UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

MASTER'S THESIS

MEDIA'S IMPACT ON PUBLIC OPINION REGARDING IMMIGRATION

Ljubljana, April 2021   ESTA ÇARÇIU

AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

The undersigned Esta Çarçiu, a student at the University of Ljubljana, School of Economics and Business, (hereafter: SEB LU), author of this written final work of studies with the title Media's impact on public opinion regarding immigration, prepared under supervision of Denis Marinšek, PhD.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EU- European Union

TA- Thematic analysis

INTRODUCTION

The media is a snapshot of our society, depicting what and how society functions. The only mechanism that aids in informing people is media, whether written, electronic, or on the internet. It also aids in entertaining the public, as well as educating and informing people about current events (Singh & Pandey, 2017).

Media is a powerful tool; hence, it is almost impossible to ignore the influence of it, moreover, its impact and effect will continue to grow in the future (Hiebert & Reuss, 1985). Years ago, people were using books, newspapers, and magazines to become informed while now this communication process has been through changes with the new presence of the internet (Blinder & Jeannet, 2014). Society depends on the media because the media provide them with a magnificent panorama of how the reality is (Croteau, Hoynes & Hoynes, 2006).

In recent years, Europe is facing a massive number of migrants coming from other countries but also immigrants from within the EU, as this number continues to increase the anxiety and concerns of the local rise (Esses, Medianu, & Lawson, 2013). Immigration, mentioned by more than a third of respondents conducted by euro barometer, is still seen as the main problem facing the EU, after an increase in concerns about climate change and the environment (European commission, 2019).

Since the start of the European refugee crisis five years ago, migration-related controversies have had a major effect on political environments around the EU (Fengler & Kreutler, 2020). Globalization, which includes increased immigration, is altering our communities' fundamental character at a faster rate than at any other time since World War II. People are worried that the rapid speed of change has robbed them of power over their lives and that their societies' very identities are changing in front of their eyes. The ethnic and cultural diversity of European societies, however, is not adequately reflected in the European media, especially in the depiction and representation of immigrants in the mainstream media (Papademetriou & Heuser, 2009).

According to a systematic review, the bulk of media attention on migration is framed and recorded in the news format. Editorials and investigative or background research on the subject, on the other hand, are almost non-existent. This fact can contribute to the inference that migration is only considered acceptable from an informational view.

The media's coverage of immigrants and immigration significantly impacts public opinion, reflecting and influencing the policy debate's parameters. In some instances, the media acts as an autonomous social agent rather than merely a mediating entity that represents contemporary issues, and it is necessary to consider this.

Immigration policies and how immigrants and refugees are handled are thorny topics fraught with ambiguity and unease. The media may use this confusion to establish a crisis

culture in which immigrants and refugees are represented as "enemies at the door" trying to occupy Western countries (Esses, Medianu, & Lawson, 2013). Far-right and even mainstream parties often describe immigrants as a challenge to economic growth and cultural identity. Even if the generally accepted criteria for assessing immigrants contribute to economic development, the point is that this narrative has been supplanted by rhetoric connecting immigrants to problems such as crime and, lately, terrorism (Caviedes, 2015).

In these circumstances, it is crucial that the two actors involved in the integration process, immigrants and recipients, be linked to a stable integration policy. Appropriate policy formulation at all levels, from engaging civil society to national capitals, depends mainly on conditions. It is possible to achieve a long-term framework that balances both sides' concerns. Short-sighted policies that prioritize politics over fact can be costly in every way (Penninx, 2003).

The aim of this work is to contribute to the literature about media and immigration. The research aims to examine the role of the media in shaping public opinion on immigration. The study of the media's role in influencing public opinion on such a subject is one of this research project's key goals. The findings would aid in investigating the role of the media in assisting immigrants in their integration into society. This study aims to assess the media's effect on society (Papademetriou & Heuser, 2009).

Research objectives: This research will show whether negative or positive disclosure, publication, and broadcasting in the media about immigration and immigrants contribute to negative or positive attitudes toward mobility and immigrants. The aim of this work is to answer the research questions presented below:

- Is media inciting racism and xenophobia?

- How much is the media shaping voters' views, opinions, and feelings?

- What is the media's role in the discrimination of immigrants?

- How can the media help the immigrants integrate into society?

Methodology: Both theoretical and empirical analysis will be included in this study. Statistical data from European Commission surveys, studies, and reports are used to support the theoretical part. Other academic papers, books, and articles will supplement the initial theoretical section with data and a transparent representation of relationship between citizens, information, and media. Empirical research, which will be the central part of this master thesis, will introduce qualitative data collection based on in-depth interviews and focus groups. The qualitative method is the most appropriate methodology since the topic itself requires human interaction about keen interests performing. There are conducted twenty-one individually in-depth interviews using open-ended questions with natives Europeans of different backgrounds, statuses, and ages. To achieve such an understanding, it is important to focus on how people speak and

understand immigration. Therefore, qualitative methods are commonly used for this type of research. As a result, a focus group of six people was created.

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1 MEDIA

This chapter explains the media's role in society, the usage, and the trust that European Union citizens have in the media. It also delves further into describing how the media portrays immigrants in Belgium's Flemish region, where anti-immigrant parties received many votes.

1.1 Media trust in European Union

Since 2011 the way respondents have ranked the media depending on the trust they have has not changed. According to European Commission (2013), radio is classified as the most trusted media with 57 percent, followed by television in second place with 53 percent, press with 43, and the internet with 37. Trust in the media depends on everyone's age, education, and financial situation. According to the survey, those who have financial difficulties and have problems paying various bills trust media less than others. Trust in the media also depends on the education of the respondents.

From those who have an education from the age of 20 onwards, 63% believe in radio, 50% in the press, and 46% on the internet. Compared to 51%, 36%, and 15%, respectively, those without education have dropped out of school under the age of 16. The most respondents still believe they are ill and poorly informed in respect to European affairs (European Commission, 2013).

The Europeans think that their country's citizens are not well informed about European affairs, which reaches 73% compared to 24% who think otherwise. The percentage of those people who think of themselves as misinformed reaches 66 %. Eurobarometer shows that 70% of Europeans have the website as their preferred source of information on national political issues, followed by institutional websites with 24%, social internet

networks 20%, blogs counted 10%, and at the bottom of the list the video hosting websites 7% (European Commission, 2013).

1.2 Media usage in Europe

Despite the fact there has been a slight change in the way media is used in recent years, the European Commission (2012) has reported that television remains the most common medium in Europe, with 81 % of those polled watching TV in 2019. Although conventional media such as radio and print newspapers are declining in popularity, social media and the internet are growing in importance. More than two-thirds of European respondents, in 2019, said they use the internet every day. Eight years ago, the share was just half of what it is now.

 In 2019, 77 percent of Europeans watched television on a regular or nearly daily basis. With a share of 94 %, Portugal had the most people watching TV on a television set, followed by Croatia (91 %). Traditional television was not as common in Germany, Luxembourg, Sweden, or Finland, where only about two-thirds of surveyed watched TV daily. The percentage of Swedes who watch online television has increased significantly, notably amongst youngers. In 2019 the percentage of 15–24-year-old watching TV was 65 % compared to 32 % in 2011.

Radio is regarded as the third most crucial medium in European countries, after the internet and television. According to the poll mentioned earlier, radio use has declined significantly in recent years, hitting 48 % of people in 2019. Furthermore, radio had the highest confidence level – 57 % of Europeans appeared to trust this medium that year (European Commission, 2012).

In contrast, just 20 % of people believed in social media. With 65 and 66 % of regular users in each region, radio was the most popular medium in Slovenia and Ireland. Luxembourg (63 %) and Slovakia (62 %) came in second and third, respectively.

In contrast to other types of advertising, the written press has the smallest audience. For example, in the Netherlands, newspapers reached just around 40% of people in 2018, falling from 66.5 % in 2010. In Norway, a similar pattern can be observed.

The elderly, in particular, rely heavily on print media in this regard. In 2019, people aged 67 to 79 spent 34 minutes reading newspapers. Just four minutes a day are spent reading newspapers by people aged 25 to 44 (Stoll, 2020).

1.3 The role of media

The term media is derived from the Latin word "medius," which signifies "middle." "The communication media are the various technical processes that enable communication between the sender of a message and the recipient of that message (Croteau & Hoynes, 2013). Therefore, this is an essential point; using media is a two-way approach. Besides knowing how the message is sent, academics argue that knowing how this message is received is of great importance. The intimate contact of sender and recipient that

characterizes personal correspondence is impossible with mass media messages. Mass media is pervasive in our daily lives (Croteau & Hoynes, 2013).

The arrival of genuinely mass-oriented radio broadcasts in the early 1920s and the widespread availability of television sets after World War II began to erode newspapers' position as the most important medium. Following its rapid growth in the 1990s and early twenty-first century, the Internet has become the newest addition to mainstream media.

As shown in Figure 1, democratic societies have a complex and dynamic relationship among the media, policymakers, and the general public opinion. Through what they broadcast; mass communication plays an important role in influencing public opinion on many important issues. They play an essential role in influencing popular culture by choosing and presenting a specific set of beliefs, values, and practices. That is, they form to represent reality according to their perception of reality (Croteau & Hoynes, 2013).

Figure 1: The dynamic relationship between media, public opinion and policy making.
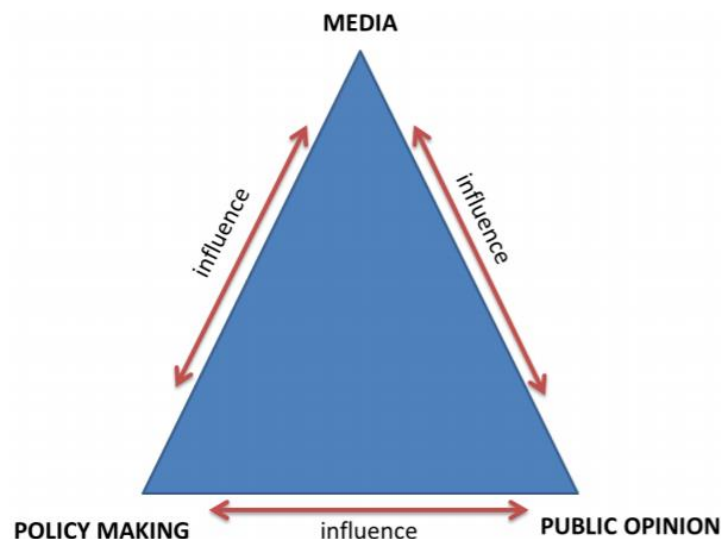
Source: Karstens & McNeil (2018).

1.4 How media shapes political trust

Between 2012 and 2017, the researchers studied media coverage of refugees and immigration on EU confidence in 18 European countries. While immigration attitudes are one of the most significant predictors of EU attitudes, there is very little prior research on the media's role in this process, the critical source of immigration knowledge.

The exposure and the validity of the coverage of refugees have an impact on EU confidence. These effects depend on the political ideology of the citizens. Besides, attitudes towards immigration are becoming another significant predictor of EU trust during the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe.

Harteveld's (2018) findings indicate that increased media exposure to refugees' fuels Euroscepticism. Positive refugee coverage has also been related to the decreased trust. This may mean that EU people are not pleased with how the Union has dealt with the refugee crisis, rather than with the simple connection between anti-immigrant and anti-European sentiment.

Altogether, coverage of general immigration did not have an overall effect on EU assessments. This is a remarkable insight into the literature on the correlation between immigration and the EU stands that point out that there might be a need to distinguish between various immigration forms.

Additionally, to these overall effects, it should be considered how citizens of different ideologies respond to media coverage of immigration. In addition to these general consequences, it is necessary to consider how people of various viewpoints react to immigration coverage in the media. Left-wing people, who are typically more in support of immigration and asylum, do not display significant improvements in their EU assessment when immigration is covered more frequently or more favorably. On the contrary, for right-wing voters, the coverage that favors immigration can spark a reactionary impact and reduce their trust in the Union. Increased refugee coverage also has a more substantial adverse impact on the confidence of right-wing people in the EU.

Altogether the studies reveal that for right-wing people, trust in the EU depends more on coverage of immigration and asylum problems than on left-wing citizens. Therefore the findings are congruent with the previous researchers, who found that the EU's political and cultural dimensions are essential to the right.

Usually, due to cultural menaces to national identities, specific responses on the right are conceptualized. However, this unlocks a fascinating new viewpoint on the conceptualization of immigration attitudes as a 'soft' indicator of EU attitudes. The findings shift in attitudes towards the EU may be triggered by media attention, i.e., immigration matter information.

If there is a change in response to information, it can also be considered an assessment of EU policies' effectiveness. Right-wingers might be displeased, with policies, such as implementing refugee relocation quotas, which bind member states to resettle a certain number of refugees. The trust as an evaluation approach is based on the idea that political institutions' beliefs depend on the institution's performance perceptions; however, it is essentially concentrated on economic presentation.

The study suggests (Armingeon & Guthmann, 2014) that performance assessments relevant to political trust could also be extended to other policy areas. A positive impact on confidence is demonstrated by the prominence of European integration in media

coverage. One speculative theory is the 'minor exposure' effect of increased exposure to an object, leading to more favorable evaluations of that object when not linked to negative signals. The news about political organizations can also contribute to greater openness and political reliance (Camaj, 2014). Recent studies, however, show that exposure to EU news coverage will polarize people more, making the positive more confident, and making suspects more questionable. The multiple triple impacts of migration media coverage on public opinion based on Figure 2 emphasize the importance of ensuring that migrants are ethically represented in the media. If media coverage of migration can influence political views, it can strengthen anti-immigrant sentiment. Newsmakers wield immense power because they can influence political parties and thereby migrant groups' integration experiences.

Figure 2: Effects of Migration Media Coverage on Public Opinion
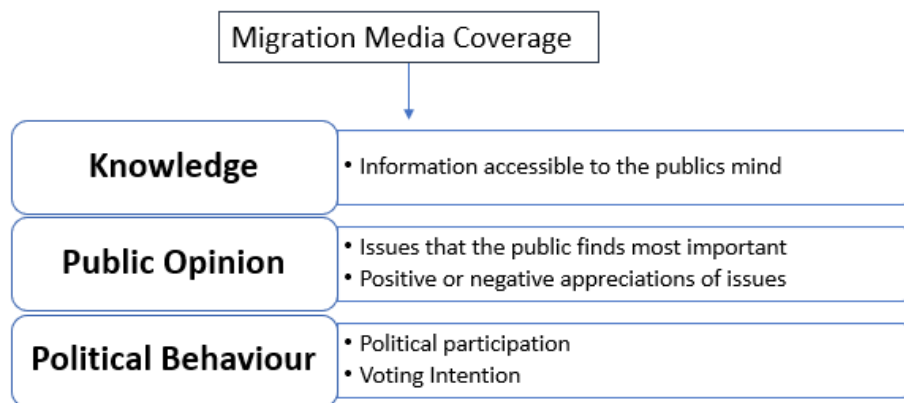
Source: United Nations University (2017).

Further study is needed to unravel the impact of an institution's media exposure on political faith. People trust the EU more when the coverage is more beneficial for European integration. As previous research confirms, people are less disposed to vote for Eurosceptic parties if exposed to more optimistic EU media content (Brosius, Elsas & Vreese, 2019).

1.5 Media and culturalism in Flanders

One of the media's most significant obligations is to accurately and sensitively portray ethnic minorities in a multi-racial world (Hall Hall, 1995).

Denying the presence of ethnic minorities or commenting excessively on them may have severe implications for conceptualization. One of the essential duties for researchers is to identify inequalities in media coverage of ethnic minorities and to raise awareness of the critical position that media professionals can work in such representation.

In our culture, people's perceptions of immigrants are directly related to how this group's cultural identity is portrayed in the media. According to Verstraeten (1998, p. 20-23),

cultural identity is constantly redefined and recreated, and the media play a critical role in this phase of 'identity building.'

They are crucial for creating individual and group identities and the development of popular culture in a society. Society depends on the media to shape their beliefs, norms, and ideas and comprehend and interpret the world around them. Media play an influential character in this process, but they are not intense (Verstraeten, 1998, p. 20). While there is no consensus in social science regarding media's actual impact on people's thinking, it is widely acknowledged that the media sets the tone and creates those pictures. They have the power to influence public discourse, decide the relevance of topics, and determine which views are correct and which are not.

The ideas, principles, evidence, and arguments that people use are heavily influenced by media production, as Murdock and Golding claimed. Since numerous individuals have no immediate communication with ethnic minorities, they should depend on the media for data. This information is then used to instruct public views of ethnic minorities. The mass media, especially the news media, may play a significant role in legitimizing established biases and attitudes. Still, this does not imply a causal association between news content and racial attitudes (Hall, 1981).

While overt racist disclosure in the media is no longer accepted, most studies indicate that ethnic minorities are still not viewed equally to natives and that assumptions regarding minorities are still prevalent. In general, the media is accused of perpetuating racial stereotypes, highlighting derogatory aspects of conduct, and inferring moral and intellectual shortcomings that stigmatize a whole population.

To avoid and fight bias, Schelfhout (1998, p. 216) stresses the value of awareness regarding cultural differences and similarities. Prejudices are reinforced when people are misinformed or not educated at all. According to a study, if the media reports on immigrants in a neutral way, stereotypes may be stoked.

Immigrants are often associated with issues and disputes, according to both daily reporting and crisis reporting. Despite the complexities in the 2001 findings, some significant patterns represent ethnic minorities in the Flemish press. However, since the research instrument used in 1993 was revised in 2001; the two studies' findings are not fully comparable. Immigrant issues and multiculturalism are often discussed in Flemish newspapers (Jacobs, 2001). In terms of daily news, according to the research the majority of papers was found in Het Laatste Nieuws, Het Belang van Limburg, and De Morgen. According to the findings of the crisis reporting, Het Laatste Nieuws publishes the most articles on the subject, followed by Gazet van Antwerpen and Het Volk.

It is worth recognizing that one-third of everyday reporting on immigrants and multiculturalism is crime-related in both the 1993 and 2001 results. In 1993, more than half of the articles indicated nationality or country of origin. The findings from 2001 are

noteworthy in that only one-third of the selected papers reference the actors' nationality (Favell & Martiniello, 1998) (Jacobs, 2001).

The majority of immigrant-related stories in 1993 were unrelated to the news story. Non-natives were generally permitted to speak in their native tongue. In 2001, more than half of the stories about immigrants were about the news case itself. According to reports from daily and crisis news, immigrants who are permitted to talk directly are still rare.

Concerning crime and justice, which is a subject that most immigrants are familiar with, they seldom have the opportunity to talk directly. This pattern is supported by the results of a survey on crisis reporting. When immigrants are allowed to talk, it is usually on "social interest" and "entertainment, culture, and art. Data such as native nation, ethnicity, skin color, history, and religion are rarely noticed. However, it is almost always irrelevant; it adds no additional details.

The articles, chosen in 1993 and 2001, display a clear generalizing bias against immigrants. Immigrants, Turks, Moroccans, and naturalized Belgians are all lumped together. Just one-third of the papers feature immigrants as individuals. In addition, there are very few posts that include context information or can be categorized as opinion pieces. The majority of journalists remains neutral or expresses no opinion on the issue. Therefore, even a neutral attitude can lead to negative conceptualization (Favell & Martiniello, 1998) (Jacobs, 2000) (Jacobs, 2001)..

The findings of the crisis reporting review some of the findings of the 1993 study and the daily reporting study, such as a solid generalizing bias toward immigrants and a lack of opportunities for immigrants to talk directly to the press. Compared to the results of 1993, the Flemish press is more accurate in their daily reporting on immigrants and multiculturalism issues. This pattern is less visible in crisis reporting (Devroe, 2002).

1.6 Media and the European Union

The viewpoints towards immigration are essential while analyzing attitudes towards the European Union. The survey shows that how media portrays the immigrants drives trust in the European Union. This behavior becomes noticed and dominant when, in 2015, more than one million refugees registered entering the European Union (Brosius, Elsas, & Vreese, 2019). As per the European Union and its democratic system, several authors mention that this political system cannot continue longer if most citizens do not find it reliable (Miller, 1974).

According to the articles, a fluctuation of citizens' confidence in the European Union; this significant change in belief has to do with the integrity of the democratic system and how policies are made (Armingeon & Guthmann, 2014). According to statistics, still, confidence in the European Union remains high; in other words, half of the citizens believe in the European Union (European Commission, 2018) This also involves the information flowing on the topic of immigration and how the European Union makes

policy; however, it is not defined in what context a news article, in particular, can affect citizens' belief in the EU institutions. According to the latest research, emigration has become the primary concern of European Union citizens (European Commission, 2018).

The thesis of the clash of civilizations has created events and debates recently in the offline world even though Facebook's founder seeks to unite online more and more people. The chaotic situation created by Brexit, the strengthening of the Islamic State following the war in Syria, as well as the uncertainty in the European Union make experts, politicians, and ordinary people think that this is due to a cause, being the clash between two civilizations, Western and Islamic. European voters are seen abandoning their multicultural aspirations and hopes in favor of local and xenophobic identities due to Westerners' continued efforts to impose democracy and human rights on Muslim nations. This Western attempt drew a violent Islamic response and counterattack, creating a wave of emigration to Europe and beyond, accompanied by terrorist attacks (Harari, 2019). The reactions and the numerous discussions among Europeans due to the increasing wave of emigrants have resulted in harsh conclusions regarding Europe's future. Are those who urged Europeans to close their doors to immigrants betraying multicultural ideals, or are they merely doing their best to prevent a tragedy from happening? On the other hand, those who demanded the door's opening to immigrants are perhaps charging the European project with impossible expectations (Harari, 2019).

How the state should tackle terrorism is also a problem that most people frequently ask about these days. There are two fronts on extending a successful war on terrorism; first, the state must concentrate on covert actions against terrorist networks; second, the media must glance at things more deeply and in perspective to avoid the hysteria created. The theatre of terror cannot succeed without publicity. Unfortunately, the media provides this free. The media obsessively reports on terror attacks and exaggerates their risk because reports on pollution and diabetes don't sell newspapers better than those on terrorism (Harari, 2019).

1.7 Media and the society

The media's influence and effects can be seen in various fields, including individuals, communities, institutions, and society, as McGuire (1986) described media effects in several circumstances. Political campaigns involving individual votes, propaganda, politics, personal actions, community growth, and even buying behavior influenced by advertisements are all examples of the media's effect. However, the media refers to all of the above as "intentional effects." On the other hand, the media have unintended outcomes, such as influencing violent actions and abuse, creating prejudices, stereotypes and having a societal influence on creating a certain perception the reality, among other things.

Other fields of media effects research are information gain from educational television, dissemination of technologies, socialization of cultural norms, organization and business

shifts to emerging technology, enhancement of anxiety and other emotional reactions, as the effect on body image. One of the first and most significant doubts of the study of mass communication has been the assumption that media and their substance have critical and considerable effects. In 1922, Lipmann proposed that mass media could become the foundation for people's worldviews (Bottom & Kong, 2012). As Lasswell (1927) saw mass communication as a social control mechanism and coercion. Concerns regarding negative consequences for children have fueled a "legacy of terror" (DeFleur & Dennis, 2002), as well as several government inquiries and hearings that have followed the advent of each mainstream medium - film, radio, comic books, and television. Whereas some politicians are inspired to foster public interest and media accountability, others see the media as easy-to-understand victims for social issues. Even if there are compelling reasons to be concerned about the level of violence in the media, assuming that violent elements in mainstream film, music, comic books, or television are the primary cause of delinquency and high rates of violent crime is inherently irrational and false (McCorkle, 2019).

However, opposing media brutality is a less politically fraught stance than calling for solutions to other causes of crime, such as poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, a broken family life, insufficient or substandard educational services, and easy access to firearms. The study of media impact serves a realistic and policy-oriented function. Using that information helps elaborate the circumstances and understand the different media effects and how media effects arise. Understanding media impact mechanisms on a realistic level would allow media practitioners to develop successful messages to achieve political, advocacy, and public relations objectives. Agencies would now be able to create marketing strategies that support prosocial goals and help society (Perse & Lambe, 2016).

To put it another way, learning how media effects work can help media practitioners increase the probability of altruistic media effects. Agencies would now be able to create marketing strategies that support prosocial goals and help society. To put it another way, learning how media effects work can help media practitioners increase the probability of altruistic media effects. Additionally, and importantly, learning how media effects arise can provide parents, students, and government official's additional opportunities to combat negative media effects. We would be able to minimize harmful effects if we grasp the mechanisms of media effects. Media impact would no longer be limited to modifying or limiting media content. We would reduce negative media impacts by focusing on specific aspects of the impact process (Lambe & Perse, 2016).

1.8 Fake news

The phrase "fake news" is nothing new. The current discussion, especially media coverage, describes fake news related to viral posts based on fake accounts created to look like news. Recent research has defined fake news as "deliberate and verifiable

articles that can mislead readers." The creation of fake news has two primary purposes: financial and philosophical.

Simultaneously, extreme and fabricated stories that go viral provide content creators with clicks that are equivalent to advertising profits, precisely because they are outrageous (Tandoc et al., 2018).

Instead, other fake news providers create false news to foster specific ideas or individuals they support, often censuring others. Fake news is now jargon, but the current context explains it differently than the previous definition. Previous studies have used the term to describe relevant but diverse content styles, such as news satires, political scandals, and news promotion.

Currently, fake news is used to discredit critical reports from some news agencies, further clouding the fake news discussion. Misinformation is not fresh in the media. Since the invention of the earliest writing systems, it has been present. A classic instance of broad misinformation dates back to 1938 when a radio adaptation of H. G. Wells was transmitted. The radio drama producer Orson Welles found a smart idea of telling the Martian invasion story by adopting a radio news format through the relatively modern radio technology, complete with actors playing the roles of journalists, locals, specialists, and authority officials (Eurobarometer, 2018). Although his purpose was to entertain audiences, radio adaptation took the form of a live news show when radio was the primary information source in the United States. Although Wells and the Mercury Theatre of the Air wanted to create a piece of radio drama, it was perceived as concrete news by listeners. Since those online web portals, especially social media, are becoming the leading news source for an increasing number of people, it seems that misinformation has found a new station.

The digitization of news is questioning the traditional meaning of news. Online channels offer space to reach a mainstream audience for non-journalists. The non-journalists began to participate in editorial activities to generate journalistic outputs, including news; therefore, citizen journalism's rise challenged news and journalists' connection. Initially, citizen journalists were limited to blogging. Social media eventually created a larger forum for non-journalists to participate in journalism (Mcgonagle, 2017).

2 IMMIGRATION

This chapter discusses immigration in Europe over the years and the various routes that immigrants have taken to reach the continent. It focuses on how technology aids in the dissemination of knowledge. It discusses the benefits and drawbacks of this technological advancement, first and foremost since it aids in integrating refugees into Europe, but it also aids criminal organizations in smuggling foreigners into Europe. Finally, it demonstrates how the European Union's highest is managing the migration topic.

2.1 Definition

Sixty years after the European Union's creation, the establishment of its institutions, and transforming into a supranational organization with the Maastricht treaty and Single European Act, the EU has become the multilevel governance whose policies have a broad impact. The European Union's policies influence European Union member states, citizens, political parties, and political groups. All the European Union's concerns automatically gain the attention of the member states' domestic policies. The member states' parties have openly expressed their position on integrating the European Union and its problematic issues that the union itself has been remarkably silent. This matter is related to immigration (Sokolska, 2020).

The beginnings of migration to Western countries after World War II began with tiny debates, but the nations' need for labor force hosted many migrants. During that time, the governments and industries designed and developed special programs to recruit workers to recover the economy. Immigrants' admission had a political and commercial consensus among elite groups who made such decisions based on some assumptions that history later proved wrong (Van Mol & De Valk, 2016).

These elite groups believed that these workers invited to work in their countries would temporarily stay in host countries. After filling in the labor market gaps, the elites wanted these workers to return to their countries of origin when their service would no longer be needed. In other words, the elites ignored the fact that these young workers might seek to become citizens of the countries in which they were working, benefit from welfare, or reunite with their families and bring them to the host countries.

Although many countries strengthened their rules and regime to prevent this from happening, family reunification significantly increased immigrants' numbers. The number of migrants in the future is not expected to decrease. The need for a cheap workforce and the declining number of births creates "pull" factors driving global migration (Van Mol & De Valk, 2016).

By contrast, socio-political uncertainty and economic problems created the so-called "push factors" (European Asylum Support Office, 2016). Although the emigration continues, those who have settled in the receiving countries and are already part of their society will continuously influence their political and social climate. During the elections, the central coalition lost its majority, and the far-right and far-left populist parties made gains. The hostility towards immigrants is expanding.

2.2 Migration movements through history

Europe identifies 4 phases as migration waves on the continent. The influx of migrants began between the 1950s and 1974s, and the first phase is recognized as the oil price shock (Van Mol & De Valk, 2016). There are currently four categories in which immigrants are classified; seasonal workers invited to work for a temporary period, mostly men, migrants coming from post-colonial countries, and refugees (Kaya, 2002).

Reconstruction and rehabilitation of post-war Europe required a cheap labor force not necessarily specialized. State authorities of the receiving countries, supported by the sending countries cooperating with large companies in manufacturing or mining, created the framework conditions and documents necessary to hire workers legally. The countries from which the migrants came were southern Europe, Turkey, and Morocco.

The second phase between the years (1974-1989) was the period between the shocking price of oil and the end of the Cold War. Those who had the opportunity to enter Europe during the period were those who had family members in European countries together with refugees. Due to the oil crisis and lack of work, Europe stopped hiring seasonal workers and ended relationships with guest workers. Meanwhile, stricter restrictions on new entrants begin. The only opportunity to enter the continent is through family reunification and asylum request due to the Cold War's antagonism. Family reunification occurred with individuals from Southern Europe, Turkey, the Maghreb, and South Asia. During this time, asylum seekers come from Central Europe and Turkey.

The third phase in which Europe experienced migration repeatedly is the post-Cold War period dating back to 1989-2001. Another time the people who could enter the European Union were those of the same ethnicity (co-ethnics) students, those with a family member in Europe, or refugees. In a Europe seeking to reconnect due to increased East-West migration, it has been identified that no legal framework has been accessed other than privileged ethnic migration; consequently, there is an increase in irregular migration. (Braun & Arsene, 2009).

Furthermore, there is an influx of students and tourists with highly competitive skills in the market who choose to stay in Europe. In addition, by filling low skill vacancies in manufacturing, construction, tourism, agriculture, or home care, seasonal workers have entered Europe. Those positions were filled by volatile employees.

The countries from which these migrants arrived were Central and Eastern Europe, while the asylum seekers came mainly from the Western Balkans, Algeria and Chechnya. The same categories of immigrants who arrived in Europe at other stages attempt to enter Europe at the fourth stage from 2001 to 2020.What is marked as a trend is the stagnation of people with irregular documentation who have low educational and professional skills. Whose people have entered the EU illegally or are using tourist visas to avoid returning to their home countries (Bonifazi, 2008). Secondly, there is still a mix of new inflows, whether of a refugee or economic migrant. Thirdly, the escape of minors without adults' accompaniment has been identified, likewise increasing the number of women arriving in the EU. However, the EU intends to implement a strategy to accept only highly qualified people for the European market. From 1950 to today, there is diversification from countries where people decide to come to Europe. Phase 4 brought migrants from

South Asia, China, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, South Maghreb, and sub-Saharan Africa (De Haas & Vezzoli, 2018).

2.3 Migration today and technology

Migration today is more diverse and globalized. In recent years, history has shown that the real reason for migration is economic. Ravenstein's famous immigration laws reinforce this. Nowadays, there is diversity in migration reasons. The causes start from education, warm climate, lifestyle as well as love. However, what remains open to debate in political terms is that of economic migration. The term "economic migration" is widely used in the United Kingdom. According to British such cases need to be investigated, monitored, and perhaps even suppressed unless they could bring economic benefits to the EU enlargement policies (Abel, 2010).

Various migratory movements are observed whether the countries of origin from which migrants move or the host countries to which they decide to go. Technological changes have reduced travel and communication costs. Before, an initial budget was necessary to move from one place to another, whereas nowadays, this amount is less due to technology.

Technology has proved to help migration network stay connected with their people, whether by sending money or traveling to their home countries more easily. Germany's use of technology proves that digital technology has helped many immigrants in the German state's integration process. It has been the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in cooperation with appropriate Institutions and the Federal Employment Agencies to develop an efficient application to assist newcomers. The application called "Arrival" provides information on the basics that an integration process requires, such as information on asylum, procedures, studies, cultural practices and values in Germany, and many other integration services (Abel, 2010).

In the summer of 2015, when an unprecedented influx of immigrants arrived in Germany, civil society organizations and private actors continued to develop innovative tools of a digital nature to support their integration. Among the most prominent applications like "Home4refugees" made the connections of those looking for a home with market offers and opportunities to find a place to live, where the lessee was a friendly person. There was another application like "Airbnb's Open Homes," in which the locals provided free temporary accommodation for refugees under other conditions.

By analyzing their online data, humanitarian organizations, and relevant authorities, seek to improve the decision-making process for a better migration approach. These digital tools have slightly negative functions in slowing down and complicating the integration process. The "bubble" effect risks the newcomers virtually immerse themselves in their community rather than in the host community (Bonifazi, 2008).

Exposure to digital platforms and modern technologies issues a type of information not available in the pre-Internet era. This digital connection shows migrants the best destination options and presents them with an alternative lifestyle. Although not all manage to leave their country, digital connectivity stimulates individual predisposition and aspirations to move (Van Mol & De Valk, 2016).

The advantages of digital technology somehow outweigh the disadvantages. Due to the location tracking application, refugees are greatly assisted during their journey. Smugglers use social media platforms for advertising their illegal activities, and those who have taken this route can give the appropriate ranking. Smuggling of migrants has already become a very lucrative and almost risk-free business for smugglers. Motivated by significant demands to bring illegal migrants to Europe, these criminal networks managed to generate 4 to 6 billion euros in 2015 (European political strategy centre, 2018).

2.4 Migration in the Media: A Short Overview

According to a recent publication (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2015) migrant groups are negatively represented in the media, focusing on the dispute, which increases anti-migrant sentiment and turns it into anti-immigrant votes. Studies have also shown that asylum seekers were the most salient group in the media among immigrant communities, long before the 2015 crisis. By promoting a particular group over others and their actual size in that particular category, media coverage can change public perceptions about immigration in a country. Research shows that making particular migrant groups more salient in the media will raise out-group animosity towards that group, and anti-immigration stands in the local media audience. This issue becomes even more troublesome. Studies indicate that views towards immigrants are more negative in tabloids than in high-quality newspapers.

Where it comes to framing, most studies involved in immigration news coverage rely on issues and examine the relevance of fiscal health, security factors, or cultural, in-migration coverage. Some studies analyse the value of these frameworks by comparing costs, threats, and benefits. East Europeans are often portrayed as threats to economic and social systems, but studies show that refugees are portrayed in the circumstances of antipathy to Islam or extremism linked to threats to culture and stability. The results show that news reports will both negatively and positively impact the public's views regarding immigration. In various countries, media coverage can depend on political background and the country's media system, mainly about migration coverage. The political setting of a nation also includes the country's migration history.

In addition, according to a survey (Walsh, 2019), between 2006 and 2015, immigration was "the most relevant topic in British public talk." Negative headlines about immigration have progressed, especially since the conservative government came to power in 2010, leading to a public debate on migration that could have contributed to the Brexit

referendum's probable consequences. Research shows that British tabloids promote anti-immigrant discourse. Like other Southern European countries, the Spanish media system can be categorized as a Mediterranean model or a polarized multi-model. (e.g., Italy and Greece) (Eberl et al., 2018).

In such a media system where the interdependencies and affinity between politics and the media tend to be high, reflecting the journalistic culture of intervention and improving tolerance in these countries may be necessary. In a broader sense, the media debate on immigration is just as negative as in other European countries but, due to the history of left-wing unity after the Franco dictatorship, racism and xenophobia are less overt. Likewise, during the refugee crisis in 2015, the media reporting was relatively positive, as it gave voice to irregular migrants and depicted them as victims rather than delinquents (Spigelman, 2013).

Germany is the most populated country in the EU, with a so-called 'migration history' accounting for over one-fifth of its population. Immigration to Germany resulted principally from Southern Europe and Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s. The government would later launch an initiative in the early 2000s to attract extremely qualified staff, especially from non-EU countries. Germany began to accept its brand-new identity as a supposed "immigrant country" during the years, even though it had already been one. However, after the Eastern Enlargement of 2004, the country agreed to wait seven years before initiating its labour market to the new Eastern European Member States. Public anti-immigrant discourse began to escalate after that. Following the crisis, Germany registered more asylum applications than other EU member states. It could be attributed to migrants associating the nation, among other things, with a robust economy, excellent education, and job openings (Hollifield, 2006).

2.5 EU migration policy and migratory routes

Migration has been on the rise since 2015. The European Union has taken steps to regulate external borders and migration courses, resulting in a 90% reduction in irregular arrivals (European Council, 2021). The European Council, whose task is to set strategic priorities together with its member states, works hard to build an efficient, reliable, and humanitarian migration policy.

Obtaining mandates with third countries, laying down instructions for action plans, and defining specific programs, as well as passing legislation, are the priorities of Europe's Council (European Council, 2021). The Council and the European Union have reacted strongly to migration persistence. The presidency, placed in Luxembourg in October 2015, put together all the key elements and integrated, activated all the concrete tools that help coordinate the political response to this crisis. Identified as the Eastern Mediterranean Road, the sea crossing route from Turkey was the route used by refugees from the war in Syria to seek refuge in the European Union. Close co-operation between

Turkey and the European Union has led to a significant reduction in irregular arrivals from this route.

The second most talked-about route is the Western Mediterranean. Migrants from North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa pass through Morocco to reach Europe. With almost 64,300 arrivals in 2018, Spain is the country with the most irregular arrivals in Europe. The European Union has invested in a close partnership with Morocco to strengthen border controls and end migrant smugglers. Dangerous tactics used by smugglers to bring migrants and refugees trying to reach Europe are no longer unknown. For this reason, the European Union, to save their lives but also to fight their smuggling, has launched three operations in the Mediterranean. In 2016, a center was also set up to help member countries fight the smuggling of migrants. Such efforts led to the rescue of more than 534 800 lives.

To manage the flow of emigration, the EU is obliged to create and adopt rules for different groups and categories, starting from students, asylum seekers, people with high abilities, family reunions, and temporary or seasonal workers. In 2015 many asylum seekers moved from Greece and Italy, which comes from new and common rules for other immigration flows. The EU has also decided to establish an agreement on the return of illegal migrant. As some EU countries are more inexperienced with migrants' integration, the EU adopted conclusions on integrating the legal third-country nationals staying in the EU.

3 PUBLIC OPINION

The topic's primary goal is to conduct public opinion research on the media's influence in the European Union. This chapter examines how the media has shaped Belgian public opinion regarding immigrants over time regarding how they have been portrayed in the news. This chapter examines how the media depiction of immigrants affects the formation of stereotypes and attitudes against a particular community.

3.1 Public opinion on immigration, a Belgian perspective

Reports indicate that large numbers of Americans and Western Europeans have a negative attitude toward migrants and refugees. The reason is the misrepresentation and portrayal that the media offers on these minority groups. There are still individuals who have rare contact with these misjudged groups; consequently, they rely on the news they listen to reach such conclusions (De Coninck et al., 2018).

Mass media stereotypes play an important role in shaping public opinion on certain issues or specific topics. If not, some people who don't consume news have nevertheless formed an opinion about these groups influenced by the rest of the people who consume news. The media's perspective to produce news can contribute to preventing or creating subgroups in the population. The form chosen by the media to represent migrant groups influences the formation of an opinion on these minority groups, findings which have

recently been demonstrated by numerous studies. It is reported that the media does not critically and objectively inform about the situation; moreover, it also misleads its consumers about the actual immigrant figures (Jacobs, Hooghe & de Vroome, 2017).

The number of immigrants is also overestimated, as are the associated fears and potential threats. Research has shown that immigrant communities have not been spared from the misleading Belgian media and stereotypes' real use. These are the terms that the media has chosen to represent, often described as criminals and sometimes victims.

Belgium consists of Flanders on the border with the Netherlands and Wallonia on the border with France. In the Flemish part of Belgium, both public and private television do not present immigrants favorably. However, private televisions turn out to be more damaging in the nuances they give to such news. Given this fact, the study found that people who primarily take the news on commercial television conduce a more negative attitude toward minority groups than those who watch public television news (Van den Broucke et al., 2015)

Social identity and group threat theory answer the question of why the news has such an impact. Group threat is the theory stating that when a minority group is seen as disruptive and a threat to the larger society's well-being and lifestyle, the majority group will negatively judge it. This theory describes the harsh views that majority groups have towards the minority. The feeling of threatening is not previously unheard of a phenomenon; On the contrary, this feeling is heightened by the adverse reporting of immigrants. People tend to favor and assign some positive characteristics to the social group members where they belong (In-group bias). The opposite happens to members and groups when they do not belong (out-group prejudice). Complementary theories are social identity theories, stating that people's self-concept depends on the social classes to which they belong. Through the media, disseminated stereotypes can lead the (in-group) members to set negative characteristics and definitions towards (out-group) members. In attitudes toward migrants and refugees, the same situation has been observed. There is no disparity in approaches towards these groups. According to studies, attitudes towards these groups are essentially the same: negative attitudes towards immigrants often apply to refugees and vice versa (Riek, Mania & Gaertner, 2006).

Views towards minority groups are based not only on how the media portrayed these groups but also on the audience's credibility. People are free to use any means they prefer to be informed. For specific questions, they specifically look for sources that meet their needs to some extent. In contrast, when people are skeptical about the primary source of information, they will look for other alternative means of clarification and persuasion. In the Belgian reality, it is concluded that citizens' trust in the news media is high along with other EU countries. According to statistics, 64% of the locals believe local media provide reliable information. While the level of trust in television and newspapers in Europe is 55%, this percentage is 71% and 76% in Belgium, respectively. Radio is 66% reliable in Europe and 73% in Belgium.

Increasingly terrorist attacks in the Europe of the 21st century lead researchers to study patterns of fear to media coverage. Greater exposure in media that overemphasizes terror and abuse leads the viewer to a warped worldview. As fear increases simultaneously, the majority group's perception that these members of these minority groups described as perpetrators of these terrorist acts is contingent on crime and life-threatening. According to studies, fear levels run parallel to the source of information that citizens choose to be informed. In the community of those who read it, while radio and television run, the newspaper does not turn out to be a fear originator (Cruz, Paulino & Tavares, 2021).

Even though there are no direct experiences, framing such news about such events impacts fear. There is a link between attitudes towards immigrants and refugees and the consumption of the before-mentioned news, which constitutes the group threat theory. Linguistic and cultural differences have diversified the climate of the Belgian media. Due to the lack of a unified market, Belgium has two separate media organizations, the Flemish-speaking, the Dutch part of Belgium, and Wallonia, the French-speaking part. The printing press in Belgium is concentrated with only five publishing groups. In Belgium, on the French-speaking side, print media readers are less than on the Flemish side, thanks to digital technology. Only a few of them are represented on the Internet, but hardly a few are successful (De Coninck et al., 2018).

3.2 Public opinion in Belgium

According to an analysis of public perceptions of immigrants and refugees and how these views are associated with fear of terrorism, respondents 'age has been found to have a negative impact on behavior and attitudes. This attitude is more negative for refugees than for immigrants. The negative attitude comes in tandem with age, according to the findings. This non-positive attitude was more evident in the elderly than in the younger. This approach was most notable in the French-speaking region of Belgium. Education also often affects the development of attitudes regarding these groups. People with a high school diploma or higher have been shown to have more positive attitudes than people without primary education. Also, people with higher economic status have a moderately positive attitude towards immigrants, which cannot be said for refugees' attitudes. Those who are not religious, but freethinkers have a more favorable stance about immigrants and refugees than Christians.

As to quality newspapers, the more readers trust this kind of quality newspaper media, the more likely; it is that their attitude towards immigrants will be more assured. The consumption of information from the most popular newspaper of moderate quality and the trust shown and their articles affect the creation of negative approaches for immigrants and refugee. More than the use of information in these media is the trust that the public places in these media, which leads to a greater extent of attitudes towards the mentioned groups. In terms of online news and various websites described as qualitative in providing information, the result is that: Negative access to the Wallonia part compared to before is

marked somewhat softer. By comparison, contrasted to the Flemish part, Brussels, the capital, maintains a rather positive attitude toward immigrants.

Moreover, recently, it is seen that terrorism is closely related to the perception created for newcomers. Fear of terrorism has a colossal and massive impact on immigrants. Again, this approach is more negative for refugees than for immigrants. In terms of how they assess the media, the public is split into two broad categories. Those who believe that the media portrays these groups negatively will perceive them positively. In this respect, this kind of view applies more to immigrants than to refugees. Regarding the consumption of news by various media, popular or not, which form the Belgian opinion, in the Franco-speaking and Dutch-speaking part, there are no significant differences in the opinion towards the immigrants, unlike Brussels, which holds a very favorable opinion.

3.3 Public opinion, media fighting discrimination

The survey investigated the public's stance on the role of the media in matters of discrimination. Particularly with a specific emphasis on racial origin, religious discrimination, and television as a tool. The most meaningful conclusion of the survey is that most EU citizens consider the media's role in the fight against discrimination significant (79 %). European public opinion supports all three proposals put front in the survey about specific steps that the media and television should seek to address unequal treatment (Kaya, 2002).

They largely agreed with the proposal to broadcast more stories or documentaries coping with discrimination. From all the European responders 73 % agreed to adopt legislation to make ethnic minorities more open to some careers such as television news, making this initiative the second most favored choice. Finally, 64 % of Europeans favored broadcasting more films or dramas involving ethnic minority people. The action against discrimination utilizing the media serves to be of greater significance to the youngest respondents, the best-trained individuals with left-wing political views.

The poll also investigated whether the ethnicity of a journalist covering the news would affect the option of a TV channel for people. The survey results show that the ethnic background of the news presenter will not impact the preference of news channels for three-quarters of watchers (74 %). Eventually, concerns were raised as to the media's role in helping to build conflicts between various cultures. 62% of EU citizens claim that the way information is portrayed in the media leads to tensions between cultures, such as when people's ethnic backgrounds or religions are listed in little news articles.

Fifty percent of respondents think that mentioning individuals' racial origin or religion in short news articles is justified, while 39 percent think the opposite. The key finding of this study is that in countering prejudice, the media is generally perceived to play a significant part. EU citizens who seem prepared to want to see people from ethnic minorities appear on TV, either in films or while reporting the news, understand their potential to affect people's attitudes (Eurobarometer, 2007).

4 INTEGRATION

The integration of immigrants is addressed in this chapter. It describes how this process is unfolding in Belgium as well as how the institutions of the European Union view the situation.

4.1 Integration process for the newcomers

Over the last ten years, most member states have developed a series of policy documents that lead to formal frameworks. The critical issue of integration has already become a political issue. Eastern and Central Europe have recently faced this challenge, and therefore development has not been equal. In 2006 in Ireland, integration was treated only as an ongoing debate. Immigration issues have become a significant issue on the European research agenda. The central dilemma facing the EU is the challenge of developing a real supranational immigration policy. This is because of immigration's sensitivity to state sovereignty. Some parties need to analyze it and, consequently, resolve it on a supranational level, meaning that independent national policies are insufficient to address the migration crisis. At the same time, others are pushing and exploring more critical concerns, such as considering immigration issues at the national level.

The integration of immigrants plays a key role in migration policy. The integration of existing migrant populations into society can lead to social and economic problems if not implemented properly. As it happens, many Europeans see immigrants as a burden and a threat to their society. If the state does not pursue such policies, there is a risk of ethnic fragmentation and locals' hostile reactions. Therefore, it is worth considering whether there are standard European policies in this regard and what kind of policies are in place and should be followed to achieve the desired results (Shafagatov & Mirzayeva, 2005).

The moment immigrants leave their country to move elsewhere and enter the host society; they must find a place for themselves. This task of theirs is an authentic and necessary thing. They need to provide a place to settle, a home, a commitment that generates income, a school for their children, and access to the health system. These, such as the settlement process, cooperation with the local society, and the social change that follows emigration, are known as integration (Mascareñas & Penninx, 2016, p. 11).

Finding a place to settle beside the house also means gaining space in the host society's cultural and social sense. It requires interaction between groups and other individuals outside their family group - connections based on cooperation.

Placing newcomers in the host society dates to the early twentieth century; it was the School of Urban Sociology in Chicago that used various concepts to approach this issue from different perspectives. Thus, the host society is also changing due to the new emigration flows observed in the demography, composition of the population, in changes in institutional rules aimed at satisfying migrants' needs, whether cultural, political, or social (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016, p. 11).

4.2 The New Pact on Migration and Asylum

In September 2020, after five years of being helpless to control the existing system, the European Commission proposed a new immigration and asylum agreement. In a moderately uncoordinated Europe, it is essential to achieve coordination of views and actions between member countries on this matter. Margaritis Schinas described the state of the various refugee camps as places where Europe is missing. Member States do not face immigration in the same way because of many influencing factors. Hence, it is necessary to speak, accept, address, and resolve such challenges (Banks, 2020).

Given the situation in the refugee camps, it was requested the adoption of a standard immigration policy. The European Commission's proposal on this issue has been compared to a three-story house built on two main foundations: accountability and solidarity. The first floor represents the emigrants' origin country and transition areas into a three-story building and enhancing cooperation between the parties. The second floor is designed to effectively manage the border and its procedures. The third floor refers to integrating newcomers to Europe and the return of those who do not have a residence permit and cannot stay. Considering the past flows, the objective is to return irregular migrants.

The truth is that Europe needs immigration for several reasons; therefore, in 2015, it granted 2.4 million people the right to stay legally. As explained in previous paragraphs, this influx of migrants made possible the flourishing of smuggling networks that Europe is trying to fight. On the other hand, Europe struggles to reduce the number of illegal immigrants by turning them back on whether they are not fulfilling their legal rights to stay. After asylum applications were reduced by 66%, the number of irregular migrants reached 140,000. As to how the Commission has agreed to proceed on the matter, there are two action plans. The European Union will implement a well-integrated border strategy. All individuals who cross the external European border will undergo a screening process, including those saved during a rescue operation. These people will also undergo a medical examination; consequently, the results will be part of an EU database (Banks, 2020).

This system will ensure the pace in decision making. After evidencing the facts, there are two ways of action; the first relates to an asylum procedure's approval or non-admission in the border and the return. Secondly, the border procedure would be extended to individuals from countries below 20% of international protection and individuals who, if their claim is not argued with evidence, have an abusive view and pose a risk to national security protection. This procedure does not apply to families with children under 12 and those who are unaccompanied. For people in need, this procedure would be applied only after an individual evaluation. The refusal of an asylum applicant is based on individual judgement. Suppose the assessment confirms that the country from which the asylum seekers leave is safe; thus, there is no reason why they seek to stay in Europe.

On the other hand, no official EU document relating to safe third countries and countries of origin is available. The new pact requires harmonization of documentation with the appropriate list of these countries. Immigrants who are not granted the right to stay in the EU should not feel threatened or intimidated to return to their countries of origin. The EU has agreements with these countries on the repatriation of returnees (European commission, 2020).

4.3 Belgium a country of Bureaucracies

According to the reports, after welcoming migrants to emergency shelters, Belgium does not continue to help them integrate. First and second-generation immigrants, apart from their education, are not integrated as a labor force. Belgium suffers from an unfunded and inefficient system. Belgium lacks data collection and information infrastructure for migrants, which prevents them from accessing the labor market. With a shortage of staff, administration offices make the application process for immigrants very long and complicated. Such procrastination makes immigrants wait months and maybe years for a work permit. Caritas International is the first institution to receive and assist immigrants upon arrival in Belgium. According to the agency's coordinator, lack of knowledge of the official languages, skills, and diplomas is a significant barrier to finding employment for immigrants. Motivated people get frustrated and depressed when things go awry as these obstacles last for years (Lafleur et al., 2019).

The Figure 3 shows that approximately 200 illegal immigrants flocked to a 17th-century church in central Brussels to draw the government's attention. They do not expect to have a place to stay. Many of the people who live at St. John the Baptist Church are from north-western Africa, Afghanistan, and Egypt. They have been living and working in Belgium for a long time. Instead, they want to highlight the problems undocumented immigrants currently face, such as lack of access to social security, social inclusion, and labour rights, compounded by the pandemic situation Belgium is facing.

Figure 3: In Brussels, 200 mattresses are spread across the hall of a church

Source: GIJS (2021).

Even after waiting for years, most of the time, refugees can still get low-earning jobs. Language skills are a major concern in Belgium. According to articles, more on-the-job training in Germany encourages learning the language while being employed and working. In Belgium, individuals either do not have a degree or their degree is not acknowledged. Not only are refugees facing this difficulty, but people of different backgrounds also do not easily find jobs in general, even for second and third-generation immigrants. After finding a safe place to live, which can take between six months and a year, integration and work quest can only really begin. When the foreigners look for a property, they don't speak the language, refugees rely on a limited social support allowance that scares homeowners, the homes they find are often of low quality, and the prices are incredibly high.

De Gucht, a Belgian politician, referred to a more social topic during an interview. The Flemish form of reasoning, as stated by him, presents an integration challenge. According to him, the Flemish people are not very open to anyone. Cultural tensions are inevitable, but in other nations, integration operates more smoothly. Locals are also unwilling to rent to foreigners, according to De Mot (Meers, 2021).

Caritas International receives 9.9 times a "no" out of 10 telephone requests, depending on the origins of individuals or whether they earn living wages," Unia, an independent governmental organization for equal chances and against prejudice, was established in the early 1990s when racism and nationalism grew in Belgium. It converted to an inter-federal entity in 2013, which means it participates at all three levels of the government of Belgium. According to a German study, the public funds and constructive policies are still insufficient to achieve the essential results needed to make the immigration that has taken place in 30 years a success story despite the measures taken. According to the reports, adolescent Muslim minorities feel left out of Belgian society and centered in big cities, especially Brussels and Antwerp. For instance, unemployment in Brussels is already 15%, and by 2020, city schools could surpass the capacity of beyond 20,000 students (Van de Walle, Groeneveld & Vandenbussche, 2013).

4.4 Integration of immigrants in the European Union

According to the findings, about a third of Europeans (37%) believe they are well educated about immigration and integration issues (Eurobarometer, 2018).

Respondents further appear to exaggerate the number of non-EU immigrants: the approximate proportion of immigrants in the population in 19 of the 28 Member States is at least twice that of the real proportion, and in some countries, the percentage is even higher.

According to the findings, roughly six out of ten (61%) of respondents engage with immigrants weekly, whether sharing a few words or performing an activity together in one or two different contexts. A similar number of people (57%) claim they would be

comfortable having some social relationship with immigrants (manager, co-worker, neighbor, doctor, family member, partner, or friend. Four out of ten Europeans (40 percent) have either companions or relatives who are immigrants (Eurobarometer, 2018).

Just over half of Europeans (54%) believe immigrants are successfully integrated, but the percentages vary significantly between countries. There seems to be a correlation between immigrants' actual share in a country's total population and respondents' perceptions of integration: respondents in countries with a low proportion of non-EU immigrants are less likely to view integration as a success or believe that immigrants have harmed the country's economy.

Eventually, most Europeans believe that several different players, including the European Union, play a critical role in immigrant integration (80 percent). Most of all Member States respondents believe the European Union's role is significant, particularly in fostering better cooperation between actors involved, sharing best practices among the Member States (Eurobarometer, 2018).

4.5 Integration for more inclusive societies

A sound immigration policy management takes on value when all those legally staying in the European Union have access to European societies' advantages. According to statistics in 2019, about 21 million non-EU had the legal right to stay in the European Union. Great integration serves both parties, the concerned individuals, and the community in which they already belong.

It promotes social cohesion and sets a positive example that helps Europe better manage immigration by building more robust and more inclusive societies. Unemployment, lack of training, limited opportunities, social interactivity, and lack of educational options are challenges immigrants face. In 2019, the employment rate for non-European descendants in the 20–64 age groups fell to 60%. This figure generates doubt about integration, so a public policy is essential for things to work. Social inclusion is one of the objectives of the European agenda, for which the integration of foreigners together with their families is one of the critical components. The European Union has supported the member states since adopting an action plan in 2016, even though the integration policy is a responsibility that belongs only to them. The European Union has enhanced cooperation with regional authorities, economic partners, employers, and civil society. The European Commission has also renewed its economic and social partnership for integration to enable refugees to integrate into the European labour market. Therefore, to attract the economy's skills, this could lead to another dialogue and future collaboration. It is essential to accelerate this work to guarantee that significant opportunities are given to everyone to participate in the economy and society. The Commission will affirm an Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion for 2021-2024 as part of the priority to promote the European lifestyle. The Action plan will attract all appropriate policies and tools in

crucial areas such as social inclusion, job, education, well-being, equality, culture, and sports, and determine how migrants' integration can help reach EU objectives needed.

The main goal would be to ensure that migrants benefit fully from the pillar of European social rights. People with migration histories (such as foreign-born or second-generation immigrants) frequently face integration problems like third-country nationals.

Currently, the Commission is engaging stakeholders, people, and migrants on potential steps to facilitate the integration and social inclusion of immigrants and European nationals with a history of migration. It is critical to assure that immigrants are assiduously involved in implementing the European Union's immigration policy; therefore, the Commission sets up a group of informal experts on immigrants' senses. One of its first tasks is to inform and contribute to the Integration and Inclusion Action Plan's preparation and provide the Commission with guidance and experience in designing and implementing measures in migration and asylum areas. The aim of the Immigration and Asylum Pact lies in the fact that the main goal is to build a stable and efficient immigration management system in Europe (European Commission, 2020).

5   CAN IMMIGRANTS TAKE THE JOB AWAY?

Citizens' complaints to immigrants, especially for unskilled workers, is that they take their jobs away. Part of the people who voted against immigrants is not afraid because they might lose their job. The fear consists of the fact that these large influxes of immigrants can decrease their social status (Epping, 2020).

Anti-immigration propaganda in Belgium reached its climax when Michel's government was on the verge of collapse. For this reason, the report initiated by the national bank of Belgium began at that time. To create models capable of representing the economic effects of immigration in Belgium, the NBB used social security data to split net payment flows by national origin. Therefore, the margin rate of 0.5% was due to the difference in EU citizens' contributions and those from non-EU. Consequently, there was no evidence to support the detrimental effect of immigrants on the Belgian economy.

The study indicates that if new emigration had a negative impact on employment, it would be the immigrants of the first generation who would be impacted by this influx, not the natives (National bank of Belgium, 2020). However, the study shows that in some categories, such as welfare, net income, unemployment, salaries, or even participation, migration does not affect the natives. The immigrants' young age lowered the state's burden below average and led to a 3.4 percent. Backed by its bureaucratic and governmental system, Belgium ranks among the EU countries with low success in integrating newcomers. In the past, specific reports from the bank were released, similar to the recently published study. At the time, the Ministry of Finance explicitly demanded the implementation of such a project to face the long-running debate on the topic of

immigration. On the other hand, before the 2019 elections, the nationalists of the Nieuwe Vlaamse Alliantie party insisted on such a report, but the bank objected that such a report could not be handled and prepared too quickly. According to the nationalists of this party, the Flemish people were entitled to information lacking at the time (National bank of Belgium, 2020). This insistence came after the conviction that emigration to Belgium would have a tremendous social and financial impact.

While being transparent concerning the information published and collected from social security data, the bank emphasized that not all emigrants' categories were considered. The bank report does not include irregular migrants and those without a declared and legal residency in Belgium and, secondly, asylum seekers who are pending a court decision on the file. Also, immigrants in transit and the temporary workers in Belgium were omitted (National bank of Belgium, 2020). The lack of education, the challenging trajectory of immigrants arriving in Belgium, and the absence of public policy interest make immigrants' economic integration much more complicated. If this were a different case, the employment rate would be higher; accordingly, the GDP per capita and GDP would also increase. The harsh, demanding Belgian market and the small presence of policies designed to help immigrants find a job make Belgium perform worse than other countries. (National bank of Belgium, 2020).

If the performance of the first and second generations of immigrants in Belgium were to be measured, it could be said that the second generation performed strongly and contributed significantly to the economy.

In addition to the bank's resolution that if Belgium's policies promote immigration integration, the contribution of immigrants to the economy would be more significant, Theo Francken, who has held the position of State Secretary for Immigration and Asylum, called the report disappointing and flawed, which he posted on Twitter (Galindo, 2021).

In 2008 and 2009, after the recession, in six countries where migrants migrated, one survey found a different perspective on immigrants and the claims that they take jobs from locals. The survey disproves the media and politicians' claims that immigrants take jobs from local people. Divided into various categories, people think that immigrants, by contrast, serve the country by occupying positions rather than vice versa. In the short run, they will not affect the growth of unemployment. On the contrary, they promote long-term future employment.

Following the recession in the years 2008–2009, as presented in Figure 4, public opinion polling in six destination countries of immigrants found that most people believe that the newcomers build employment than taking jobs from native workers; they also agree that immigrants fill job shortages (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Public opinion on immigrants and jobs, 2011
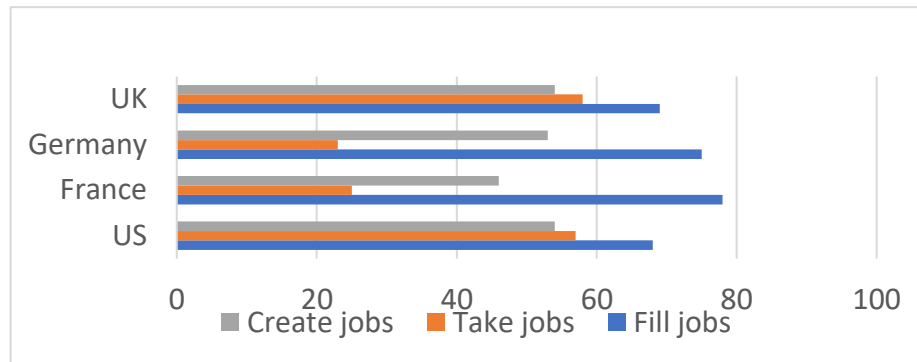
Adapted from Constant, (2014).

The balance of supply and demand determines wages. People who can work are behind the demand curve, and employers who give jobs are behind the supply curve. This traditional model of work shows that emigration instead increases the demand for work. If all other variables such as international trade and labor demand are kept unchanged for a moment, it turns out that this type of mechanism increases the demand for labor and lowers the wage equilibrium. Who benefits from this is what remains unexplained? If such a thing happens, then two phenomena occur: someone leaves finding another job, and an immigrant fills that job or remains unemployed. In this case, what is not considered is that something like perfect employment does not exist as integration takes time.

In this ideal case, migrants are at the same professional level as the native people and have immediate access to the job market. Migrants never directly replace domestic workers, regardless of whether they are highly qualified or low-skilled. Migrants, instead, are mostly supplementary to domestic workers or accept employment that local citizens do not want or cannot do.

Immigration's positive results far outweigh any negative impacts. Migrants prefer jobs being available and easily accessible disposal and solve labor shortages. By fostering development, engaging in self-employment, and promoting workers' transfer to superior posts, they generate new jobs. Immigrants' presence boosts demand and can encourage the opening of new industries, generating more employment for immigrants and local communities (Constant, 2014). Recently, an awaited article from the Belgian national bank reported that the last wave of emigrants in Belgium 5 years ago increased GDP by 3.5 %. Economic growth from emigration seems to have, in some way, financially eased the Belgian deficit.

6 EMPIRICAL STUDY

The use of qualitative research techniques for data collection and interpretation has exploded in popularity in the last two decades (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). In contrast to quantitative research, where world representation is coded numerically, qualitative

research primarily provides representation of the linguistic world (Heppner, Kivlighan & Wampold, 1999). Interviews, ethnographic surveys, and focus groups are all examples of qualitative study techniques. Interviews and focus groups tend to be a good approach for this study since they encourage the researcher to ask open-ended questions to a limited group of people and hear about their personal experiences or thoughts about the phenomena being studied. The degree of structure in interviews varies, among other items (Bryman, Becker & Sempik, 2008). To collect information on public perceptions of the media's effect on immigration, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted. On average the interviews lasted forty-five minutes and the focus group two hours.

6.1 Methodology

With rapidly evolving technology and the resulting human interaction issues, there is a greater need for timely evaluation of systems with distributed users in various contexts (Evans, 2017). In commercial usability and academic study, this has culminated in greater use of in-depth interviews, and focus groups. While thematic analysis has an unsatisfactory reputation, it is commonly used in qualitative research and it is not as well-known as ethnography grounded theory, or phenomenology (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the thematic analysis should be a fundamental tool for qualitative research because it offers key skills for performing many other qualitative analysis types. TA is a technique for detecting, analysing, and reporting data themes. It is the easiest way to organize and define a collection of data. This review, according to Rubin and Rubin, is really interesting when to uncover trends and ideas from the interviews. The thematic analysis phases share many characteristics with other qualitative study stages and are not unique to thematic analysis. The research is carried out in a recursive rather than linear manner (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). The codes are extracted, and they are then converted into themes. The researcher regularly refers to and validates the extracted codes as well as the entire data collection (Javadi & Zarea, 2016).

Qualitative processes, on the other hand, have drawbacks. The individuals who take part in group discussions are not statistically reflective of the general population. As a result, quantifying the proportions of participants who hold the participants' views is impossible. Similarly, generalizing from group discussions to a broader sub-group is difficult (Ma, 2000).

To ensure the accuracy of the findings obtained from the qualitative research method, careful preparation is required. There is no mathematical way to interpret qualitative results. The findings of this type of study are less critical than the researcher's opinion and judgment. All qualitative studies are one-of-a-kind, making replication impossible (Bowen, 2009).

6.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

To obtain primary data, we decided to conduct   qualitative interviews. Qualitative interviewing differs from quantitative interviewing in several ways. For example, qualitative interviewing is often less structured (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2018).

In addition, qualitative interviewing is typically thought to be adaptable; the interviewer expresses a strong interest in the interviewee's point of view, and he responds and changes as he seeks full and insightful responses. During the answers, new questions and elaborations may arise, and the order of the questions may change (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2018).

Further research and descriptive analysis concepts are explored in detailed interviews. Interviewers need to build relationships with respondents to understand their perspectives fully. Cook, Heath & Thompson (2000) calls for attention and respect for people as individuals, explaining that detailed interviews are not for those who don't know how to listen. Unstructured and semi structured interviewing are two different methods of qualitative interviewing. During the non-structured interview, the researcher can start the conversation with a question and then effectively listen to the fluent speaker actively, while the semi structured interview follows a list of questions that the researcher wants to speak throughout the session (Damgaard, Freytag & Darmer, 2001; Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2018). Therefore, semi-structured interviews were preferred as the research tool in this thesis. The semi-structured interview technique was chosen to allow interviewees to openly share their perspectives on the media's impact on immigrants. This open-ended interview approach will help us fine-tune the influence of factors affecting migration reporting in the media. According to (Damgaard, Freytag & Darmer, 2001), the semi-organized interview is neither a free discussion nor a highly structured questionnaire. Instead of relying solely on principles and questions identified in advance of the interview, semi-structured interviews enable respondents to control the order of the questions and extend their ideas and talk in detail about various topics. In other words, semi-structured interviews are much more flexible than standard methods such as fabricated interviews or surveys.

The interview is "seasoned" with the interviewer's preferences and thoughts, which is a common issue with quality interviews with open-ended questions. Semi-structured interviews are reasonably well-organized in terms of the topics that will be addressed during the interview, but follow-up questions are at the interviewer's discretion. Like any other method, interviews have their limitations.

Interviews have drawbacks, just like any other instrument, according to Pole & Lampard (2002). Therefore, they are artificial in character and cannot be expected to reveal the truth or essence of a person's beliefs, opinions, or experiences. Current literature was carefully reviewed before performing the interviews. The knowledge gained was used to generate open questions to comprehend the idea of migration better. Relevant hypotheses or similar themes were gathered, and several questions were formulated for each of them.

In preparation for the loose interviews, the questions were divided into different categories. However, the order of questions in the interview guide was not strictly observed during the interviews. Given the accessible and semi-structured nature of the

study, it seems more appropriate for the interviewer to respond to the question in their terms (Patton, 2002).

Many respondents initially addressed topics that were planned for a later part of the interview. So, it seemed appropriate to ask questions on this particular subject. Therefore, follow-up questions were asked whenever it seemed necessary to check how the respondents understood the questions and whether the interviewer understood their answer correctly. For this thesis, twenty open-ended questions were asked.

6.1.2 Focus group

Focus groups have proven to be a valid method of data collection in the tradition of qualitative research. The approach was initially developed for consumer research, but it is now widely used in social science, health, and other related fields. The reasoning for using focus groups is that awareness is generated by participants' varied perspectives and sources of knowledge, and their engagement. Participants of focus groups provide each other with an audience, facilitating a wider diversity of communication and different content than other observational data collection approaches (Kitzinger, 1995). A focus group's ability to produce data based on group interaction's synergy is its defining attribute. As a result, group members should feel at ease with one another and participate in discussion (St-Pierre, 2001).

The primary goal is to comprehend and describe the meanings, values, and cultures that affect people's emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. It is perfect for delving into the complexities of vote choices, dietary and other lifestyle choices in the light of lived experience while also encouraging participants to interact positively with the research process.

Thus, the emphasis of this research is on daily ways of discussing media and migration relationships. The belief that people's knowledge and attitudes are not entirely enclosed in rational answers to direct questions underpins this emphasis. Everyday modes of communication can show just as much, if not more, about a person's personality as what people are aware of or have seen (Kitzinger, 1995).

Participants in this form of study are chosen since they would have something to say about the subject, that they are within the age group, share similar socio-demographic characteristics, and feel comfortable talking to the interviewer and each other.

6.2 Sampling

Convenience sampling is a sampling method in which the first available primary data source is used without any additional study criteria. This sampling process entails gathering participants anywhere they can be found, which is usually wherever is most convenient. Before the collection of subjects, no inclusion criteria were established in convenience sampling. The pandemic situation made it impossible to reach people in such a limited time. Therefore, participants were purposely sampled in such a way in order to

recruit participants with diverse characteristics and to ensure variation in nationality, gender, social and professional backgrounds. This approach was aimed at ensuring both homogeneity and heterogeneity in the group construction.

The focus group and interviews took place for a week, from November 1st to November 7th. 21 semi-structured in-depth interviews with Europeans of various backgrounds, statuses, ages, and ethnicities as presented in the table below were conducted using open-ended questions.

The focus group, on the other hand, was designed as a conversation with six certain people who expressed a willingness to openly express their opinions in a discussion during the interviews. As a result, the group consists of six individuals who are diverse in terms of age, race, and social class.

Table 1: Research sample - interviewees

	Ethnicity-Nationality	Gender	Age group
Interviewee Nr. 1	Iranian- Belgian	Female	25-30
Interviewee Nr. 2	Mexican-Belgian	Male	25-30
Interviewee Nr. 3	Indian-Belgian	Male	30-35
Interviewee Nr. 4	French-Belgian	Male	30-35
Interviewee Nr. 5	Belgian-Belgian	Male	20-25
Interviewee Nr. 6	Albanian-Belgian	Female	30-35
Interviewee Nr. 7	Indian-Belgian	Female	20-25
Interviewee Nr. 8	Estonian-Belgian	Female	30-35
Interviewee Nr. 9	Belgian-Belgian	Female	35-40
Interviewee Nr. 10	Ecuadorian-Belgian	Female	30-35
Interviewee Nr. 11	Greek-Belgian	Female	35-40
Interviewee Nr. 12	Spanish-Belgian	Female	37-40
Interviewee Nr. 13	Belgian-Belgian	Female	25-30
Interviewee Nr. 14	French-Belgian	Male	30-35
Interviewee Nr. 15	Polish-Belgian	Female	25-30
Interviewee Nr. 16	French-Belgian	Male	45-50
Interviewee Nr. 17	Spanish-Belgian	Male	25-30
Interviewee Nr. 18	Turkish-Belgian	Female	20-25
Interviewee Nr. 19	Belgian-Belgian	Female	25-30
Interviewee Nr. 20	Belgian-Belgian	Male	30-35
Interviewee Nr. 21	Belgian-Belgian	Female	60-65

Source: Own work.

Table 2: Research sample - focus groups

	Ethnicity-Nationality	Gender	Age group
Focus group Nr. 1	Belgian-Belgian	Female	60-65
Focus group Nr. 2	Spanish-Belgian	Female	37-40
Focus group Nr. 3	Belgian-Belgian	Male	30-35
Focus group Nr. 4	French-Belgian	Male	30-35
Focus group Nr. 5	Belgian-Belgian	Female	20-25
Focus group Nr. 6	Indian-Belgian	Male	30-35

Source: Own work.

Interviews and focus-group data together provide contextual information collected, transcribed, and analyzed, typically by looking for common themes that appear in multiple interviews. Thematic analysis is used to interpret the interviews after being transcribed. Thematic analysis was chosen as a method of extracting debate from the data because it helps researchers check for trends in the data and organize them into concrete categories and themes that capture the topic under investigation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The interviews were transcribed after they were completed to prepare them for review. Audio recordings were written and synthesized, and the knowledge gained from in-depth interviews was transcribed. Following the indicators in the chart below (Figure 5), thematic analysis was used to analyze the data to identify specific patterns.

Figure 5: The 6 steps of Thematic Analysis

Familiarizing yourself with your data

Generating initial codes

Searching for themes

Reviewing themes

Defining and naming themes

Producing the report
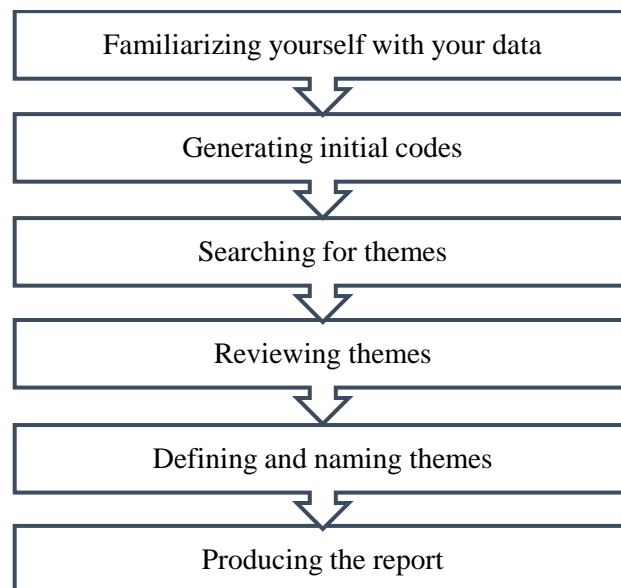
Source: A review on Journal of Client Care (Javadi & Zarea).

The method of thematic data analysis entails reading and rereading the data many times, searching for common concepts, and coding them in the document, whether identical or dissimilar (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

The codes were then grouped into related clusters to form a meaningful theme. As a result of thematic analysis, a theme is a word or expression that captures something essential or the context of the data concerning the research query (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Themes are usually a thing that catches the researcher's eye, and they can be descriptive or abstract as long as they capture the nature of the respondents' experiences and facts (Boyatzis, 1998). Following the identification of several broad and important themes, the data was re-read to examine how they fit into each encounter. New trends were applied to the data as they appeared.

6.3 Findings

The aim of thesis is not to generalize and interpret what is correct or incorrect. The aim is to reveal the interviewees' thoughts and perspectives on a highly relevant topic that affects everybody. Seeking answers to specific questions that concern the world, regardless of which country or city we are in, has piqued interest. The media's impact on public opinion is a work that will provide resources and information for many other issues of the same or similar nature in the future.

Five themes emerged from analyzing the data gathered through interviews, which will be explored in this part. The five major themes are as below:

1. The portrayal of immigrants in the media.
2. An immigrant can take the job.
3. Integration
4. The role of the media in the integration of immigrants
5. The trust in the EU in solving the immigration matter.

6.3.1 The portrayal of immigrants in the media.

Respondents were given the option of rating their choices on a hierarchical scale, from most to least spoken about, in three categories: fake news, immigrants, and the media. The majority admitted that they frequently discuss the media, especially news published in the media and on social media. Fake News and Immigrants are listed below with the same number of responses. Belgium is a very diverse country in terms of population. Therefore, the respondents' answers differ significantly from each other due to their age, background, ethnicity, education, and the work they do. Brussels is the capital of Europe, where the European Union's essential institutions are established, and news consumption is meaningful. As questions about immigration and news followed, respondents state that immigrants' news has a negative connotation. Most of them answer yes to the question, while others explained more as follows.

- "Yes, immigrants, they are either negatively portrayed or their accomplishments in society are ignored, because good news is no news." (Interviewee 1)

- "More than mainstream media, certain sections of the media, especially those with ultra-right wings, tend to run negative reports on immigrants." (Interviewee 3)

- "Yes, they are poorly portrayed, people do not understand why and what were the reasons or circumstances that made them move to another country. This is still an issue for the national media, and it should not be distorted in favor of one side or the

other. The information that is broadcast must be objective; politics or other factors must not influence it. People should be informed without being branded or marginalized." (Interviewee 4)

On the other hand, just, a few interviews were neutral in their answers while showing a different perspective.

- "In the world definitely, the immigrants are negatively portrayed, In Belgium I tend to think the media is rather in partial." (Interviewee 7)

- "Rather not in a negative way, I think they are not portrayed in a direct and transparent way, they don't show the good things." (Interviewee 11)

- "Paying more attention to the source of information strongly confirms that ' ' the immigrants are not portrayed negatively, the media I follow, informs me about the situation as it is." (Interviewee 12)

While the interviews' primary responses show that news about immigrants had a non-positive trend, respondents shared their thoughts and ideas on how the news precisely reflects immigrants. When, addressing immigrants, the media is continually commenting and making references to poverty and need. The media has been accused of distorting the image of migrants by emphasizing negative experiences (criminal clashes with local residents, etc.) in order to scare them. This is just one side of the story; the other is seldom discussed in the media.

- "Media doesn't talk about the rich immigrant; they talk about those who come to steal the money of the government." (Focus group 1)

- "There is a selective way of portraying them depending on the county try they are coming from. Immigrants from rich countries are appreciated more than that one from poor countries." (Focus group 4)

- "When the media talked about that bank that was robbed by Brazilians, people in the building where I live started to talk badly about Brazilians. Of course, it was bad what they did, but the media emphasized so much, that people think that all Brazilians are like those ones." (Focus group 5)

- "Media portrays the immigrants as a burden to the society of the welcoming country." Muslims are depicted as particularly dangerous and dumb. I believe that these negative characteristics are mainly due to their belief. The media's depiction of Muslim women is similar: insecure, powerless, voiceless, and mistreated, because it sells papers." (Interviewee 8)

Apart from the fact that immigrants are seen as an obstacle to the host country, some support the idea that the media portrays them even worse by linking them to terrorist attacks. Some of them reflect as below:

- "What I read in the news about immigrants is usually linked to crime and terrorism, while as per refugees they are usually depicted as victims. Some media coverage of immigrants is unsatisfactory because it portrays them as offenders on one side and victims on the other. I will never forget their faces at the borders or in the refugee's camps." (interviewee 21)

- "They are portrayed as people who do not abide by the rules and disturb the peace." (Interviewee 20)

- "They are portrayed as criminals, opportunists and troublemakers." (Interviewee 14)
- "They are described as activists and terrorists; the best example is that of France, what is happening right now, they are all going against one religion." (Interviewee 15)

The terrorist attacks at the <u>Maalbeek</u> metro station in Belgium and the national airport of Zaventem in 2016 have incredibly intimidated this country's citizens. The media's coverage of the attack caused confusion and panic among the public. As a result of news stories about terrorism, people are fearful. The greatest concern is when such news is associated with immigrants.

- "Terrorism is any act targeted against humans with the purpose of inflicting pain, fear, death and destruction can be categorized as terrorism. News about terrorism tends to make us feel afraid. As an Indian we have seen the devastating impact of terrorism, especially the 26/11 terror attack in Mumbai." (Interviewee 7)
- "Terrorism is when you attack or use violence against people who have another opinion, when you want to pressure your opinion. I was in Brussels when it happened, March 22nd, 2016. I was going to school. I was having my coffee when my mom calls me telling what was happening. Immediately I see people running and screaming. You could see the impact of the attack itself but also that of media's way of reporting the news. It was so sad to see, people continued to stay at home and not go out. Brussels it is such a nice city, I'm trying to cope with it and not be afraid." (Focus group 5)
- "Terrorism is attacking people and ruining lives. I heard it from news for the first time and I don't like metros anymore. I link them with bombs. I try to avoid it but the impact of the news I read left me with those remarks." (Focus group 6)
- "Terrorism is an unlawful act of violence to take political stance against a state or international organization. I'm not actively afraid of it but it scares me whenever I hear about an attack because it reminds me that such things can happen anytime, anywhere and to anyone. I hear it more often in the news." (Focus group 1)

All of the respondents acknowledged that society is subjected to false news and skewed facts, but they emphasized that the source of information is just as relevant as the information itself.

- "The society it is exposed to fake news, but it is up to everyone to choose a trustworthy source and in case of doubt to check where this information is coming from, from who is published and what is the meaning beyond, me personally I check, the Guardian and euro news." (Interviewee 9)

Such distorting news leaves room for comments. Consequently, the question arises about whether they have read or seen racist or xenophobic messages about immigrants in the web portals or newspapers. Migrants are particularly vulnerable to acts of hate and bigotry in a volatile political environment marked by Islamophobia, fear spread by terrorism, and the rise of anti-immigrant groups.

- "I've sent xenophobic posts, which is humiliating. After reading the article, I felt bad, as I was with a friend who shared the same ethnicity as the "violent immigrant" mentioned in the news. Stereotyping is a bad skill for journalists to have. It leads to the lack of understanding in the society. The lack of expertise of ordinary people with university degrees shocks me." (Interviewee 1)

- "Yes, everything what is happening in the United States of America. The systematic and widespread use and acceptance of hate speech and propaganda, especially in the media, that promotes hatred and/or incites violence against minority groups." (Interviewee 11)

- "Yes. I feel like the humanity is really lost." (Interviewee 16)

6.3.2 An immigrant can take the job

Several EU Member States have seen a substantial rise in unemployment rates as a consequence of the global economic crisis, leading policymakers to act to protect their domestic labor markets. As respondents have pointed out, people who are experiencing a difficult economic condition are more likely to turn against outsiders or immigrants, believing that these groups pose a danger to the economy. The impact of the media on public opinion on immigration is a dynamic subject that has prompted a variety of studies. Different discussions with the interviewees took place as they expressed their feelings about whether they would like to leave their country for whatever reason. All of the interviewees indicated that if a better opportunity arose, they would be willing to relocate, either temporarily or permanently.

The reasons given by the interviewees for wanting to leave their country varied, but the majority claimed that it would be for economic and professional reasons, implying that they would like to pursue a better job and career.

- "Yes, I would live my country for better job opportunities, clearly not now; the pandemic situation it is making the things really difficult. But in the future why not, if the job offers and the country's conditions are favorable." (Interviewee 4)

- "Yes, I'm Spanish but I live in Belgium for 10 years already. I left my country due to the development of my professional career, to enjoy a life experience abroad, to learn new languages and to meet new people." (Interviewee 12)

- "I did leave my country several times already, I'm in Belgium for 5 years, I would leave Belgium for a better job, love and willingness to discover a culture." (Interviewee 6)

The opportunity to be free to try other experiences and get to know new cultures was another reason why respondents wanted to leave their country for another destination.

- "I would leave my country yes because I consider myself open to various cultures than mine. I like diversity and admire the adventure of living an international life." (Interviewee 10)

- "I would leave to accept new experiences and expand the horizon." (Interviewee 11)

But many are those who would leave their country for studies and then work.

- "I left my country for a different education and then again for work, so again I would leave for a better job." (Interviewee 3)

- I left my country Mexico for a better education and then I stayed in Belgium to work. I'm always open to better job opportunities." (Interviewee 2)

- "I have already done it, for studies and then work." (Interviewee 20)

On the other hand, some interviews agreed that they feel comfortable in Belgium. They are satisfied with how the system works; therefore, they don't consider leaving

Belgium eternally, but they would temporarily leave to travel and experience new adventures.

- "I don't want to leave my country, but I love travelling, that's what I'm planning to do." (Focus group 5)

- "I would go temporary to live a new experience, but I don't want to raise my kids outside Belgium. Here we do pay high taxes, but we get many things in return." (Focus group 6)

- I'm an immigrant. I wouldn't prefer to leave Belgium. The rights and opportunities we get here are much better than in our home country. If I have to compare, I find many differences in terms of equality, education, free speech, economic situation. If these were respected, they would have been no reason to move to another country." (Focus group 3)

Respondents who decide to leave their home country or place of residence for work reasons answer the question of whether their workplace is at risk from a newcomer. The interviewed believe that the media leads people to a negative perception of competition. The subject of immigrant jobs is a contentious topic because it instills fear. So, where does this fear of migrant workers originate? The basic model of supply and demand of the labor market assumes that migrants are native workers with similar skills, education, and abilities, and their arrival increases the supply of labor. This model's unmistakable assumption is that, as the economy grows, all workers' incomes will fall, and unemployment will rise. The reality is a little different: native workers and migrants have different human capital levels in their respective countries, such as language fluency, professional networks, and social and cultural knowledge. New immigrants are ineffective replacements for native labor due to initial ability gaps. Furthermore, we are all aware that labor shortages and work openings will coexist.

- "This is a false notion. An immigrant generally has to fulfil a lot more conditions before he/she is even considered for a job that it opens to all nationals of the country. Immigrants generally get jobs for which either the local talent is unavailable or jobs that locals may be not inclined to take up." (Interviewee 11)

- "People are not really well informed. When reading the news people can get the wrong picture of the right amount of people coming. People feel threatened because they think many more than in reality are coming and media does not help on that. People have the right to be fairly informed. It is not a problem if an immigrant can take my job. It is about a fair completion and I support it. If he/ she have a better education than mine than fair enough." (Focus group 2)

- "As I mentioned before, I said I would leave my country for a better job opportunity, therefore the newcomers can take my job position as I can take their job. The reality is that an immigrant tends to get offered position no locals is willing to do and yet essential work but that it is not published in the media, no one talk about this therefore everyone better than me can take a job." (Focus group 3)

- "Immigrants do not steal jobs, and this is what you get from what you hear in the media, but the question in here it is different. I believe immigration represents new opportunities that could generate more jobs. This is my perceptions which it is not in the headlines of the magazines or newspapers." (Focus group 1)

There is no concern that migrants would steal jobs from locals, and some participants believe that the number of migrants should not be limited in order to ensure adequate employment for locals; rather, they should strive for equal competition in the labor market.

- "They can take my job for both the reasons, first if they are better skilled and I am fine with this and secondly because companies tend to pay immigrants less and them freely abuse with such thing." (Focus group 6)

- "As long as the person is now a resident in the country, he/she has as much rights as I have. It is fair if both of us can compete." (Focus group 4)

Although the media has created a misconception about the way, immigrants get their jobs. Respondents express their willingness to be part of a transparent and competitive process where everyone gets what they deserve based on their abilities.

- "Media constantly portrays this as a threat, but a job should be awarded to the most qualified person, regardless of his and her nationality. Exceptions are of course possible, for example a job in the diplomatic corps of a country. (Focus group 5)

- "In my job the nationality it is not a problem therefore everyone more experienced than I can take my job. If the person is competent enough, he/she can take my job. Everywhere you can take someone job if you are better than them." (Focus group 2)

- "If you do your job well, there is no reason for the employer to replace you. If you don't do it well then no one shouldn't complain if someone takes your job position." (Focus group 4)

- "I don't feel threatened by this even though it is so highly discussed in the media. Everyone deserves to get a job and let the best candidate win. I assume that the selection process should be fair and non-discriminative." (Focus group 3)

6.3.3 Integration

Over the past half-century, Europe has become an "immigrant's continent," and the racial and cultural diversity in European societies has increased. Immigrants in Europe are often seen as culturally distinct from major nationalities, and other religions are unfamiliar in most Western European countries. Many European governments deemed multiculturalism a 'failure' and preferred more strict means to integrate refugees, and all this started before the terrorist attacks in Washington, New York, Madrid, and London. Consequently, the social sciences have played a crucial role in influencing public views of immigrant integration processes and shaping government policies in many instances. The need to develop policies to establish integration because of these facts has been unevenly recognized over time and space.

As interviews have shown, the integration of immigrants in Belgium is not what was expected. Everyone recognizes the importance of integrating migrants into society but not all societies have been welcoming. Respondents describe their interactions with immigrants and the disparity between the picture they project and the attention they receive in the media.

- "I never had a bad experience, but people go what they hear in the media, that they steel and then they generalize them. I do feel comfortable with them." (Interviewee 15)

- "Yes, I do I work weekly with them at the abattoirs of Anderlecht to collect unsold fruits and veggies. They are hardworking and seem to want to fit in. I recognize why negative reports pique the media's attention. As a result, they occasionally write articles about migrants that are negative. The quality of the media used in this type of image creation is important. However, I am confident that the majority of people are aware of which types of media they can trust or not." (Interviewee 5)

As the majority responded positively based on their personal experience, another one responded like this.

- "I'm not always comfortable; it depends on the person, but same way it depends also if I'm around Belgians. The nationality it is not an issue." (Interviewee 6)

Learning the local language, building a social network, understanding, accepting, and respecting the local community, complying with the law, getting a career, and a sense of belonging are all considered as aspects of integration, according to the results of the interviews. It seems that understanding how integration can be done is essential in order to comprehend the principle of integration. The question now is whether it is viewed as an internal mechanism that occurs within the immigrant's mind or as a process that evolves in tandem with the receiving world.

As a result, the participants were asked who they believe is responsible for achieving integration. The majority of interviewees believe that the immigrant must integrate into the community in which they are moving and that it occurs inside oneself.

- "So, I believe it is mostly up to the individuals themselves to decide how much they want to incorporate. And I believe that if you really want to, you can still integrate. Individual effort is required for integration. (Focus group 1)

- "It is everyone's responsibility to adapt to society's rules and respect their laws and customs, because asking the culture to adapt to you is absurd; you must adapt to it." (Focus group 4)"Recognition of the person's community and surroundings is something individual. Learning the language is ideal. However, for me, integration does not imply that I must adopt the same culture and beliefs as others, such as being religious. I don't want immigrants in my country to convert to Christianity in order to integrate." (Focus group 5)

6.3.4 The role of the media in the integration of immigrants

In Europe, the integration of immigrants is a matter that opens up debates. One of the aims of writing this thesis was to address how the media would contribute to the migratory country's integration of foreigners. Although it is not a direct task of the media, its effect on public opinion has given rise to questions to which interviewers have replied. The interviews also claimed that the media strongly influences the opinion that citizens have created about immigration based on how the media has presented them.

- "The media has a massive influence on how people view immigrants." Especially because some people will believe everything they read if it coincides with their ignorance and beliefs." (Interviewee 13)

- "Media is only a product. It reflects culture, politicians, residents, and businesses. Since the media writes what people want to see and hear, it has a significant impact." (Interviewee 18)

- "Media impact public opinion a lot. It is known that you can influence people very easy as long as you are persuasive enough. Since their main goal is to share information, this fuels the hatred of the extremists." (Interviewee 20)

- "Media can influence popular perception of the immigration issue and this could influence political decision making." (Interviewee 21)

Although the media's influence in generating prejudices is excellent in terms of immigration, they claimed that the media could change things for the better and enable society to act healthily. The media is responsible for conveying optimistic messages that make it easier for foreigners to adjust to the host culture and not feel discriminated. The interviews answered the questions if they think the media in their country plays a part in countering discrimination. Almost 18 out of 21 of Belgian respondents agree that national media play an essential role in countering discrimination. They consider the media's position extremely important to combat the discrimination while the rest consider it somewhat significant.

- "Media can help the immigrant to better integrate by making people understand why immigration is a key thing not only for the people who are immigrating but also for the people who are natives of European countries. Europe as a developed continent needs many intellectual people to run this well-organized union and employing immigrants should be seen as an advantage." (Focus group 2)

A central path forward in reducing racism is a talk among media, civil society, religious groups, and policymakers. They have the potential to represent and spark public intolerance. A democratic society's fundamental concept is to defend people from the racist and xenophobic discourse. The media must take positive action to combat and remove stereotypes that promote racism and discrimination.

- "Media can encourage immigrants to integrate by running positive and encouraging stories of immigrants who have successfully integrated in the community." (Focus group 1)

- "The media will aid the integration process by disseminating fair and accurate information and providing various viewpoints and perspectives from each party. The media can launch awareness campaigns across conventional and social media platforms to counter anti-immigration and xenophobic campaigns." (Focus group 4)

  When it comes to communicating with refugees, the media should stop being too harsh. It is widely assumed that improving public awareness of the migrant situation is primarily a media concern. Negative migrant stereotypes are a product, at least in part, of negative press coverage, according to both the general public and migrants. Nonetheless, they believe that a more reliable, up-to-date picture of migrants and their contributions to society will help reverse the trend and build a more optimistic image of migrants and their contributions to society.

- "Media can do a great thing by not talking about them constantly. The media will describe things as they are and demonstrate their added value." (Focus group 1)

- "Media can talk and show the contribution of the immigrants into the society. Therefore, people will be more open to accept the foreigners." (Focus group 5)

- "They must first improve the way they refer to migrants; they should learn more about the personal stories surrounding each of those who decide to enter the country. The journalists should also know the countries of origin's situation to understand the

general context and individual needs. As I mentioned before, stop using words or expressions that suppose any discriminations. I also believe that the issue should be prevented from the way they portray poverty. They dramatize most situations because those who do have money do not appear in the news. They delve into the idea that the poor ones come to live in the state and do not contribute to anything because they are somewhat "ignorant they do not want to work. Lastly, the media should also talk about the immigration of their citizens, their country. There are also critical situations that citizens of European countries experience. If a media publishes these stories, it is easier to empathize with them because they are compatriots. So, people may have developed more empathy for them as news about immigrants comes out." (Interviewee 5)

- "Media can help by making them feel welcome and well accepted. As well as promoting the recognition of their cultural identities rather than discriminating them." (Interviewee 17)

They typically focus their reporting on the words of politicians and those of political experts as the media writes on immigrants and immigration, but the immigration narratives are more than just that. Their story goes deeper than the newspaper headlines. Their stories have history, conflicts and economic aspects that require ever deeper attention.

- "There are many articles' media can share about what the newcomers should know about Belgium. Differences between different parts of Belgium. More informative articles to share." (Interviewee 8)

The media must make young journalists aware of ethical standards and respect for different beliefs and races.

- "Immigrants are increasingly tired of having a negative connotation attached to them. Why should race be present at all times when discussing immigrants? If this could be removed from the articles that would be great." (Interviewee 19)

6.3.5 The trust in EU, solving the immigration issue

Belgium is a country where the far-right populist parties performed better, and the anti-immigration response now is a fact. Television and newspapers are the key sources of knowledge for people about politics and government as confirmed by the interviews. These media can influence voters not only by the side of a specific report but also by selecting which articles to cover. According to interviews, media reporting greatly influences political awareness, perceptions, and public conduct. However, the individual's beliefs, personal approach to the way news is searched, news sources, and their pre-existing views diminish the media's influence to influence the vote. The interviews argued that the media influences to some extent their vote as most give more attention and priority to deeper research to be fully convinced.

- "I am aware of this influence. I read from reliable sources rather than listening to the thoughts of strangers on the internet. The media, on the other hand, is an important outlet for politicians' messages to the public, and the content of these messages has the power to influence voter behavior. I have a set of preferences. I, strive not to be swayed." (Interviewee 17)

- "To some extent, the media can affect voter choice. I try not to form my opinions based on what I see in the media. That, I believe, would make my opinion shaky in

terms of evidence and biased against the media story. However, it continues to provide detail, which I attempt to cross-reference with other sources. Finally, I am free to form my own opinion. As a result, the media has a minor impact on my viewpoint." (Interviewee 15)

- "The media has always had the power to manage or influence people's opinions, perceptions, and ideology. We all always seek to consume information from a tool that has a view similar to ours. But the particularity of this century is that we have access to the communication channels of political parties, companies, associations, institutions, etc., so we can access the information they publish without prior manipulation. In this way, it is more difficult for a media to change opinions. The media do not end modifying my political statement, but they help me know everything that influences me." (Interviewee 10)

- "I use Twitter to follow all those involved in politics. I first see whatever they say. How they respond to daily facts. And based on that, I know who I prefer. Then, when I see by myself what the candidate is saying, I know which news channel is being more transparent and which is trying to distort what was said. I screen all information and try to stick as much as possible to true facts." (Interviewee 19)

Respondents do not seem to be influenced by the media when it comes to political confidence in the European Union, despite the media's influence on public opinion when it comes to voting. The issue of public trust in EU institutions to deal with immigration and integration policies emerges, but this appears to be a product of each country's particular national policies rather than a media concern.

- "I believe the solution is not quotas or border closures. To think that money is an issue in Europe is a mistake. As a European and a Spaniard, I believe there is a lack of solidarity among the countries in resolving this problem. Thousands of migrants arrive in southern European countries each year, needing regularization, registration, and assistance in becoming citizens. I believe that since Sweden and Denmark do not have to deal with these issues on a regular and large scale, they are unable to comprehend the urgency or need for increased investment in this region. Furthermore, why not allow the southern countries to lead meetings on the strategy to be pursued, as they are the ones with the most experience? Yeah, I trust the EU, but I don't trust nations, and the EU is run by nations, so I don't trust." (Interviewee 16)

- "However, I would like to believe in the EU, but it is one of the matters that are dividing the society and if the society cannot find a consensus it is hard to think that EU can solve the issue. It starts with people." (Interviewee 17)

- "I understand this is quite challenging since the majority of the inflows come from the south whereas north countries suffer less from that. There are several different types of trust. Political confidence is characterized as a fundamental evaluative orientation toward the government based on how well the government meets people's normative expectations. Therefore, I do not trust EU, because every country has its own strategy towards immigration and not a common one." (Interviewee 13)

- "Everyone recognizes that migration is a world-wide issue. Climate change, for example, is a global problem that cannot be addressed at the national level. One of the reasons why nationalist politicians generally reject climate change is that such an issue can only be addressed on a global scale, which goes against their national interests. If they emphasize the importance of European cooperation over nationalist solutions, I will believe in European Union. A pro-European message against

nationalist ones can be conveyed by a sentence like Success comes when people work together; failure tends to happen alone." (Interviewee 19)

Others trust in the European Union's ability to address the problem because of their personal and tangible contribution to its institutions.

- "I have confidence in the EU. I'm really familiar with these types of projects. They spend millions of euros per year on immigration issues, but it is a difficult issue to manage." (Interviewee 5)

7 DISCUSSION

Immigration has become the most talked-about word at school, work and everywhere. It seems it is becoming a challenge, and people feel threatened for their personal life, stability, employment, and security. The effect of immigration is noticed in both the home countries but also the host countries. During the European elections, many parties received a considerable number of votes, and various political debates were incentivized. It is not simple to have a personal view about immigration since this phenomenon is complex and extensive. The people create this image about immigrants because of individual experience, statistics and the information received from the media. The link between the media and immigration goes beyond the meaning of media as just a communication tool. The media nowadays filter, store, construct and control everything (Blinder & Jeannet, 2014). The media presents the immigrants and migrants typically as criminals, terrorists, drug dealers, and troublemakers. This attitude of the press drives adverse reactions, behaviors, and views toward immigration. Its impact is so strong that it causes stereotypes, racism, hate, and xenophobia. This language addressed to immigration affects the voting choice (Eberl et al., 2019). Different parties use different means to convey their message, but also to propagandize.

How media can help immigrants to better integrate into a society

According to current national patterns and strategies, the notion of "integration" often implies forced assimilation in a host culture. Compulsory participation in integration programs has coercive characteristics, but such programs are unquestionably crucial for further integrating migrants in host societies under the concept of balance of compromises (Crouch, 2014).

Different institutions concentrate on other aspects of foreigner integration, as defined in the literature review. However, assimilation does not seem to be a significant emphasis in the European idea of integration. Neither the EU nor Belgian society tends to warrant a drastic shift in foreigners' culture and actions (Berry, 2001).

In general, the definition of integration of Belgian institutions and society seems to fit how immigrants would define integration for themselves. Consideration is being given to aspects such as employment, language, and law enforcement. Member states and regions have developed initiatives to enhance the quality of knowledge about migrants. If ethnic group, skin color, country of origin, religion, or culture are not essential to understand the plot, some professional guides advise not mentioning them. Simplicity, dramatization, and sensationalism are often discouraged. If dialogue about migrants is not strengthened, there is a chance of further dividing the mainstream and immigrant audiences, resulting in the development of two distinct blocks of the population receiving different knowledge and forming different views of society.

It is generally assumed that improving public awareness of the migrant situation is primarily a media problem. Negative migrant stereotypes are a product, at least in part, of negative press coverage, according to both the general public and migrants. The media's portrayal of migration represents, in large part, the various migration backgrounds and perspectives of European countries, as well as the larger sense of enforcing equality legislation. First and foremost, there is a need to keep an eye on coverage and avoid stereotypical, negative expressions about suspects' ethnicity, derogatory phrases in crime news, such as stressing a person's legal stay status. Nonetheless, they believe that a more reliable, impartial, and rational representation of migrants can reverse the trend and establish a more positive image of migrants and their contribution to society.

Communicating on migrant integration problems, for example, should draw on a range of sources (including, most importantly, migrants themselves) and aim to include definitions, analyses, and nuanced accounts, as well as mentioned the implications and solutions of particular issues, rather than being simplistic and generalized.

Media generating discrimination and encouraging xenophobia.

When it comes to migration and international mobility, there is likelihood to view immigration in social issues such as rising crime and criminality rather than highlighting the positive aspects of immigration to the host country (Igartua & Cheng, 2009). Migrants are more prominently featured in certain forms of news than others, such as crime news, and these reports frequently portray them in a negative light as criminals rather than victims. Migrants are often portrayed as more collective than individuals. They are often associated with threats or issues, such as crime and disputes, and individual responsibility for specific behavior is attributed to the contextual characteristics of the specific migrant community. Similar stories about 'native' people, on the other hand, concentrate on individual accountability, actions, or ideas rather than cultural characteristics. In similar news settings, migrants are more negatively portrayed than non-migrants.

Media coverage of perceived economic rivalry with immigrants promotes restrictive immigration policies while undermining support for policies that grant immigrants. As a result, threat-related media disclosure hurts public views of immigrants. These results are also confirmed in a non-experimental context, where repeated exposure to news representations of social groups concerning cultural, economic, or security threat frames increases bias over time (Costello & Hodson, 2011).

The news on immigration continues to be mostly negative (Igartua, Otero, Muñiz, Cheng & Gómez, 2007). According to an analysis of news coverage in 16 Western democracies, the third most negative political news coverage is immigration and integration. The influx of migrants and refugees on European shores in 2015 was framed as a European crisis by the European press. Although the media's portrayal of "the crisis" is diverse, newcomers are seen as outsiders and distinct from Europeans: helpless outsiders or threatening outsiders. There are also observed regional variations in coverage. Coverage varies significantly across European regions. There was a big difference between the media coverage in the West and the East, especially in the receiving and receiving countries, especially at the beginning of the "crisis.

Xenophobic stereotyping is a widespread and growing phenomenon in the media. The new wave of xenophobia is distinct from the media-fueled nationalisms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The proliferation of digital media and outlets coincides with the

growth of political cultures and the emergence of new tensions within them. The feared "other" is no longer a faraway concept; xenophobia has turned inward, tearing apart historical political cultures and old nationalisms. The twentieth century's famous nationalisms were primarily the product of media-fueled divisions between "them" and "us." The establishment of such boundaries is inextricably linked to the most fundamental media effect: developing a mutual sense of space, time, and language. In this context, all media are "xenophobic" since they offer a distinct sense of belonging that can seem regular and special (Kleist, Loewenstein, Trudel, Zabrovskaya & Harry, 2017).

Discrimination is characterized as a collection of differentiated treatment methods that occur in various societal contexts, given that there are many places where this distinction is applied, such as at work, school, home, and in social circumstances. Discrimination is commonly manifested as a negative collection of emotions or as "negative behaviour in front of a community, based on a negative bias or attitude" grounded "in assumptions or convictions about the negative characteristics that characterize that group" (Cunha, Policarpo, Monteiro & Figueiras, 2003).

A particular collection of migration assumptions fuels discrimination. Immigration is seen as a natural source of problems by many Belgian people, who see migrants as a danger to national security, the economy, and culture. But this is not always the case.

Media's impact on shaping beliefs

Media and journalists who create and deliver information to people play a significant role in contemporary democracies because of their role as intermediaries between the political system and the general public. Importantly, there is scientific evidence that social media influences offline political conduct, including the incitement to dangerous behaviours including hate crimes. In a democracy, they serve a dual purpose: educating the public about democratic processes and expressing public sentiment for the political elites. Every person engages in mass communication daily, although not always consciously. Newspapers, magazines, television, advertisements, and social media platforms are all used for this form of contact (Wettstein & Wirth, 2017).

Research since decades ago has shown that these encounters with media material can have affective, cognitive, behavioral, and even physiological consequences. Such media impacts are especially important when political or social interest groups are attempting to alter public opinion or power and mobilize voters. Any intentional use of the media as a weapon to influence public opinion or democratic processes, it has been suggested, would pose a significant challenge to any liberal democracy (Scharkow & Bachl, 2017).

However, this is not always the case, especially when the voters are capable of having a critical and independent view and use a variety of sources of information and closely support their political parties' agendas. Several circumstances, however, hindered this general trend. Individuals' emotional reactions, insecurity, trust in media, and own beliefs and values that resonated with media content were among the conditions. Finally, it was found that the media, especially individual media outlets, cannot sway public opinion or influence their readers at will.

CONCLUSION

As discussed in this thesis, immigrant events continue and can scale due to various factors, including the effects of climate change and the dynamics of the new world economy. As shown in the literature review, European leaders are increasingly questioning the idea of borderless Europe and, in turn, ending multiculturalism. In this sense, media coverage of immigration is a major challenge for current and future communities as it can shape general debate and attitudes about immigration. Also, while new technologies such as the Internet have diversified news providers, the content is becoming more and more similar. Immigrants' voices will not be heard as long as immigration issues are presented according to a media agenda that homogenizes public discourse. The promotion of alternative multi-voice structures is a necessary complement to traditional media and a necessary complement to immigration coverage. This paper has shown that media disclosure may have a substantial effect on the creation of public opinion on immigration.

Given the rise of anti-immigrant parties across Europe and the challenges to Europe's open border policies; it is needed to take a more systematic approach to understand immigration discourses in the media and their influences on public opinion, considering broader media samples, including new and social media, and comparative evaluations crosswise different countries.

In the years ahead, migration is foreseen to remain a major sociocultural and political problem. Thus, understanding current and potential trends in public perception and public policy of migration in Europe and beyond requires in-depth knowledge of media reports on immigration, the factors behind those forms of coverage, and their impact on public opinion.

After all, the relationship between the economic, welfare state, social policy, and immigration policy are essential in every country. Hence, local integration policy may require the cooperation or partnership of many different organizations, and media can be one. Several campaigns by media organizations, governments, migrant organizations, and international organizations have aimed to minimize xenophobic stereotyping in the media, increase journalist awareness of the problem, and enhance migrants' access to the media so that their voices can be heard. There is a need for greater understanding between civil society and the media on cultural and ethnic differences. Engaging with minority communities would help the media improve the standard of news and become more mindful of intercultural sensitivities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Povzetek (Summary in Slovene language)

Migracija ni nov pojav; vedno je bila del človeške kulture. Ljudje so se selili z ene celine na drugo, iz ene države v drugo in celo znotraj ene države. Ob nedavnem gospodarskem upadu in množičnem prilivu migrantov, ki so Evropo preplavili leta 2015, se je na izseljevanje začelo gledati kot na težavo in ne kot na fenomen. Mediji močno vplivajo na javno mnenje in s prihodom družbenih medijev ta vpliv samo še narašča. Po drugi strani pa se zdi, da se izseljevanje ne bo upočasnilo prav kmalu. Ker je zastopanje priseljencev v medijih ključnega pomena, lahko negativni diskurz o njih prispeva k stereotipom in oblikovanju javnega mnenja. Jezik priseljencev se osredotoča predvsem na njihov negativni odnos in škodljiv učinek na družbo. Njihov prispevek k družbi je zato pogosto spregledan. Raba rase, vere in njihovih povezav z ilegalnimi aktivnostmi, ko je govora o priseljencih, v javnosti vzbuja strah. Problem priseljevanja je ena izmed najbolj perečih tem v Evropski uniji, letos pa je dobila dodatno pozornost javnosti, s podpisom novega sporazuma o beguncih in prosilcih za azil.

Vključevanje priseljencev v lokalno skupnost bi bilo oteženo zaradi pomankanja gostoljubja lokalne družbe. Medtem ko se na integracijski postopek gleda kot na samostojno entiteto, imajo mediji v tem procesu ključno vlogo.

Zaskrbljenost glede priseljevanja še naprej narašča na nacionalni in mednarodni ravni in ljudje so vse bolj fatalistični glede evropskega gospodarskega položaja. Glede gospodarstva in zaposlovanja so še vedno nekoliko pesimistični, toda izobraženi ljudje so bolj odprti za konkurenco. Evropejci hkrati bolj zaupajo svojim institucijam, da bodo rešile problem.

Zaradi medijske blokade migranti ne morejo v celoti prispevati k rasti države gostiteljice in svoje matične države. Rezultati poudarjajo kritično potrebo po premagovanju pomembnih ovir glede migracije, da bodo lahko migranti v celoti prispevali k celoviti človeški rasti Evrope in njihovih domov.

Mediji bodo strah ljudi pred priseljenci zmanjšali s spodbujanjem raznolikosti, boja proti rasizmu in multikulturalizmu, tako da bodo minimizirali protimigrantsko poročanje in bodo pri poročanju o priseljencih govorili objektivno. Da bi preprečila protimigrantske in ksenofobne kampanje, bi vlada lahko sodelovala z medijskimi akterji, ustanovila zavezništva in vodila kampanje ozaveščanja na običajnih platformah in platformah socialnih medijev. Preko kolaboracije z lokalnimi in regionalnimi vladami, sindikati, verskimi organizacijami in priseljenskimi organizacijami, bi mediji pomagali v integracijskem procesu z zmanjšanjem diskriminacije in povečanjem pobud za vključevanje.

Appendix 2: Interview questions

1. When you get together with friends or relatives, would you say you discuss frequently, occasionally, or never about Immigrants, fake news, media? Rank it from Most discussed to less.
2. Do you know the difference between an immigrant and asylum seeker?
3. How many immigrants do you think live in Belgium?
4. Your favorite source of information?
5. Do you comfortable with immigrants?
6. Would you leave your country and why? If yes / no; why?
7. Whatever feelings or emotions the words " you are not welcome" cause to you
8. What's terrorism, are you scared and where have you heard about it more often?
9. Are immigrants negatively portrayed in the media?
10. Have you encountered racist and xenophobic messages in the media about immigrants and how did you feel?
11. Can immigrant take your job? If yes / no; why?
12. What is your definition of Integration?
13. Do you trust the EU in solving the immigration issue?
14. How can media help the immigrant to better integrate in a country?
15. Is the society exposed to the fake news?
16. Where you base your vote preference, how much media influences on that?
17. How media portrays immigrants, refugees?
18. In your opinion on the issue of immigration how much does the media influence?
19. What are your expectations for the next twelve months: will the next twelve months be better, worse or the same, when it comes to immigration in Europe?
20. If there is a message you would like to give regarding this issue, what would it be?