. Many studies already focused on the representation of the crisis in the news, but no systematic longitudinal research existed comparing coverage in crisis and non-crisis times. This study analyzes all television news items on immigration in Flanders (Belgium) from the two main broadcasters from the period 2003-2017. By doing so, we are able to study whether there are changes in immigration coverage before and during the crisis years. We focus specifically on the actors that get the opportunity to voice their point of view on immigration and on the issues related to immigration. Our results show that before the crisis, immigration news coverage on the commercial and public service broadcaster was relatively similar. However, during the crisis their approach changes. The commercial broadcaster criminalizes immigration more and focuses on political actors. The public broadcaster opts for a broader issue approach and gives the word more to citizens and immigrants during the crisis. We elaborate in the conclusion on how crises can change the nature of reporting.

Word Count: 8989

In the course of 2015, around one million migrants arrived on Europe's Mediterranean shores (International Organization for Migration, 2018). This migrant "crisis" turned into a key policy issue capturing worldwide political and journalistic attention (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Holmes & Castañeda, 2016). Migration also played a prominent role in major political discussions across the globe, most notably Brexit and the election of Trump (e.g. Somerville, 2016).

Immigration always has been an issue of political debate, however, the 2015 migrant crisis received much attention from policymakers and news media. The European news media played a central role in framing the events as a "crisis" (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017). In general, immigration is a rather abstract topic, as it happens gradually and is mostly not unusual or surprising. However, the 2015 crisis was shaped by several heavily mediatized key events, such as the publication of photographs of the drowned child Alan Kurdi or images of people arriving at the European shores on small boats (e.g. Goodman, Sirriyeh, & McMahon, 2017). It is precisely in times of dramatic events the media play a central role in informing people and often help shape the debate by reporting events in a specific manner, in this case as a migrant "crisis" (Carastathis, Spathopoulou, & Tsilimpounidi, 2018; Perse, 2001). Our main question is whether the crisis structurally changed the way in which the issue of migration is covered in the news. Did changes occur in the issues that were linked to immigration before and during the crisis? And did the crisis influence who gets access to the news as a speaking actor? Do different types of broadcasters react differently to a crisis?

The actors that get a voice in the news are particularly relevant for issues where power differences in civic debate are expected to be the highest. Previous studies found that access to the media is very unequally distributed for immigration coverage. As for most news issues, governmental sources in general have easy access to the media, whereas "societal underdogs", such as immigrants, usually have fewer opportunities to—actively—speak in the news (Benson

& Wood, 2015; Masini et al., 2017; Tyler & Marciniak, 2013). In her study on political violence, Lawrence (2000) also argued that dramatic events have the ability to change how an issue is discussed and defined in the press. Crises would provide the possibility for outsiders or otherwise ignored actors to challenge the coverage of events and the traditional elite dominance in the news.

Immigration has been one of the most important political issues in Western societies in the past decade (Castles, 2013). Consequently, a growing number of studies already focused on how immigration is covered in the news and which actors are present in it (e.g. Benson & Wood, 2015; Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Masini et al., 2017). This study adds to the literature by differentiating between routine news periods and coverage in times of crisis. Our longitudinal data (2003-2017) allow us to study changes in news covering the broader topic of immigration and the effect of the European migrant crisis on this coverage. By including the coverage of 2017, after the crisis was partly resolved and immigration numbers dropped again[1], we are able to see whether the coverage went back to "normal". Using a content analysis of *all* television news items on immigration in Flanders (Belgium), we study how the migrant crisis impacted (1) the (sub)issues that are related to immigration news and (2) the distribution of actors actively speaking in the news. By doing so, we provide insights on the actors that get the opportunity to influence the interpretation of the events. We also relate issues and actors by exploring whether the crisis influenced the linkage between immigration and crime and the influence thereof on the presence of actors in the news.

Using such an elaborate dataset reveals systematic differences across time and media type, but at the same time provides a more profound understanding of how crises can change the way journalists cover the news. We will elaborate on the impact crises have on news coverage and devote special attention on how different media organizations, in this study the

commercial broadcaster and the public service broadcaster, potentially react differently to a crisis.

Can a Crisis Change News Coverage?

Although journalists in Western democracies have become more autonomous of political influence, the news content they produce remains highly similar. Journalism scholars argue this homogeneity is mainly the consequence of the working routines and news values that are shared by journalists across the board (O'Neill & Harcup, 2009). These routines and values are often implicit, but nonetheless they provide a solid framework for journalists and are necessary to translate the enormous amounts of raw material into news with limited means and time (e.g. Shoemaker & Reese, 1991; Tuchman, 1973). According to what are called new-institutionalists (e.g. Cook, 2005; Sparrow, 1999), the work of journalists is so strongly grounded in standard practices and procedures that the media can be considered an institution. News routines and values also explain why the distribution of coverage across issues is stable and keeps attention relatively steady at a high or at a low level (Boydstun, Hardy, & Walgrave, 2014).

The stability in the way news is made, however, does not imply that issue coverage is immune to change. In particular, external and unexpected "key events" can spark a process of media co-orientation leading to what has been called a *media hype* (Vasterman, 2005) or *media storm* (Boydstun et al., 2014). These key events, such as political scandals or terrorist attacks, create short-term increases in media coverage and in some cases also temporarily change the way an issue is covered (Kepplinger & Habermeier, 1995; Masini et al., 2017; Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2007). However, the 2015/2016 immigration crisis is expected to be different, as it was composed of multiple successive key events. Therefore, we argue in line with previous work on the financial crisis of 2008, that the migrant crisis can theoretically be seen as "a critical juncture" influencing the deep rooted patterns of migration coverage (Kalogeropoulos,

Svensson, Van Dalen, De Vreese, & Albæk, 2015). The series of events related to migration might not only increase media attention (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Holmes & Castañeda, 2016), but more fundamentally change the routines and underlying values in how journalists cover the issue and who gets to speak.

Immigration in the News

Most studies focusing on immigration news content investigated the framing of immigration and the portrayal of immigrants in the news. These studies established several key frames that on the one hand portray immigrants as innocent victims in need of help, yet on the other hand as intruders that pose a security and cultural threat to the respective host countries (Benson, 2013; Innes, 2010; Van Gorp, 2005). The vast majority of these content analyses conclude that since the 1990s immigration news is increasingly represented in terms of crime, threat and problems (e.g. Bennett, Ter Wal, Lipiński, Fabiszak, & Krzyżanowski, 2013; Mai, 2005; Milioni, Spyridou, & Vadratsikas, 2015). Greussing and Boomgaarden (2017) conducted an automatic content analysis of Austrian newspapers, focusing specifically on the 2015 migrant crisis. They found that particularly in tabloid newspapers, the criminality frame of immigration news was most prevalent. Studies analyzing Belgian, Dutch, and German news found that non-EU migrant groups are more likely to be associated with crime than other actors in the news, even when this is not mirrored per se in crime statistics (Jacobs, Damstra, Boukes, & De Swert, 2018; Ruhrmann, Sommer, & Uhlemann, 2006). The study of Milioni et al. (2015) revealed that 24% of news items in online mainstream media in Cyprus were directed towards news stories concerning immigration-related crime. Despite the fact that several studies found that immigration is not linked to higher crime rates in society, this link seems to implied abundantly in the media, politics and public opinion (e.g. Ousey & Kubrin, 2018).

This study focuses on what topics immigration is linked with most frequently and possible differences between crisis and non-crisis periods. As our study focuses on the aggregate level, we do not study frames in an in-depth manner as many previous studies did before us, but rather look at the broader link between immigration and other issues, in particular crime. Our specific expectation is that immigration will be more often connected to the issue of crime during the migrant crisis, as the general narrative in the European press was found to gradually become more hostile towards refugees and migrants as the crisis evolved and as several European countries (including Belgium) were faced with several terrorist attacks (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017). Kovář (2019) conducted a content analysis of immigration news in Czech and Slovak media in the period 2003-2016 and found that as of 2015, immigration was framed in terms of a security threat more often than in the period before. Moreover, Holzberg, Kolbe, and Zaborowski (2018) found that from the moment German newspapers defined immigration in terms of a "crisis", the focus shifted to the consequences and (dis)advantages of immigration. They found that immigration was increasingly linked to crime (e.g. terrorist attacks) and that the majority of articles during the crisis years constructed refugees as threats. Although these different studies used different operationalizations of frames or viewpoints, they consistently found similar results in the direction of a stronger 'criminalization' of immigration news.

H1. In crisis years, immigration will be linked to crime more often compared to routine news periods.

The increased focus on crime could be a consequence of the crisis strengthening the negative nature of news production. Negativity, violence and conflict are deep-rooted news values and immigration news easily lends itself to be reported in terms of violence, drama and conflict

(Cottle, 2000). However, we expect there to be differences between commercial and public service broadcasters because of their different nature and logic (Van den Bulck and Broos, 2011). Being publicly funded, public service broadcasting is expected to fulfil a democratic role in society and therefore adopts a public logic, characterized by public value, quality and a focus on strengthening diversity. Commercial broadcasters, on the other hand, have a market-oriented logic and are characterized by audience maximization; i.e. the news focuses more on "what is of interest" instead of "what matters" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 277). Commercial news is expected to stress more sensational news features than public television news (Esser, 1999; Hendriks Vettehen, Nuijten, & Beentjes, 2005) and therefore include more stories about crime and violence. In line with its public interest goal, public television news is anticipated to depict immigrants more positively by providing background and context, and by emphasizing the added value of immigration for society (Van den Bulck & Broos, 2011). Jacobs, Meeusen, and d'Haenens (2016) focused specifically on immigration television news in Flanders and found that there were more signs of sensationalism and tabloidization on the commercial broadcaster than on the public service broadcaster regarding immigration news. We thus expect that in general, immigration will be covered more positively on the public service broadcaster and consequently will be linked less to crime.

H2. Immigration will be linked to crime more often on the commercial broadcaster compared to the public service broadcaster.

Previous research on the Flemish broadcasters found that in their general news coverage and immigration news specifically, the coverage on the broadcasters follows similar trends and reacts in similar manners to events, i.e. parallel increases or decreases in sources quoted and issue attention (Beckers & Van Aelst, 2018; Jacobs & Hooghe, 2015). So, often the broadcasters

"imitate" each other during routine news periods. However, as mentioned above, crises might sometimes (temporarily) change the way in which an issue is covered. Previous research found that during key events media often tend to imitate each other (Kitzinger & Reilly, 1997; Vasterman, 2005). However, in-depth interviews with journalists indicate that if an event is exceptionally large journalists were found to be focused more on their own outlet and not imitate others (Hardy, 2018). It might thus be that because the migration crisis consists of multiple successive key events over a longer period of time, the broadcasters make different decisions and decide to report the news events differently, as they have time and space to place their own emphases. However, no research has ever studied this, which is why we formulate a research question:

Q1: Has the crisis influenced the difference between the commercial and public service broadcaster in their news coverage?

Who Gets to Speak in Immigration Coverage?

The actors that get to speak in the news are often studied in the context of content diversity. Several studies already have shown that a larger variety of actors in the news results in a greater variety of views expressed. Or put differently, that actor and viewpoint diversity are positively correlated (e.g. Gans, 2011; Masini et al., 2017; Sheafer & Wolfsfeld, 2009), which makes it relevant to focus on the actors that get a voice in the news. Studying actors in the news is also important from a perspective of power. Actors with regular access to the news media receive the power to help shape the interpretation and meaning of events (Carlson, 2009; Lawrence, 2000).

Multiple studies across time and place have shown that elite actors, and politicians in particular, dominate the news (e.g. Grabe, Zhou, & Barnett, 1999; Tiffen et al., 2014). There is little reason to believe this will be any different in immigration news. Indeed, several studies

focusing on immigration news find that immigrants' voices are a minority compared to those of politicians. The study of Chouliaraki and Zaborowski (2017), comparing newspaper coverage on key moments in the 2015 migrant crisis in eight countries found that politicians played the most prominent role. Quotes from migrants or refugees were present in merely 17% of the sample, compared to 66% of politicians' quotes. Benson and Wood (2015) found that political and governmental actors in US, Norwegian and French media were the leading sources in the immigration debate, while (unauthorized) immigrants only played a minor role. The study of Masini et al. (2017) on immigration print news across four countries (Belgium, UK, Italy and Germany) in the period 2013-2014 came to similar results. In all countries, politicians made out more than half of the quoted or paraphrased actors, while immigrants made out less than ten percent.

However, all these studies used rather limited samples of news items to study actors in immigration news. Our study comprises the entire population of immigration news items from television news over a long period, namely 2003-2017. We will focus specifically on immigrants' opportunities to speak in the news as they are often the subject of immigration news and because they are found to typically have less "power" to make it into the news. Our goal is to get a fuller insight into the prevalence of speaking actors in immigration news over the years, both in times of crisis and during periods when the issue is less salient. It might be that during the crisis years, when there is an increase in the number of refugees in the country or when immigration becomes more salient in the heads of audiences, more citizens and immigrants specifically get the opportunity to have their say (Lawrence, 2000).

H3: In crisis years, citizens speak in television news more often as compared to routine news periods.

Despite the fact that public service broadcasters across the world have to compete more heavily for audiences, most studies still find differences between commercial and public service broadcasters in the actors they quote, such as a higher amount of layman's quotes on the commercial broadcaster in the Netherlands (Hendriks Vettehen et al., 2005) and Belgium (Beckers, Walgrave, & Van den Bulck, 2018). Soroka et al. (2013) showed that public service broadcasters generally tend to report more hard news than the commercial newscasts in their markets and as a consequence also give a more prominent place to political elites. Other studies, however, did not find large differences between the two types of news broadcasters regarding the prevalence of elite or citizen actors (e.g. Lunt 2009; Hopmann and Shehata 2011). Focusing specifically on immigration news, Jacobs et al. (2016) showed that on the commercial broadcaster, more concrete and personalized events were used to illustrate the news items, which might result in more focus on citizens on the commercial broadcaster, and immigrants specifically. However, they only focused on the period until 2013, and did not study differences that might emerge between broadcasters in crisis times. As argued above, it might be that during the crisis years the two broadcasters make different choices regarding their news coverage.

H4: On the commercial broadcaster, citizens speak in television news more often than on the public service broadcaster

Q2: Has the crisis influenced the difference between the commercial and public service broadcaster in the actors they quote?

Lastly, we make a distinction between immigration news linked to crime and other immigration news. Previous research found that crime stories typically come with an elite focus: the quoted actors are almost exclusively police or public officials (Chibnall, 2013; Milioni et al., 2015). We will consequently focus specifically on the relationship between immigration and crime in the news and the consequences thereof on speaking actors. Based on a content

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analysis of newspapers in eight countries, Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017) showed that when negative consequences of the migrant crisis appeared most in a news period, immigrants got less opportunities to speak for themselves. Based on these existing studies, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H5. More attention for crime-related immigration news leads to less immigrants as speaking actors in the news

Method

A longitudinal content analysis is used to study the evolution and trends in actors in immigration television news. The population dataset contains all news items on immigration in the period 2003-2017 in Flanders, the largest, Dutch-speaking Northern part of Belgium. News items were selected from the "Electronic News Archive", an archive containing all 7 pm newscasts from the two main Flemish broadcasters[2].

Flanders is an interesting case to study as it has a public service broadcaster (*Eén*) with a central position in the media landscape, and only one commercial broadcaster (*VTM*) with a primetime news program. Both news bulletins are popular and compete for audiences. In 2017, the 7 pm news broadcasts from the two main broadcasters had an average audience share of around eighty percent during prime time (CIM 2017). We focused on television news as it is still the main source of information for most people and as actors get the opportunity to speak for themselves.

The newscasts were coded on a daily base by on average twelve coders. The separate sports section and weather forecasts were left out of the analyses, all other news items were included. For every news item, the date, duration, medium and issue topic were coded. Every news item could receive up to three issue codes that were based on a list of specific issues (Appendix A). News items were coded as belonging to the issue of immigration if they covered

topics such as refugees, integration and asylum seekers (Examples are news items about refugee centers, asylum quota, regularization, Belgian migration policy). Intercoder reliability for the issue immigration was KALPHA = 0.79. We are aware that this broad issue category goes beyond the problem of refugees, which was a central topic during the crisis. However, we believe that the migrant crisis was closely related to other aspects of immigration policy and many actors, in particular those opposing immigration, linked claims about refugees with issues such as integration, religion and identity politics (e.g. Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007). Moreover, we are interested in the broader coverage of immigration in the news over a longer period of time and want to compare between the crisis and the non-crisis period. Lastly, an item was coded as belonging to the issue of "crime" when it was related to crime in a broad sense: e.g. fights, vandalism, rape, robbery, pickpocketing, but also terrorist attacks and police actions related to human trafficking and illegal refugees.

4183 news items covered immigration in the period 2003-2017, containing 7056 speaking actors. Public service broadcaster *Eén* covered immigration more frequently (N = 2350) than commercial broadcaster *VTM* (N = 1833). News items on migration were on average longer in seconds on *Eén* ($M = 99.37$; $SD = 48.60$) compared to *VTM* ($M = 91.21$, $SD = 51.31$; $t(4181) = 5.257$, $p < 0.001$). During the years 2015, 2016 and 2017, news items become longer on the public service broadcaster compared to the period before, but not on the commercial broadcaster ($F(7, 4175) = 11.53$, $p < 0.001$). The number of news items on immigration was lowest in 2014 (N = 139), while it was highest in 2015 (N = 698) and 2016 (N = 662).

Furthermore, all actors present in the news items were coded. The actors were classified into four aggregate actor categories to focus on more general trends over time: governmental and political sources, professionals and experts, civil society organizations and citizens (Figure 1, based on Authors, 2018). Next, all speaking actors were coded into one of thirteen functional actor categories relevant for immigration news to get a more detailed understanding of the

actors present. We do not distinguish between refugees and other types of immigrants in our research, because it was often difficult to distinguish between the two and know the specific role of an actor, as "refugee" and "(im)migrant" are often used interchangeably. Note that actors were only coded as "immigrants" when they were interviewed in that role, so not when somebody of an ethnic-cultural minority was cited as an eyewitness or victim of a car accident, for example. Krippendorff's alpha was calculated for five percent of the news items and resulted in a KALPHA = 0.92 for the 13-category actor variable.

[Figure 1 around here]

Before moving on to the results section, we first look whether the migrant crisis had an impact on the amount of news coverage. Figure 2 displays the evolution of the share of news broadcasts covering the topic of immigration on the public and commercial broadcaster in the period 2003-2017. Across the years, the public service broadcaster paid almost consistently more attention to the topic than the commercial broadcaster. However, the differences are limited and the trends on both broadcasters are remarkably similar. There does seem to be a difference between the period before and during the migrant crisis. As of 2015, the amount of news items paying attention to the topic of immigration doubled. This finding is in line with research in other countries concluding that there is an exponential rise in immigration coverage as of 2015 because of the European migrant crisis (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017). The maximum was eight items on immigration in one day on the public service broadcaster on September 5, 2015, which was at the height of the migration crisis, in the aftermath of some key events such as the publication of the photograph of the drowned child Alan Kurdi that was retweeted over 30,000 times (e.g. Goodman, Sirriyeh, & McMahon, 2017).

In 2017, the situation seems to normalize itself slightly, although the attention for immigration is still higher than the period before 2015.

[Figure 2 around here]

Results

First, we investigate the topics related to immigration news. This way, we get a better understanding of how immigration is covered in the news and whether there are changes before and during the crisis years. Based on the literature, we are specifically interested in how immigration was linked to crime within the different periods. Table 1 shows the top ten related news topics for the period 2003 to 2017 for the two broadcasters. The percentages are rather low, as in 35% of the news items immigration is covered as such, without others topic codes (e.g. news items on immigration statistics or on the administrative burdens related to providing shelter for refugees). Overall, the issue of immigration is linked to a diverse set of other issues. If immigration is linked to a subissue, it is connected to crime most often on both broadcasters, followed by politics and civil rights.

[Table 1 around here]

In this study, we are mainly interested in crime-related immigration news and how this influences speaking actors in the news. Examples of immigration news items linked to crime are "the government is setting up a project to send illegal sneak thiefs back to their country as soon as possible" (*VTM*, 02/01/2015), "The increase in refugees in Calais is a threat for truck drivers in terms of crime" (*Eén*, 24/08/2016). As the number of news items on immigration fluctuates over the years, the number of crime-related news items does too, going from a minimum of eight it 2014 until 115 in 2016.Our expectation that the commercial broadcaster would more frequently discuss immigration and crime together is also confirmed. On the

commercial broadcaster 17% of immigration items are linked to crime, while on the public broadcaster this is only 10%; $t(3452) = -6.55, p < 0.001$.

Table 2 shows a regression analysis with crime-related immigration news as dependent variable to test our hypotheses in a more systematic manner. In general, across the years, migration is criminalized more on the commercial broadcaster than on the public service broadcaster. In the crisis year 2015, specifically, the two broadcasters seem to make a different choice. While on the commercial broadcaster, the share of crime-related immigration news increases, it remains largely constant and even slightly decreases on the public service broadcaster. For 2016 and 2017, the interaction effects are not significant, so the broadcasters become more alike again. Our first hypothesis is thus only confirmed for one of the two broadcasters.

[Table 2 around here]

Next to looking at the coverage of immigration in the news, we study the actors that get to speak in it. Before trying to explain the presence of different actor types in the news, we first explore differences between broadcasters and trends over time. To compare the prevalence of actors in immigration news over time, we have applied the aggregate fourfold classification that can be found in the method section. In Figure 3, the results for polical actors and citizens are displayed. The presence of civil society actors and professionals and experts was relatively stable around 10% across the years for both broadcasters and consequently left out of the visualization for reasons of clarity.

[Figure 3 around here]

Although across issues the public service broadcaster focuses more on political actors, for immigration news it is the commercial broadcaster that focuses more on political elites at the

cost of the representation of citizens. In immigration news, the public service broadcaster pays significantly more attention to citizens in the period 2003-2013 than the commercial broadcaster ($F(1,6464) = 7.18$, $p < .01$). The share of political actors increases for commercial broadcaster *VTM*, but decreases slightly for public broadcaster *Eén* in this period. As of 2014, the broadcasters seem to make different decisions of how to cover immigration. In this year, the share of political sources on the commercial broadcaster rises until 66%, while at the public broadcaster only 28% of the speaking sources were political actors. In contrast to the often-found general trend of a more human-interest approach of the commercial broadcaster (e.g. Hendriks Vettehen et al., 2005), it is the public service broadcaster that shapes immigration news more through ordinary citizens, i.e. 56% of the speaking sources. However, the prominence of citizens gradually decreased again, and by 2017 the share of political actors is again larger than the share of citizens. On the commercial broadcaster, the trend of more political actors and less citizens seems to carry on.

The remarkable difference in how ordinary citizens versus political elites are covered requires more attention. Table 3 shows the more specific functional actor categories for both broadcasters in the period before the migrant crisis (2003-2014) and the years during and after the crisis (2015-2017). Here, some major changes can be seen between the time periods. On the commercial broadcaster, the share of politicians quoted has doubled, a trend that remains stable from 2015-2017. On the public service broadcaster, no significant difference is found in the presence of political and governmental actors between the period before or during the crisis years.

The other most significant changes over time relate to immigrants specifically. In 2015 and 2016, immigrants were quoted almost twice as often compared to the period before the crisis on the public service broadcaster. In 2017, the number decreases again and is not significantly different from the period before the crisis, so the situation seems to be returning

to the pre-crisis situation. No difference can be found for immigrants on the commercial broadcaster between the period before the crisis and the crisis years 2015 and 2016. Moreover, in 2017, when the height of the crisis was over and attention for immigration decreases, the share of migrants of speaking actors even decreases on the commercial broadcaster.

Finally, we also note a decline during the crisis years in the presence of business professionals and civil society organizations not directly related to immigration. This might be due to the fact that the economic dimension of the migrant crisis was hardly discussed in the news. The share of civil society organizations linked to migration was low before the crisis but increased as of 2015 on the public service broadcaster. Overall their presence remains limited on both broadcasters.

We also investigate the average speaking time (in seconds) of the different aggregate actor categories. Here we find that it are especially citizens that get on average significantly less speaking time (M = 13.57, SD = 10.59) compared to political actors (M = 22.01, SD = 16.85), professionals & experts (M = 22.22, SD = 18.91) and civil society organizations (M = 19.89, SD = 11.05); F(3,7051) = 131.45, p < 0.001. There are no differences in speaking time between the commercial and the public service broadcaster, and no significant changes between the different time periods.

[Table 3 around here]

To investigate which factors determine which actors appear in immigration news as speaking actors, we analyze the influence of media type and crisis years on speaking actors. Moreover, we zoom in on the relationship between crime-related immigration news and the actors that get the opportunity to have their say. The broad actor categories "political and governmental actors" and "citizens" are used as dependent variables. In addition, we also focus on immigrants in the news as a subcategory of citizens, as they are often the subject of immigration news and a

weaker group in society. Table 3 already indicated that it is especially for this category that changes over time seem to occur and broadcasters seem to make different choices. Table 4 presents the results of the logistic regressions with the three different actor dummies as dependent variables.

The regression analyses confirm some of our earlier descriptive findings. In crisis years, the share of political actors on the commercial broadcaster increases, while the share of citizens and immigrants specifically decreases (and vice versa for the public service broadcaster). This is shown by the significant interaction effects between the crisis years and medium. This effect also remains in 2017. Our third hypothesis, stating that the crisis would lead to more active citizens in the news, is consequently rejected for the commercial broadcaster, but confirmed for the public broadcaster.

We also find effects for news item duration. The longer the news item, the higher the chance that citizens in general and immigrants specifically are allowed to speak in a news item. An opposite effect was found for politicians, their chance to speak in a news item decreases as news items become longer. This might be caused by the fact that longer news items provide more background coverage and have a higher chance to have a human interest focus.

Lastly, the analysis shows that there is a relationship between issue topic and actor types. In particular, if immigration is linked to crime, immigrants are less present as speaking actors compared to other immigration news. Contrarily, political actors have a higher chance to appear in news about crime. These results confirm our fifth hypothesis: more attention for crime-related immigration news leads to less immigrants as speaking actors in the news.

[Table 4 around here]

Conclusion & Discussion

The goal of this study was to gain a systematic insight in the coverage of immigration in the news in the past decade, with a specific focus on the migrant crisis that struck the European continent as of 2015. Although a relatively large body of research focuses on immigration, not many studies exist focusing on the influence of crisis versus routine periods on the issues and the actors quoted in the news. Moreover, our study comprised all news items on migration in Flanders in the period 2003-2017, enabling us to find systematic patterns.

Our data show that until 2014, there were few changes over time, and the differences between the public service and commercial broadcaster were not outspoken. However, in 2015 immigration suddenly became a hot topic because of the migrant crisis, which was also reflected in Flemish news coverage. Attention for the topic of immigration almost doubled during the crisis years. Our study identified three effects of the crisis on immigration news.

First, we show an effect of the crisis on the issues related to immigration. Previous research found that immigration news is often covered with a focus on crime and threat (Bennett et al., 2013; Mai, 2005; Milioni et al., 2015). Indeed, also in Flemish newscasts immigration is linked to crime frequently—most notably on the commercial broadcaster, even though previous studies concluded that there is no link between an increase in immigration and crime in real life (e.g. Ousey & Kubrin, 2018). During the European migrant crisis, the public service and commercial broadcaster seem to make different choices. While the share of crime-related immigration news decreased on the former, it increased significantly on the commercial broadcaster in 2015, which was in line with our expectation.

Second, the migrant crisis had an impact on the distribution of actors that get to speak in immigration news. The most outspoken differences were found for ordinary citizens and politicians, which were also the actors competing most for space in immigration news. Again, the crisis had not one general, but rather opposing effects on each broadcaster. On the

commercial broadcaster, the share of political actors increased significantly during the crisis period, while the relative share of citizen actors (both immigrants and other citizens) decreased. An opposite trend was found for the public service broadcaster. This finding suggests that both broadcasters choose a different strategy to cover the issue during a crisis period. The commercial broadcaster opted to rather "politicize" or "institutionalize" the issue giving a more prominent voice to politicians. The public broadcaster seems to have opted for a "human interest approach" with longer stories where immigrants were allowed to speak. This different approach is remarkable as it goes against the general idea of the public broadcaster favoring a more hard news approach with ample room for official sources, while the commercial broadcaster is seen as the one that opts more often for a softer approach with personal, human interest stories and more space for ordinary citizens. We believe these different strategies are also not without consequences on how the audience perceived and interpreted the news. The actors that get a voice in the news gain some sort of power over the news item. Or at least, they can introduce a more personal narrative that might affect how news consumers perceive immigrants (e.g. Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009). It seems that the public broadcaster's decision to treat the migrant crisis as a human crisis had an impact on who was allowed to speak in the news and potentially also on how their viewers made sense of it.

Third, our study shows that the presence of (sub)issues and actors is connected. More concretely, we find that immigrants are quoted less often when immigration is linked to crime. It is also not the case that civil society organizations speak on their behalf here. So, when immigration is portrayed in a probably negative fashion (i.e. linked to crimes committed by immigrants or violent behavior and threats), immigrants get fewer opportunities to present their point of view in the news. This link between criminalized immigration news and the presence (or rather absence) of immigrants might be consequential, as media effects research almost consistently found that the coverage of immigration from a crime perspective has a negative

influence on public opinion (e.g. Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Jacobs et al., 2016; Schemer, 2012). Not giving a voice to individual immigrants but talking about them in general terms, for instance, might strengthen anti-immigrant attitudes.

It thus seems that the migration crisis was a "critical juncture" influencing the deep rooted news routines, as was also found in previous studies focusing on other crises in the news (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2015). The crisis and related increase in media coverage led to changes in the way in which the broadcasters covered the events. This is in line with Boydstun (2013), who argues that once a "storm" or crisis gets the newsroom's attention—and resources have been assigned to the topic, the media have incentives to shift from "alarm" to "patrol" mode. In patrol mode, newsrooms not only follow daily developments of the events more closely, but also dig in and provide more substantial coverage on the issue. Our study seems to suggest that the public broadcaster went into patrol mode, providing longer news items in which more diverse and "underdog" sources were given a voice. The commercial broadcaster chose for a more traditional top-down interpretation of the events. What the rationale was behind these diverging choices is not clear. Fact is that the public broadcaster has more resources to support a "patrol mode" style of coverage compared to the commercial broadcaster.

We also want to acknowledge some of the shortcomings of this study. Because of the large population dataset, our content analysis focused on general trends and on the presence or absence of specific speaking actors and issues in the news. However, we did not study what the speaking actors said or what the exact framing of the news items was. Our goal to conduct a large-scale systematic content analysis meant that more detailed coding was not viable. Although our study included data on 2017, when immigration rates dropped again, it remains too early to determine to what extent journalists return to their traditional way of covering immigration. A final limitation is that our study comprises only one media system, i.e. the

Flemish. However, as Flanders has a media system with a strong and popular public service and commercial broadcaster, it made it a suitable case to study different choices.

Despite the limitations, we believe several findings transcend this case study. The idea that news coverage is relatively stable over time, but that a profound crisis can (temporally) change how an issue is covered is relevant beyond immigration and deserves further research (See also: Kepplinger, Köhler, & Post, 2015). In addition our study suggests that the migrant crisis forced journalists and editors-in-chief to make specific choices about how to cover immigration and who gets to shape the news coverage. These choices are not neutral and might influence how citizens perceive an issue. We hope these insights will inspire further studies to dig deeper and study the effects of crises in other contexts and for other issues.

Notes

1. In 2015 and 2016, respectively 1,322,825 and 1,259,955 first time asylum applicants arrived in the EU28 countries, more than double compared to the years before. In 2017, the number decreased again until 712,235 (Eurostat, 2018).

2. The full codebook can be accessed through http://www.steunpuntmedia.be/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Codeboek-TV-Nieuwsarchief.pdf.

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Appendix A. List of issue codes

1. Political organization
2. Crime & Justice
3. Human rights
4. Immigration, integration and refugees
5. Finance
6. Economy
7. Consumer affairs
8. Labor
9. Social affairs
10. Demography
11. Nature & environment
12. Energy
13. Agriculture
14. Culture & entertainment
15. Education
16. Science
17. Tourism
18. Religion
19. Media
20. Telecommunications
21. International organizations
22. Europe
23. War & peace
24. International contacts and relationships
25. Disasters
26. Sports
27. Celebrity
28. Royalty

Table 1. Top ten subissues related to immigration news (N = 4183)

	Public service broadcaster	Commercial broadcaster
	(*Eén*)	(*VTM*)
Crime	10.3%	17.4%
Politics	8.0%	8.2%
Civil Rights	7.0%	6.5%
Europe	6.0%	4.6%
Social Affairs	4.6%	3.9%
War & Peace	4.4%	3.2%
Religion	2.9%	1.8%
Labor	2.6%	1.8%
Disasters	1.7%	1.9%
Economy & Finance	1.6%	1.9%
No Subissue	36.6%	33.2%

Table 2. Logistic regression with link between immigration and crime as dependent variable

	B (SE)	Exp(B)
Model I		
Medium (VTM)	0.548*** (0.92)	1.793
Dummy 2015	-0.468** (0.15)	0.626
Dummy 2016	0.329** (0.12)	1.389
Dummy 2017	0.433** (0.15)	1.541
Model II		
Medium (VTM)	0.442*** (0.12)	1.555
Dummy 2015	-1.824** (0.56)	0.161
Dummy 2016	-0.111 (0.41)	0.895
Dummy 2017	0.496 (0.45)	1.598
Medium * 2015	0.846** (0.32)	2.331
Medium * 2016	0.284 (0.25)	1.328
medium * 2017	-0.016 (0.27)	0.984

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$
Nagelkerke R^2 model I: 0.0.34
Nagelkerke R^2 model II: 0.037

Table 3. Prevalence of issue-specific actor types in news on immigration (N = 7056)

	VRT				VTM			
	2003-2014	2015	2016	2017	2003-2014	2015	2016	2017
Political and governmental actors								
Politicians	31.1%	30.2%	34.2%	31.5%	25.4%	48.8%	47.4%	49.4%
Government institutions	5.6%	4.8%	2.1%	4.8%	6.5%	2.7%	2.7%	3.9%
Law enforcement & emergency agencies	4.0%	2.7%	3.2%	3.6%	7.4%	5.1%	6.8%	9.4%
Professionals and Experts								
Media & journalists	0.9%	0.2%	0.0%	0.6%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
Business professionals	7.0%	3.8%	4.1%	5.8%	9.8%	2.4%	6.1%	7.0%
Experts & academics	2.5%	1.1%	2.9%	2.3%	1.7%	0.5%	1.2%	1.5%
Celebrities	1.1%	1.5%	0.8%	1.1%	1.0%	0.5%	1.5%	2.7%
Civil society actors								
Civil soc migrants	0.9%	2.8%	4.2%	1.9%	0.1%	0.5%	1.2%	1.0%
Civil soc other	10.1%	7.7%	5.7%	8.8%	9.6%	6.4%	4.4%	4.8%
Citizens								
Vox pops	6.4%	3.8%	3.8%	5.4%	4.7%	1.3%	1.7%	2.2%
Immigrants (incl. refugees)	14.6%	25.9%	26.4%	19.1%	16.2%	19.5%	14.9%	10.4%
Protesters	4.1%	1.8%	2.3%	3.3%	2.5%	0.3%	2.4%	2.4%
Other citizens	11.5%	13.8%	10.5%	11.8%	14.5%	12.0%	9.5%	4.8%

Table 4. Logistic regression analyses with actor dummies as dependent variables

	Political Actors		Citizens		Immigrants	
	B (SE)	Odds	B (SE)	Odds	B (SE)	Odds
Model I						
Medium (VTM)	0.253*** (0.05)	1.288	-0.184** (0.05)	0.832	-0.156* (0.07)	0.856
News item duration	-0.007*** (0.00)	0.993	0.008*** (0.01)	1.008	0.007*** (0.00)	1.007
Link to crime (=1)	0.204** (0.08)	1.226	-0.455*** (0.0)	0.635	-0.473** (0.13)	0.623
Dummy 2015	0.215** (0.08)	1.24	.0116 (0.08)	1.123	0.561*** (0.10)	1.753
Dummy 2016	0.313*** (0.07)	1.368	-0.011 (0.08)	0.989	0.463*** (0.09)	1.588
Dummy 2017	0.590*** (0.08)	1.805	-0.540*** (0.09)	0.583	-0.180 (0.11)	0.836
Model II						
Medium (VTM)	-0.069 (0.07)	0.933	0.077 (0.07)	1.080	0.143 (0.09)	1.153
News item duration	-0.007 ***(0.00)	0.993	0.008*** (0.0)	1.008	0.007*** (0.00)	1.007
Link to crime (=1)	0.164 (0.08)	1.178	-0.420*** (0.09)	0.657	-0.435** (0.12)	0.647
Dummy 2015	-1.357*** (0.25)	0.257	1.328*** (0.26)	3.775	1.524*** (0.30)	4.591
Dummy 2016	-0.84*** (0.25)	0.432	0.945*** (0.23)	2.573	1.649*** (0.28)	5.268
Dummy 2017	-0.329 (0.25)	0.719	0.357 (0.67)	1.428	0.589 (0.35)	1.803
Medium * 2015	1.159*** (0.18)	3.188	-0.914*** (0.19)	0.401	-0.723*** (0.22)	0.485
Medium * 2016	0.824*** (0.15)	2.279	-0.695*** (0.16)	0.499	-0.891* (0.20)	0.416
Medium * 2017	0.635*** (0.16)	1.886	-0.628*** (0.18)	0.534	-0.542*** (0.18)	0.581

Nagelkerke R² Model I = 0.038 Nagelkerke R² Model I = 0.043 Nagelkerke R² Model I = 0.038
Nagelkerke R² Model II = 0.052 Nagelkerke R² Model II = 0.052 Nagelkerke R² Model II = 0.045

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Functional actor classification for news on immigration

Figure 2. Percentage of news items covering the topic of immigration on public service broadcaster *Eén* and commercial broadcaster *VTM*

Figure 3. Evolution of political actors and citizens on *Eén* and *VTM* (N = 5638)