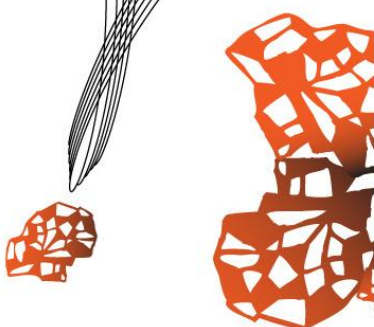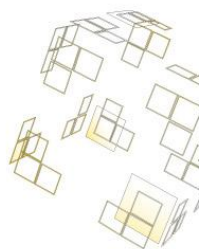# The Content and Tone of the Media Coverage with regard to the Refugee Crisis in Dutch Popular and Quality Newspapers over time

**Master thesis
Communication Studies**

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Prologue

Completing a Master's thesis is an intensive process and I have definitely gained great personal insight. A personality test once described me as a person who is 'always looking for new opportunities', 'dislikes tasks that are on a routine basis and take a long time' and 'appreciates variety and speed in activities'. This Master's thesis was precisely the contrary of all the things that I do best. Nevertheless, I have completed this task and I am very proud of the final result. Of course, I would like to thank a few people who certainly contributed to this thesis.

First of all, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to my two supervisors, Dr Jordy Gosselt and Dr Joris van Hoof, for their great support, insightful comments and inspiration during the process.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my Granny, Oma Loes, for always keeping her door open to me, so I could turn her home into a real 'study house'. Naturally, my parents and my sister were also a great support. Mom, thank you for always bringing me interesting newspaper articles, for all the talks we had and for your great work in acting as a second coder. Dad, thank you for all the practical help and your unconditional faith in me. Lizemijn, thank you for providing many moments when I did not need to think about the thesis, and your natural way of assuring me that everything would be fine. Of course, Aron, thank you for popping bottles of champagne with me, for the much needed relaxation you provided and for always believing that this process would be successful. Last, but not least, I would like to thank my classmates, friends and other family members, who always made me laugh and celebrated every tiny victory with me. I am forever grateful.

I would like to end this prologue, and this thesis, with some typical Twentse words I learned from my classmates: '*'k heb de knollen op, 'k pak de paling in, nu 'n poar neem'n!*', which means, 'I am done here; I am going out for a few drinks!'

Abstract

Immigration has become an increasingly important political issue in many European countries in recent years (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009). This has been due, in part, to the increasing number of migrants arriving in Europe. Also media coverage appeared to be one of the influencing factors to the formation of immigration attitudes. Since Europe is dealing with the largest refugee crisis in years, and the content and tone of the Dutch media coverage is still unknown, this study has great practical relevance. Furthermore, the study contributes to scientific knowledge about the use of frame and tone in media coverage with regard to humanitarian crises.

   With the use of a content analysis ($N = 400$), two Dutch popular newspapers (*De Telegraaf and AD*) and two Dutch quality newspapers (*NRC Handelsblad and De Volkskrant*) have been studied. The content and tone of the media coverage with regard to the refugee crisis from the beginning of July 2015 until the end of April 2016 was investigated. The results showed that the media coverage was most frequently written in terms of responsibility and human interest. Furthermore, the tone of the media coverage of the refugee crisis is mildly negative and differs significantly per type of stakeholder. Besides that, this study determined three possible key events in September, October and January. It appears that all key events influenced the attention to the refugee crisis and thereby the number of published articles with regard to the refugee crisis. Only key event in January significantly influenced the use of frame and tone. Last, the use of the human interest frame is significantly higher in popular newspapers compared to quality newspapers. The tone of the media coverage does not significantly differ between popular and quality newspapers.

Keywords: *refugee crisis, framing, content, tone, media coverage, key events and newspapers*.

Table of content

1. Introduction

'Humanitarian dramas at the borders, but also Europe's heart gets cracked'
'EU countries argue over "shirking migrants"'
'Nightmare in Koln caused by refugees'

Europe's largest refugee crisis in years has garnered prominent headlines. Hundreds of thousands of people are risking their lives at sea for a better life in Europe. Upon arriving in Europe, many refugees reside in crowded refugee camps, waiting for a definitive residence permit or the possibility of travel farther into Europe. Although not all those arriving in Europe choose to claim asylum, many do. Moreover, the crisis is far from over; the expectation is that a million people from Africa, the Middle East and Asia will seek refugee status in Europe in 2016. The war in Syria will continue to be the main source of migrants, according to a report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration (2015). Furthermore, tensions within the EU have been rising due to the disproportionate burden faced by some countries and conflict among member countries concerning the distribution of refugees.

It is common knowledge that immigration has become an increasingly important political issue in many European countries in recent years (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009). This has been due, in part, to the increasing number of migrants arriving in Europe. The Dutch Institute for Social Research (*Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau)* (2016) has found that 65% of Dutch citizens are apprehensive of the arrival of refugees and see immigration as a major social problem. This trend is confirmed by Berry, Garcia-Blanco and Moore (2016), who state that European citizens are dealing with high levels of anxiety about immigration and asylum across Europe. Research shows that the EU attitudes towards asylum and immigration have tended to be more negative in the past few years. This change in attitude could be explained by the increasing number and visibility of asylum seekers, the economic crisis and citizens' growing concerns about national security and cultural differences. In addition, it is generally acknowledged that information provided by the media plays a role in the formation of political attitudes towards asylum seekers and migration (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009). The media provides information that citizens use to make sense of the world and their place within it and, as a consequence, the media set agendas and debates.

In summary, previous research (Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart, 2009) has shown that media coverage about refugees affects the process of forming attitudes towards immigration and immigrants. However, as Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2009) stated, it is important to know the actual content of the media coverage in order theorise its effects on public opinion and attitudes towards immigration. This study will scientifically explore this gap to determine the actual media content that citizens access with regard to the refugee crisis.

This research studies the content and tone of media coverage with regard to the refugee crisis by means of a content analysis. The content is studied with use of generic media frames. Frames are the result of the 'selection, organization and emphasis of certain aspects of reality, to the exclusion of others' (de Vreese, 2001, p.108). Valkenburg, Semetko and de Vreese (1999) summarise framing as a particular way in which journalists compose a news story to optimise audience accessibility. Frames are used to simplify messages, maintain the

attention of the reader and give meaning to issues. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) have developed a framework of five different generic *news frames*: the human interest frame, the responsibility frame, the conflict frame, the economic consequences frame and the morality frame. In this study, these frames are coded where they appear in news stories. Journalists all over the world frequently apply these frames and many other researchers have studied the content of media coverage using this framework.

In addition, the tone of the media coverage is coded in the study, since tone can have an influence on attitudes towards a topic. This indicates that if the content is negatively framed, people tend to have more negative attitudes towards the topic (Brunken, 2006). The tone of the media coverage is coded via the determination of a main stakeholder in the article and the codes range from very negative to very positive. Furthermore, this research aims to determine if certain key events play a role in the content and tone of the refugee crisis. A key event is defined as a spectacular report about a more or less unusual occurrence (Kepplinger & Habermeier, 1995, p.373) that receives a remarkable amount of attention and is followed by a high amount of media coverage on the subject. Previous research demonstrates that key events may influence the attention, frame and tone of a subject. This study focuses on the media coverage of Dutch newspapers, since newspapers remain a steady and reliable source of information for citizens. Furthermore, it appears that the style of reporting depends on the characteristics of the social structure in which the newspaper exists (Donohue, Olien & Tichenor, 2012). Therefore, this study investigates the distinction between popular and quality newspapers (Atteveldt, van Aalderen-Smeets, Jacobi & Ruigrok, 2014). Previous research shows that there may be differences in the use of frame and tone by different types of newspapers (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; An & Gower, 2009).

This study has great practical relevance, due to the fact that the content and tone of media coverage of the one of the largest humanitarian crises in Europe's history is still unknown in the Netherlands. The fact that so many citizens worry about immigration and that their attitudes towards immigration tend to be negative illustrates the importance of a study that investigates content and tone in this media coverage. This study also enables other scientists to study the influence of media coverage on immigration attitudes. Furthermore, this study provides additional insight into framing and tone in media coverage for the scientific field. For instance, the use of frame and tone in media coverage has been previously examined on many occasions (e.g. Iyengar & Simon, 1993, Kim & Cameron, 2011, Schultz, Kleinneijenhuis, Oegema, Utz & van Atteveldt, 2012), but strangely, humanitarian crises remained underexposed in these studies. This seems unusual, since humanitarian crises, in comparison with organisational or environmental crises, largely involve a higher number of stakeholders, which means that the consequences of media exposure may be much larger as well.

In summary, the goal of the study is threefold. The first goal is to study the content and tone of media coverage with regard to the current refugee crisis in Dutch newspapers by means of a content analysis. The second goal of the study is to examine whether or not frames differ over time, and if key events may be distinguished. The third goal is to investigate if the use of frame and tone differs between popular and quality newspapers.

RQ: What is the content and tone of the media coverage of the refugee crisis in Dutch popular and quality newspapers over time?

2. Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework begins with an introduction to the process of media coverage. The second part will define the concepts of framing and tone in media coverage, and canvass definitions and effects related to framing and tone. Thereafter, previous research in media coverage of refugees will be presented, followed by the five media frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). These frames will be used to study the media coverage of the refugee crisis, the frequency of the frames used, the content of the articles and the presumed effects on readers. Further, the influence of key events on use of frame and tone will be explored. Lastly, the variation in the use of frame and tone between popular and quality newspapers will be presented in the final subsection.

To explain the cohesion among media coverage, frames, tone, key events and types of newspaper, it is essential to first gain greater insight into the process of media coverage. The process begins with the news media, which has the capacity to limit and define the meaning of a story and select which subjects to include and exclude (Valkenburg, Semetko & de Vreese, 1999). This process is called 'framing', and it is by this means that the news media determines, consciously or unconsciously, the content of the story. Besides that, the news media uses a certain tone of voice, which is also referred to as 'tone' or 'valence'. Furthermore, it appears that certain key events are able to influence the use of frame and tone and that the use of frame and tone might depend of the type of newspaper. All of these subjects will be further explained in this theoretical framework.

2.1 Framing
Previous research shows that framing is a complex process, containing several components. In short, there is a distinction a distinction may be made between the concept and process of framing, and the effect of framing on the audience.

2.1.1 Definition and effects
Although there is no established definition of what the concept of framing really entails, several definitions have certain characteristics in common. According to Entman (1993, p. 52), framing consists of selecting aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text, which results in the promotion of a particular definition of a problem, causal interpretation, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation for the item described, or any combination of them. Further, Valkenburg, Semetko and de Vreese (1999) summarise framing as a particular way in which journalists compose a news story to optimise audience accessibility. Thus, frames are used to simplify messages, maintain the attention of the reader and provide meaning to issues.

  The actual 'power' in the process of framing is in the hands of news media. News media can limit and define the meaning of a story and are able to select what material to include and exclude. The information that will be published will emphasise certain aspects of a topic as a result of this framing process. In this way, news media frame a story (Valkenburg, Smetko & de Vreese, 1999; Hallahan, 1999; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Otieno, Spada & Renki, 2013). Valkenburg, Semetko and de Vreese (1999) maintain that it is

unavoidable that journalists frame or structure their news messages to make them accessible to a large audience or to optimise the impact of a story on a particular audience.

Furthermore, a distinction can be made between issue-specific and generic frames. Issue-specific frames only relate to specific topics or events. Other frames are found in media coverage of different topics, over time and in different contexts. These frames are referred to as 'generic frames' (de Vreese, 2002).

The impact of frames on readers is common knowledge. Multiple studies have found that framing in media coverage can cause several significant effects. Framing effects can be defined as 'changes in judgment, engendered by subtle alterations in the definition of judgment or choice of problems' (Iyengar, 1987, p. 816). By reading a framed news article, the audience will be guided to an understanding of the event. Frames explain how to interpret an event and put it in perspective. By helping the audience to understand the event, media frames have the ability to affect the perceptions of readers (Rhee, 1997; Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997; Gross & D'Ambrosio, 2004; McCombs & Ghanem, 2001; McComs et al.,1997; Scheufele, 1999; Steimel, 2010). In addition to influencing how the audience understands and perceives a news message, framing may also influence readers' thoughts and their ability to recall information (Valkenburg, Semetko & de Vreese, 1999). Furthermore, research in the political communication field shows framing effects on levels of support for the political issue in question (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003).

2.1.2 Framing in immigrant media coverage

Research shows that refugees and asylum seekers generally fulfil two roles in news coverage: either as intruders— a 'threat'—or as innocent victims. For instance, a content analysis of immigration coverage in France, Norway and the United States found that the 'public order threat' and 'humanitarian victim' frames have consistently dominated the news in all three nations (Benson, 2013; Eide, 2011). The intruder frame is related to crime, dishonesty and a threat to society. An intruder is unwanted in the host country and is portrayed as someone instilling fear (Parker, 2015). For instance, another content analysis in Australia demonstrated that refugees and asylum seekers have been construed not only as a 'problem' population, but also as a 'deviant' population that pose a risk to the integrity of the nation state, race and public health (Pickering, 2001, p. 169). When the media portrays refugees as a deviant population, it differentiates 'them' from 'us' (Parker, 2015).

O'Doherty and Lecouteur (2007) analysed articles in Australian newspapers and found that certain types of categorisation were used, such as 'boat people' or 'illegal immigrants'. On the contrary, in his analysis of media coverage in Australia, Gale (2004) found that asylum seekers and refugees were positioned as 'victims'. In addition to reporting the problems caused by asylum seekers, the media also presented human interest stories featuring individual refugees recounting their tragic stories. According to Parker (2015), an asylum seeker in a 'victim frame' is portrayed as a 'tragic' person, in need of help. Further, in a content analysis of Belgian media, van Gorp (2005) found that the 'victim frame' has a more dominant position than the 'intruder frame'. The 'victim frame' was also more prevalent in the UK media than the Australian media (Parker, 2015).

In conjunction with the 'intruder frame' and 'victim frame', the 'problem frame'; the 'cause frame' and 'solution frame' are also often used (Benson & Wood, 2015). The 'problem frame' is used to portray problems for authorities, society or immigrants, for instance, the

notion that immigrants threaten national security and the culture of the host country, or that immigrants face potential racism or inhumane treatment. The 'cause' frame is used to describe push and pull factors leading immigrants to emigrate to their host country. For example, immigrants may come to the host country to take advantage of health and social benefits, or alternatively, violence and war forces them to leave their home country. The 'solution' frame depicts enforcement solutions, external solutions, reform system solutions or campaign solutions, such as enhanced punishment for violations, reinforced border control or improved employment opportunities.

Recent research indicates that the current refugee crisis is widely reported in the media. Media researchers admit that the coverage of the crisis has not been straightforward for journalists. Di Salvo (2016) states that the refugee crisis represents a challenge to journalism all across Europe. The difficulty lies in reporting such a complex phenomenon in a balanced manner, without reinforcing banal stereotypes and dehumanising refugees.

In response to the problem, cause and solution frames, a content analysis of the refugee crisis in France, the United States and Norway shows that immigration problems were discussed more often than causes or solutions. Government and political officials, followed by unaffiliated individuals and pro-immigration associations, were the dominant sources of news (Benson & Wood, 2015). Holmes (2016) made a positive–negative distinction between deserving and non-deserving refugees. Deserving refugees are the 'real' refugees: people that are here for political reasons, who were forced to flee their homes. Non-deserving refugees are also referred to as 'migrants', that is, those who moved for economic reasons, voluntarily leaving their homes in search of a better life. This distinction appears to be determinative of acceptance of asylum seekers, as Verkuyten (2005) found that the degree to which Dutch residents supported multiculturalism depended on whether participants endorsed a classification of asylum seekers as having a 'lack of choice' as opposed to having 'personal choice'. The European Journalism Observatory (EJO) (2015) carried out a content analysis to study the media coverage of the refugee crisis in eight different European countries: Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, United Kingdom and Ukraine. The general conclusion is that the media generally failed to provide a clear, broad picture of the migration phenomenon, because the media was surprised by the extent of the refugee crisis.

2.2 Tone

Previous research stated that tone is an important part of media coverage. This section will provide insight in the concept of tone, the impact of tone on readers and the available literature about tone in immigration media coverage.

2.2.1 Definition and effects

The content of news coverage is also characterised by the tone of voice. Tone, which in framing literature is also designated as valence, may be positive, neutral or negative (Brunken, 2006). Studies indicate that the tone of voice in the first days after an event is rich in emotional content, but grows distanced and intellectualised as time goes by (Gortner & Pennebaker, 2003). If tone is applied to the concept of framing, it has been found that some frames are indicative of 'good' versus 'bad' dichotomy and implicitly carry positive or negative elements, or both (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003).

Several studies have found that tone in media coverage has multiple significant effects. Firstly, tone influences audience members to think in a certain way about a particular issue. It appears that if the content is negatively framed, people tend to have more negative attitudes towards the topic (Brunken, 2006). Further, significant effects on public opinion (Gunther, 1998; Kim, Carvalho & Cooksey, 2007), tolerance (Nelson, 1997) and identification with the subject (McLeod & Detenber, 1999) have been confirmed. For example, de Vreese and Boomgaarden (2003) studied valence frames in the context of European Union media coverage and found that the overall valence of the news was disadvantageous towards the EU and extension of the EU. In their experiment, participants who were exposed to disadvantageously framed news showed lower levels of general support for both the EU and more specifically, the EU extension, and considered more negative than positive aspects of the expansion enlargement than participants exposed to advantageously framed news.

2.2.2 Tone in immigrant media coverage

It appears that the tone of coverage of immigrants in the news significantly influences both positive and negative anti-immigration attitudes (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009). However, the strength of the effect of the media coverage depends on contextual variation in immigration levels and the number of asylum seekers. Research in many countries proved that refugees and asylum seekers tend to be framed negatively as a 'problem', rather than as a 'benefit' to host countries. It appears that the media focused on the benefits that asylum seekers could bring to host countries in only a few cases. This was demonstrated by the scant number of articles that described success stories or economic and cultural benefits (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2016). Furthermore, it appears that there are differences in reporting on asylum and immigration by the press in different countries. In a content analysis of media coverage in five different countries—Sweden, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom and Germany—it was apparent that media coverage in Sweden was most positive towards refugees and asylum seekers, while the newspapers in the United Kingdom were the most negative (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2016). However, Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2009) found that the more positively immigrants are described by the media, the less concern people have about immigration.

2.3 Five media frames

News media can, consciously or unconsciously, use a variety of specific frames to communicate news to audiences (Steimel, 2010). For instance, Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992) examined four dominant news frames that are applicable to multiple news contexts, namely, the conflict, economic consequences, morality, and human impact frames. Valkenburg, Semetko and de Vreese (1999) added the responsibility frame and renamed the human impact frame as the human interest frame. Several researchers (e.g. Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; D'Haenens & de Lange, 2001; Schuck & de Vreese, 2006; Cho & Gower, 2006; An & Gower, 2009) have used and identified the five frames in their content analyses, because journalists all over the world frequently use these frames.

2.3.1 Human interest frame

The human interest frame brings a dramatized, emotional and personal angle to the presentation of an event (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). By doing so, the human interest frame covers issues as individual examples with a focus on personal problems and responsibilities (Aalberg & Beyer, 2015). Journalists often personalise news stories by using individual cases and personal experiences in order to engage the audience in complex issues, and to attract and hold attention (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Hong, 2013). The human interest frame significantly influences emotional responses, as it appears that people who read a story framed in terms of human interest feel more empathy, sadness and sorrow related to the situation. The emotional response, in turn, appears to be a clear predictor of assignment of blame and responsibility (An & Gower, 2009). Furthermore, it appears that the human interest frame stimulates the formation of more negative perceptions towards the issue. In the case of a crisis, the human interest frame causes people to perceive experience the crisis as serious, urgent or dangerous (Cho & Gower, 2006; An & Gower, 2009; Padin, 2005). Graber (1990), Robinson and Levy (1986) and Gunter (1987) show that individuals better recall personalised and local news stories.

The human interest frame is a commonly used frame. Earlier research of Neuman et al. (1992) showed that the human interest frame, alongside next to the conflict frame, is the most common frame across a variety of news content. Figenschou and Thorbjørnsrud (2015) found that half of the news stories they studied ($N = 1355$) about immigrants in France, the United States and Norway presented a human face or provided an individual example of the issue. Previous research on media coverage of asylum seekers in the Netherlands demonstrated that the human interest frame was the most commonly used frame (d'Haenens & de Lange, 2001).

2.3.2 Responsibility frame

The responsibility frame shows the responsibility of a government, an individual or a group related to an issue or problem (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Otieno, Spada & Renki, 2013). There are probably many articles written about the EU or Dutch government and their involvement in the refugee crisis. For example, Benson and Wood (2015) state that across several nations and media types, government sources dominate the news coverage about immigration. The high prevalence of government in the news may be explained by the unequal distribution of resources. Governments, for instance, can impart their positions to the public with relative ease, whereas many of those involved in immigration, particularly immigrants, have fewer opportunities and experience higher risks in relating their stories (Tyler & Marciniak, 2013).

An and Gower (2009) studied news articles about crises and found attributions of the responsibility frame in 95% of their corpus ($N = 235$). This finding is very similar to that of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). As the refugee issue is considered a crisis, it is anticipated that the frequency of this frame in the current study will be high.

2.3.3 Conflict frame

News stories framed in terms of conflict emphasise conflicts among individuals, groups or organisations (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) and accentuate controversy and diverging positions among the conflicting parties (de Vreese, 2004). D'Haenens and de Lange (2001) state that the conflict frame is used to reduce complex social and political problems to simple

conflicts, where one party stands in straightforward opposition. The EJO (2015) demonstrated that the refugee crisis is a rather complex phenomenon, which is difficult to report in a balanced manner. It is clear why journalists might choose to use the conflict frame in order to simplify complex events and have them more easily understood by the audience. It appears that the conflict frame may contribute to the attribution of blame in crisis situations (Nijkrake, Gosselt & Gutteling, 2015). Furthermore, de Vreese (2004) found that a narrative written in a conflict frame leads the reader to include more and opposing points of view in his or her thoughts.

De Vreese (2005) found that the conflict frame was more prominent than the economic consequences frame in political and economic news stories in Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands. The high frequency of the conflict frame is confirmed by An and Gower (2009), who found that in crisis news coverage, the conflict frame is the second most frequently used frame.

2.3.4 Economic consequences frame

The economic consequences frame tells a story in terms of financial consequences for an individual, group, organisation or region (Neuman et al., 1992). The frame emphasises the profit or loss consequences of the issue (de Vreese, 2004). Economic impact is an important news value, and media uses this frame to make an issue relevant to the public (d'Haenens & de Lange, 2001). Furthermore, when crises involve larger economic consequences, the frame will be more common in the news (Nijkrake, Gosseling & Gutteling, 2015).

Neuman et al. (1992) identifies the economic consequences frame as a common frame in news coverage. An and Gower (2009) studied news articles about crises and found attributions of the responsibility frame in 75% of the corpus ($N = 235$). The refugee crisis involves major economic consequences and the European Union, its member countries and citizens will be faced with the economic impact. Because the economic consequences are large, the expectation is that the refugee crisis will be a prevailing theme in the news.

2.3.5 Morality frame

News stories placed in the context of moral prescriptions are framed in terms of morality. The stories consist of a moral message, a reference to God or other religious tenets or social prescriptions about behaviour (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Due to the journalistic norm of objectivity, the morality frame is commonly used indirectly through quotations or inference (Neuman et al., 1992). As a result of the policy of most Western media to refrain from publicly adhering to a particular deity, references to God are scarce in media coverage. Norms and values, on the other hand, are present in the context of dehumanising issues, such as famine, war or a refugee crisis like the present example.

Several studies (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; d'Haenens & de Lange, 2001) found that the morality frame was infrequently presented in the media coverage of several issues. Focusing on crisis media coverage, it appears that the morality frame is not frequently used compared to the other four frames, but the frame is used predominantly in certain types of crises. For instance, news stories related to preventable crises were more likely to be framed in terms of morality than stories about other types of crises (An & Gower, 2009). This study presupposes that the morality frame is frequently used in the media coverage of the refugee

crisis, based on the expectation that this crisis concerns norms and values, as well as social prescriptions for refugees.

2.4 Key events

Previous research indicates that so called 'key events' can have a direct impact on the attention to immigration in the news and the content that is presented in this articles (Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2009). A key event is defined by Kepplinger and Habermeier (1995) as: 'a spectacular report about a more or less unusual occurrence. A possible indicator of a key event might be an unusual number of reports concerning an exactly defined occurrence' (Kepplinger & Habermeier, 1995: 373). This indicates that a key event is an event that receives a remarkable amount of attention and is followed by a high amount of media coverage about the subject.

Researchers disagree in their characterisation the content of media coverage after a key event. Vasterman (2005) found that the preliminary media coverage after the event concerns facts and developments relating to the event, followed by the presentation of the events in an even broader new context, wheras Gortner and Pennebaker (2003) state that the content in the first days after an event is characterised by emotional coverage, but becomes more distanced and intellectualised as time goes by. Furthermore, it appears that there is even a variation in the effect between international and national key events. International events seem to have a direct but temporary effect, while national events influence the media coverage permanently (Vliegenthart & Boomgaarden, 2009). Due to extensive media coverage, key events are able not only to push an issue on the agenda (Kepplinger & Habermeier, 1995) but also to trigger, accelerate, and strengthen changes in the use of frame (Brosius & Eps, 1995). According to Scheufele (2006), a key event eventually leads to one dominant frame at a time with low frame competition.

An addition to the theory of key events is that of Sniderman (2000), who stated that a variation in immigration attitudes can be explained by so-called 'external shocks'. These shocks can be social or economic, such a significant increase in the number of refugees, for instance. Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2009) state that media coverage may also be a factor influencing the variation in immigration attitudes, since the media can create or strengthen those external shocks by hyping news stories about refugees.

The European Journalism Observatory (2015) and Niewsmonitor (2015) both studied the media coverage after the publication of the story and compelling image of Alan Kurdi, a young boy who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea during his family's attempt to reach Europe. In the Netherlands, the media coverage of the refugee crisis tripled after publication of Alan Kurdi's photo, which represented a total of ten per cent of the total coverage in newspapers that reported on the refugee crisis. This indicates a tremendous increase in attention to the refugee crisis. Similar results were found in Italy, Germany and Portugal, where newspapers published three times more positive human interest stories about refugees. The coverage in the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom became more positive and significantly more sympathetic towards refugees. This example indicates the assumed effect of key events on the use of frame and tone. Furthermore, Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2009) found by means of monthly time-series data that both the frequency

and the tone of the media coverage of refugees in the news significantly influence dynamics in anti-immigration attitudes.

2.5 Type of newspaper

The literature provides evidence that the use of a certain frame or tone can also be related to the type of newspaper. It appears that the style of reporting depends on the characteristics of the social structure in which the newspaper exists (Donohue, Olien & Tichenor, 2012). This indicates that different newspapers have a different target audience and therefore a different focus. A well known concept in media literature is the distinction between popular and quality newspapers. (Atteveldt, van Aalderen-Smeets, Jacobi & Ruigrok, 2014). According to previous research, the quality newspapers have a particular focus on 'hard news', such as domestic and foreign policy, economics and national security (Nir, 1984). Furthermore, quality national newspapers provide more analysis and more background reporting (d'Haenens & Bosman, 2003). The popular newspapers concentrate on 'soft' news that is more accessible to a large audience: crime, sports, sex and gossip, alongside a small amount of hard news (Hartley, 1996; Winch, 1997). Further, popular national newspapers tend to offer more pictures, more sports and more entertainment than quality newspapers.

Previous studies show a difference in the use of news frames between popular and quality newspapers. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) found that the human interest frame was most prevalent in the popular newspapers. Furthermore, it appeared that serious newspapers more often used the responsibility and conflict frames (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; An & Gower, 2009).

In summary, this research aims to study the media coverage of the refugee crisis to answer three questions:
1. **What is the content and tone of the media coverage of the refugee crisis?**
2. Are there any differences in the use of frame and tone over time? Are there any significant key events?
3. Are there any differences in the use of frame and tone between popular and quality newspapers?

3. Methods

By means of a content analysis, the content and tone of media coverage with regards to the refugee crisis was analysed. The content of the media coverage was measured with the aid of the five frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). This chapter will begin with a description of framing research, followed by an explanation of the choice to code the articles with use of a deductive approach. Secondly, the corpus of the media coverage will be described. Thereafter, the codebook and corresponding coding procedure will be outlined. The reliability of the codebook will be presented in the final paragraph.

3.1 Framing research

Content analyses are often used to study frames in news coverage. According to Semetko et al. (2000), there are two general approaches to determine frames by means of a content analysis. The first approach is the inductive approach, which involves analysing a news story with an open view, trying to reveal possible frames. The advantage of the research method lies in the open view, to ensure that no frame will go unnoticed. On the other hand, this type of research is very time consuming, difficult to replicate and, for the most part, based on a small sample. The second approach is the deductive approach, whereby frames are derived theoretically from literature and coded in a standard content analysis. This approach requires a clear idea of the frames that should be included in the study. Matthes and Kohring (2008) expressed their concern about the fact that other important frames could be overlooked in the analysis. However, the deductive approach is easily replicated, can manage large samples and easily detects differences in framing between media and within media. This study follows the deductive approach due to the fact that there is a clear idea of which frames are expected, and there is a sufficient amount of reliable literature available upon which the study is based. In addition, many other studies (e.g. D'Haenens & de Lange, 2001; Kim & Cameron, 2011; Nijkrake, Gosselt & Gutteling, 2014) also followed the deductive approach in detecting media frames.

3.2 Corpus of news articles

Newspapers form a reliable, steady source of information for citizens. Although the worldwide newspaper market is decreasing, the membership of digital newspapers is growing more than ever. This trend also applies to the Dutch newspaper market, where the total number of paid print orders decreased from 3 million in 2011 to 2.6 million in 2015. However, a corresponding increase of digital memberships is also seen: 92.000 orders in 2011, compared with 1.4 million orders in 2015 (Consultancy.nl via HOI, Deloitte, FD Research & PwC, 2015). This implies that newspapers remain a relevant source of information, and continue to adapt to prevailing circumstances by offering digital articles in conjunction with print orders.
  This study will code the four national newspapers with the highest circulation rates: *De Telegraaf, Algemeen Dagblad (AD), NRC Handelsblad (NRC) and De Volkskrant. De Telegraaf* has a readership of 15% of the Dutch population, *AD*, 10%, *De Volkskrant,* 7% and

NRC, 4%. These newspapers were selected because they all belong to the most widespread newspaper titles in the country, each with a specific readership (Kaiser, 1994, p.128).

De Telegraaf and *AD* are popular newspapers and *NRC* and *De Volkskrant* are quality newspapers (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). According to Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), *De Telegraaf* is widely read by a variety of people, from the higher to the lower education levels. *AD* also reaches a broad audience and is easier to read than the more serious and quality newspapers *NRC* and *De Volkskrant*. *NRC* is the Dutch equivalent to *The New York Times*. The newspaper pays little attention to popular stories, which can be found in *De Telegraaf* and *AD*, and reports on serious matters and background information. *De Volkskrant* may be compared to *The Guardian* in the United Kingdom, and is widely read by professionals in education, social work and the civil service.

The corpus of the coverage consisted of 400 articles published in the four national newspapers and was derived from the online database of Lexis Nexis. Lexis Nexis is a database of news (Nexis) and legal (Lexis) documents. Lexis Nexis provides full-text search capabilities for a wide variety of news sources around the world. The keywords '*asielzoeker*' (asylum seeker) and '*vluchteling*' (refugee) were used as the search criteria in Lexis Nexis. In order to investigate the content and tone during the most relevant period of time, 10 months of media coverage was chosen to be coded from the beginning of July 2015 until the end of April 2016. The month of July was chosen as a starting point because it was the time that the public discussion concerning refugees actually started. It was the starting point of an enormous rise in attention towards the refugee crisis which would follow in September, 2015. Furthermore, the period was characterised by two major peaks in the number of articles, which could indicate the presence of key events. In summary, it was expected that this 10-month period would contain some interesting, and perhaps diverse, content.

Table 1: Overview of the articles containing '*asielzoeker*' (asylum seeker) or '*vluchteling*' (refugee)

	De Telegraaf	*Algemeen Dagblad*	*NRC Handelsblad*	*De Volkskrant*	**Total**
July 2015	16	29	35	25	105
August 2015	62	63	75	87	287
September 2015	163	167	138	176	644
October 2015	183	192	134	183	692
November 2015	108	108	79	71	366
December 2015	57	98	94	91	340
January 2016	125	120	138	150	533
February 2016	89	81	86	99	355
March 2016	64	52	85	80	281
April 2016	51	40	42	56	189
Total	918	950	906	1.018	3.792

In the search period, the four newspapers combined published 3.792 articles containing the word '*asielzoeker*' (asylum seeker) or '*vluchteling*' (refugee), or both. Table 1 shows the number of articles per month and per newspaper. To create a valid and reliable view of the content and tone of the media coverage, 10 articles of each newspaper per month were

selected for coding. This led to a total of 400 articles, which is equal to 10.5% of the total number of published articles. The articles of the sample were randomly selected with use of an online calculator.

3.3 Codebook and coding procedure

The codebook of this study is presented in three parts and may be found in Table 2. The coder's instruction is strictly formulated, with very limited opportunities for free interpretation. First of all, the existing frames in the article must be coded to create an overview of the content with regard to the media coverage. This part of the codebook is based on the conceptual framework of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). The framework of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) has been used by several researchers to investigate media coverage with regard to crises (An & Gower, 2009; D'Haenens & de Lange, 2011; Nijkrake, Gosselt & Gutteling, 2014) and has proven its worth. The framework involves the five previously mentioned frames: the human interest frame, the responsibility frame, the conflict frame, the economic consequences frame and the morality frame. For each news article, the presence and content of the preceding frames were analysed with the use of a list of 19 questions, which each characterise one of the five news frames. The questions can be answered with 'yes' or 'no', meaning that multiple frames could exist within one article. The presence of a positive answer to one of the questions in the article indicated that the frame is present. The original framework of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) consists of 20 questions, but one item related to visual information was removed, because Lexis Nexis provides only the text of an article, not the images.

Thereafter, the main stakeholder was coded in order to determine the tone of the article. The determination of the tone was easier to accomplish based on the main stakeholder of the article. Nine commonly used stakeholder categories were identified during the pre-test: refugees, the European Union, political leaders, countries, central government, decentralised government, refugee organisation, refugee centre, civilians and the tenth addition was 'other'. For each article, the most important stakeholder was determined.

Finally, the tone was coded. This was done based on the manifest positive or negative wording regarding the main stakeholder in the article. The five-point 'tone' scale was based on the research of Meijer and Kleinnijenhuis (2006), who stated that tone could take one of the following values: -2, -1, 0, 1 or 2. This ranges from very negative to very positive. Negative terms include 'misbehaviour', 'failure' and 'ingratitude'. Examples of positive wording are 'honesty', 'satisfaction' and 'appreciation' (Kuttschreuter et al., 2011). Articles with a neutral tone were factual pieces that avoided strong wording, personal statements or anecdotes (Miller, Tyler & Mor, 2014).

Before the start of the coding procedure, a pre-test was conducted in which two coders coded 10% of the original corpus. To create a reliable pre-test, one article per newspaper, per month was coded. This led to the selection of four articles per month, and 40 articles over the 10-month period. The purpose of this pre-test was twofold.

Table 2: Codebook

Code	Frames	Code	Explanation
1	Human interest	1	Does the story provide a human example or 'human face' on the issue or problem?
		2	Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue or problem?
		3	Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy or caring, or sympathy or compassion?
		4	Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?
2	Responsibility	1	Does the story suggest that some level of government (Dutch or European) has the ability to alleviate the issue or problem?
		2	Does the story suggest that some level of the government (Dutch or European) is responsible for the issue or problem?
		3	Does the story suggest that an individual, or a group of people in society, is responsible for the issue/problem?
		4	Does the story suggest solution(s) for the problem or issue?
		5	Does the story suggest that the problem requires urgent action?
3	Conflict	1	Does the story reflect disagreement between parties-individuals-groups-countries?
		2	Does one party-individual-group-country does reproach another?
		3	Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem or issue?
		4	Does the story refer to winners and losers?
4	Economic consequences	1	Does the story mention financial losses or gains, now or in the future?
		2	Does the story mention costs or the degree of expenses involved?
		3	Does the story refer to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action?
5	Morality	1	Does the story contain any moral message?
		2	Does the story offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave?
		3	Does the story make a reference to morality, God and other religious tenets?

	Stakeholder
1	Refugees
2	European Union
3	Political leaders
4	Countries
5	Central governments
6	Decentral governments
7	Refugee organisation
8	Refugee centre
9	Civilians
10	Other

	Tone	
-2	Very negative	The words that are used to describe the main subject evoke very negative associations and include expletives. For instance: worthless, spreading fear, polarizing or hateful.
-1	Negative	The words that are used to describe the main subject evoke negative associations. The main subject is exposed in a bad way. For instance, misbehaving, unthankful, unsatisfied, causing troubles or unethical.
0	Neutral	The main subject is described in an objective manner and the story is based on facts. The words used to describe the main subject evoke no specific positive or negative associations.
1	Positive	The words that are used to describe the main subject evoke positive associations. The main subject is exposed in a good way. For instance: helping, honest, satisfied or (suggesting) solutions.
2	Very positive	The words used to describe the main subject evoke very positive associations and include expletives. For instance: fantastic, a hero, dream chaser or amazing.

First of all, the first coder used this pre-test to investigate which key stakeholders were important in the media coverage of the refugee crisis. All of the main stakeholders were noted, and thereafter they were merged into overarching groups such as countries, political leaders or civilians. As described in the section regarding the codebook, nine groups emerged. After that, the codebook was complete and the pre-test with the second coder could be used to investigate the reliability of the codebook. Therefore, the first coder coded the frames and tone, and also a second coder was also exposed to the coding instruction and coded the 10% sample of the original corpus. The results of the pre-test were entered in SPSS to perform a Cohen's Kappa to ensure reliability of the codebook. The remaining 360 articles were coded by the first coder in exactly the same manner as the pre-test, except that the stakeholders were coded per group.

3.4 Reliability of the codebook

Before beginning the coding procedure of the final corpus, a Cohen's Kappa was calculated to test the reliability of the study. The Cohen's Kappa score must be higher than approximately .7. The Cohen's Kappa score was calculated for the coding of the five frames, the stakeholders and the tone. The first attempt was adequate to achieve the minimal Cohen's Kappa score of .7 for all variables. The results are found in Table 3.

Table 3: Cohen's Kappa scores

		Cohen's Kappa
Frames	Responsibility	.80
	Human interest	.85
	Conflict	.76
	Morality	.79
	Economic consequences	.84
Tone		.87
Stakeholders		.77

4. Results

This chapter presents the results of the study. The first part provides an overview of the media content related to the refugee crisis, characterised by the use of the five media frames and their aspects. Secondly, the tone of the media coverage, based on the key stakeholder, will be described, followed by an explanation of the correlation between tone and news frames. The fourth paragraph presents a timeline of the media coverage with regard to the use of frame and tone, including the designation of key events. Finally, the difference in use of news frames and tone per type of newspaper will be presented.

4.1 News frames

The frequency of the news frames used in the media coverage is presented in Table 4. As stated before, an article can contain multiple frames. The average article contains 1.7 frames. Two frames dominate the media coverage of the refugee crisis: the responsibility frame, which was present in 65% of the articles, followed by the human interest frame, which was present in 56% of the articles. Further, 30% of the stories contained the conflict frame, followed by the morality frame (11%) and the economic consequences frame (9%). All five media frames will be discussed in detail with the use of their characteristics, which could also be found in Table 4. One article can contain multiple characteristics of a frame at the same time.

4.1.1 Responsibility frame

The results demonstrated that 65% of all media coverage contained the responsibility frame. In this media coverage, three main responsibility themes can be distinguished. First, 62% of the responsibility stories concerned a level of government that purportedly has the ability to alleviate the problem. In this case, media reports about actions that the government could or should execute to reduce the number of refugees or to provide better assistance. Secondly, 62% of the media coverage containing the responsibility frame relates to a level of government that is responsible for the problem. The question of who is responsible for the refugee crisis is a current subject in the media coverage. More than half of the articles containing the responsibility frame (59%) suggest a solution to the issue. One proposed solution is, for example, that the European Union provide assistance in the region to avoid attracting refugees to Europe. Furthermore, some articles describe the support that other countries should provide to the countries facing the most refugees, such as Greece and Hungary. Thirty-one per cent of the articles emphasise that the situation is so urgent that it requires immediate action. For instance, articles describe the situation for refugees in refugee centres as so inhumane that assistance is needed. The suggestion that an individual or group in society is responsible for the problem appeared least frequently (9%). Almost all articles containing this characteristic related to angry civilians. The arrival of a refugee centre often leads to strong emotional reactions among citizens and far-right hooligans. Residents feared nuisance and on occasion decided to organise aggressive protests, which were not rarely without violence.

Table 4: Use of news frames and their characteristics in media coverage

	Media coverage	Characteristics
Responsibility frame (*N* = 259)	**65%**	
The story suggests that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem		62%
The story suggests that some level of government is responsible for the issue or problem		62%
The story suggests solution(s) to the issue or problem		59%
The story suggests that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue		31%
The story suggests the issue or problem requires urgent action		9%
Human interest frame (*N* = 224)	**56%**	
The story provides a human example or 'human face' on the issue		75%
The story emphasises how individuals and groups are affected by the issue or problem		62%
The story employs adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy or sympathy		36%
The story delves into the private or personal lives of the actors		29%
Conflict frame (*N* = 119)	**30%**	
The story reflects disagreements between or among parties, individuals, groups or countries		85%
One party, individual, group or country reproaches another		56%
The story refers to two or more sides of the issue or problem		29%
The story refers to winners and losers		24%
Morality frame (*N* = 45)	**11%**	
The story contains a moral message		58%
The story offers specific social prescriptions concerning behaviour		49%
The story makes a reference to morality, God and other religious tenets		20%
Economic consequences frame (*N* = 35)	**9%**	
There is a mention of costs or degree of expenses involved		49%
There is a reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action		31%
There is a mention of financial losses or gains, either now or in the future		23%
Total	**170%**	
Total number of articles		400
Total number of news frames		682
Average number of news frames per article		1.7

4.1.2 Human interest frame

The media coverage of the refugee crisis was framed in terms of human interest in more than half of the cases. The human interest frame is primarily used (75%) to provide a personal example or human face to the story. For instance, articles describe a certain act of a refugee or resident, explain why the arrival of the refugees is an enrichment or deterioration, or outline a person's opinion about a certain subject. Secondly, 62% of the stories with a human interest frame emphasise how individuals and groups are affected by the issue. These articles describe the impact of the refugee crisis on people. Such articles canvass, for example, how refugees

live in the so-called 'inhumane' refugee centres or, on the other hand, the impact on current residents when a new refugee centre is being equipped in their village. Thirty-six per cent of these stories employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, care, empathy or sympathy. For example, coverage included harrowing stories about refugees, harsh articles about extreme right hooligans and a success story about an integrated asylum seeker. Less than a third (29%) of the human interest articles describe the personal lives of the actors. Several articles used this characteristic to provide inside stories or background information about refugees and their journeys. In these stories, refugees are able to recount their personal narrative of family, jobs and education in their native country, for example. Furthermore, those personal stories are also used to describe angry civilians or political leaders, to provide further insight and background information.

4.1.3 Conflict frame

Nearly a third of the media coverage was framed in terms of conflict. The main portion of the coverage (85%) contained disagreements among parties, individuals, groups or countries. It appears that countries often disagree as to the ultimate solution to the refugee crisis. Some nations, such as Norway, Denmark and Hungary, decided to follow their own course, which led to accusatory responses from other countries of the European Union. Furthermore, there has repeatedly been discord between government and citizens, for instance, with the citizens of the Dutch town of Oranje. Multiple conflicts resulted from poor government communication concerning the number of refugees that would reside in Oranje. In 56% of the cases, one party, individual, group or country reproaches another. This characteristic is frequently combined with the first characteristic related to the disagreement. The parties, individuals, groups or countries that disagree often reproach another party. For instance, the European Union reproached the countries that would not cooperate in a common solution, stating that this was not the right approach, and citizens of Oranje reproached the Dutch government, saying that it had communicated badly and that Oranje could not integrate any more refugees. In nearly a third of the articles depicting conflict (29%), there is reference to two or more sides of the story. This typically happens by using quotations from multiple individuals, parties or countries who do not always share the same opinion. For instance, in an article that described a debate among several countries as to whether or not taking care of refugees is humanitarian obligation, a refugee organisation stated that the arrival of the refugees is an cultural and probably economical enrichment, and an association of housing cooperatives was described as having consulted with the Dutch government on how to settle them. Finally, 24% of the conflict frame articles refer to winners and losers. The main subjects in these articles are refugees, the European Union or other countries. Sometimes, refugees are depicted as the 'winners', who are coming to Europe to receive financial support and care and presenting a threat to the 'losers' of the European Union. The European Union is in this example the one who loses money and control. In other articles, refugees are described as the 'losers', who are innocent and involuntarily fleeing war and violence.

4.1.4 Morality frame

When news was framed in terms of morality, 58% of the articles contained a moral message. An example of a moral message is coverage about the moral and legal obligations countries have to provide protection and a humane shelter for those threatened by violence and war. Countries that do not adopt refugees breach the European values of humanity and solidarity. Nearly half (49%) of the articles framed in terms of morality contain specific social prescriptions about behaviour. Most social prescriptions are intended for refugees. For instance, the media reports that refugees should adjust to the norms and values of the country in which they reside. If refugees do not adjust, there should be consequences on the asylum process. In particular, after the events in Koln in January, when asylum seekers harassed innocent German girls, articles with specific social prescriptions for refugees appeared. Belgium and France offered an engagement statement, which ensures that migrants acknowledge basic principles such as equality between men and women, freedom of speech, separation of church and state, respect for each nature and the acceptance of the democratic state. Furthermore, Belgium introduced a class where refugees learn how to interact with women. Finally, 20% of the articles framed in terms of morality make references to morality, God or other religious tenets. Primarily using quotations, their God or religion is explained as the reason why people act in a certain way.

Furthermore, it is remarkable that the morality frame is the only frame that only exists in combination with other frames. Most of the time, the morality frame was combined with the human interest frame and the responsibility frame. An example of the combination of the morality and the human interest frames is a story about the personal life of a former refugee who stated that it is important for refugees to adapt to the norms and values of a country. An example of the combination of the responsibility frame and the morality frame is, for instance, an article about refugees who infringed the norms and values of a country and the government became involved. One further example of this combination is an article containing a moral message, such as a humanitarian response to the refugees and solidarity with other countries, while identifying a level of government that is in a position to create a solution to the problem.

4.1.5 Economic consequences frame

Media coverage about the refugee crisis was least frequently framed in terms of economic consequences. Only 9% of the articles contained stories about the economic consequences of the crisis. Almost half of the economic consequences articles (49%) mentioned the costs or the degree of expenses involved with managing the crisis. The cost of caring for refugees by the various countries was frequently described. Furthermore, 31% of the articles concerned the economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action. For instance, the agreement between the European Union and Turkey led to multiple financial consequences, which were described in the media coverage even before the arrangement was actually finalised. Twenty per cent of all economic coverage concerned financial losses or gains, either now or in the future. For instance, articles described the financial losses for countries due to low employment and high costs of care, or the financial gains for private investors, who invested in housing for refugees.

4.1.6 Frame per type of stakeholder

As explained in the methods section, the coding of the main stakeholder was primarily intended to determine the tone of the media coverage. Even though it is not possible to combine the results of the frames and the stakeholder one-to-one, it remains interesting to observe the use of frame in the articles where a certain stakeholder was present.

Figure 1 shows the use of frame per type of stakeholder which was present in an article and presents a great deal of variation among the stakeholders. An ANOVA revealed that the use of frame differs significantly among stakeholders for the responsibility frame $F(9, 390) = 3.726$, $p < .01$, the human interest frame $F(9, 390) = 2.760$, $p < .01$, the conflict frame $F(9, 390) = 2.275$, $p < .01$ and the economic consequences frame $F(9, 390) = 3.111$, $p < .01$. For instance, it appears that the refugees and civilians are most frequently framed in terms of human interest, while the government entities—European Union; political leader, country, central government and decentralised government—are most frequently framed in terms of responsibility. The responsibility frame is also prevalent in the coverage of refugee centres, due to the fact that these centres usually provide a solution to the refugee crisis, which is a part of the responsibility frame.
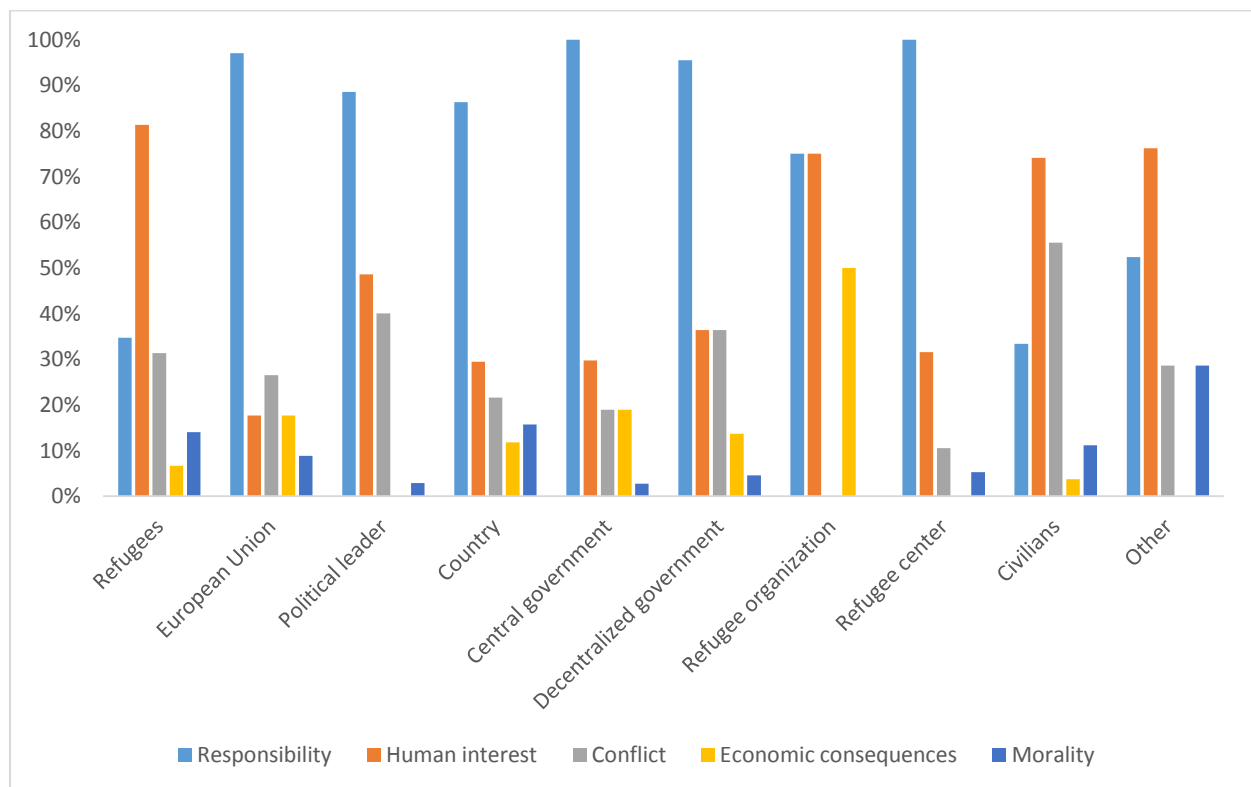

Figure 1. The use of frame per type of stakeholder

4.2 Tone

The mean found in the tone of the media coverage regarding the refugee crisis is mildly negative and differs significantly from zero ($M = -.318$, $SD = .877$); $t(-7.243) = 399$, $p < .01$. In this case, 0 indicates a neutral tone.

Table 5: The frequency of the used main stakeholders and the tone per type of stakeholder

	N	%	Mean	SD
Refugees	150	37.5%	-.06	.95
European Union	34	8.5%	-.68	.68
Political leader	35	8.75%	-.51	.74
Country	51	12.75%	-.43	.78
Central government	37	9.25%	-.73	.61
Decentralised government	22	5.5%	-.23	.87
Refugee organisation	4	1%	.00	1.15
Refugee centre	19	4.75%	-.37	.60
Civilians	27	6.75%	-.44	1.01
Other	21	5.25%	-.19	.93
Total	400	100%		

Tone was coded based on the manifest positive or negative wording related to the key stakeholder in the article. An ANOVA revealed that the tone differed significantly among stakeholders, $F(9, 390) = 3.685$, $p < .01$. The post hoc Bonferroni test presented statistically significant differences between the tone regarding refugees and the tone regarding the European Union and the central government. It appears that the refugees were described significantly less negatively compared with the European Union and the Dutch central government.

Table 5 presents a magnified view of the main stakeholders. This reveals that the biggest stakeholder group are the refugees. Refugees are the main stakeholders in 37.5% of the articles. The group 'government' consists of multiple stakeholders, such as the European Union, the political leaders, the countries, central government and decentralised government. Merged as one group, they are also a very important stakeholder in the media coverage of the refugee crisis, with a presence of 44.75%.

4.2.1 Tone per type of frame
Because this study coded the main tone towards the main stakeholder, instead of coding a tone value for each present frame, the mean tone values presented in Table 6 indicate the mean tone of an article where the respective frame is present. It appears that the mean tone values of all articles are negative. However, the standard deviations of the tone values are high, especially in the human interest, morality and economic consequences frames. This indicates a wide range in tone values. Articles containing the human interest frame have the highest standard deviation and a mean tone close to zero. This finding shows that there were articles written in terms of human interest with a positive tone and a negative tone, which

results in a neutral mean. Articles containing a conflict frame have the most negative tone and the smallest standard deviation.

Table 6: Average tone per news frame

		Tone	
		M	*SD*
Frames	Responsibility	-.49	.764
	Human interest	-.17	.979
	Conflict	-.77	.574
	Morality	-.31	.932
	Economic consequences	-.40	.915

4.2.2 Correlation between news frames and tone

Since the data were not normally distributed, Spearman's Correlation analysis was used to calculate the correlation between tone and news frames. The analysis revealed three significant findings which are presented in Table 7. Firstly, the conflict frame and tone are negatively correlated, which means that when media coverage is framed in terms of conflict, the tone becomes more negative. The strength of this correlation is moderate. Secondly, there is significant evidence that there is a negative correlation between the responsibility frame and tone. Thirdly, the analysis showed that there is statistically significant evidence that there is no correlation between the human interest frame and tone, which is indicated by a correlation value that is close to zero. The morality and economic consequences frame are not significantly correlated with tone.

Table 7: Correlation between frame and tone

		Tone
	Responsibility	-.244**
	Human interest	.157**
Frames	Conflict	-.340**
	Morality	.001
	Economic consequences	-.034

4.3 Timeline and key events

This part of the result section presents a chronical timeline of the 10-month period of the media coverage with regard to the refugee crisis. Figure 2 shows that the research period is characterised by variations in the number of articles published. The number of articles published indicates the amount of attention that is paid to the refugee crisis. It is remarkable that the beginning and end of the period are both characterised by a low number of articles and thereby less attention to the refugee crisis. In the intervening period, two peaks can be

distinguished. The number of articles increased tremendously in September, October and January. This indicates the potential presence of certain key events.

Qualitative research in the peak months September, October and January revealed three potential key events. First, the peak in September and October could be related to two interesting events. The first key event could be the record number of refugees seeking asylum in Europe. The high number increased the visibility of refugees, which has been proven to be a predictor for media attention (Vasterman, 2005). The second key event could be the high pressure on the European Union and the crucial European Asylum Meeting, which was designed to find a united solution to the refugee crisis. This possible key event is characterised by contradictions. Due to conflicts of interest and statements, a gap arose between Eastern and Western Europe and the old and new members of the European Union. Furthermore, the need for protection demands stricter border controls, which conflicts with the Schengen arrangement that mandates open boundaries. These open boundaries represent one of most important European values: freedom. Finally, the potential key event in January could be the events in Koln, where asylum seekers harassed innocent German girls during New Year celebrations.
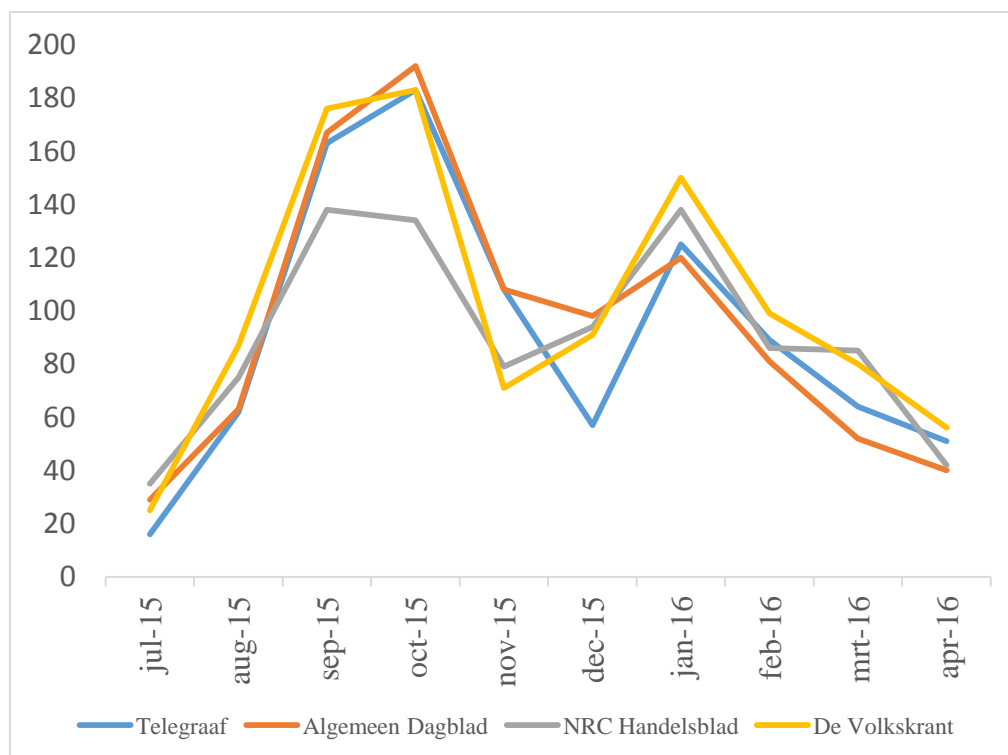

Figure 2. The amount of articles about '*vluchtelingen*' or '*asielzoekers*' per type of newspaper over time

4.3.1 Frames over time

To gain insight into the development of news frames and the average tone in the media coverage of the refugee crisis, a chronological timeline was created. The mean score for each frame was determined for each month of the media coverage and is displayed in Figure 1. It appears that the use of the different news frames is rather consistent throughout the period in question, except for a few peaks. An ANOVA of varying frames throughout the coverage showed several significant differences of frame use throughout the ten months analysed.

An ANOVA revealed that the media's use of the conflict frame varied significantly from month to month, $F(9, 390) = 4.316$, $p < .01$. The post hoc Bonferroni test presented statistically significant differences in the use of the conflict frame, which are presented in Table 7. The use of the conflict frame in January differs significantly from the use of the conflict frame in August 2015, October 2015, November 2015, December 2015, March 2016 and April 2016. It appears that the conflict frame is used more often in January than in any other month, either before or after. It is plausible that the significant increase in the use of the conflict frame is related to the key event in Koln, where asylum seekers harassed innocent German girls. This event took place in January of 2016 and lead to multiple conflicts, disagreements and reproaches. Furthermore, there is a significant difference in the use of the conflict frame between February 2016 and April 2016. In Figure 2, the curve around the event in Koln in January 2016 may be seen. The presence of the conflict frame remains high in February, and it is not until approximately March 2016 that it is restored to the same level as that of December 2015. By April, the assumed effect of the events of Koln on the use of the conflict frame had dissipated. Further, it is striking that the use of the morality frame shows a peak at the same time as the peak in the use of the conflict frame. The responsibility frame also shows a slight peak. On the other hand, the frequency of the human interest frame experiences a considerable decrease in January.

It is remarkable that despite the tremendous peak in the number of articles and the two assumed key events in September and October, Figure 3 presents that the frames did not show any variations in these two months.

Even though it is not a significant peak, the frequency of the responsibility frame in July 2015 is noteworthy. It appears that in July 2015, the responsibility frame could be found in 95% of the articles, which is a record number. Qualitative research of this study shows that July 2015 was the month that the call for assistance became more insistent. Both the European Union and individual countries took action and began to renew refugee policies and invent solutions. It was also the month that the first refugees arrived in the Netherlands and that the media widely reported on the emergency solutions and the responsibility of the government.
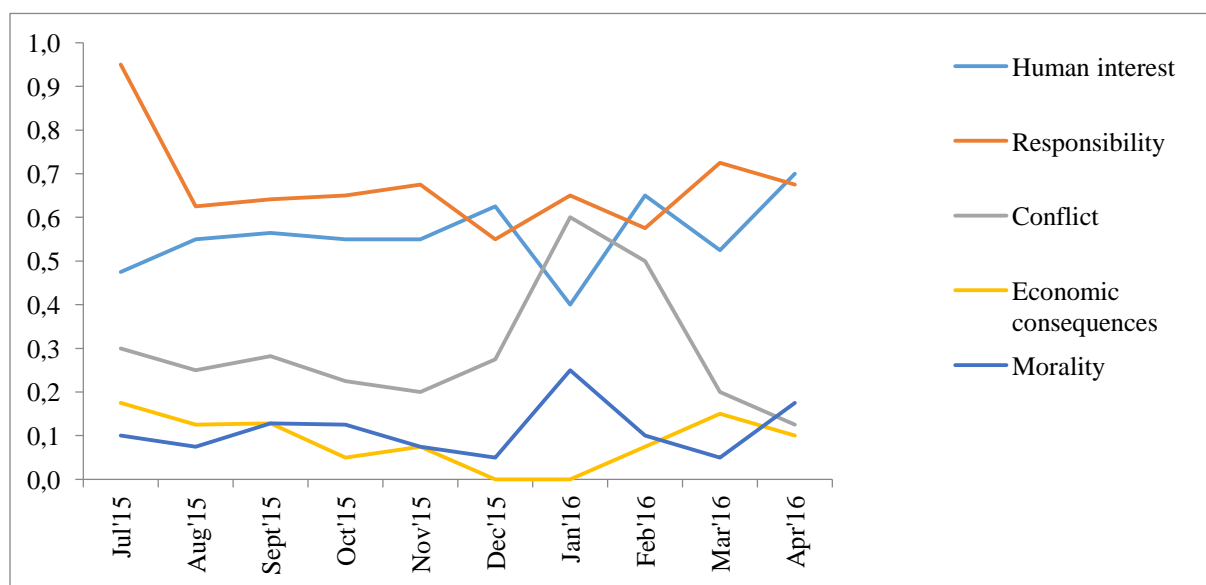

Figure 3. The mean presence of the used frames per month

4.3.2 Tone over time

It appears that the tone of media coverage is rather consistent over time, which may be seen in Table 8 and visually in Figure 4. It is important to note that the standard deviations are high, which indicates a wide range of possible tone values. An ANOVA was conducted to investigate the significant differences in tone over time. It showed a significant difference in tone over the 10-month period, $F(9, 390) = 1.988$, $p < .039$. The post hoc Bonferroni test presented one significant variation between December 2015 and January 2016. The tone was significantly more negative in January 2016 compared with December 2015. It is possible that has to do with the key event in Koln. Furthermore, it might have a connection with the use of the conflict frame, which was very present in January 2016.

Table 8: Average tone per month

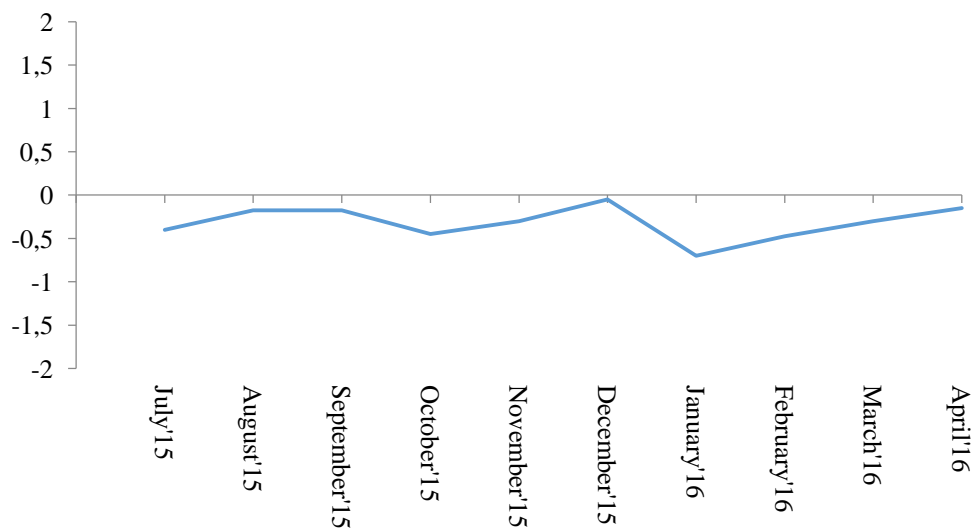|	*Mean*	*SD*
July 2015	-.40	.81
August 2015	-.18	.90
September 2015	-.18	.98
October 2015	-.45	.81
November 2015	-.30	.88
December 2015	-.05	.96
January 2016	-.7	.72
February 2016	-.48	.75
March 2016	-.30	.88
April 2016	-.15	.92

Figure 4. The mean tone per month

4.4 Type of newspapers

This part of the results section shows the variations in the use of frame and tone between popular and quality newspapers.

4.4.1 Use of news frames in popular and quality newspapers

Independent-sample *t*-tests were conducted to compare the frames used for each newspaper type. The use of the human interest frame appeared to significantly differ per type of newspaper. For the popular newspapers, news is framed in terms of human interest with significantly more frequency ($M = .610$, $SD = .4890$) when compared to the quality newspapers ($M = .510$, $SD = .5012$); $t(2.020) = 398$, $p < .05$. Furthermore, there is a difference in the use of the responsibility frame between popular and quality newspapers, but this finding is not statistically significant. Table 9 shows that, in this study, quality newspapers used the responsibility frame more frequently than popular newspapers. It appears that the use of the conflict, economic consequences and morality frames are rather equal this study, but this study provided no significant proof of this claim.

Table 9: The mean presence of the frames used per type of newspaper

		Popular Newspapers	Quality Newspapers
Responsibility	*Mean*	.62	.68
	SD	.03	.03
Human Interest	*Mean*	.61*	.51*
	SD	.49	.50
Conflict	*Mean*	.30	.30
	SD	.46	.46
Economic consequences	*Mean*	.08	.10
	SD	.27	.29
Morality	*Mean*	.10	.13
	SD	.30	.33

* $p < 05$.

4.4.2 Tone in popular and quality newspapers

An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the tone toward the main stakeholder for each newspaper type. Table 10 presents a difference in mean tone per type of newspaper in this study. The mean tone is lower in popular newspapers than in quality newspapers. However, there is no statistically significant evidence to conclude that there is a difference in tone between the different types of newspaper.

Table 10: The mean tone per type of newspaper

		Mean	*SD*
Tone	Popular newspapers	-.36	.89047
	Quality newspapers	-.28	.86332

5. Discussion

The key purpose of this research is to study the content and tone of the media coverage of the refugee crisis in Dutch popular and quality newspapers over time, and possibly identify certain key events. The study began with a literature review to gather important previous research about framing, tone and refugees in the media. A total of 400 articles, 200 from popular newspapers (*De Telegraaf and Algemeen Dagblad*) and 200 from quality newspapers (*NRC Handelsblad and De Volkskrant*) concerning refugees and asylum seekers were coded using a content analysis.

5.1 General discussion

In this part of the discussion section, the principal, noteworthy conclusions of this study are discussed and compared to the literature forming the basis of the theoretical framework. Similarities and deviations are also explained.

5.1.1 News frames

An and Gower (2009) found that crisis news stories used news frames in the following order of predominance: attribution of responsibility, economic, conflict, human interest and morality. This study partially confirmed this result. Media coverage of the refugee crisis was indeed most frequently framed in terms of responsibility, and the conflict frame also appeared in third place. However, the frequency of the human interest frame, economic consequences frame and the morality frame were different.

First, the responsibility frame dominated media coverage of the refugee crisis, alongside the human interest frame. News that was framed in terms of responsibility mainly described a level of government, mainly the European Union or a national government, that was responsible for the refugee crisis and had the ability to alleviate the pro problem. Furthermore, many articles containing the responsibility frame offered a solution to the refugee crisis. However, media coverage did not identify urgent action that was required to address this crisis. This logically follows from the fact that the refugee crisis is such an tremendously complex issue, involving so many parties, that it is not possible to solve it with emergency measures. The prevalence of the responsibility frame was expected, as previous research on media coverage of several other crises found that the responsibility frame was the most frequently used (An & Gower, 2009; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Kuttschreuter et al., 2011).

The second most used frame in media coverage of the refugee crisis was the human interest frame. The human interest frame was primarily used to provide a human example of the refugee crisis and to emphasise how individuals or groups are affected by it. Stories with human interest framing emphasise the complexity of the problem of the refugee crisis, both from the point of view of the refugees personally affected by the story, as well as political leaders and the European Union that face expectations that they will find a solution to the crisis. News articles framed in terms of human interest gave the refugee crisis a 'human face'. The high presence of the human interest frame was also expected due to previous research in media coverage about asylum seekers or refugees, which found that immigration

news was strongly framed in terms of human interest (d'Haenens & de Lange, 2001; Steimel, 2010; Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015).

The presence of the conflict frame was predictable, and its frequency was as expected: moderate, with a remarkable peak due to a possible key event. This will be further discussed in the section regarding time and key events.

The media coverage of the refugee crisis is characterised by a relative high frequency of the morality frame, compared with other framing studies of crises, refugees and more general news related articles (e.g. An & Gower, 2009; d'Haenens & de Lange, 2001; Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015; Steimel, 2010; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Kuttschreuter et al., 2011). Possible explanations for this variation are a difference in the type of crisis, the presence of certain key events and the increasing concerns related to cultural assimilation. With respect to the first difference, being the type of crisis, this refugee crisis cannot be compared to any economic or environmental crisis that has previously been investigated (An & Gower, 2009). This is a humanitarian crisis; it follows that moral messages are more prevalent. Further, the key event in Koln may have led to an increase in the use of the morality frame. It is likely that this relates the discussion about norms and values which emerged after the event. Further, social prescriptions became more visible in the media, stipulating behavioural norms for refugees as a threshold for the opportunity to acquire asylum. The key event and the corresponding media coverage existing concerns in relation to the fear of cultural assimilation (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2016). The event was used in the media as 'proof' that the norms and values of the refugees were completely different and that cultural concerns were justified.

The difference in the type of crisis may also explain the low occurrence of the economic consequences frame as compared with the coverage of other crises (Cho & Gower, 2006; An & Gower; 2009). For instance, Dr Klaas Knot, president of De Nederlandsche Bank, stated that for humanitarian reasons, people should not consider the refugee crisis from an economic perspective. It is likely that other aspects of the crisis were more important than the economic consequences, such as who could alleviate the crisis, how individuals were affected by the crisis or how individuals should behave.

5.1.2 Tone

The tone of the media coverage regarding the refugee crisis appeared to be mildly negative, having regard to the mean values generate by the study. This was expected, given that recent research of EJO (2015), Nieuwsmonitor (2015), Vasterman (2015), Berry, Garcia-Blanco and Moore (2016) and Terlingen (2016) regarding this refugee crisis demonstrated that the media coverage had a negative tone. In addition, news about immigration, refugees or asylum seekers in general tended to be more negative (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009). It is remarkable that in this study, the value of the standard deviation of the mean with respect to tone is rather high, which indicates that the media coverage was characterised by a great variety of tones.

Further, when focusing on the most important stakeholders of the refugee crisis, the presence of the 'Government group' (consisting of the European Union, political leaders, countries, central governments and decentralised governments) is almost equal to that of the 'Refugee group'. This finding is in contrast to the research of Benson and Wood (2015), who stated that across several nations and media types, government actors dominate news

coverage about immigration. Arguably, there is an unequal distribution of resources because governments, for instance, can impart their positions to the public with relative ease, whereas many of those involved in immigration, especially refugees, have fewer opportunities to communicate their position and higher risks associated with publicly relating their side of the story. This conclusion cannot be confirmed by this study. However, the difference in method between the research of Benson and Wood (2015) and this study is that this study focused on the main stakeholder, were Benson and Wood (2015) focused on the main resource. Therefore, this study can only state that the attention to refugees is equal as the attention to government entities, but if refugees are the main resources is unknown. Furthermore, three-quarters of the media coverage identified refugees or governments as the main stakeholder, which indicates that news of the refugee crisis was primarily concerned with government entities or refugees. Finally, this study demonstrates that refugees are described in a significantly less negative way than the European Union and the Dutch central government.

5.1.3 Key events

The part of the research dealing with time and key events studied the media coverage over the ten-month period, which was characterised by two peaks in the number of articles and one significant variation in the use of frame and tone. This study found evidence that key events increase the attention on the subject and thereby the number of articles written on the subject.

The study found three possible key events that may have been important in the media coverage of this period during the refugee crisis. First, the peak in September and October could be related to two noteworthy key events. The first key event may be the record number of refugees seeking asylum in Europe. The second key event may be the high pressure on the European Union and the key European Asylum Meeting, which was intended to find a united solution to the refugee crisis. Lastly, the possible key event in January could be the events in Koln. All three key events have been characterised by a remarkable amount of attention and a high amount of media coverage.

It was expected that the use of frame would change after a key event (Brosius & Eps, 1995). However, this theory applied only to the key event of January 2016. A comparison of the media coverage before and after the key event showed a significant difference in the use of the conflict frame. It is remarkable that the use of frames remains unchanged during the media coverage of the two key events in September and October. It is possible that this is due to the fact that the key event related to the record number of refugees was most frequently framed in terms of human interest, and the key event concerning the pressure on the European Union was a typical responsibility frame subject. These two frames were weighty important and highly prevalent during the entire period, which resulted in no significant increase. The key event in Koln was of a completely different nature, which resulted in a significant increase in the use of a different frame. Furthermore, the conclusion of Scheufele (2006) that a key event eventually leads to one dominant frame at a time with low frame competition, was also be found only in relation to the key event of January 2016, when the conflict frame was dominant.

Furthermore, it appears that the tone of the media coverage is rather consistent in the 10-month period in question. The only significant decrease in tone occurred in January 2016. It is safe to assume that this decrease in tone was related to the key event in Koln, since it is assumed possible that this key event led to a negative perception of refugees. The assumption

that the first media coverage after an event concerns facts and developments of the event, followed by the presentation of the events in a broad, new context (Vasterman, 2005) seems to be correct. It was remarkable that after the major occurrences, such as the outcome of the European Union meeting, for instance, or the recent number of refugees, the media coverage was supplemented by thematic media coverage with regard to the key event. Practically, this indicates that in addition to a more intensive and extensive media coverage, newspapers began to report on, for instance, how the Netherlands dealt with refugees in the past, what social actors thought about the key event and how earlier events may be reinterpreted in light of this key event. These features all align with the characteristics of key events (Vasterman, 2005).

5.1.4 Type of newspaper

The third goal of the study is to investigate whether or not there are any differences in the use of frame and tone between popular and quality newspapers. This study demonstrates that the use of the human interest frame differs significantly between popular and quality newspapers. This corresponds with the research results of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Also, the general belief that popular newspapers concentrate more on 'soft' news (Hartley, 1996; Winch, 1997) is confirmed by this study. Previous research (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; An & Gower, 2009) indicated that quality newspapers use the responsibility and conflict frames significantly more often when compared with popular newspapers. This study does not confirm that statement. Based on this research, there are no significant differences in the use of the responsibility or conflict frames between the two types of newspaper. Lastly, there were no significant differences in the use of tone between the different newspapers. It is possible that this result is related to the issue of immigration. On the whole, news about immigration tends to be negative, and it is possible that it will always be coloured by negativity, regardless of which newspaper publishes the articles.

5.2 Implications

In this part of the discussion section, the implications of the study are discussed.

5.2.1 Frames

Firstly, the manner in which refugees are described, framed and represented in the media is of importance, as the media actively contributes to and constructs our understanding of events (Hall, 1997). As stated in the general discussion, it appears that the media coverage of the refugee crisis was dominated by the responsibility and human interest frames. The implications of these two frames are emphasised in this part.

The high occurrence of the responsibility frame and the high incidence of governmental stakeholders in the coverage of this frame indicate that the media portrays governments as having played an important role. Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore (2016) found that the European Union was most frequently named as the key institution responsible for solving the crisis.

Previous research indicates that the human interest frame stimulates the emotional response towards a subject. For example, the human interest frame influences people to perceive the crisis as serious, urgent or dangerous (Cho & Gower, 2006; An & Gower, 2009;

Padin, 2005). This indicates that, for instance, media coverage with regard to the consequences of the refugee crisis for a united European Union, or a story describing how refugees are affected by the situation, resulted in a more serious and urgent perception of the crisis. Due to the high frequency of the human interest frame, it is possible that citizens perceive the crisis as more serious and dangerous than they would if the human interest frame were less common.

However, it is important to keep in mind that despite the proven influence of news framing on citizens' understanding, perception and opinions (Price, Tewksbury & Powers, 1997; McCombs & Ghanem, 2001; Otieno, Spada & Renki, 2013; Scheufele, 1999; Steimel, 2010), the influence of the media is merely a part of the total attitude-forming process towards refugees. It appears that attitudes towards asylum seekers are influenced by a complex interplay among media reporting, political rhetoric, personal experiences and socio-demographic factors (McKay, Thomas & Kneebone, 2012). This indicates that media reporting plays an important role in the attitude-forming process towards refugees, but it is not decisive.

5.2.2 Tone

The tone of the media coverage with regard to the refugee crisis is mildly negative and previous research has shown that if the content is negatively framed, people tend to have more negative attitudes towards the topic (Brunken, 2006). This indicates that it is very likely that Dutch readers hold negative attitudes towards the refugee crisis, the refugees themselves and their contribution to society. However, in this study, refugees were described significantly less negatively than the European Union and the Dutch central government. This indicates that people may also have negative attitudes towards the European Union, Dutch central government and the methods they had employed to alleviate the refugee crisis and engage a solution. Furthermore, it appears that the emerging negative stereotypes of refugees are, at least partially, a result of negative press coverage (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2016). This indicates that it is possible that the mildly negative tone of the Dutch media coverage could have led to a more negative perception and stereotyping of refugees. However, there is always the potential to reverse the trend and create a more positive image of refugees and asylum seekers. The media is capable of creating a positive image by portraying refugees in a more objective accurate and realistic manner.

5.2.3 Key events

This research proposes that key events may have the ability to influence the use of frame and tone. However, the extent of this influence depends on the characteristics of the key event in comparison with the content in the period preceding the key event. This is posited because the content of the first and second key events in September and October aligned with the content of the period before the key event. Therefore, the key events did not influence the use of frame and tone. On the other hand, the content of the third key event in January 2016 was very different in comparison with the content of the preceding period, which resulted in a significant variation in the use of frame and tone. However, this assumption should be viewed as a starting point. To test and verify this statement, further research is necessary.

5.2.4 Type of newspaper

This study shows that, apart from the significant variation in the use of human interest frame, there are few differences in the use of frames and tone between popular and quality newspapers. This result indicates that in the media, both popular and quality newspapers reported on asylum and immigration in broadly similar ways. Dutch newspapers tend to use the same frames and a similar tone. This is called a homogenous press system. Other countries with homogenous press systems, as they relate to articles about asylum seekers and refugees, are Spain, Italy and Sweden (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2016). However, it is possible that this statement only applies to the issue of immigration. This assumption indicates that Dutch readers, regardless of the newspaper they read, were exposed to similar media coverage.

5.3 Limitations

This research design has some limitations which should be canvassed. Firstly, it is important to further explain the choice of methodology. During the coding procedure, only one stakeholder and one tone for each article were coded. This choice was made because it was the media coverage of the refugee crisis, not the concept of framing, that was the central research topic. The main purpose of the research was to study the content and tone of the media coverage with regard to refugee crisis in Dutch newspapers over time, in order to acquire a global view of what Dutch newspaper readers actually read concerning the refugee crisis. The five frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) were used as a tool to operationalise the concept of 'content'; they were not used as a central research topic. It is important to note that the results with regard to frames in combination with stakeholders and tone are not necessarily accurate. This combination provides an indication that frame and tone may correlate, that tone may significantly differ for each type of frame and that there could be significant differences in the use of frame for each type of stakeholder. To be 95% certain of these indications, future research in the specific field of frames could undertake to code a specific tone and stakeholder per frame, to determine if there are actually significant correlations and differences in the tone per frame and the use of frames per type of stakeholder.

A second limitation of this study is that the research consists of a sample of the total media coverage of the refugee crisis. Despite the fact that the selection of the articles was conducted in the most reliable manner and 10% (400 articles) of the total media coverage was examined, it is possible that some key events did not occur in the sample. The most important example that illustrates this statement is that the sample contained no articles about the drowned boy, Alan Kurdi. This is peculiar, since it was an influential subject in newspapers for many weeks. This indicates that some events may be over- or under-represented in this study.

Furthermore, since news about immigration tends to be cyclical in nature (Benson, 2013; Suro, 2011; Figenshou, 2015), the period of time selected for the study may have influenced the results. For instance, it appears that the last three months (May, June and July 2016, which were not included in the sample), demonstrated an overall stable trend in the number of news articles on the refugee crisis. This indicates that the refugee crisis became less visible in newspapers in more recent months, in contrast to a major part of the time frame

of this study, which was characterised by multiple peaks. This indicates that it is possible that a different period of time may have yielded different results.

Another limitation of this study is that the deductive approach used only the five frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), which were derived from theoretical assumptions. This suggests that new frames may be present in the coverage of the refugee crisis that have not yet been taken into account. This approach was chosen because the inductive approach is very time consuming, difficult to replicate and typically based on a small sample. Nevertheless, it would be interesting for future research to investigate the media coverage regarding the refugee crisis with an open view, to identify other possible frames that may be relevant.

A fifth limitation is the type of media coverage studied in this research. Newspaper articles were selected because newspapers remain a reliable, steady source of information for citizens, and the Dutch newspaper landscape is characterised by high diversity. However, due to the increasing popularity of social media and blogs, for example, it is recommended that news websites, weblogs or social media channels be included in similar studies in the future.

Lastly, a content analysis is a purely descriptive method. The results describe *what* exists, but may not reveal the underlying motives and explanations for the observed findings. This study therefore presents the content and tone of the media coverage with regard to the refugee crisis, but cannot provide information about the reasons why journalists use certain frames or tones, or what affect certain frames and tones have on their readers. This is precisely why this study offers a point of departure for future research.

5.4 Future research

As identified in the limitations, this study has investigated only the content and tone in media coverage with regard to refugees. The journalist who writes articles using certain frames and tone and the person who reads the media coverage are not taken into account, although these appear to be important (McKay, Thomas & Kneebone, 2012). A follow-up study that examines these factors in the communication process will provide more information and insight into the conscious, or perhaps unconscious, reasons for the use of frame and tone by journalists and the influence of media coverage on readers with regard to the refugee crisis. However, this study provided an overview of the actual content and tone of the coverage of the refugee crisis. Accordingly, the influence of media coverage on immigration attitudes can be tested in the future, to ensure that the knowledge of this subject can be expanded.

Furthermore, research into the differences in the use of frame and tone with regard to the refugee crisis between national and regional newspapers would be of interest. Kuttschreuter et al. (2011) showed that in the media coverage of a firework disaster, local newspapers used significantly more human interest and economic consequences frames. This could be explained by the readership of the newspapers. The local newspaper focused on the relevance of the crisis for local residents and, therefore, made use of the human interest frame and the economic consequences frame more often than the national newspaper. It is possible that a similar study of media coverage of the refugee crisis would lead to similar results, because this crisis also leads to various consequences for local residents, such as the construction of a refugee centre.

A third recommendation for further study is frames and tone in media coverage with regard to the refugee crisis in other countries. Recent research from Berry, Garcia-Blanco and Moore (2016) demonstrates that there are differences in the media coverage regarding the refugee crisis between countries, in terms of the sources journalists used (domestic politicians, foreign politicians or citizens), the language they used, the reasons they provided for the influx of refugees and the solutions they offered. This indicates that that differences in the use of the five frames, tone and stakeholders may be expected. It would be interesting to compare the results to determine if the content and tone of the media coverage differs between countries.

A fourth recommendation is made for researchers with a particular interest in the concept of framing and the five media frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). To deepen the knowledge of the five media frames, it may be of interest to discover if the five frames significantly differ in tone and if particular stakeholders are principally described in specific frames. A tone and stakeholder could be coded for each frame present in an article, which would facilitate the comparison and linkage.

Future studies could use this research as a point of departure. The analysis could be replicated and refined to measure the content and tone of refugee crises, perhaps in other countries, and within other types of media. This research may even be expanded to another level, to gain insight into the process of framing and tone by journalists and the influence of media coverage on readers.

5.5 Conclusion

The general conclusion of the analysis of media coverage is that the refugee crisis is described as a humanitarian crisis that citizens believe the government is responsible to alleviate and resolve. This statement is characterised by the high presence of the responsibility and human interest frame and the indication that three-quarters of the media coverage concerns a level of government or refugees. Furthermore, the tone of the media coverage is mildly negative. There are three possible key events that may have had an influence on the attention paid to the refugee crisis and the use of frame and tone. Furthermore, there are few differences between popular and quality newspapers in the use of frame and tone, with the exception of the human interest frame, which is used significantly more often in popular newspapers.

The most important findings are as follows:
- The media coverage of the refugee crisis is most frequently framed in terms of responsibility and human interest.
- The use of the responsibility, human interest, conflict and economic consequences frames differs significantly among stakeholders.
- The 'Government group' (consisting of the European Union, the political leaders, the countries, the Dutch central government and the Dutch decentralised government) and the 'Refugee group' are the most important stakeholders of this refugee crisis. Three-quarters of the media coverage that was examined referred to at least one of these two stakeholders.
- The tone of the media coverage of the refugee crisis is mildly negative and differs significantly according to the type of stakeholder. Refugees were described

significantly less negatively than the European Union and the Dutch central government.

- The articles in which the conflict frame is present are the most negatively written, compared with articles where other frames are present.

- There is a significant positive correlation between the human interest frame and tone, and a significant negative correlation between the responsibility frame and tone and the conflict frame and tone.

- Two remarkable peaks in the number of articles in September 2015, October 2015 and January 2016 are revealed. Based on these peaks, three possible key events have been deducted. It is likely that two key events influenced the peak of September and October 2015. The first key event may be the record number of refugees arriving in Europe. The second key event may be related to the pressure on the European Union and the crucial asylum meeting. Aside from the fact that after these two possible key events the number of articles increased tremendously, no significant differences in the use of frame or tone were found. The third possible key event took place in January 2016, namely, the event in Koln, where asylum seekers harassed innocent German girls during New Year celebrations. In this case, the key event not only influenced the number of articles but also significantly increased the use of the conflict frame. Furthermore, this key event probably corresponded with led to a significantly more negative tone in the articles of January 2016.

- The use of the human interest frame is significantly higher in popular newspapers compared with quality newspapers. The tone of the media coverage does not significantly differ between popular and quality newspapers. This indicates that in the media, both popular and quality newspapers reported on asylum and immigration in broadly similar ways.

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