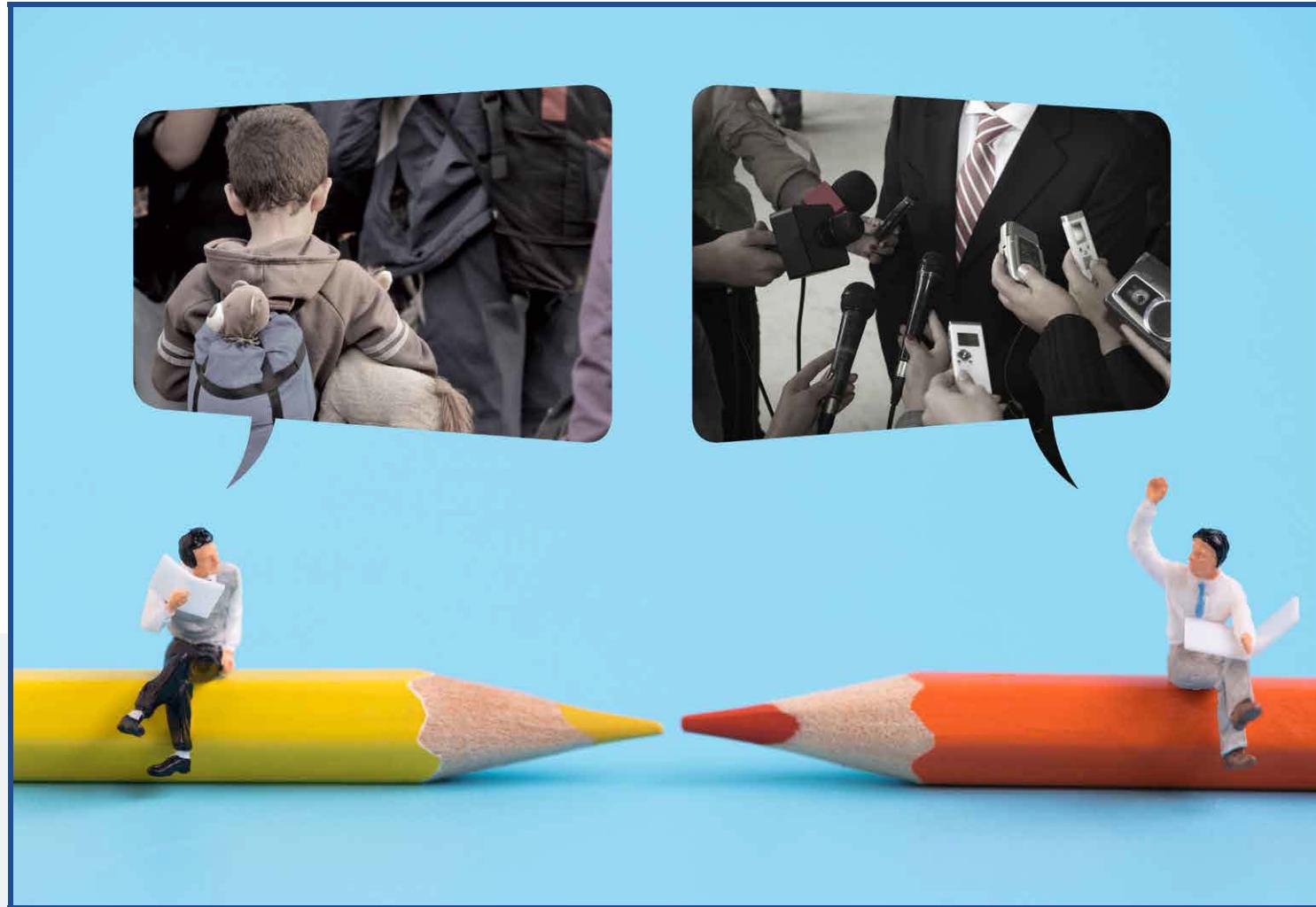


Susanne Fengler/Marcus Kreutler



# Migration coverage in Europe's media

A comparative analysis of coverage in 17 countries

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## Summary

This study analyzes mass media coverage of migrants and refugees in 17 countries and involves agenda-setting print or online media outlets<sup>1</sup> from 16 European nations and the United States of America. Eight of these media outlets were selected for a pre-study, including all articles published between August 2015 and January 2016 as well as between October 2017 and March 2018. Based on this pre-study, six exemplary study weeks were selected, comprising periods of prominent increase in coverage.

Key results of the study are:

1. Across countries, the development of media outlets' coverage was largely similar. Thus, migrants and refugees moved onto the public agenda more or less simultaneously across countries. Coverage also decreased over time in a similar pattern.
2. The pre-study found many more articles for the first period of the analysis (2015/16) as compared to the second period of analysis (2017/18). Thus, the salience of the topic decreased noticeably over time across media outlets and countries.
3. However, the intensity of coverage was remarkably different between countries. Hungary's media outlets (1500 articles) and Germany's media outlets (1000 articles) during the six weeks of analysis do stand out. The
- average number of articles published per outlet in the 17 countries was no more than 200 articles.
4. Migrants and refugees are under-represented in media outlets' coverage. They are depicted mainly as large groups and rarely as individuals. Within this group, male migrants and refugees are over-represented in coverage. A low share of migrants and refugees is quoted in the articles.
5. The study finds distinctive differences in the structure and content of coverage between the study countries, but also among the two media outlets analyzed per country. A domestic perspective contrasts with the perception of migrants and refugees as rare foreign phenomena. While some media outlets emphasize positive aspects, others highlight problems.
6. Content and tone of the coverage can be differentiated by both the geographical region and – if applicable – the political position of the media outlets. While Eastern European outlets in general tend to take a more critical approach towards migrants and refugees, there are often clear differences between each country's pair of analysed media outlets. Readers, depending on their choice of media outlets, are confronted with differing topics and opinions on migrants and refugees.

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<sup>1</sup> In this report the word 'media', on its own, is the generic term for mass media. The words 'media outlets' or 'outlets' refers to businesses that disseminate news for profit.

## 1 Introduction

The ‘refugee crisis’ of the mid-2010s has had a deep impact on public debates and political landscapes across Europe. Pictures of refugees from the Syrian civil war making their way towards Europe on foot became iconic images in 2015, as well as the fences erected at Hungary’s borders. Angela Merkel’s decision to accept an unlimited number of refugees at the peak of the crisis was followed by a years-long political quarrel in the EU about the course of its asylum policy. In the months and years after August 2015, citizens across Europe witnessed an outstanding wave of help and support for migrants and refugees, as well as sharp protests and the rise of populist parties in many countries, and also the incidents of New Year’s Eve 2015 in Cologne.

Within the European Union, a consolidated migrant and refugee policy is still out of reach. This may also be due to the varied histories of migrants and refugees across the EU member countries. While the former colonial powers France and the UK have decades-long experience of being destination countries, the Mediterranean countries like Italy, Spain and Greece have long been the countries of origin of migration until a few years ago, when they began to be used as transit and destinations countries for migrants from the Middle East and Africa. Also countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have been, and still are, countries of origin for many intra-EU migrants. Yet, public debates in the CEE still resonate with the experience of the Soviet era, and the loss of national sovereignty.



### “Refugee” and “Migrant”: Definitions

UNHCR (2018) argues for a clear separation of the terms “refugee” and “migrant” – those who are refugees cannot be migrants; those who are migrants cannot be refugees. In contrast, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the EU use a wider definition of the term migrant, which is explicitly independent from the motives to leave home (IOM 2019a: 130; European Commission 2018a: 252). According to their definitions, all refugees would be considered as migrants as well; but only a share of the migrants could be termed refugees, with specific rights as well (see for the historical development also Long 2013). However, journalists are frequently confronted with the problem that they have to report on groups of individuals with different motives, or they do not have the chance to verify information about the countries of origin and the motives available to them. Therefore, as a first step, our analysis distinguishes between articles with and without clear classifications into one of groups. As a second step, we selected articles on refugees protected under the Geneva convention, and those granted the same privileges, and also articles on migrants without protected status.

Which role did the media outlets in Europe play in the refugee crisis? Are there similar deba-

tes about migrants and refugees across Europe, can we find hints for a ‘European public sphere’ even though EU politicians continue to disagree – or is coverage dominated by the national perspective? How are migrants and refugees covered in destination versus transit countries? Do have traditional ‘origin countries’ also a different perspective on the recent phenomena of migrants and refugees?

This study aims to answer these questions for a substantial number of European countries in Western and Eastern Europe. The study was conducted by members of the European Journalism Observatory (EJO).



**The European Journalism Observatory (EJO)**, a network of 12 independent non-profit media research institutes, aims to bridge journalism research and practice in Europe, and to foster professionalism and press freedom.

#### **Mission**

- Observe media and journalism research, trends in the media industries, and best practices in journalism.
- Build bridges among journalism cultures, particularly in Europe, its neighboring countries and the United States.

- Promote professionalism in journalism by reducing the gap between communication sciences and media practice.
  - Reduce cultural barriers, providing accessible, multi-lingual media news and analysis to busy researchers and practitioners.
- 

The European Journalism Observatory promotes dialogue between media researchers and practitioners and brings the results of media research to the people who deal with and work in the media. The EJO aims to improve the quality of journalism, contribute to a richer understanding of media, and to foster press freedom and media accountability.

The consortium was complemented by researchers associated with the European Journalism Observatory or with the Erich Brost Institute for International Journalism at Technical University Dortmund. The researchers and institutions involved in this study are listed in Table 1.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review, summarizing recent studies on the coverage of migrants and refugees with a focus on comparative studies. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. Chapter 5 presents a discussion and summary.

**Table 1****Research Consortium**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Researchers</b>
Albania	Dr. Rrapo Zguri, University Tirana
Czech Republic	Dr. Filip Lab, Charles University Prague Sandra Štefaniková, Charles University Prague
Germany (plus coding of material for France and UK)	Prof. Dr. Susanne Fengler, TU Dortmund Marcus Kreutler, TU Dortmund Johanna Mack, TU Dortmund Lisa Oppermann, TU Dortmund
Greece	Dr. Dimitris Skleparis, ELIAMEP Konstantinos Vlachopoulos
Hungary	Dr. Gabor Polyak, University Pécs Eszter Katus, Mertek Media Monitor
Italy	Dr. Sergio Splendore, Università degli Studi di Milano
Poland	Dr. Michal Kus, University Wroclaw Daria Gigola, University Wroclaw Dr. Adam Szynol, University Wroclaw
Portugal	Dr. Ana Pinto Martinho, ISCTE – University Institute, Lisbon Décio Telo, ISCTE – University Institute, Lisbon
Romania	Prof. Dr. Raluca Radu, University Bucharest Denisa Kovacs, University Bucharest Antonia Matei, University Bucharest
Russia (plus material from Belarus)	Prof. Dr. Svetlana Bodrunova, University St. Petersburg Dr. Anna Litvinenko, Freie University Berlin
Spain	Prof. Dr. Dimitrina J. Semova, University Complutense, Madrid Carlos Rodríguez Pérez, University Complutense, Madrid Eva Perez Vara, University Complutense, Madrid Nastaran Asadi, University Complutense, Madrid
Switzerland	Georgia Ertz, Università della Svizzera Italiana
Ukraine	Halyna Budivska, Mohyla Academy of the National University of Kyiv
USA	Prof. Dr. Scott Maier, University Oregon Kaitlin C. Bane, University Oregon

## 2 Literature Review

Mass communication and political science have for long argued that the lack of a “European public sphere” might have a negative impact on the political process (e.g. Lichtenstein 2012). Only few comparative studies on the coverage of Europe’s ‘refugee crisis’ exist so far. The comprehensive meta-analysis of English-language research on migration coverage since 2000 conducted by Eberl et al. (2018) lists 78 studies, but only 9 of them comprise more than two countries. Horsti (2008) notes that migration and refuge have in the past emerged as issues of global governance, thus the analysis of public debates across national borders seems even more pressing. However, the CEE countries are often left out of comparative analyses. Eberl et al. (2018) found only 19 studies taking media coverage from at least one CEE country into consideration.

Coverage of migrants, refugees and minorities has received more steady attention in mass communication since the 1980ies. Existing studies help us to evaluate the development and status quo of migration coverage across Europe, as they look for “the factors that shape media coverage of migrants and minorities, as well as the effect of that coverage on public attitudes, policy outcomes or social relations” (Bleich et al. 2015: 857).

However, the majority of existing studies has been presented in the “Global North”, and thus mainly from the perspective of destination countries for migrants and refugees. One of the few studies that also takes coverage in African countries into account was a study by Fengler et al. (2017), which suggests that migrants and refugees as topics are far less salient in the origin countries under study, partly due to political and editorial constraints, but also partly because origin countries do not find them newsworthy. The media’s role in the recurring xenophobic incidents against African migrants in South Africa has been analyzed by several studies in that country.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, migrants and refugees have dominated media agendas in both European transit and destination countries since 2015 (Krüger/Zapf-Schramm 2016, Haller 2017, Moore et al. 2018).

Eberl et al. (2019) conducted a computer-assisted analysis of media coverage on migration in seven European countries between 2003 and 2017. The research team showed that coverage has increased both in destination countries and in origin countries of intra-European migrants. They also find distinct patterns of coverage of migration from outside the EU, which is rather negative and focused on issues of securitization as well as on economic aspects.<sup>3</sup>

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2 Authors analyzing print media in South Africa include Danso and McDonald (2001), McDonald and Jacobs (2005) as well as Fine and Bird (2006). They argue that coverage is characterized by lack of balance and hostility against foreigners (see for an overview Smith 2009: 11). Assogoum (2011) has compared coverage on migration from Africa to Europe in Senegalese and German newspapers.

3 Like other computer-assisted analysis, this project has the advantage of being able to include a large number of articles and long periods of study – limited only by access options to electronic archives (Eberl et al. 2019: 22). In contrast, human coders who speak the different languages of publications can better analyse grammatical structures and stylistic peculiarities, as well as read texts in their context, allowing for further interpretation in a more limited number of articles that can be covered (for limitations see Eberl et al. 2019: 67-69, concerning the question of automatic translation 24-27).

Caviedes (2015) has compared coverage of migration in France, UK and Italy between 2009 and 2012 and concludes media paid increasing attention to the topics security and crime during the period under study. The economic dimension of migration is also a major issue, and media point to its potentially negative impact on the cultural identity of host countries. Esses et al. (2013: 520) found negative and conflict-laden frames dominated migration coverage in Europe. Media described intra-EU migrants more as threats to the economy and the welfare system, while migrants from outside the EU are rather presented as a “threat to the host countries’ culture” (Eberl et al. 2018; see also Goedeke Tort et al. 2016).

Horsti (2008) has conducted one of the few studies that focused on migration from Africa to Europe and argues the media of Sweden and Finland “domesticated” the migration event of approximately 30,000 migrants landing on the Canary Island in 2006, by focusing on Northern European actors and perspectives and neglecting the motives of the migrants. Another very interesting study is that of Balabanova/Balch (2010), which compares the coverage of labor migrants in the UK and Bulgaria after EU enlargement in 2007. Thus, the study compares media coverage in the country of origin with the destination country. The authors assumed that the media agenda in each country with their own stakes in the phenomenon would differ. Instead, they found coverage to be strikingly homogenous, because the Bulgarian media largely mirrored the UK’s media. The authors conclude this was caused by a lack of editorial

resources in Bulgarian newsrooms to produce original reporting on the topic. However, the authors also suggest the results may be interpreted as indices for a developing European perspective in media coverage (Balabanova/Balch 2010: 395).

Focusing on the European refugee crisis of 2015, Berry et al. (2015) analyzed coverage in five European countries. Their study finds notable differences. Humanitarian aspects were prevalent in Italy’s media, Sweden’s had the most positive tone, while the UK’s was remarkably negative. Spain’s media frequently included the perspective on migration from Africa to Spain. Coverage in Germany had many similarities with Sweden’s media, but was more divided along the editorial line of the media in the sample.

Fotopoulos and Kaimaklioti (2016) studied the coverage of refugees in the press of Greece, Germany and the UK, which they argue portrayed refugees as helpless and desperate victims of the civil war in Syria in the early phase of the ‘refugee crisis’. A comparative analysis of the media coverage of Aylan Kurdi – the little boy found drowned on the Turkish coast in 2015 – in Western and Central Eastern Europe revealed contrasts. Directly after the publication of the shocking photo, media in Western Europe covered migrants and refugees more positively and emphasized compassion for the needs of refugees and migrants. However, the pictures received far less attention in CEE media, and thus had a lesser impact on the tone of coverage in the region (EJO 2015). A comparative analysis by Georgiou and Zaborowski

(2017) on media coverage in eight European countries concludes that European media paid little attention to either or both the contexts of migrants and refugees and the situation in their countries of origin. The coverage also rarely included refugees and migrants as actors. Metaphors of natural disasters – e.g. a (tsunami) wave of refugees and the vocabulary of war ('defense') were found in the media of both Sweden and Germany (Petersson/Kainz 2017).

A considerable number of studies are German, by origin, reflecting both the nation's role as the key host country in Europe for refugees from the Syrian Civil War after 2015, and the high visibility of the topic on the agenda of Germany's media. Based upon content analysis of three agenda-setting newspapers, Haller (2017) concludes Germany's news media had little interest for the situation of refugees and migrants arriving between February 2015 and March 2016 – they only comprised 4 per cent of the articles under study (Haller 2017: 133). Indeed, "(u)ntil late autumn 2015, almost no commentary talked about the sorrows, fears, and also resistance of a growing part of society" (Haller 2017: 135). Coverage, Haller argues, was dominated by voices close to the government, the scope of the discourse was too narrow (2017: 136). The same author published a second study in 2019, analyzing the coverage of the UN Compact on Migration, in which media were not pro-active in the coverage of the debate about the com-

pact, but reacted only to political actors (Haller 2019: 26-28). However, Haller did observe a multi-faceted and pluralistic coverage in the (more conservative) *Welt* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Haller 2019: 28-31), while the outlets *Tagesschau*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *tageszeitung (taz)* "[...] gave very little room to arguments critical of migrants and refugees" (Haller 2019: 31).

Maurer et al. (2018) focused on the factual correctness of the coverage of migrants and refugees at the peak of the refugee crisis as well as on the tone (positive/negative) of the coverage. They conclude the media's representation of migrants' and refugee's socio-demographic characteristics matched the statistics in that the rate of crimes committed by migrants and refugees was somewhat under-represented before the incidents of New Year's Eve 2015/16<sup>4</sup>, and over-represented afterwards. Maurer et al. (2018) argue Germany's media outlets presented migration as a risk, while portraying individual migrants and refugees rather positively, with the exception of the tabloid *Bild* (Maurer et al. 2018: 28-30). Greck (2018) analyzes the framing of migration in Germany's regional papers for the year 2015 and concludes that immigration is predominantly covered as a challenge for society. Other frequently used frames were the question of integration – emphasized especially by media in Eastern Germany – and the capacities of Germany as a host country (Greck 2018: 375-379).

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<sup>4</sup> Media widely discussed New Year's Eve sexual assaults in Germany, which the Federal Criminal Police Office confirmed were committed by migrants from North Africa who had arrived during the European 'refugee crisis'.

The studies mentioned above are relevant because media impact on the perception of migrants and refugees matters within the public. Even though “empirical studies on the impact of migration coverage are scarce, it may be assumed that it determines the perception of migrants to a considerable extent. [...] Media has an impact via the choice of topics and the form of coverage” (Ruhrmann 2007, see also Liesching/Hooffacker 2019: 55-65). Negative frames were prevalent in the coverage of “Gastarbeiter” (guestworkers) in Germany in the 1970s (focus on the coverage of crime), in the coverage of increasing migration in the

early 1990s (with a dominant focus on crime as well), and the ensuing episodes of migration coverage in conflict-laden contexts; coverage often picked up individual actions or fates of migrants (Röben 2013: 115; Ruhrmann 2007). The results of a EUROBAROMETER survey 2017 point towards a widespread criticism of media coverage among EU citizens (see for Germany Arlt/Wolling 2017), in which 46 per cent of the interviewees stated that they did not feel well informed about migration, 15 per cent felt wholly uninformed, and only 4 per cent confirmed they were well informed by the media (European Commission 2018b 11).

### 3 Study Design

#### 3.1 Comparing media content across countries

The main challenge of comparative studies is the comparability of data. Political systems, media systems, and journalistic cultures may have characteristics distinct for each country (Hallin/Mancini 2004, 2012; Brüggemann et al. 2014). The markets for newspapers may serve as an example, with structures of production, circulation and distribution differing across countries. Indeed, in some countries, printed newspapers play no more than a marginal role today compared to online news platforms. However, also legal systems and journalistic cultures, which impact on the education and professionalization of journalists as well as journalism ethics, need to be taken into account (for an overview for Europe see Eberwein et al. 2018, for the editorial and professional context specifically of migration coverage see McNeil/Karstens 2018). Finally, the researchers involved in this study are trained in various academic contexts. This may imply, for example, that theoretical models and concepts are not known or shared in all study countries. It is important to keep all these factors in mind when conceptualizing and implementing a comparative study, and communicate openly about all these challenges in the research consortium. Another example: The search words for the identification of articles going into our sample were discussed in English first, but needed to be translated into local languages afterwards. This could, depending on the language, result in the number of search words changing. Identification of journalistic genres may be less

consensual as expected as well across journalism cultures, so we needed to make sure that all coders have the same understanding of genres, and categorize them correctly in the coding process. Based on experiences from previous comparative studies (e.g. Fengler et al. 2013, 2018), we have simplified the categories in the codebook to a somewhat larger extent than for content analysis not involving any comparison.

The study followed a “project-language procedure” (Rössler 2012: 463), with English being the working language for the communication within the consortium and for the codebook development. Consortium members then worked with the material in their national languages. Thus, the project strived to establish shared standards for all steps in the research process, and at the same time to include the specific expertise of consortium partners on national political contexts, media systems, and journalistic cultures (Wilke 2008: 243-244). This was achieved by closely involving all partners in the planning process, the development of the codebook, the repetitious interim debates and the final results of the data analysis.

#### 3.2 Selection of media outlets

The consortium analysed news media in most of the language regions covered by the European Journalism Observatory (EJO): Albania, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. The Greek research ELIAMEP joined the consortium for this study. The EJO network also allowed the inclusion of the United States, Russia and

Belarus, which were added to the sample as relevant countries beyond Western and Central Eastern Europe, which were similarly affected by the phenomena of either or both migrants and refugees (migrants and refugees from Mexico and Central and Latin America into the USA and Central Asian migrants and Ukrainian refugees into Russia).

The media systems of the countries in our study are quite heterogeneous, and not all of those media outlets selected for this study may be comparable in the context of their positions in the country-specific media eco systems. For example, a political profile distinction (liberal/conservative bias) was not feasible in several Eastern European countries where political identification was sometimes neither clear nor consistent, as support for a political party may depend on its participation in government. Nonetheless, the project aimed at achieving the largest-possible functional equivalence within the media systems in our sample. The national partners were advised to select print or online media agenda-setters, which have a high impact on the national news agenda and on public debates in the study countries. In Western European countries, this role in the national media system is still occupied by leading quality newspapers; in many Central and Eastern European countries, online portals have taken over this function. In countries where newspapers and online portals were similarly relevant for agenda-setting, national experts made their decision concerning the availability of archives.

Due to limited resources, the study focused on print and online media, which are still easier to access and process for content analysis as compared to broadcast media. The research consortium was aware that we would have to include analysis of TV coverage in order to gain a comprehensive assessment of the quality and quantity of migration coverage in some study countries. This is especially true for the media systems of Southern Europe, which are dominated by broadcast media, as compared to Northern European countries, which still have a relatively wide reach of print media. Studies also indicate that media channels may have an impact on the perception of media coverage, with print media likely to induce a more realistic, and also somewhat more positive, evaluation of migration and effects of migration (Eberl et al. 2018). Despite the restrictions faced by the consortium, we expected our analysis to provide valuable insights to better understand the different debates about migrants and refugees in countries across Europe, as well as their reflection in the USA's and Russia's mass media.

The study includes two outlets per country.<sup>5</sup> If feasible, national partners were advised to select leading outlets with contrasting political positions. In the case of Switzerland, a German and a French speaking outlet were selected, to represent the two largest language groups. Figure 2 provides an overview of the outlets selected, channel of distribution (print/online), and editorial line.

<sup>5</sup> The exception was ELIAMEP, which could only code one outlet. Although the data was therefore not fully comparable, we decided to include it due to the key role Greece plays in terms of migrants and refugees heading towards Europe.

Table 2

## Sample media outlets and the quantity of analyzed articles

Country	Media Outlet	Print/Online	Political Leaning	Articles	
				Total	Sample
Albania	Shqiptarja.com <sup>a)</sup>	Print	center-left	32	32
	Panorama	Print	moderately conservative	25	25
Belarus	Segodnya	Online	pro-government	47	47
	Nasha Niva	Online	relatively independent, more liberal	16	16
Czech Republik	MF Dnes	Print	moderately conservative	102	100
	aktualne.cz	Online	no political affiliation	106	100
France	Le Figaro	Print	conservative	74	74
	Le Monde	Print	center-left	59	59
Germany	FAZ	Print	center-right	303	100
	Süddeutsche Zeitung	Print	center-left	703	100
Greece	EFSYN Online	Online	pro-government (SYRIZA)/left	102	100
Hungary	Magyar Hírlap online	Online	right	301	100
	Index.hu	Online	no political affiliation	1.282	100
Italy	Corriere della Sera	Print	center	56	56
	La Stampa	Print	center-left	35	35
Poland	Gazeta Wyborcza	Print	center-left	58	58
	Rzeczpospolita	Print	center-right	40	40
Portugal	público.pt	Online	Portugal's papers traditionally avoid a political profile	80	80
	expresso.pt	Online		89	89
Romania	hotnews.ro	Online	center-right	63	63
	adevarul.ro	Online	center-right	137	100
Russia	Rossijskaja Gaveta	Print	pro-government	51	51
	Kommersant	Print	more liberal	26	26
Spain <sup>b)</sup>	El País	Print/Online	center-left	113	100
	La Razón	Print/Online	conservative	103	100
Switzerland	Le Temps	Print	center-right, French-speaking	97	97
	Neue Zürcher Zeitung	Print	center-right, German-speaking	183	100
UK	Daily Telegraph	Print	conservative	68	68
	Guardian	Print	center-left	300	100
Ukraine	Ib.ua	Online	Media's profile is determined by the respective owner. The two media from Ukraine are currently more towards the center of the political spectrum.	37	37
	pravda.com.ua	Online		74	74
USA	New York Times	Print	center-left	216	100
	Washington Post	Print	center-left	90	90
<b>Total</b>				<b>5.068</b>	<b>2.417</b>

Ann.: For further information on the media sampled and the number of articles retrieved per outlet and analyzed see sections 3.3 and 4.1.

a) The name of both online and print editions officially includes the internet suffix .com. Informally in Albania, the outlet is called "Shqiptarja".

b) Due to the varied forms of distribution of Spanish papers (exclusive content in the print edition of *El País*), the articles selected for this study were retrieved in a procedure that combined print and online versions. Source: Own illustration.

### 3.3 Pre-study: Visibility of the topic over time

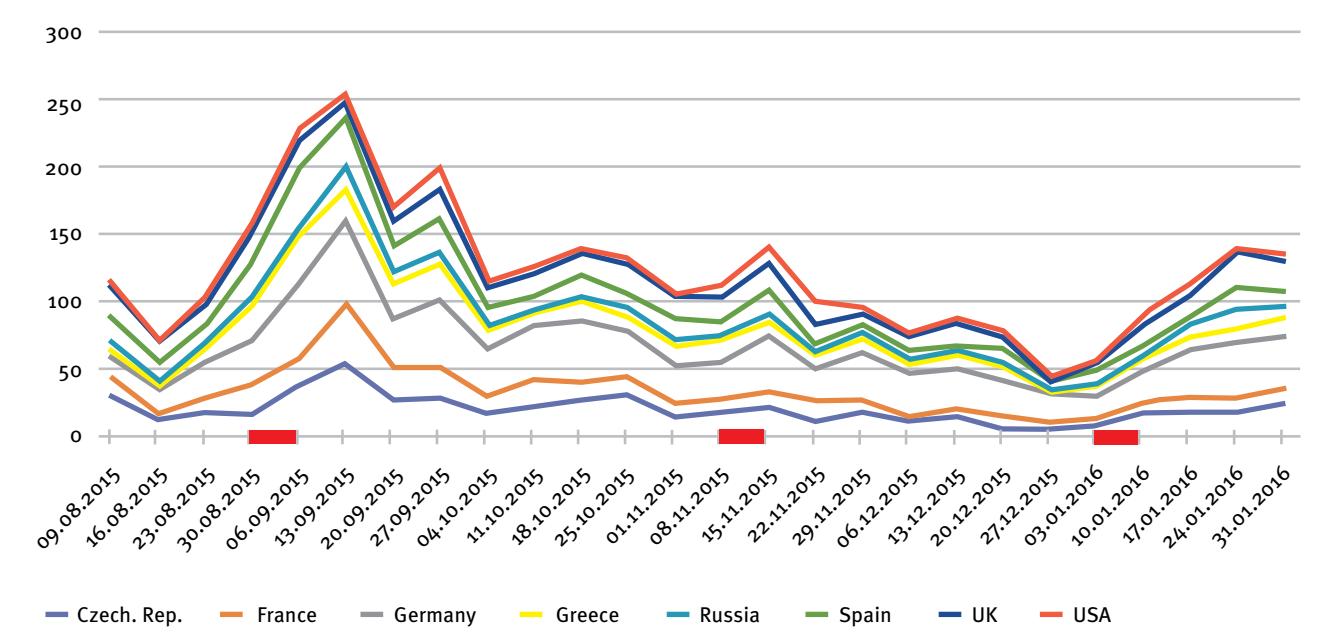
The study comprised coverage in selected weeks, six of them, picked from two six-month periods. The first, August 2015 to January 2016, covers a period of steep increase in the numbers of migrants and refugees heading towards Europe as well as intensified public debates; the second October 2017 to March 2018 serves for actualization and comparison. Because some outlets in our sample did not provide the opportunity of a full text search, we found it necessary to concentrate on selected weeks in the period of study, in order to avoid a too la-

bor-intensive manual identification of relevant texts over such a long time span.

The six study weeks were selected on the basis of the pre-study in eight outlets, which could identify a notable increase of articles in absolute numbers in comparison with the week before. Thus, we could follow coverage patterns typical for major new events (Waldherr 2012: 17-31). This preparatory step in the research process could only be conducted in a fully comparable way with media archives allowing complex search functions, e.g. reducing the search to title and lead. The pre-study included outlets from Western, Southern, Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, as well

**Figure 1**

**Total coverage in eight media outlets by country between August 2015 and January 2016**



Note: Accumulated article numbers. In total, 3187 articles were identified in the eight outlets of the pre-study. Selected weeks for the main study are marked by red rectangles. Source: Own illustration.

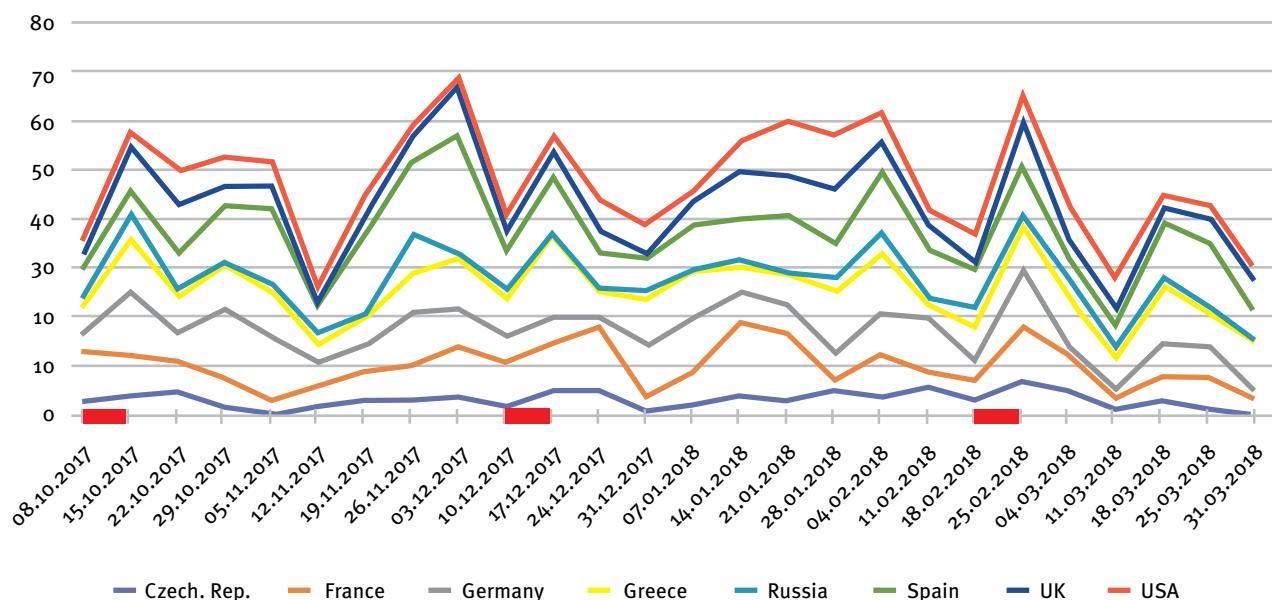
as Russia and the US, no region was left out. Thus, the following eight countries and outlets were involved in the pre-study: Germany (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*), France (*Le Monde*), Greece (*Efimerida ton Syntakton online*), Spain (*El País*), Czech Republic (*MFDnes*), the UK (*The Daily Telegraph*), as well as Russia (*Rossiyskaya Gazeta*), and the USA (*New York Times*).

Figure 1 shows the quantitative development of coverage on migrants and refugees in the first period of study (August 2015 – January 2016), and Figure 2 shows comparable coverage for the second period of study (October 2017 – March 2018). Most of the ana-

lysed outlets showed significant increases in coverage during the same weeks although a few intensified their coverage during certain periods, e.g. September 2015 for *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Efimerida ton Syntakton online*, and January 2016 for *MFDnes*. Converse trends, i.e. when outlets produced less coverage when the general trend was to report more, were very rare. Thus, we may conclude that the six selected study weeks do indeed represent peaks in coverage about migrants and refugees across countries. *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* is the only prominent exception, because its intensified coverage – probably on the widely-

Figure 2

Total coverage in eight media outlets by country between October 2017 and March 2018



Note: Accumulated article numbers. In total, 3 187 articles were identified in the eight outlets of the pre-study. Selected weeks for the main study are marked by red rectangles. Source: Own illustration.

reported New Year's Eve 2015/2016 incidents in Germany, see below – was only visible, following a delay of one-week, in January 2016.

A comparison between the study periods of 2015/16 and of 2017/18 reveals a decrease in coverage over time. While migrants and refugees clearly dominated the media agenda across countries in summer 2015, intensity of coverage remains at a high level in autumn 2015 (with more than 100 articles per week in the eight outlets selected for the pre-study). Coverage decreases notably in late 2015, and intensifies again in January 2016. While we did not research the main topics of coverage in this step of the process, it seems plausible that the increase of coverage in January 2016 was triggered by the events of New Years' Eve in several German cities, and the ensuing debate about refugees and migrants committing criminal acts in host countries. In the 2017/2018 study period, less than half as many articles were published as compared to the 2015/16 period. Indeed, even the peak coverage weeks of 2017/2018 never exceeded the number of articles in low coverage weeks in 2015/2016.

The pre-study resulted in six weeks selected for analysis, marked as red rectangles in Figures 1 and 2:

August 31 – September 6, 2015

November 9 – November 15, 2015

January 4 – January 10, 2016

October 9 – October 15, 2017

December 11 – December 17, 2017

February 19 – February 25, 2018

In the next step following the closure of the pre-study, the national partners collected data for these six selected weeks, using online data bases as well as non-searchable archives. For online outlets, the partners retrieved all articles published online in the six study weeks. For print outlets, all editions issued within the six study weeks were selected. As not all newspapers appear every day, this resulted in a variance of numbers of issues per country.

### **3.4 Methodology of the content analysis**

The codebook is the central tool of studies based on content analysis. It determines the criteria not only to *select* a text for the analysis, but also to *analyze* the text (categories) once the article has been added to the sample, and provides instructions how to code the different features of the article. For example, the number and type of actors quoted in an article were documented or the journalistic genre of the text was coded.

For comparative studies, is it essential that the codebook

1. is adequate for the media reality in all study countries, and that
2. it is interpreted by coders in all the study countries in a coherent manner.

With these goals in mind, the codebook was jointly developed by the participating researchers from all the study countries. It was pre-tested with material from the study countries as well as with articles in English, in order to facilitate a debate about the applicability of

the categories as well as potential problems during the coding process. Afterwards, the original draft codebook was revised and condensed several times, as the pre-test and ensuing discussions in the consortium revealed that coders – coming from highly heterogeneous political contexts – also had their own perspectives especially on categories requiring them to make qualitative decisions. For example:

A category asking to code ‘problems versus chances ascribed to migrants and refugees’ in the article was deleted from the codebook, as the pre-test did not achieve matching codes across the study countries. Finally, we tested if the coders reliably used the modified codebook in a coherent way, by asking them to code a selection of English-language texts, and comparing coding results.<sup>6</sup>

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6 For this intercoder reliability test, the 15 coders (one bilingual coder per material from each country's two outlets) coded 30 English-language articles. Three categories with unacceptable reliability figures were identified and deleted from the final codebook. In the ‘motivation’ category (pairwise .598 / Krippendorff’s  $\alpha$  .283), the ‘other’ option was used noticeably often and with differing meanings. But, further clarifications in the codebook led to a more expected use of the ‘motivation’ category (3.9 %). The other categories resulted in acceptable (pairwise .677 - .978 / Krippendorff’s  $\alpha$  .699 - .999) and sometimes critical (topic, main actor, number of non-migrant speakers; pairwise .478 - .675 /  $\alpha$  .501 - .598) reliability scores. These categories remained in the codebook. The English-language translations of the texts caused problems with the coders’ uncertainties of word/phrase meaning, exacerbated by the high number of countries and coders involved. These problems do not arise in the main phase of the analysis when coders worked in their native languages. These results only give an estimate of reliability in the final study, as coverage was written in many languages. Linguistic differences and distinctive features of the analysed material could result in both lower (transposing the English-language codebook to other languages is problematic) and higher reliability (coders understand and interpreted texts in their native language more confidently than the English-language test items from the reliability test).

## 4 National perspectives on a global phenomenon

### 4.1 Quantity of coverage

The study retrieved a total of 5 068 articles focusing on cross-border migrants and refugees in the six studied weeks.<sup>7</sup> Our analysis revealed substantial differences in the coverage of the topic across the study countries, with Germany and Hungary standing out in terms of intensity of coverage. The two analyzed online outlets in Hungary published 1 583 articles – *Magyar Hírlap* 301 and *index.hu* 1 282.<sup>8</sup> The two German papers under study published 1 006 articles – *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 303 and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 703.

Furthermore, the outlets in our sample which target an international audience stand out, as they publish an above-average amount of articles on migrants and refugees. In the six study weeks, *The Guardian* (UK) published 300 articles, *The New York Times* (USA) published 216, and the German-language *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (Switzerland), which has a substantial cross-border audience in the German-speaking part of Europe, published 183. The French-language *Le Temps* (Switzerland) published 97 articles. The intensity of coverage in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* may also be attributed to the dominance of the topic on Germany's political agenda; more than half of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* articles did focus not on the domestic phenomena

of migrants and refugees, but on international issues concerning the topic.

In contrast to Germany and Hungary, outlets in other EU countries paid much less attention to the topics of migrants and refugees. *Adevărul* (Romania) published 137 articles, *La Stampa* (Italy) no more than 35 articles in the six study weeks – even though Italy, along with Greece, was strongly affected as one of migrants' and refugee's main entry point in the European Union.<sup>9</sup> The rather low coverage in Poland could be explained with relevant domestic events in the periods of study (e.g. a major change of cabinet members in December 2017). Also coverage in France was lower than expected. However, the second study week (November 2015) coincided with the terrorist attacks in Paris, and the fifth week (December 2018) with the terrorist attack on the Strasbourg's Christmas market. Media in Spain and in the Czech Republic provided an average amount of articles. Portugal's outlets were reporting somewhat below the average.

While the analysis shows a high level of attention for migrant and refugee topics in the USA outlets, coverage in Russia was far below average. Even though Ukraine was affected by migrants and refugees in the period of study itself, due to the ongoing armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, outlets in Ukraine remained largely silent about this phenomenon. Coverage

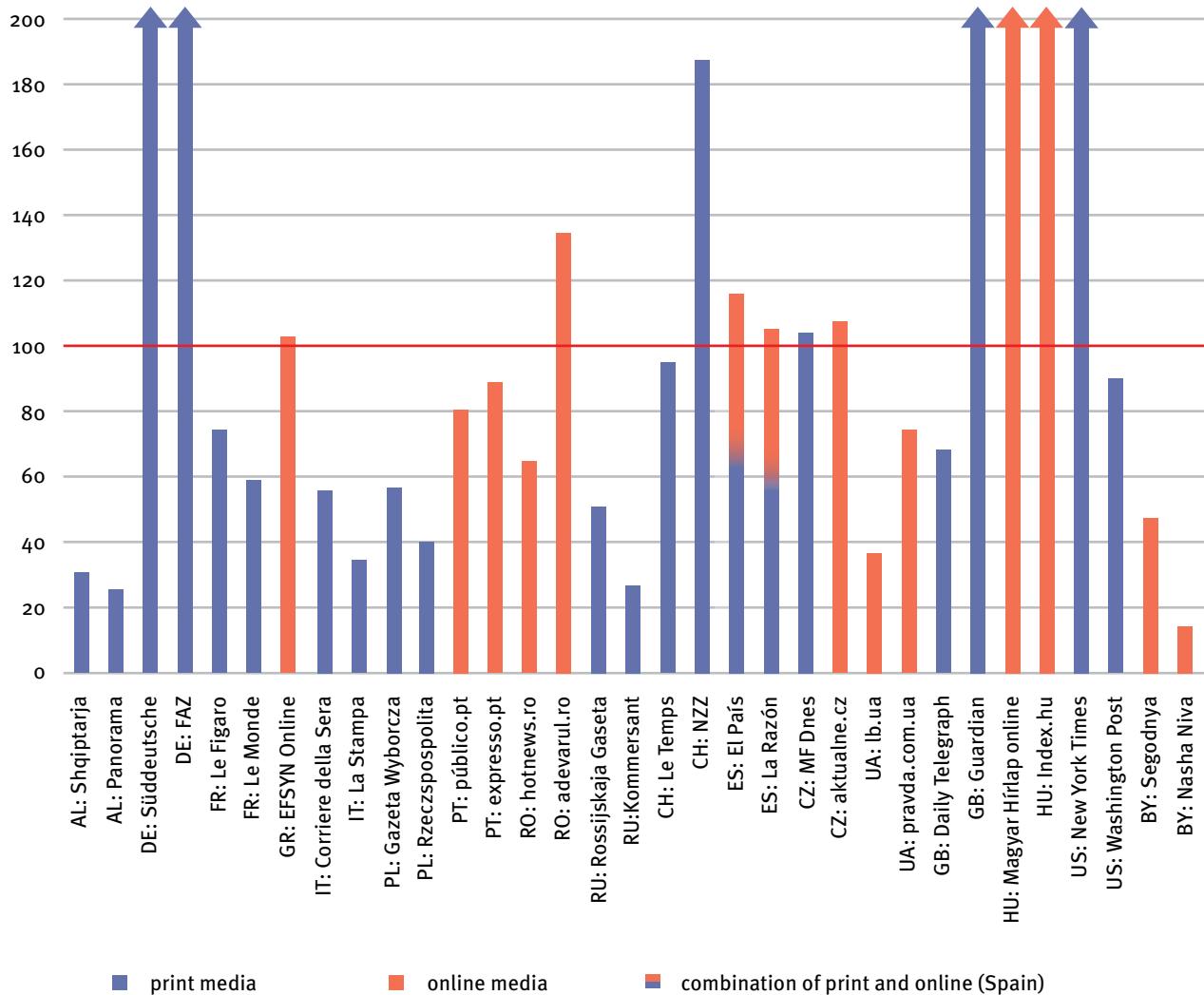
<sup>7</sup> Articles on historical aspects on cross-border migration since 1800 were picked up as well, in order to ensure including phenomena of migration with a potential impact on 21st century developments. Articles that cover migration solely from a historical point of view were not included in our sample.

<sup>8</sup> An objection here is that online media like Hungary's have more 'space' at their disposal than print newspapers. However, there is generally no difference between the number of articles in online and print media; the outlet with the lowest number of articles, Belorussia's *Nasha Niva*, is an online news portal.

<sup>9</sup> In contrast to the results of previous studies on migration in Italy (e.g. Fohrn 2009).

Figure 3

Number of articles published by each media outlet during the six study weeks



Acronym Outlets: FAZ – *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*; EFSYN – *Efimerida ton Syntakton*; NZZ – *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*.  
 For outlets with more than 100 articles, 100 articles were random-selected. Periods of analysis: 31.08.-06.09.15,  
 09.11-15.11.15, 04.01-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

in Albania and Belarus was strikingly low. The limited coverage in Albania may be due to the country still being seen as a country of origin (albeit playing an emerging role as a transit country). Former studies have also shown that media in Albania have only very limited editorial resources for foreign coverage (see Fengler et al. 2018).

The large variety in the size of national samples required us to further reduce the number of articles in countries with particularly intensive coverage. For the 20 outlets with up to 100 articles, all the articles found were coded. For the 13 outlets with more than 100 articles in total, 100 articles were randomly selected. This allowed us to both limit work load for partners as well as avoid an over-representation of few outlets that had published very high numbers of articles. Thus, the sample for the final coding process comprised 2 417 articles.

#### **4.1.1 More migrants and refugees, more coverage?**

The total number of 5 068 registered articles was still used to tackle one more question: Do countries with a higher share of migrants and refugees also see a higher intensity of media coverage of migrants and refugees? A variety of meta data may be used to detect correlations, e.g. the number of immigrants per country per year, and the share of asylum seekers

and refugees versus population size. Available statistics often include overlapping groups of people, respectively count similar subgroups of the different categories.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 4 correlates the number of articles per study country (axis y) with the share of refugees per country (axis x). The results show an albeit modest tendency: The more refugees there are present in one country, the more intense is the outlets' coverage of migrants and refugees. If the data from Hungary – with an outstanding amount of coverage, yet only a small refugee population – would be deleted from this diagram, the correlation would be much more evident.

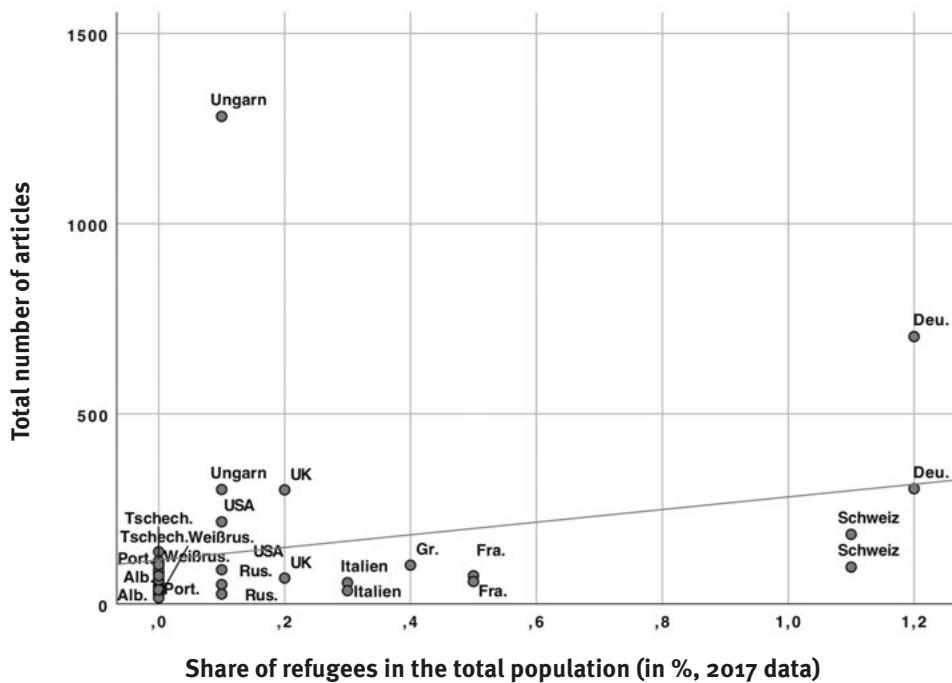
Several countries with almost zero refugees, according to official data, also have a very low share of articles. However, not all countries do show this tendency. Coverage in France's outlets appears to be rather low, given the relatively high share of refugees in the country. While the share of refugees in Switzerland has the same proportion as Germany, the former's outlets reported much less on migrants and refugees than the latter's.

We have also correlated the number of articles per country with the number of immigrants (with foreign nationality) per country. Again, Hungary stands out with exceedingly intense coverage, even though immigration numbers are actually low. In contrast, coverage in USA outlets was rather modest, compared to

<sup>10</sup> All data used here was retrieved from the Migration Data Portal of International Organization for Migration (IOM 2019b). The portal combines statistics from different sources: Data on *international migrant stock* (total and relative to total population) is from UN DESA and refers to the year 2017, *inflows of foreign population* from OECD and refers to 2016. Data on *refugees by destination* (total and relative to total population of destination country) and *asylum seekers in the country* (total and relative to total population of destination country) are from UNHCR and refer to 2017.

Figure 4

**Number of articles per media outlet per country and the share of refugees in the total population of the country of publication**



Note: Based on 5 068 articles. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11.-15.11.15, 04.01.-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Calculated using our data and IOM (2019b).

the large numbers of immigrants. This might be explained by the long tradition of the United States as an immigration country, with established structures of regulated immigration.<sup>11</sup>

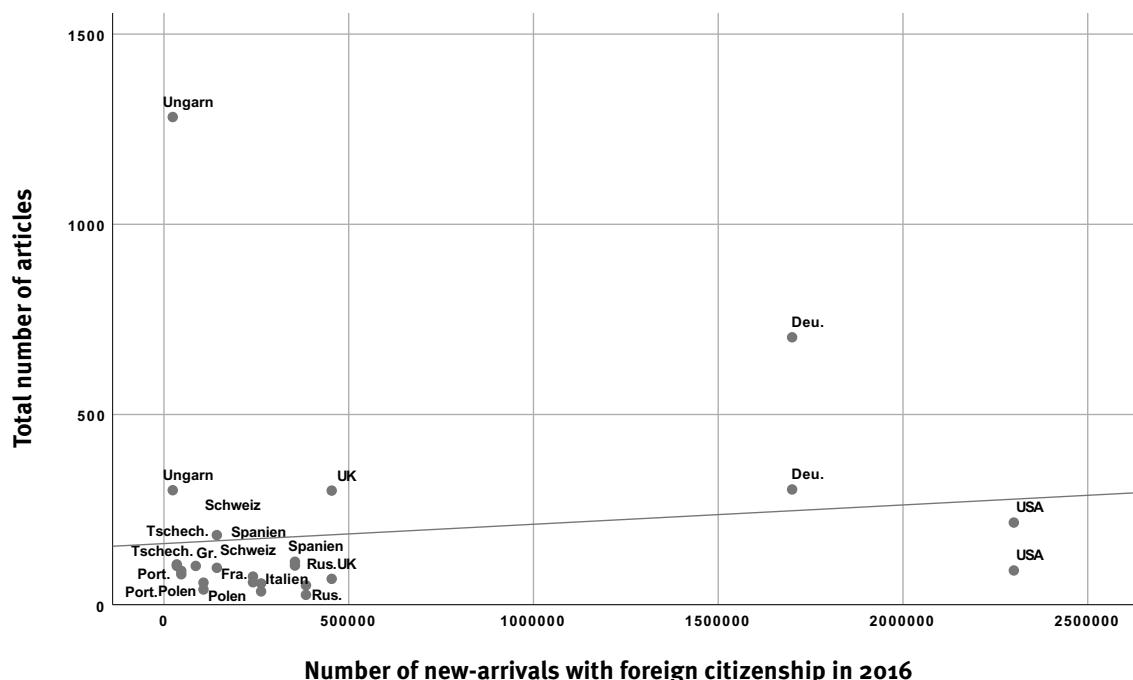
As long as the extremely productive Hungarian outlets are part of the sample, we do not see a statistically significant correlation between the number of articles per country and the external data used here. However, if

Hungary is deleted from the sample, we do find significant correlations between the number of articles and the number and share of each category of refugees, asylum-seekers and new arrivals in 2016. In countries with higher absolute and relative numbers of refugees, asylum-seekers and incoming migrants, outlets also covered the phenomenon of migrants and refugees more intensely.

<sup>11</sup> Numbers on the influx of foreign nationals refer to 2016, as more recent data is not available. Our data was gathered in selected weeks in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. At least the comparison of the influx figures from 2015 and 2016 shows that relations between countries stay rather stable.

**Figure 5**

**Number of articles per media outlet by country and number of new-arrivals with foreign citizenship in 2016**



Note: Based on 5 068 articles. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11.-15.11.15, 04.01.-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Calculated using our data and IOM (2019b).

#### 4.1.2 Development of coverage over time

Our study clearly shows that attention on migrants and refugees in the outlets (under study) diminished over time. In the first study week (August 31 to September 6, 2015), 40 per cent of all articles were published. In the first three study weeks of our analysis (2015/16), almost three quarters of the articles were published. This period covered the start of the ‘European refugee crisis’ with the arrival of more than one million refugees crossing into

Europe. During the three study weeks in 2017 and 2018, the quantity of coverage remained stable, but at a much lower level; UNHCR reported 185 000 refugees in 2017 and 141 000 in 2018 (UNHCR 2019).

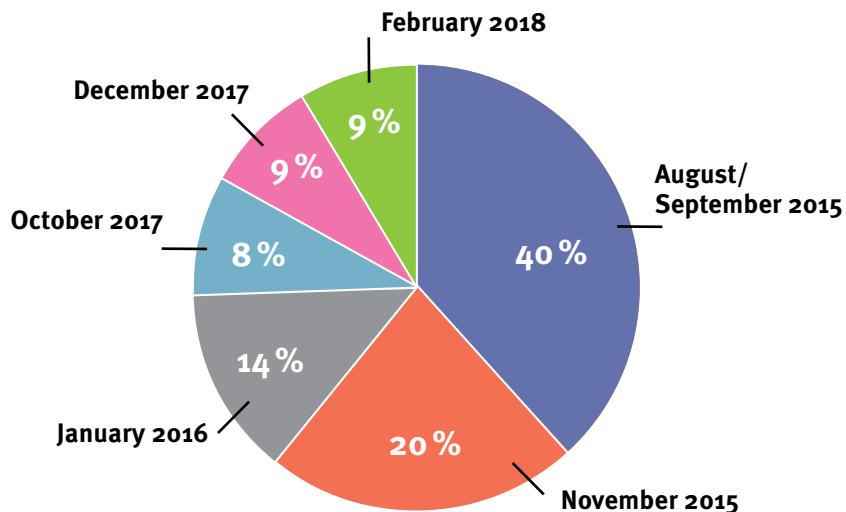
A comparison of study countries reveals patterns of coverage. Attention in Germany’s outlets remains high during the first two study weeks. Almost a third of the articles retrieved from Germany’s outlets were published in August/September and November 2015.

In contrast, by November 2015, outlets in other European countries had lost interest in the topic. Greece's *Efimerida ton Syntakton online* published more than two thirds of all its articles in the first study week (August/September 2015) while it did not report at all in the three study weeks in January 2016, December 2017, and February 2018. Even though there was a decline in the numbers of incoming migrants and refugees due to the EU-Turkey "refugee deal", the reception of migrants and refugees arriving in Greece (mainly from Turkey) remains a pressing issue for the Hellenic nation. The outlet's attention declined particularly after Greece's government implemented a far more rigid asylum policy. Taking the obvious political parallelism in Greece's media system

into account, the decline in coverage observed in *Efimerida ton Syntakton* might be explained by the many supporters of Syriza, as well as numerous members of cabinet and parliament who criticized this political initiative. Also, the media devoted considerable attention to the ongoing economic difficulties of the country. In sum, the domestic relevance of the topic does not seem to have been adequately mirrored in *Efimerida ton Syntakton's* coverage during the later weeks of our analysis.

Migrants and refugees changing transit routes from 2016 onwards (Frontex 2019) might have had an impact on the development of coverage in Italy's outlets. Compared to other EU states, coverage was particularly intense in late 2017, after the migration route across the

**Figure 6**  
**Distribution of analysed articles for each of the six weeks of analysis**



Note: Based on 2417 articles. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11-15.11.15, 04.01-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

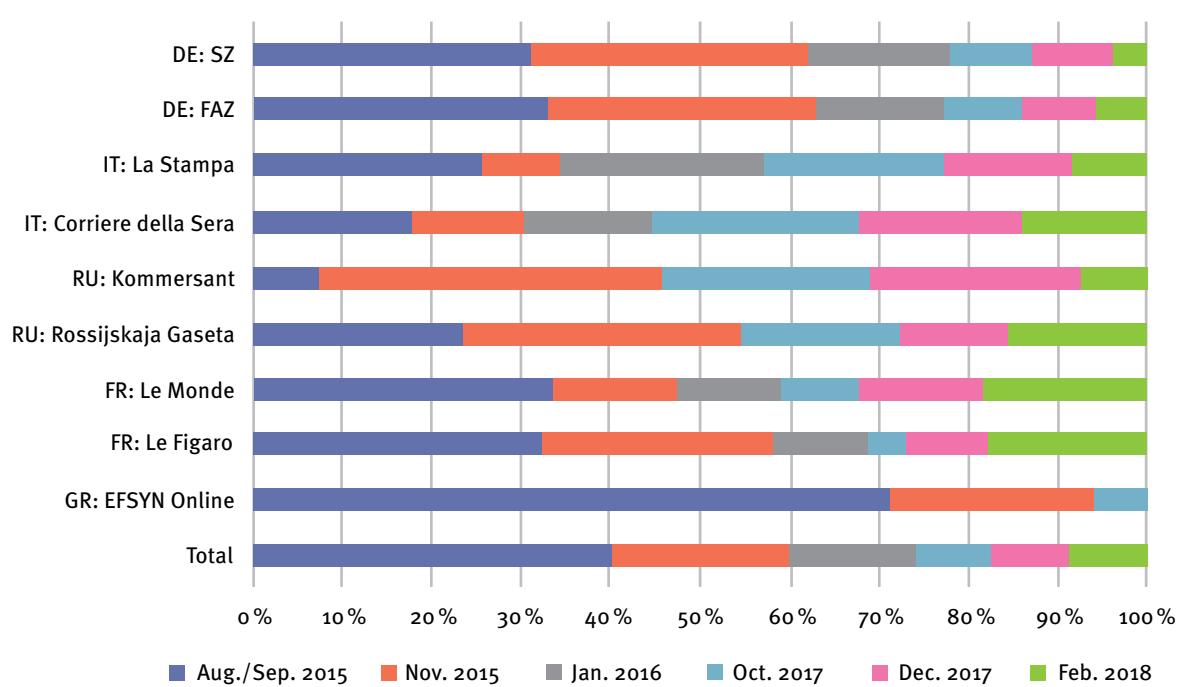
Mediterranean Sea became more frequented again by migrants and refugees in 2016 and 2017. France's outlets devoted more attention to the topic again only in 2018.

Patterns of media coverage were notably distinct in Russia's outlets, which displayed a generally low level of coverage. *Kommersant*, for example, picked up on the topic as late as November 2015, and published only two articles in the week during the peak of the 'refugee crisis' in August/September 2015. No article on migrants and refugees appeared in Russia's outlets in the study week of January

2016 – the incidents in Germany were covered in Russia's outlets with a delay, according to our Russian project partners. In the last study weeks, the patterns of coverage in Russia were more similar to the other study countries. Refugee movement from the Syrian civil war (where Russia has a stake) to Europe might have triggered peaks in coverage in Russia, while immigration from the neighboring Central Asian Republics countries brings in a more stable share of coverage. Immigration from Ukraine is covered by outlets in Russia, Belarus and Poland.

**Figure 7**

**Distribution of analysed articles for each of the six weeks of analysis in selected media outlets**



Acronym Outlets: EFSYN – *Efimerida ton Syntakton*; FAZ – *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*; SZ – *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.  
Note: Based on 2 417 articles. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11-15.11.15, 04.01-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

Coverage in the first study week – August/September 2015 – was much more intense in countries directly affected by the ‘refugee crisis’. The first study week saw the publication of 43.8 per cent of all articles found in EU outlets. In Europe’s non-EU countries, the share was only 33.9 per cent, and 24.7 per cent in the USA (consequently with higher shares observed in the other study weeks).

#### **4.2 Migration – at home or abroad?**

In the majority of study countries, outlets reported migrants and refugees as remote phenomena. More than two thirds of the articles (67.8 per cent) report about migrants and refugees as foreign coverage. Migration, political debates, problems, support – all this is covered as occurring, quite literally, far away from home. However, the perception of migrants and refugees as phenomena for foreign coverage may result in a lack of quality reporting, as professional capacities for foreign coverage are very limited in many outlets. Identifying the structural features of foreign coverage, Hafez (2002) notes a focus on conflicts, an over-representation of political and other elite actors, and a lack of contextual information needed by the audience to make sense of foreign reporting – issues we will come back to later in the report. Media in Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, as well as Albania, Ukraine, and Belarus, cover the topic predominantly as foreign coverage, without domestic references. This distinct pattern of coverage – migrants and refugee movements are presented as events

taking place beyond national borders – was especially dominant in Portugal’s *Expresso.pt* (74 per cent) and *Público.pt* (78 per cent) and Romania’s *hotnews.ro* (78 per cent), as well as Ukraine’s *lb.ua* (87 per cent) and *Pravda.com.ua* (88 per cent). Media in Portugal mainly mirrored European migration debates and reported mainly on migrants and refugees from the Middle East. Coverage is dominated by migration movements into other EU countries – not into Portugal. Immigrants from Africa, who traditionally play a much more relevant role due to colonial relationships, receive even less attention in Portugal’s outlets than in the total average in the period of analysis.

Generally, USA outlets fall into the same category. However, there are noteworthy differences. Articles with a domestic focus (45.3 per cent) appear almost as often as articles with a foreign focus (47.9 per cent). In the sampled articles from *The Washington Post*, the domestic focus was slightly more dominant (52.2 per cent). Both *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* display somewhat distinct patterns of coverage, which might be explained with the varied editorial styles of both outlets. *The Washington Post* emphasizes stories revolving around individuals, or told around individual actors. As a result, immigration into the USA and domestic political debates dominate the coverage. In contrast, *The New York Times* positions itself more as a chronicler of global events – which mostly took place in Europe in the weeks under study.

The focus on foreign news is striking for the case of Ukraine, given the migrant and re-

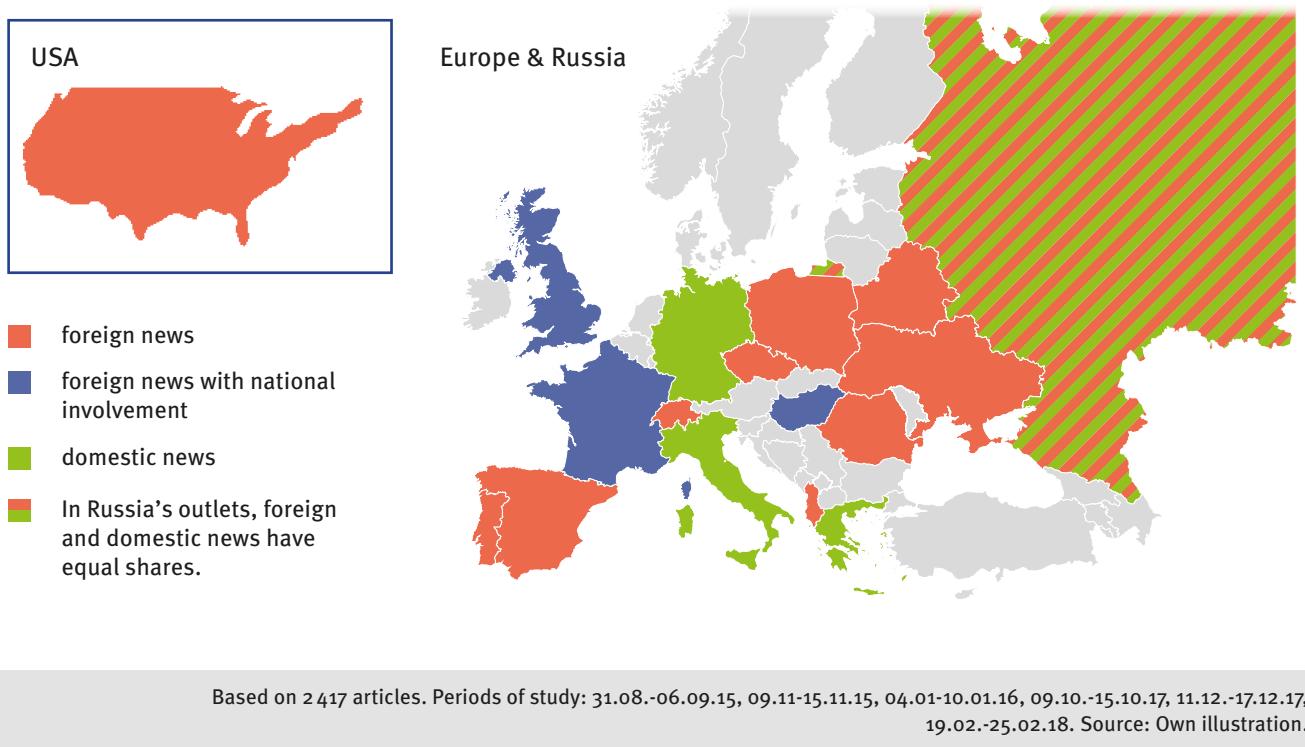
fugee flows out of its territories were affected by an armed conflict. Our project partners in Kyiv have pointed to attempts by the Ukrainian government to de-thematize migrations and refugee flows of Ukrainians from the occupied territories especially to Russia. Russia's outlets present the topic partly in a more domestic framing (*Kommersant* 46 per cent) and partly framed as foreign coverage (*Rossiyskaya Gazeta* 47 per cent).

Our analysis distinguished between foreign coverage with and without domestic references. The first category comprises, for example, negotiations which are taking place

abroad, but domestic actors (e.g. heads of state) participate in the events and thus are visible in media coverage. We found three countries, in which this type of coverage was dominant: France, the UK and Hungary – especially in the case of *Magyar Hírlap*. In the cases of France and the UK, we might explain specific patterns of coverage with the traditional clout of these countries in the field of international politics. In the case of Hungary, patterns of coverage might be impacted by the specific role of the Orbán government, as the most visible adversary to the European agreement on migrants and refugees politics.

**Figure 8**

#### Countries by dominant perspective on migration in the media coverage



In contrast, Germany's newspapers covered migrants and refugees predominantly as a domestic topic (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* 79 per cent, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 57 per cent of articles). Only a minor share of articles can be categorized as foreign coverage, and many of those articles have at least a reference to Germany. By contrast the shares of articles representing a purely foreign perspective are quite small (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 6.0 per cent and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 5.0 per cent). It seems Germany's outlets in our sample only report on migrants and refugees as long as Germany is involved.

Besides Germany, outlets in Italy and Greece share a similar perspective on migration and refugee flows as a domestic topic. Both Italy and Greece have been, and remain, deeply affected by migration and refugee flows into Europe due their geographical position. *Efimerida ton Syntakton Online* has a reputation as being pro-Syriza, and thus pro-(leftist)-Government until 2019. This might explain the unique reporting patterns of *Efimerida ton Syntakton*, with two thirds of all the outlet's articles being published during the summer of 2015, when the number of incoming refugees and migrants overwhelmed the capacities of officials and institutions. The escalation of the situation especially on the islands close to the Turkish borders explains the domestic focus of the coverage.

In line with the domestic focus of migration coverage, Germany's outlets (*Frankfurter*

*Allgemeine Zeitung* 65 per cent, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 79 per cent of the articles), Greece's *Efimerida ton Syntakton Online* (60 per cent) as well as Italy's *Corriere della Sera* (76 per cent) mainly reported about migrants and refugees movements into their own countries.<sup>12</sup> Also *The Washington Post* (52 per cent) as well as *Kommersant* (56 per cent) reported to a considerable extent about migrants and refugees moving into their own country. *The New York Times* represents a specific case, being the only outlet reporting mainly on migrants and refugees on other continents (53 per cent). This again reflects the role of a global chronicler, with *The New York Times* paying attention to the 'refugee crisis' taking place in Europe in the periods of study.

In contrast, the majority of outlets in Western and Central Eastern Europe in our sample covered the movement of migrants and refugees *into other countries* on the continent.

#### **4.3 Who is coming, and why?**

##### **Coverage of migrants and refugees and their motives**

While the previous paragraphs focused on the perception of issues of migrants and refugees as either foreign or domestic, the next section addresses the backgrounds of migrants and refugees as described in the articles retrieved for our study: What are the motives attributed to them, and how are they represented in the coverage of outlets across the 17 study states?

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<sup>12</sup> For all articles with a discernible direction of migration (2 289 out of 2 417).

#### 4.3.1 Countries of origin

From the 2417 articles in our sample, 2289 stated a clear *direction* of the movements of migrants and refugees. But only 778 of the articles were specific about the *countries of origin* of migrants and refugees. In most of these articles (293 articles out of 778), the actors were from Syria. ‘Africa’ – as a continent, without specifying a country – was mentioned in 64 articles. Other countries of origin explicitly mentioned relatively often are Myanmar (30 articles), Albania and Ukraine (18 articles each), and Afghanistan (15 articles). All other articles cover migrants and refugees as abstract phenomena, but the origin of migrants and refugees

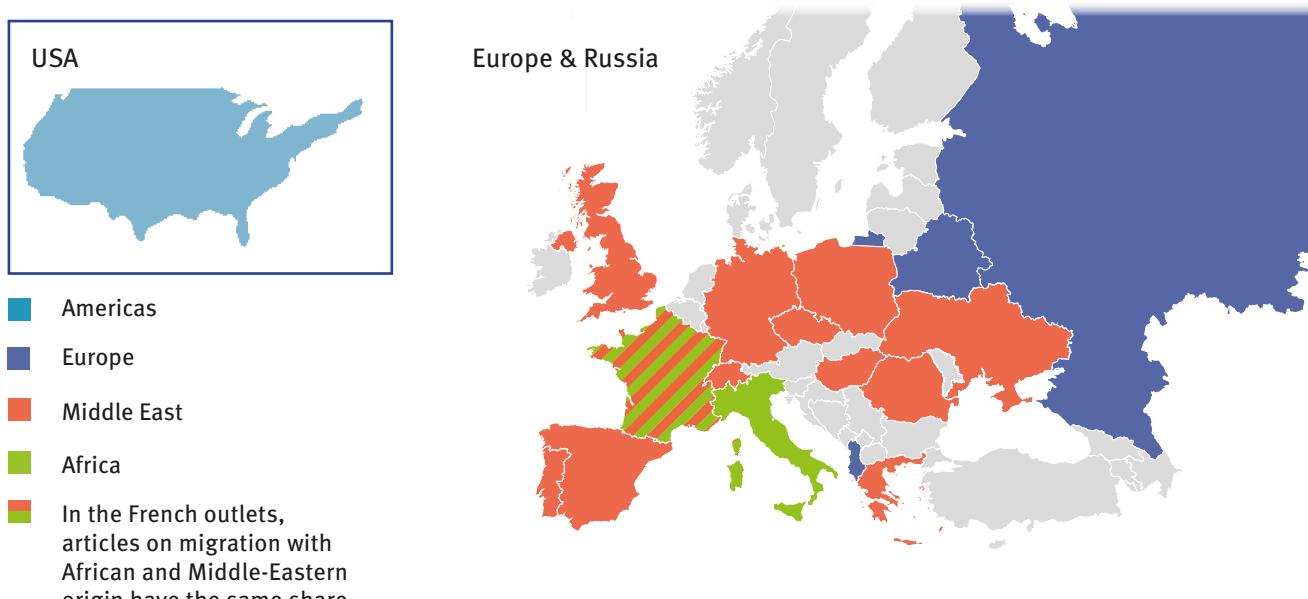
remains unclear. The articles do however include people from various countries of origin.

This means that the major share of articles is vague at best about the country of origin, and thus the context, of migrants and refugees. Audiences may find it hard to assess the actual status of migrants and refugees, and thus their specific rights, with such an obvious lack of information.

In Greece’s *Efimerida ton Syntakton online*, African migrants and refugees are not represented at all (similar to the two Albania outlets under study). In contrast, Italy’s *La Stampa* did not publish a single article focusing on migrants and refugees from the Middle East.

**Figure 9**

#### Predominant origin of migrants in the analysed media outlets



Based on 778 Articles with a discernible origin of migration. Periods of analysis: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11-15.11.15, 04.01-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

Internal European migration with European countries of origin played a considerable role in coverage in Poland (*Gazeta Wyborcza* 10 per cent, *Rzeczpospolita* 17.5 per cent), in Belarus (*Segodnya* 17.0 per cent) and Russia (*Rossiyskaya Gazeta* 15.7 per cent), where migrants and refugees from Europe were the most visible migrants' group with a clear country of origin. The strong visibility of European migrants and refugees might be explained by their role as key destination countries for migrants and refugees from Ukraine. Attention for internal European migrants and refugees was otherwise low, with only 2.7 per cent of articles across all 15 EU countries plus Switzerland. Some outlets, like Greece's *Efimerida ton Syntakton online*, Portugal's *Expresso*, and Romania's *hotnews.ro*, did not report at all about internal-European migrants in the six study weeks.

However, we also found changing patterns of coverage over time. Migrants and refugees from the Middle East had the highest visibility in 2015 and 2016 across all outlets. But the share of articles focusing on refugees from Syria decreased consistently over time. While 65 per cent of all articles sampled focused on refugees from Syria in summer 2015, these numbers dwindled to 8.6 per cent in 2018. Germany's outlets remain an exception, with Syria continuing to be the most prominent country of origin across all six study weeks.

In the two study periods in October and December 2017, the largest number of articles with clearly specified country of origin, for both migrants and refugees, referred to Myanmar.

During this period of time, large numbers of Rohingya fled to Bangladesh because of grave ethnical tensions. In February 2018, refugees and migrants from Ukraine had a share of 14.3 per cent. CEE countries reported more about migrants and refugees from Ukraine as a country of origin.

#### **4.3.2 Representation of motives for migration**

Coverage of the motivation of migrants and refugees appears crucial, as it determines their legal status in destination countries. With regard to the results of our pre-test, we used a pragmatic approach for our study and distinguished between

1. a rather wide definition of protected migration, i.e. protection under the Geneva Convention, refuge from violent conflict, or admission to asylum in destination country regardless of the reasons – people hereinafter designated refugees,
2. unprotected migration, including all other and individual reasons (e.g. economic, personal). Please also refer to the definitions box on page 5.

However, our study data show that coverage of a specific status group is an exception (see Figure 10): Less than a third of the articles retrieved (29 per cent) report specifically on refugees or persons with refugee status. Only 4 per cent of the sampled articles explicitly featured migrants without refugee status. The majority of articles comprise those dealing with a range

of groups – refugees, migrants, people with unclear status – at the same time, mixing up definitions, or remaining unclear about the status of those arriving. There might be several reasons for this. The article may indeed cover a heterogeneous group of migrants and refugees. However, reporters face a number of challenges. They may be unaware of the individuals' actual status; they may not know exact definitions, and lack either or both time and column space to be precise; they may believe their audience is not aware of the differences. They may also be confronted with sources (politicians) using ambiguous wording.

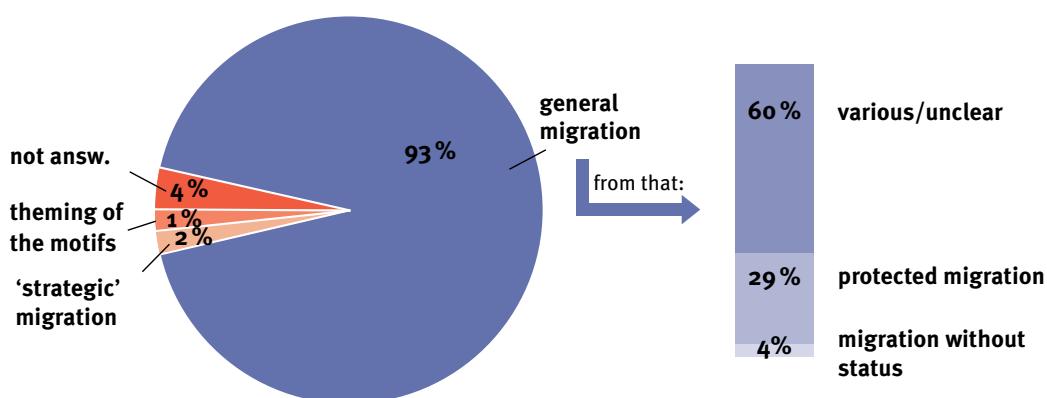
Only 1 per cent of the articles focuses on individual motives for people to become

migrants or refugees. This is even less than the 2 per cent of articles dealing with 'strategic migration', which refers to migration as camouflage for espionage or terrorist activities, or to recruit fighters in destination countries. Poland's *Rzeczpospolita* (5 per cent) and both media outlets in Ukraine (*lb.ua*, 5.4 per cent and *Pravda.com.ua* 5.4 per cent) are the outlets in the study covering 'strategic migration' most frequently, while the topic was not present at all in the study weeks in Italy's, Switzerland's and Albania's outlets, and not even by the outlets of France, which was hit by terrorist attacks.

A comparison of our six study weeks clearly shows that the wording of the articles changes

**Figure 10**

**Motivations of migrants/refugees as presented in the media coverage (for articles in the general migration category, data is further divided by the status of legal protection)**



Note: Based on 2 417 articles. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11-15.11.15, 04.01-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

over time. The share of articles clearly identifying ‘refugees’ declines over time, while the share of articles speaking of ‘migrants’ increases (see Figure 11).

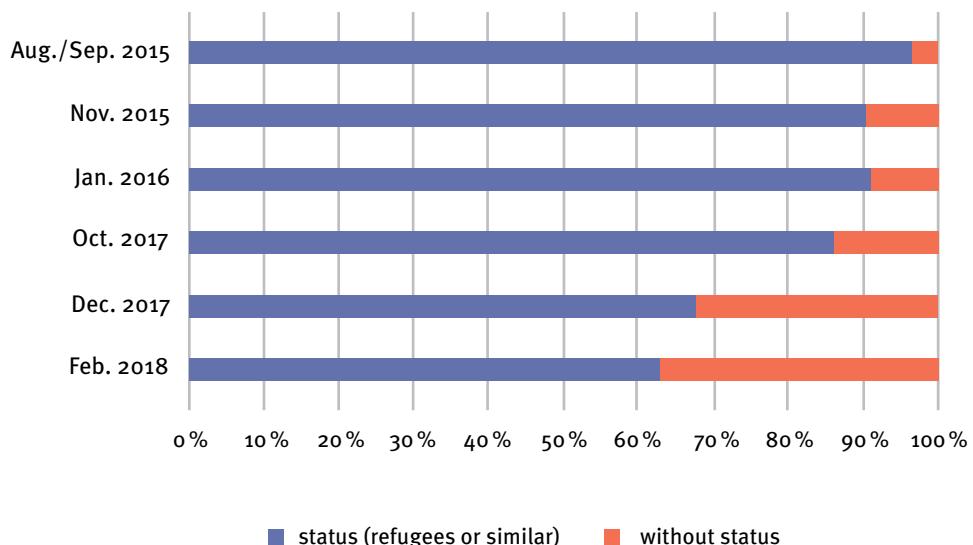
Indeed, the scope of coverage widened in 2017/18 to include a larger variety of countries of origin, while people escaping from the civil war in Syria were the focus of coverage in summer 2015. However, the study results may also be interpreted as proof for a thesis by Haller (2019: 29), who argues that journalists have gone through a “learning curve” in the years after 2015, and are increasingly clear in their distinction between refugees with a protected

status and migration without protected status. During the recent World Journalism Educators’ Congress in 2019, participants of a panel discussion argued that the changing lexicon goes hand in hand with increasing negative attitudes towards arrivals.

Greece’s *Efimerida ton Syntakton Online* (71 per cent), outlets from Romania (*hotnews.ro*: 48 per cent, *Adevarul.ro*: 65 per cent) and Spain’s *El País* (45 per cent) most frequently used the term ‘refugee(s)’ in their coverage. Non-status migration is most visible in Poland’s *Rzeczpospolita* (15 per cent) and the Ukrainian *Pravda.com.ua* (12 per cent).

**Figure 11**

**Shares of articles on refugees/persons with an equal level of protection and migrants with no further legal protection**



Note: Based on 789 articles with the two characteristics. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11-15.11.15, 04.01-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

#### 4.4 Politics, problems, or contexts? Key topics of migration coverage

Political debates dominate media coverage of migrants and refugees. Almost half of the articles retrieved by our study focus on political debates. The dominance of the political perspective was obvious both in domestic (37.8 per cent) and in foreign coverage (42.3 per cent). As expected, the share was especially high when outlets treated the topic as foreign news, which involved national political leaders (60 per cent).

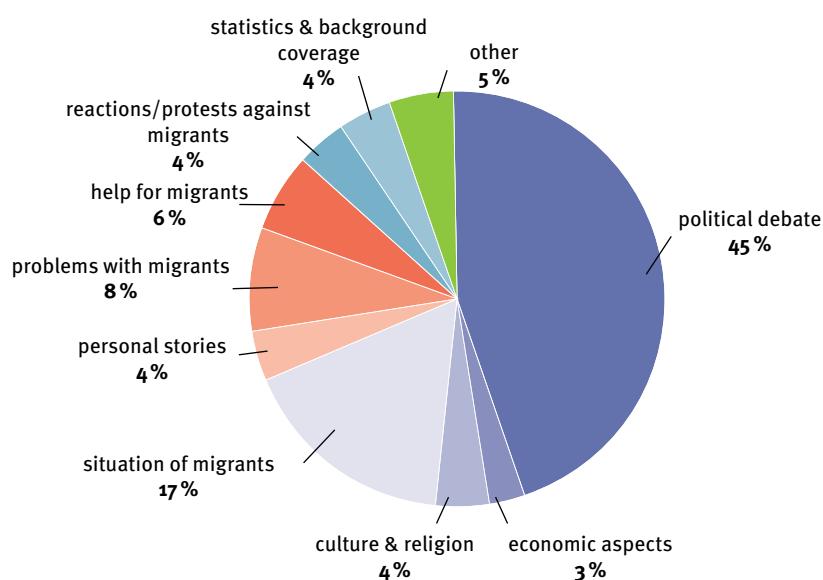
In contrast to the vast amount of coverage on political debates about migration and re-

fugee flows, coverage of the phenomenon of actual migration has a much lower share. Only 17 per cent of the articles cover the situation of migrants and refugees (e.g. on the transit routes, at the borders, in temporary camps, etc.), 6 per cent cover aid initiatives on the ground, and 4 per cent cover individual stories of migrants and refugees. Also, background stories (on “economic aspects”, “statistics and background”, “culture and religion”), which would help the audience to contextualize the information, have a rather low combined share of 11 per cent.

The analysis showed considerable differences between outlets from Western and Eastern

**Figure 12**

#### Main topic of media coverage



Note: Based on 2 417 articles. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11.-15.11.15, 04.01.-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

Europe<sup>13</sup>, but also between outlets with varied political points of view. Eastern European media published more than double as many articles on problems with migrants and refugees as Western European media (11.1 per cent of all articles versus 5.0 percent of all articles). Both in Western and Eastern Europe, outlets with a

more conservative editorial line featured problems with migrants and refugees more often than outlets with a more liberal profile. As a result, conservative outlets in Eastern Europe reported more than four times as often about problems with migrants and refugees than left-liberal outlets in Western Europe.

Table 3

**Topics by region and political point of view of analyzed media outlets' articles  
(in per cent of total coverage)**

	Western Europe			Eastern Europe		
	left-wing/ liberal	right-wing/ conservative	all	left-wing/ liberal	right-wing/ conservative	all
<b>political debate</b>	42,7	49,0	<b>46,0</b>	40,9	41,3	<b>43,3</b>
<b>economic aspects</b>	3,2	4,1	<b>3,1</b>	4,5	4,2	<b>3,6</b>
<b>culture &amp; religion</b>	4,7	5,8	<b>4,6</b>	5,3	2,9	<b>2,7</b>
<b>situation of migrants</b>	21,3	8,3	<b>16,1</b>	21,2	17,1	<b>18,4</b>
<b>personal stories</b>	4,5	3,0	<b>3,8</b>	1,5	2,9	<b>3,1</b>
<b>problems with migrants</b>	3,4	6,1	<b>5,0</b>	9,1	13,9	<b>11,1</b>
<b>help for migrants</b>	10,7	6,9	<b>8,5</b>	5,3	3,8	<b>4,1</b>
<b>reactions/protests against migrants</b>	2,8	3,3	<b>2,7</b>	5,3	4,6	<b>5,2</b>
<b>statistics &amp; background coverage</b>	2,6	6,1	<b>4,1</b>	0,0	4,9	<b>3,8</b>
<b>other</b>	4,0	7,4	<b>6,1</b>	6,8	4,6	<b>4,6</b>
<b>Total</b>	100	100	<b>100</b>	100	100	<b>100</b>

Note: The column 'all' includes all outlets in a region, including those with no discernible political stance (see Table 2). Based on 2 417 articles. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11.-15.11.15, 04.01.-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

<sup>13</sup> The differentiation of East and West used here follows the borders of the East-West conflict of the 20th century that also had implications on the experience with migrants and refugees that may continue to have effects today. Some countries cannot be clearly attributed to one group (such as neutral Switzerland), but they are closer to one of the two with regards to their recent migration history: Consequently, 'Western Europe' comprises France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, the UK and also Greece and Switzerland; 'Eastern Europe' comprises Belarus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia, Ukraine and also Albania.

The same disproportion is visible for the coverage of the issue of ‘the situation of, and help for, migrants and refugees’. While outlets in Western Europe generally report more frequently on the topic, it is even more visible in Western Europe’s liberal-left outlets (10.7 per cent) than the region’s conservative outlets (6.9 per cent). A similar comparison, but of smaller statistics apply to Eastern Europe’s liberal-left outlets (5.3 per cent) and conservative outlets (3.8 per cent), both of which are below the comparable numbers for conservative outlets in Western Europe.<sup>14</sup>

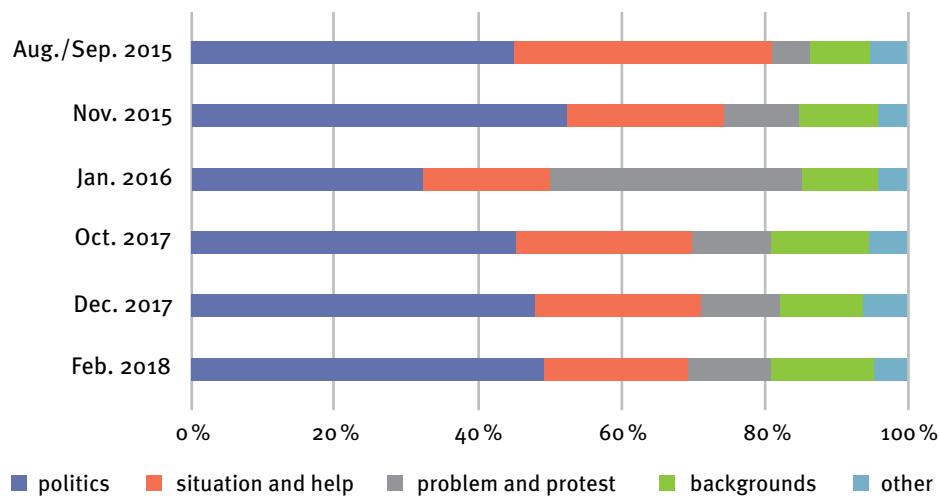
Striking differences in the emphasis of coverage can be found between countries. ‘Help

for migrants’ accounted for 19 per cent of all articles in Germany’s *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and 17 per in Spain’s *La Razón*. In these outlets, ‘help for migrants’ was the second most visible topic after political debates. In the UK’s *The Guardian*, ‘help for migrants’ ranked third (16 per cent), after political debates and the situation of migrants. In contrast, *Le Figaro*, *El País*, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* as well as the Albanian and Belarus outlets did not publish any articles with a focus on ‘help for migrants.’

USA outlets are not included in Table 3. They largely ignore economic aspects (1.1 per cent of articles) as well as cultural and religious backgrounds (0.5 per cent), but they ac-

**Figure 13**

### Topics (simplified) in the analysed six weeks of media coverage



Based on 2 417 articles. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11.-15.11.15, 04.01.-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: own illustration.

<sup>14</sup> However, this does not always mean that events were presented positively or negatively. Even reports about help and support for migrants can have a negative tone (e.g. when residents providing help are criticized, or criminalized), while reports about protests and problems can contain a positive message (e.g. when xenophobic demonstrations are criticized in the coverage).

tually have the highest share of articles with individual stories about migrants and refugees (6.8 per cent), and report intensely about reactions against immigration, e.g. xenophobic demonstrations (8.9 per cent).

It is also interesting to see that domestic coverage on migration and refugee flows has more positive connotations than foreign coverage. When migration is covered as foreign reporting, problems with migrants are also reported more frequently (10.8 per cent). In domestic coverage, articles dealing with problems have a lower share (6.5 per cent of the articles). In the context of the situation of, and help for migrants, the positions are reversed with more articles in domestic coverage (11.5 per cent) than foreign coverage (4.1 per cent). These results may be read as proof for Hafez' thesis about negativism in foreign co-

verage, which argues that "the construction of a negative-chaotic world abroad correlates with the construction of a positive-harmonic domestic world" (Hafez 2002: 61).

Comparing key topics of coverage over the six study weeks, two weeks stand out: First, the study week of August/September 2015 and second, the study week of January 2016. In the first of these two, the most intense coverage applied to political debates followed by the issue of 'the situation of, and help provided to, migrants and refugees'. Problems with migrants and refugees and protests against them were only addressed in small shares of articles. In this first study week, only Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* from Russia report more on 'problems and protests' than about 'situation and help'. The *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* is also the only outlet with a constant focus

Table 4

**Share of articles on 'situation & help' and 'problems & protest' in Western and Central & Eastern European outlets (as percentages of total coverage)**

	Western Europe		Central & Eastern Europe	
	situation & help	problem & protest	situation & help	problem & protest
<b>August/September 2015</b>	36,1	3,0	36,6	7,7
<b>November 2015</b>	22,4	7,1	21,5	15,1
<b>January 2016</b>	21,7	23,6	14,3	46,9
<b>October 2017</b>	27,8	9,3	18,8	14,5
<b>December 2017</b>	26,3	7,1	18,2	10,1
<b>February 2018</b>	16,2	8,1	17,6	14,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,4</b>	<b>7,7</b>	<b>25,6</b>	<b>16,3</b>

Note: Based on 860 articles on the above-mentioned topics in European outlets. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11.-15.11.15, 04.01.-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

on ‘problems and protests’ as opposed to ‘situation and help’ over all six study weeks.

In the second study week there is an increase of coverage on problems with and protests against migrants and refugees directly after the sexual assaults committed by migrants and refugees on New Year’s Eve in several of Germany’s cities.

The week also revealed the highly visible division between outlets in Eastern and Western Europe, as well as along political profiles. Western European outlets in general, as well as left-liberal outlets across Europe, offered a more or less balanced mix of stories focusing on ‘problems and protests’ and ‘situation and help’ (see Table 4). Media with a conservative profile across Europe, as well as outlets in Eastern Europe in general, clearly emphasized problems with migrants and refugees in this study

week. In Eastern European outlets, the share of articles about ‘problems and protests’ is three times higher, in Eastern European outlets with a conservative profile even four times higher than the share of articles about ‘help and support’.

However, our analysis also shows that the patterns of coverage in Western Europe changed over time as well. The number of articles focusing on ‘situation and help’ for migrants and refugees declines from 36.1 per cent in the first study week in August/September 2015 to 16.2 per cent in the last study week February 2018.

In most of the study countries, the audience has a choice between media outlets with different perspectives on migrants and refugees. Regarding the issues of ‘situation and help’ (SH) and ‘problems and protests’ (PP), in Germany, the shares for *Süddeutsche Zeitung* were

**Table 5**

**Share of articles on ‘situation & help’ and ‘problems & protest’ by the political stances of analysed left and right wing outlets (as percentages of total coverage)**

	left-wing/liberal		right-wing/conservative	
	situation & help	problem & protest	situation & help	problem & protest
<b>August/September 2015</b>	39,4	4,2	31,1	6,6
<b>November 2015</b>	28,1	8,1	16,7	12,6
<b>January 2016</b>	30,1	28,0	11,3	40,7
<b>October 2017</b>	38,1	7,9	14,3	11,7
<b>December 2017</b>	30,8	12,3	14,7	9,5
<b>February 2018</b>	30,4	7,1	12,6	13,6
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,9</b>	<b>10,2</b>	<b>21,0</b>	<b>13,9</b>

Note: Based on 722 articles in outlets with either a left wing or right wing political stance. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11.-15.11.15, 04.01.-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

41 per cent (SH) and 13 per cent (PP) but lower for *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (11 per cent for SH and 15 per cent for PP). In Hungary, the shares for *index.hu* were similar to *Süddeutsche Zeitung's* with 33 per cent (SH) and 15 per cent (PP), whereas the proportions for both SH and PP in *Magyar Hírlap* were the same at 27 per cent. While SH was a very visible topic in Italy's outlets, *Corriere della Sera's* share for PP was 16 per cent, the highest we have found across Western European outlets. In Russia, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* published double as much articles on PP (21.6 per cent) than on SH (9.8 per cent), while articles in *Kommersant* were balanced between PP and SH (11.5 per cent each).

#### **4.5 “Giving a voice to the voiceless”? Main actors and speakers of coverage**

##### **4.5.1 Politicians, migrants and citizens as main actors**

Politicians are the main actors in 51 per cent of all articles retrieved by our study. In most cases, these are representatives of governments and international organizations, whereas representatives from opposition parties have a low share of coverage. The clear preference for government actors (as opposed to opposition actors) may reflect the high share of articles covering migrants and refugees in an international, not in a domestic context. From a foreign coverage perspective, national opposition actors are usually less newsworthy than members of government.

As expected, national politicians are often the main actors in the media of their countries.<sup>15</sup> Jean-Claude Juncker and Donald Tusk, both EU government actors, were more visible in non-EU than in EU media. The German government is the most visible political institution across countries (8.9 per cent of articles). German Chancellor Angela Merkel, alone, is the main actor in 4.1 per cent of articles, and thus receives even more coverage than at home (3.5 per cent), where media refer more often to Germany's government as a whole. Angela Merkel is particularly visible as main actor in France's coverage (10.5 per cent of articles). Only Russia's and Belarus' media do not refer to Merkel as the main actor. In comparison, Angela Merkel is also much more visible in media across countries than Viktor Orbán (1.6 per cent), Donald Trump (1.4 per cent) or David Cameron (1.0 per cent).<sup>16</sup>

Outlets in EU member states, in comparison with non-EU states, had a lower share of articles with politicians as important actors, as they gave more visibility to migrants and refugees as the main ones (28.6 per cent of articles in EU outlets, 16.4 per cent in outlets from other European states). In the USA outlets, the share of articles giving prominence to government representatives equals the share of EU countries' outlets, while the share of international organizations as main actors is only half as big. The EU is the only organization receiving continuous coverage in the USA, and even more

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<sup>15</sup> It might be no surprise that the governments of Portugal, Albania and Belarus are solely mentioned in the outlets of their own countries.

<sup>16</sup> Neither Trump nor Cameron were in office in all the study weeks.

coverage than in the EU itself. However, no individual EU politician is presented as a main actor in USA coverage.

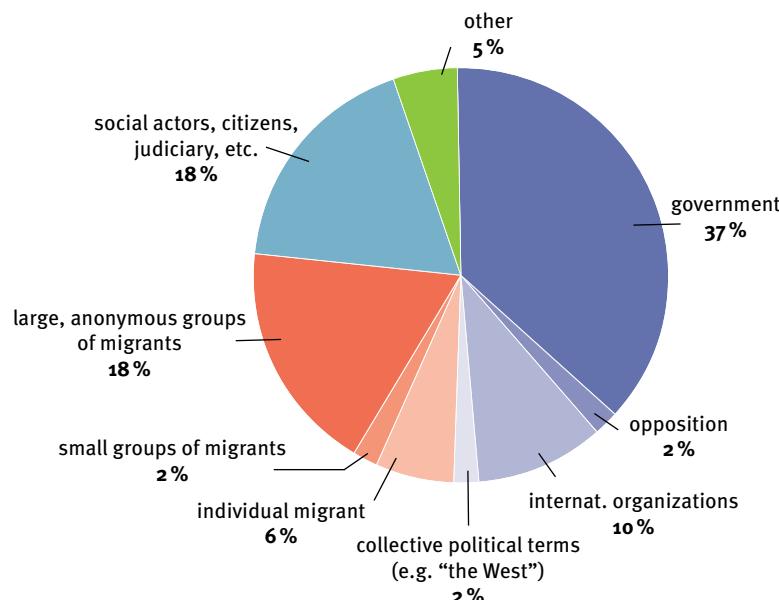
About a quarter (26.6 per cent) of all articles presented migrants and refugees, as the main actors. They are represented much more often as large, anonymous groups (18 per cent) than as individuals (6 per cent) or small groups like families, whose members remain discernible as individuals (2 per cent). *Magyar Hírlap* from Hungary covers the topic without featuring one single migrant or refugee as a main actor in all six study weeks. In the USA, groups of migrants

have a similar representation than in the EU outlets, but individual migrants and refugees are much more visible in the USA outlets as compared to all other study countries.

In absolute numbers, we found 111 articles with individual adult or teenager migrants or refugees as main actors, 89 of which described male migrants or refugees, and only 22 of which described female migrants and refugees. However, according to UN data (IOM 2019b), women comprise the majority of migrants and refugees in Europe (51.4 per cent) as well as in the USA (51.7 per cent).<sup>17</sup> Moreover, 30 ar-

**Figure 14**

#### Main actor groups in coverage of migration



Note: Based on 2 417 articles. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11-15.11.15, 04.01-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

<sup>17</sup> These numbers include all migrants, not only those who have arrived recently and probably receive most attention in media outlets' coverage. For the arrivals to Europe in recent years, a lower share of women is often reported. Based on data from the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2017), 33.5 per cent of those asking for asylum in Germany between 2012 and 2016 were women. But even if men make up 66.5 per cent of the population of new arrivals, they are still overrepresented in the coverage.

ticles focused on minors as main actors (21 per cent of all articles with a discernable migrant/refugee individual). This means that children are over-represented in coverage as well, compared with their actual share in migrant and refugee population of 8.8 per cent in Europe and 8.7 per cent in the USA.<sup>18</sup> The over-representation of children and minors could be explained by the high (negative) news value of children affected by the hardship of migrants and refugees.

Citizens and representatives of society are featured as main actors in 18 per cent of the articles. Media outlet coverage in Germany focuses on citizens and civil society actors, who are present as main actors in 35 per cent of articles in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and 30 per cent in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Private and institutional actors providing help are more visible as main actors in Germany than in any other country (7.5 per cent for Germany;

**Table 6**

**Different actor groups in media outlet coverage from non-EU and EU-countries and the USA (as percentages of all articles in the groups of countries)**

	Non-EU-States in Europe	EU member states	USA
<b>government</b>	45,3	34,7	34,7
<b>opposition</b>	1,2	2,5	3,7
<b>international organizations</b>	10,9	9,8	5,3
<b>collective political terms (e.g. "the West")</b>	0,2	1,7	4,7
<b>individual migrant</b>	5,9	5,6	11,1
<b>small group of migrants</b>	2,0	2,8	2,6
<b>large, anonymous group of migrants</b>	8,5	20,2	22,6
<b>social actors, citizens, judiciary, etc.</b>	17,8	18,6	14,2
<b>other</b>	8,1	4,1	1,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Based on 2 417 articles. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11.-15.11.15, 04.01.-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

<sup>18</sup> Even when taken into account that the UN defines minors until the age of 19; while this study coded teenagers together with adults.

11 per cent for *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, compared to 2.8 per cent of articles in the full sample). The only other country with a high visibility of private and institutional actors providing help is Greece (7.0 per cent of all main actors).

International organizations' visibility as main actors varies over time. They are coded as main actors in 15.8 per cent of the articles in November 2015 and 18.4 per cent in December 2017, but only in 1 per cent of the articles in October 2017.

As main actors, security forces appear in 2.9 per cent of all articles and traffickers (individuals and organized groups) in 1.2. They are most present in the two Hungarian outlets (5.0 per cent), while 21 of the 33 outlets under study do not cover them as main actors at all.

#### **4.5.2 The invisible migrants and refugees**

In the 2417 articles analyzed for this study, 751 migrants and refugees could be identified as individually recognizable persons. This number is independent from their share of main actors; we now counted all migrants and refugees appearing in each article.

Migrants and refugees are rarely given a voice in the articles. The share of migrants and refugees given a voice in the articles was especially low in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (average of 0.09 migrants and refugees per article), *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (average of 0.02 migrants, which equates to a single migrant in all articles), *Magyar Hírlap* (0.04) and *Shqiptarja.com* (0.09). The Ukrainian news portal *lb.ua* did not refer to a single individual migrant in all of its coverage.

Various traditions of journalism might impact on the reporting patterns in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. Post-Soviet political journalism prefers opinion pieces and analytical genres over features, which require actual protagonists to tell a story.

However, also in European countries, coverage featuring either or both migrants and refugees as recognizable individuals is rather low. The highest shares can be found in *Aktualne.cz* (average of 0.44 per article), *Gazeta Wyborcza* (0.48) and the two Spanish outlets *El País* (0.46) and *La Razón* (0.67). *La Razón* is the only European outlet in our sample presenting a migrant or refugee in more than every second article.

Either or both migrants and refugees were most visible as individuals in the USA newspapers under study. Almost a quarter of articles featuring migrants and refugees as recognizable individuals have appeared in the *Washington Post* (average of 0.84 per article) and the *New York Times*, which is the only outlet featuring at least one migrant in every article (103 migrants in 100 articles analyzed).

#### **4.5.3 The silent migrants and refugees**

According to our data, migrants and refugees are not only under-represented in coverage, but they also rarely speak for themselves. From the 751 identifiable migrants and refugees, only 411 were directly or indirectly quoted and only 10 per cent of the articles gave a voice to the migrants and refugees themselves. Across countries, slightly more than every second migrant appearing in an article is also

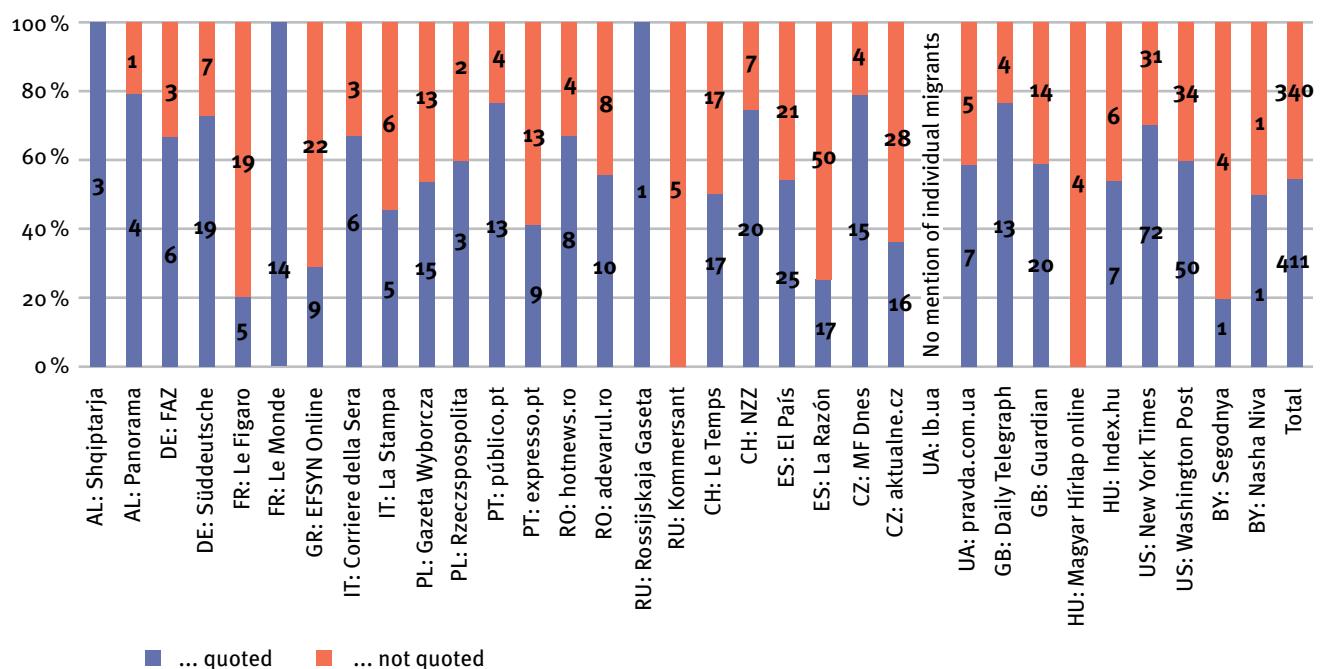
quoted and the results are almost equal for Western and Eastern Europe (51 per cent and 52 per cent). However, there are special cases. While *lb.ua* does not feature migrants at all, migrants and refugees who do appear in *Magyarlílap* (four individuals) and *Kommersant* (five individuals) remain completely silent as none of them is quoted.

Again, the USA outlets in our study display distinctive patterns of coverage. Not only do USA outlets feature the highest representation of individual migrants and refugees, they also quote them more frequently (65 per cent)

compared to 51.2 per cent of European outlets' articles. While only every second migrant or refugee featured in European outlets is also quoted, the ratio is two out of three in the USA. This might be due to the Anglo-Saxon tradition of feature articles and stories told by individuals. Our USA partner also mentions the potential impact of professional standards, as the Society of Professional Journalists encourages media professionals to give "a voice to the voiceless" (SPJ 2014). Within Europe, *El País* is the outlet with the highest number of migrants and refugees being quoted.

Figure 15

Visible and quoted migrants in the coverage by outlets and country



Outlets: FAZ – Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung; EFSYN – Efimerida ton Syntakton; NZZ – Neue Zürcher Zeitung.

Note: Based on 751 migrants identified in 354 out of 2 417 articles. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11.-15.11.15, 04.01.-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

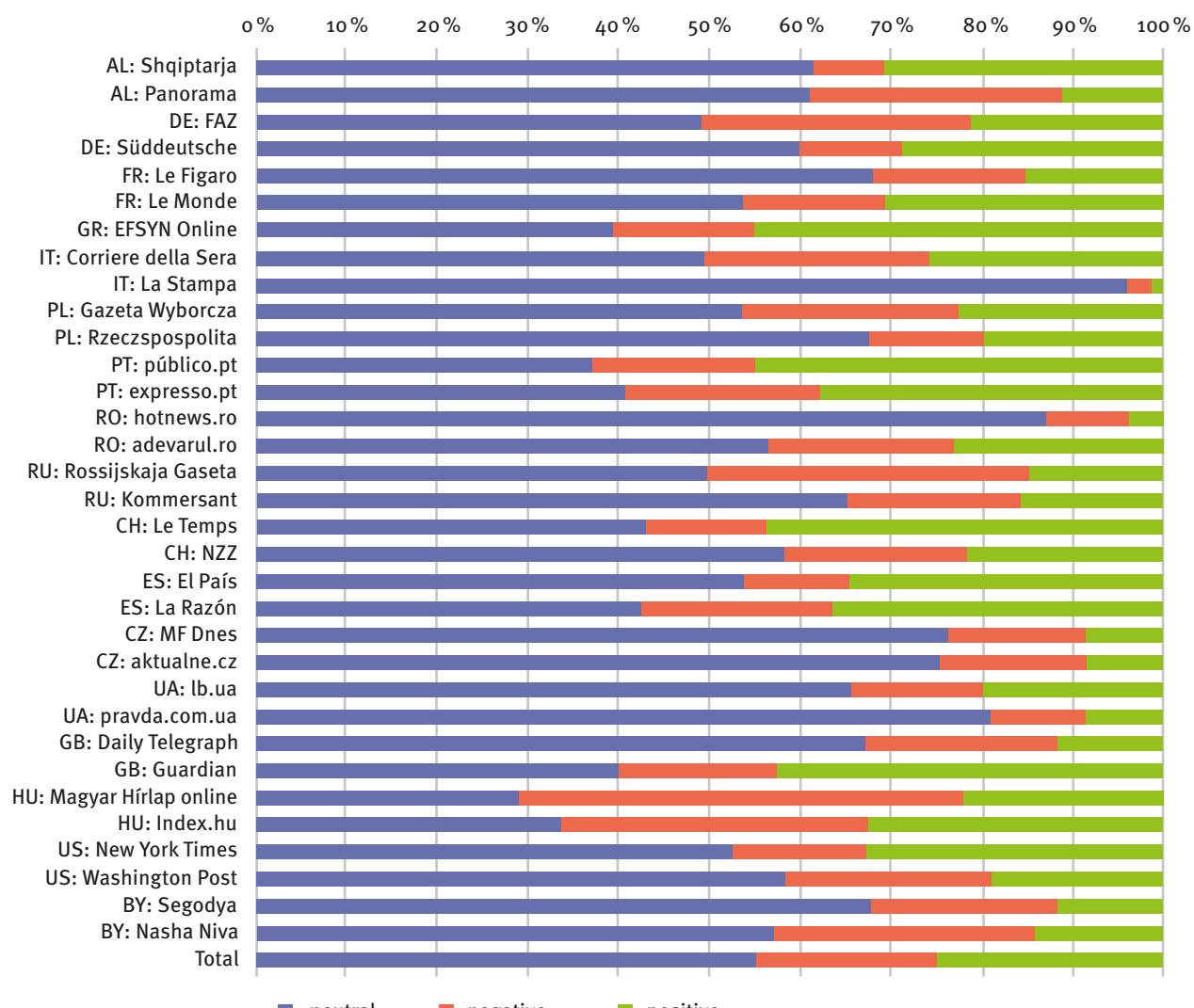
#### 4.5.4 Non-migrant speakers

The study also coded all other actors directly or indirectly quoted in the articles. Besides the 411 migrants and refugees mentioned already, we have counted 4 267 non-migrant speakers

(NMS). Their quotes on matters of migrants and refugees were coded as positive/defensive, negative/critical, or neutral/ambivalent. If one speaker was featured with more than one quote, coders were advised to make an assess-

**Figure 16**

#### Non-migrant speakers and their position towards migrants and refugees in the analysed outlets coverage



Outlets: FAZ – *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*; EFSYN – *Efimerida ton Syntakton*; NZZ – *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*.

Note: Based on 4 267 speakers in 1 796 out of 2 417 articles. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11-15.11.15, 04.01-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

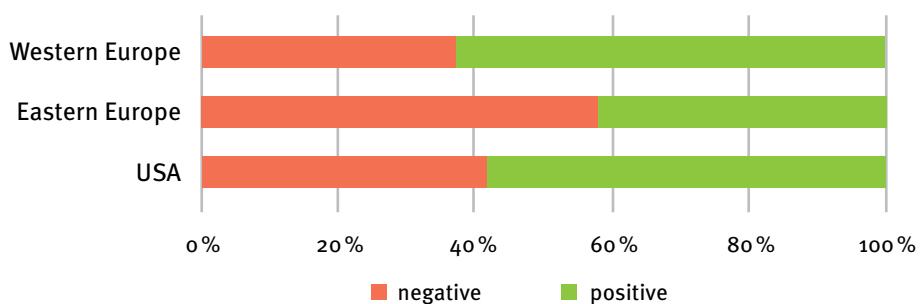
ment of the overall tendency of all quotes in the article – several contemplative quotes could lead to ambivalent coding.

Quotes from 2 354 non-migrant speakers (NMS) (55 per cent) were coded as neutral or ambivalent. A clearly positive or clearly negative attitude by NMS towards migrants and refugees impacted on the tone of coverage.

We counted 1 913 NMS with either a decisively positive or negative attitude towards migrants and refugees. Quotes from 25 per cent of the NMS (a total of 1 070) were positive, 20 per cent (843) were negative. Western European (63 per cent) and USA outlets (58 per cent) quoted more NMS with positive attitudes towards migrants and refugees than Eastern Europe, where NMS

**Figure 17**

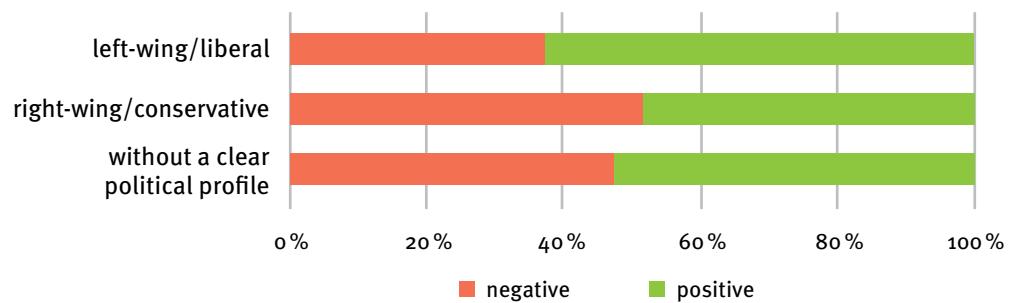
**Non-migrant speakers and their position towards refugees and migration by region**



Note: Based on 1 913 non-migrant speakers with a decidedly negative or positive opinion. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11.-15.11.15, 04.01.-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

**Figure 18**

**Non-migrant speakers and their opinion about refugees and migration by political stance of the quoting outlets**



Note: Based on 1 913 non-migrant speakers with a decidedly negative or positive opinion. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11.-15.11.15, 04.01.-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: own illustration.

with negative attitudes were over-represented (58 per cent). Exceptions to this established pattern are Italy in Western Europe and Poland in Eastern Europe.

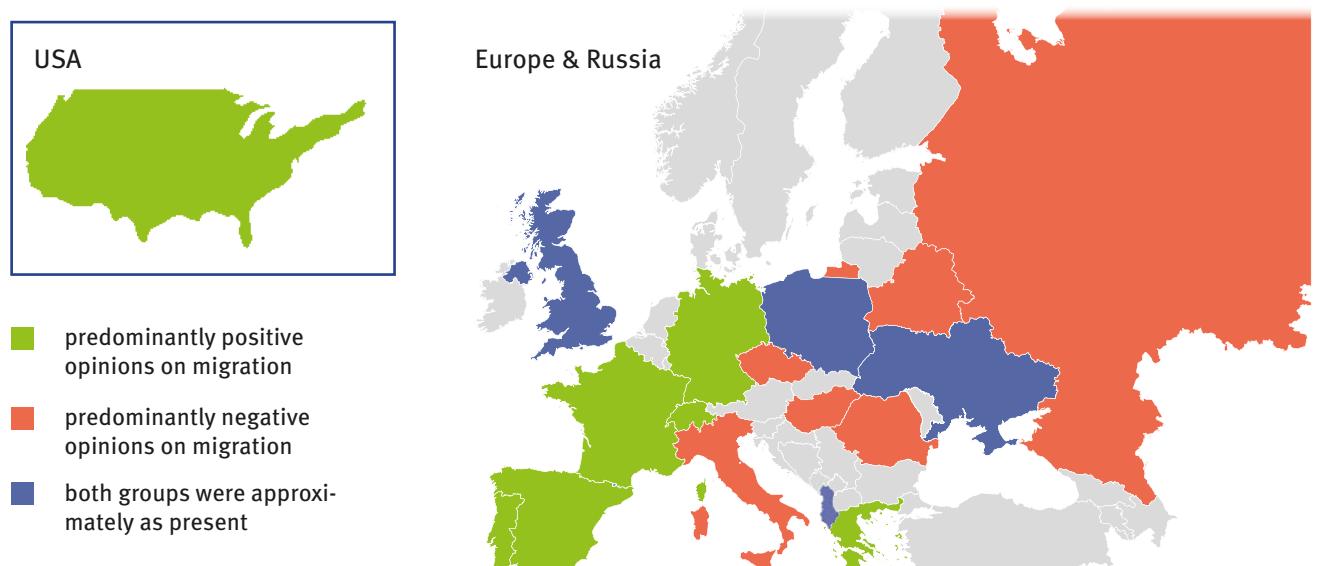
Clustered along political profiles (see Figure 18), the study finds an over-representation of NMS with a positive attitude towards migrants and refugees in outlets with a liberal-left editorial line (62 per cent). More balanced reporting patterns occur for conservative outlets (52 per cent negative versus 48 percent positive speakers) and outlets without a clear political profile (47 per cent negative versus 53 per cent positive speakers).

Analysis by country points roughly to a division between East and West (see Figure 19): The media outlets in Western Europe and the USA – with the exception of Italy – focus on voices defending migration and migrants. In Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Russia, Belarus and also Italy, critical voices made up the majority.

However, our study data also indicates that mediated debates are not uniform in the two media outlets in each study country. The audience frequently has a choice. If we take a closer look at the two outlets analyzed in each country, they offer across most countries con-

**Figure 19**

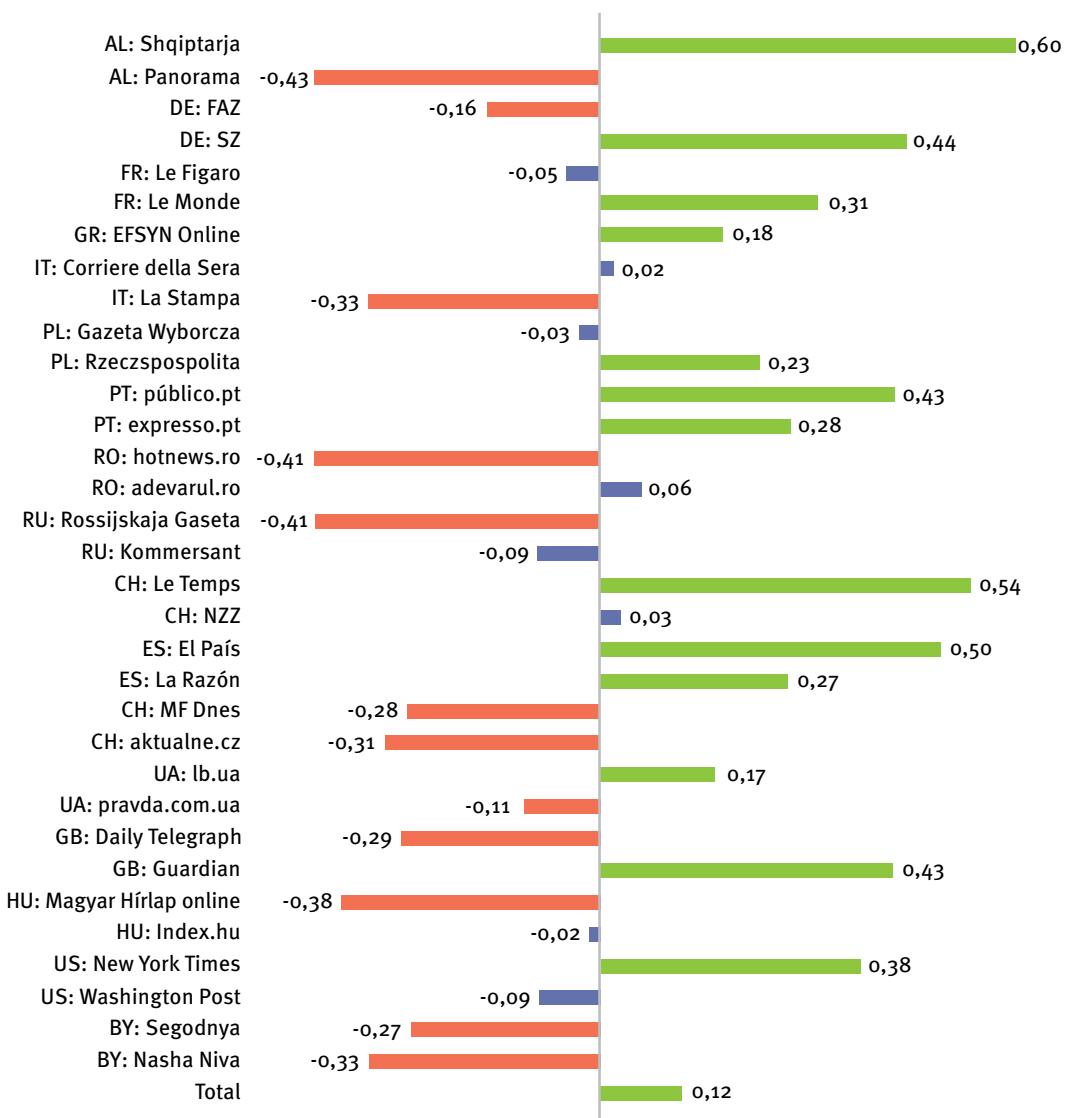
### The dominant presence of opinionated non-migrant speakers



Based on 1913 non-migrant speakers with a decidedly negative or positive opinion. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11-15.11.15, 04.01-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

Figure 20

Ratio of non-migrant speakers with a clear opinion in the analysed outlets



Key: Acronym Outlets: FAZ – Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung; SZ – S<sup>u</sup>ddeutsche Zeitung; EFSYN – Efimerida ton Syntakton; NZZ – Neue Z<sup>u</sup>rcher Zeitung; NYT – New York Times. Note: -1 represents only negative, +1 only positive opinions. Results between -0,1 and 0,1 were coloured in blue to signal a balanced selection. Based on 1 913 non-migrant speakers with a decidedly negative or positive opinion. Periods of study: 31.08.-06.09.15, 09.11-15.11.15, 04.01-10.01.16, 09.10.-15.10.17, 11.12.-17.12.17, 19.02.-25.02.18. Source: Own illustration.

trasting perspectives on migrants and refugees. In Germany and the UK, as well as in the Ukraine and Albania, news organizations have even strikingly contrasting perspectives. One outlet published many positive quotes, the other many negative quotes.<sup>19</sup> In many other countries, one outlet displays an almost balanced selection of quotes with positive and negative attitudes, while the other national outlet overrepresents speakers with negative attitudes (Italy, Hungary, Romania, Russia)<sup>20</sup> or positive attitudes (Poland, France, Switzerland, USA).<sup>21</sup> Only in Spain and Portugal, do

both outlets place a similar emphasis on positive quotes; by contrast in the Czech Republic and Belarus, both outlets feature predominantly negative quotes.

For a better visualization (see Figure 20), we deducted the share of negative quotes from the share of positive quotes, to reach values between -1 (all non-migrant speakers with a clear position are quoted with negative attitudes towards migrants/refugees) and 1 (all non-migrant speakers with a clear position are quoted with positive attitudes towards migrants/refugees).

<sup>19</sup> The most polarized situation was found in Albania, where *Shqiptarja.com* had the strongest focus on positive voices among all analysed media, while *Panorama* represented a higher share of negative opinions than any other media.

<sup>20</sup> In Italy, the comparably rather left-leaning *La Stampa* represented predominantly negative opinions. However, this newspaper hardly represented any opinionated voices (2 negative, 1 positive) as opposed to neutral speakers (71).

<sup>21</sup> In Poland, the more conservative *Rzeczpospolita* represented more positive opinions (16 positive, 10 negative), while *Gazeta Wyborcza* included more non-migrant speakers with a clear opinion, but in a balanced selection (33 positive/35 negative).

## 5 Discussion

Our analysis shows that the mediated debates about migration in Western and Eastern Europe are more differentiated, and less stereotypical, as often assumed. Indeed, coverage in media outlets in Western Europe feature more positive aspects and speakers compared to the outlets in Central and Eastern Europe. However, even in Hungary and Poland – two countries marked by very problematic developments in media policy – the outlets involved in the study offer a complex picture. The migration-critical stance of outlets closely related to the government is contrasted by the complex coverage of independent outlets. The case of *Magyar Hírlap* may serve as an illustrative example how outlets close to the government – in this case the massive anti-migration campaign of Prime Minister Orbán – ignore professional norms. Indeed, *Magyar Hírlap* did not include a single migrant or refugee in the total of 301 articles it has published in the study period.

The study identifies professional challenges for outlets in other countries. Similar to previous studies, this study shows that migrants and refugees are mostly covered as a large, anonymous group. Rarely are they identified as individuals, and rarely do they speak for themselves. But our study also shows that the majority of articles only vaguely at best indicate context and origin countries of migrants. Neither do they make a clear distinction between refugees with protected status and migrants. Certainly, this remains a challenge, given editorial constraints and incomplete information in everyday practice. However, journalists should

strive to make use of the correct definitions especially in countries where governments deliberately use incorrect labels. Taking the very low share of background articles into account as well, media users across Europe may find it hard to come to their own informed conclusions on migrants and refugees.

Another aspect is the plurality of political positions being covered in the articles. Our study data point towards a striking overrepresentation of government actors, as opposed to opposition actors. Certainly, this focus on the executive power makes sense with regard to the high share of articles framing migrants and refugees as foreign coverage. However, it may also make the mediated debate more uniform, and may help form stereotypes about neighboring countries being either ‘pro-migration’ or ‘contra-migration’.

Apart from the European refugee crisis, the study also highlights coverage in the USA and Russia. In Russia (and Belarus), the arrival of migrants and refugees from Eastern Ukraine is a relevant topic, which receives only little attention in Europe. In the United States, *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* tend to report positively about migration – opposing the anti-migration policy of Donald Trump.

From a German perspective, the comparative approach may contain many surprises. The sheer quantity of coverage points towards Germany’s unique position in the European migration debate. The hesitance of many EU states to agree on a ‘European solution’ for migration, refugee and asylum policy may derive from very different debates across European countries.

Beyond Germany, many outlets portray movements of migrants and refugees as events taking place abroad – not within national borders. The research consortium of this study hopes to sensitize for migrants and refugees debates beyond national borders, and avoid stereotypical mutual perceptions.

The study also reminds us how important it is that journalists from different European countries discuss about their perceptions, and that we foster an exchange between journalists

from origin, transit, and destination countries, in order to develop a more complex understanding of the phenomena of migrants and refugees. The topic also needs to be taught and trained more systematically in journalism education. Building on numerous intercultural trainings, the Erich Brost Institute for International Journalism will present a model curriculum on media and migration for international journalism education in the course of the year 2020.

## Appendix

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**Country codes:**

AL	Albania	HU	Hungary
BY	Belarus	IT	Italy
CH	Switzerland	PT	Portugal
CZ	Czech Republic	PL	Poland
DE	Germany	RO	Romania
ES	Spain	RU	Russia
FR	France	UA	Ukraine
GB	United Kingdom	US	United States of America
GR	Greece		

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## **OBS Working Paper 39**

**Migration coverage in Europe's media**  
A comparative analysis of coverage in 17 countries