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Master's Thesis

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Past Experience,

NOS news coverage on refugees during the Yugoslav and European Refugee crises compared

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Abstract

This thesis sets out to analyse the news coverage of the 2015 European refugee crisis and the Yugoslav refugee crisis of the 1990s by the Dutch national broadcaster, the NOS, and compare the reporting on the crises. This was done by analysing NOS news bulletins dealing with the two refugee crises, paying special attention to the depiction of demographics, how the nationalities of the refugees came into play and how the amounts of refugees coming to the Netherlands were reported on. Furthermore the NOS' portrayal of the Dutch domestic response is examined by looking at how the crises were framed, the spokespeople employed and what themes came to the fore in the NOS coverage. Clear differences are found in the way the NOS covered the Yugoslav and 2015 refugee crises. Next to differences between themes and spokespeople in both crises, the clearest differences come to the fore in the way the two crises were framed and the amount of coverage they received. These differences can mainly be ascribed to changes in the media landscape in the years between the crises, the NOS has moved away from the more official style of reporting of the 1990s to a more public driven and relatable approach during the European refugee crisis of 2015.

Keywords: refugees, news coverage, refugee crisis, framing, Yugoslav crisis, European crisis, media landscape.

Table of Contents

Abstract	1
1 Introduction	3
1.1 Research Question and Relevance.....	4
1.2 Methodological approach	5
1.3 Theoretical approach and Concepts.....	7
1.3.1 Framing	7
1.3.3 Refugees	8
1.4 Sources and Critiques	9
1.5 Literature report.....	10
1.5.1 Yugoslavs in the Netherlands	10
1.5.2 The Dutch debate on refugees	12
1.5.3 The NOS News Broadcast.....	14
1.5.4 Refugee Framing	15
1.6 A Note regarding Notes.....	17
2. Historical Background.....	18
2.1 The Yugoslav conflict, 1991-2001	18
2.3 The European Refugee Crisis.....	22
Conclusion.....	24
3. General Aspects of the Refugees.....	26
3.1 The quantity of news items	26
3.2 Countries of Origin.....	28
3.3 Demographics.....	32
3.4 Combatants as Refugees.....	33
Conclusion.....	35
4 The Dutch Domestic Response	37
4.1 Themes of Coverage.....	37
4.2 Spokespeople.....	40
4.3 Civil Disobedience and Frames.....	42
Conclusion.....	46
5. Conclusion.....	48
5.1 Main Findings.....	48
5.2 Wider Relevance	50
Bibliography	52
Primary Sources	52
Secondary Sources	53

1 Introduction

If one were to switch on the television to watch the national news broadcasts in the Netherlands back in 2015, one might have come to the conclusion that we were living in a time of great upheaval, or at least it was made to appear so. In the latter half of 2015, vast numbers of people were making their way to Europe by crossing the Aegean Sea and traversing the Balkans on their way to the European Union. The vast majority of these people were fleeing war-torn countries and poor living conditions for asylum and better lives in the European Union. This influx of people from different countries and cultures sparked a fierce debate, who is welcome here? How many people can and should be taken in? Should the borders be closed for our own safety?

The 2015 European refugee crisis seemed to be a truly massive one with a profound impact on the EU, it is however not the first time Europe had to deal with a large number of displaced people. Throughout the 20th century alone, European countries had to deal with a large number of refugee crises, ranging from massive displacement in the two world wars, to Hungarians fleeing Socialism in 1956, and many more. The aim of this master thesis is to analyse the Dutch news coverage of two of these refugee crises, and compare them to each other. The two refugee crises in question are the ones resulting from breaking up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s and the 2015 refugee crisis caused in part by the conflict in Syria and Iraq. Both of these crises received a lot of media attention from the Dutch public news broadcaster, the *Nederlandse Omroep Stichting* or NOS for short, as they unfolded. Comparing their coverage will hopefully lead to new and valuable insights into whether there are continuities or changes in the way Dutch society views refugees.

Whilst the European refugee crisis of 2015 was one of the largest instances of mass displacement in recent Middle Eastern and European history, it is not an unprecedented event. As recent as the 1990s a comparable event of mass displacement occurred during the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the period of March 1991 until November 2001. The violent disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia resulted in an exodus the likes of which hadn't been seen in Europe since the 40s, with as many as 2,3 million people fleeing their homes to escape from the violence of war by 1992¹ Of these 2,3 million, more than 400.000 fled to countries outside of the Yugoslav Federation, with as many as 200.000 going

¹ Henry Kamm, 'Yugoslav Refugee Crisis Europe's Worst Since 40's' (july 1992)
<http://www.nytimes.com/1992/07/24/world/yugoslav-refugee-crisis-europe-s-worst-since-40-s.html>
(13.11.16)

to Germany alone.

A central event in understanding the 2015 European refugee crisis is the ongoing Syrian civil war. Syria's descent into civil war started in 2011 As the Arab Spring started spreading around the Middle-East. Demonstrations against the Assad-regime quickly escalated into armed conflict between the regime's and rebel forces as Syria quickly descended into civil war. eight years after the initial outbreak of violence in Syria, the conflict is still raging on, and has gained new international dimensions. What started out as a civil war quickly evolved into a conflict which involves parties from around the globe. In 2016 the United Nations identified over 13.5 million Syrians in need of humanitarian aid, of these 13.5 million, 6 million are internally displaced within Syria itself, and over 4.8 million Syrians have fled the war abroad.² While Middle-Eastern countries like Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon bear the brunt of the refugee crisis, with respectively 2.7, 1.4 and 1.5 million Syrian refugees coming into their countries, the impact on Europe has also been considerable. By the beginning of October 2016, roughly 850.000 Syrian refugees had applied for asylum in EU member states.³ The Syrian conflict and continuing unrest in the region are some of the main factors contributing to the vast stream of asylum seekers coming to the European Union. Next to Syrians, people from over 42 different countries, such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Eritrea, are leaving behind their own states to seek refuge in the European Union.⁴

This introductory chapter will lay out the foundations of the wider thesis. Firstly, the research questions and relevance of the thesis will be discussed. Following that, the source materials, methodological approach and some central concepts of the thesis will receive attention. Lastly the historiography surrounding the central issues of the thesis will be treated.

1.1 Research Question and Relevance

The central question that the thesis seeks to answer is:

In which ways does the reporting by the NOS Dutch public news broadcasts on refugees of the Yugoslav and the 2015 European crises differ?

In today's world, we witness a high circulation of fake news surrounding any number of issues, refugees being no exception. With the mass of media attention being given to refugees and migrants, it is useful to analyse the media coverage in the public news broadcasts to see how the refugees are being portrayed, and if there is a difference between the coverage of the

² UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2016) <http://www.unocha.org/syria> (05/04/17)

³ 'EUROPE: Syrian Asylum Applications' (2016) <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php> (05/04/17)

⁴ Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland, *Vluchtelingen in getallen 2015*, (2015) 5.

Yugoslav refugees in the 1990s and the contemporary refugees of the recent European refugee crisis. By analysing the framing of refugees and the media attention they receive we may come to new and valuable insights into Dutch public opinion regarding refugees. In order to be able to answer the main question in a comprehensive fashion, the following sub questions have been devised, each of which corresponds to a chapter in the thesis:

- **What is the historical context of the arrival of refugees in the Netherlands during times of so called international refugee crises.**

Before going into the media analysis later in the thesis, it is important to establish the historical context of these refugee crises. The historical context will allow for a better understanding of the crises and the public news coverage they received.

- **What were the general characteristics of the two crises covered by the NOS?**

Issues such as the depiction of demographics, nationalities and the number of refugees coming to the Netherlands will be considered. In short: who, are being depicted in the NOS news broadcasts on the two crises, and how is this done?

- **What was the Dutch domestic response portrayed to be by the NOS coverage?**

Issues like how the crises were framed, the spokespeople employed in the coverage, and what themes were (and were not) covered by the NOS will come to the fore.

The innovative aspect of this master's thesis lies in the fact that whilst media coverage of single refugee crises has been analysed quite often and thoroughly, the NOS coverage of the Yugoslav and European refugee crises has never before been studied in a comparative fashion. Furthermore, the NOS' coverage of the 2015 refugee crisis has yet to be analysed in depth due to its recent occurrence.

1.2 Methodological approach

This thesis takes a qualitative approach in examining the way in which refugees are being covered in the NOS news broadcasts of the two crises. The aim of the thesis is to perform a comparative content analysis of the NOS news bulletins of the events. Content analysis is a method of finding out something about the way in which the media represents events, and allows for non-experts to make interpretations about aspects of said representations. Visual content analysis is a systematic, observational method used for testing hypothesis about the ways in which the media represents people or events. In this thesis the hypothesis that the media coverage of the two refugee crises by the NOS differs will be tested. The method allows

quantification of samples of observable content classified into categories.⁵

In order to conduct a content analysis of the primary sources, it is necessary to first establish a clear question or hypothesis to be answered, and relevant variables must be determined in order to be able to analyse the content. A variable is understood to be an identifiable factor of a source. Examples of variables are the length of the bulletins, the demographics represented within, and which spokespeople are employed. A variable consists of what are called values, which are elements of the same logical kind and can substitute each other because they belong to the same class.⁶ So for example: in this thesis the variable ‘demographic’ has have the values ‘adult man’, ‘adult woman’, and ‘minor’. The values which make up each variable should be mutually exclusive and exhaustive in nature, in that they should cover all possible outcomes. An example of some of the variables and their values used further on in the thesis are represented in the table below, with the variables in bold in the top row, and their respective values below them.

Table 1. Variables and values used in the thesis

Nationality (Yugoslav crisis)	Spokespeople employed	Demographics represented
Yugoslav	Refugees	Adult Male
Croat	General Public	Adult Female
Serbian	Politicians	Minors
Bosnian	Organisations/NGO	
Albanian		

I will analyse and compare the contents of the news bulletins of the two crises and compare them to each other in order to come to new insights. The ways in which the refugee crises were framed will also be compared to one another. Next to analysing the primary sources in this way, secondary sources in the form of academic studies, statistical and news articles will be used to place my findings on the NOS coverage of the refugee crises in a wider context. The aim of comparative research is to look for differences and similarities, by finding and analysing differences and similarities in the coverage, perspectives are gained. Comparative research compares and contrasts how something is done in one place, or at a certain time, with another

⁵ Philip Bell, ‘Content Analysis of Visual Images’ in Theo van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt (editors) *Handbook of Visual Analysis* (2010) 12-14.

⁶ Bell, ‘Content Analysis’, 16.

place or time.⁷ By comparing the way in which refugees were framed in Dutch public news media in two different periods in time, new insights into Dutch society and how it perceives refugees might be attained

1.3 Theoretical approach and Concepts

The focus of the thesis lies on the televised news bulletins released by the Dutch public news broadcaster, the NOS, in the duration of the two refugee crises. In analysing the content of these news bulletins special attention will be given to issues that are consistently not mentioned, and which frames are encountered in the NOS coverage of the two refugee crises. It is useful to consider some concepts that are used throughout the thesis, and provide a short history of the NOS.

1.3.1 Framing

The concept of framing was shaped by sociologist Erving Goffman,⁸ in his view framing comprises a set of concepts and theoretical perspectives on how groups, societies and individuals organize and communicate about reality. Framing can be seen in a great number of journalistic applications. In different news broadcasts about the same topic, the base information is the same, but the way in which the ‘frame’ surrounding the base information is constructed can change the viewers perception of the issue at hand, without altering the essential base information. By framing a piece of information in a certain way, one can encourage certain interpretations and discourage others. Framing is also used by politicians in order to frame an issue in such a way that makes their approach to solving the issue the most appropriate course of action.

Goffman was one of the first to extensively publish on the topic of framing. For Goffman frames refer to the definitions of a situation that are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern social events and our subjective involvement in them. Frame analysis refers to the examination of frames. Robert M. Entman offers another definition of framing: According to Entman framing is to select some aspect of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in order to promote a particular definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommended for the issue being described.⁹ Both definitions given see framing as dealing with aspects of ‘perceived reality’ and the audience’s ‘subjective involvement’ as opposed to the actual event which is being framed.

⁷ Arthur Asa Berger, *Media Analysis Techniques*, (San Francisco 2014) 118.

⁸ Michael J. Carter, *The Hermeneutics of Frames and Framing: An Examination of the Media’s Construction of Reality* (June 2013) 3.

⁹ Carter, *The Hermeneutics of Frames*, 3.

Frames help organize facts, additionally facts take on meaning by being integrated into a larger system of meanings like a frame. Frames provide reference for the public about what issues are important, and the media has great power because it is able to construct these frames. An important proposition of this is that the public's perceived importance of an issue will be directly related to the amount of media coverage given to the issue¹⁰, as an issue that receives a lot of attention from the news-media will, by virtue of its airtime, receive more public attention.

Especially relevant for this thesis is the work done by Holli A. Semetko and Patti M. Valkenburg in their piece *'Framing in European Politics: a Content Analysis of Press and Television News'* (2000). Semetko and Valkenburg investigate the prevalence of five commonly identified news frames in Dutch press and television news. The frames distinguished are: attribution of responsibility, conflict, human, interest, economic consequences and morality.¹¹ *The Conflict frame* emphasized conflict between individuals, groups or institutions as a means of capturing audience interest. *The Responsibility frame* presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for its cause or solution to either the government, an individual or a group. *The Economic frame* reports an event problem or issue in terms of its economic consequences. *The Human interest frame* brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, it can also be described as the 'human impact' frame. Lastly there is the *Morality frame* which puts events or issues in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions.¹²

Their work shows that overall; the attribution of responsibility frame was most commonly used in the news, followed closely by the conflict and economic consequences frames. In their article, they make the distinction between public and private news outlets. They note that the public news outlets, like the NOS, more often employ the conflict and responsibility frames than the privately funded outlets, who used the human interest frame more frequently.¹³ Semetko's and Valkenburg's frames will be used in this thesis.

1.3.3 Refugees

The word 'refugee' is a word that is quite commonly used in today's public debate; it is not always quite clear what is. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a refugee is: '**Refugee**,

¹⁰ Philip Marfleet, *Hermeneutics of Frames and Framing, An examination of the Media's construction of Reality* (2013) 3.

¹¹ Holli A. Semetko and Patti M. Valkenburg *Framing in European Politics: a Content Analysis of Pres and Television News* (2000) 1.

¹² Semetko and Valkenburg, *Framing in European Politics*, 3-4.

¹³ Semetko and Valkenburg, *Framing in European Politics*, 1.

(Noun) A person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution or natural disaster.’¹⁴ However, underneath this apparently straightforward definition offered by the Oxford Dictionary two important ideas and their implications need to be taken into consideration. The first of these ideas is that refugees are ‘as old as history itself’; the other is that they have only truly existed as a legal category of people since the Geneva Refugee Convention of 1951.¹⁵ Ideas about giving asylum and refuge have a long history, traditions surrounding refugees and giving asylum were embedded in religious beliefs and practice. It is assumed that until the early modern period there was a widespread commitment to the protection of refugees and outsiders under the authority of religious institutes.¹⁶

The first instants of refugees appearing as a distinct named group occurred in late 15th and early 16th century Europe. In this time the authorities of the emerging European nation-states devoted their efforts to defining a national identity based on the basis of various cultural traits, like language and religious beliefs. In this process of creating national identities, Outsiders and Others played a key role; people rejected by the new nation were integral to the process of creating national identities. These developments are illustrated by the exodus of the Muslims and Jews from Spain and Portugal in the 15th and 16th centuries, and the flight of Calvinist from France in the 16th and 17th centuries. Both the forceful expulsion and the reception of such communities were of great importance to emerging nation-states. Political authorities concerned with the creation of national communities pressured groups of Others, especially religious non-conformist, to accept new norms. In the case of France, large numbers of Calvinist fled to Switzerland and other neighbouring countries which they called *le refuge* (sanctuary). This led to the Huguenots to being the first group identified as *Réfugiés*: people rejected in their countries of origin and accommodated in others.¹⁷

1.4 Sources and Critiques

In order to answer the research questions, a number of sources will need to be studied. Books and scholarly journals on migration, public media, refugees and history will be studied throughout in order to provide background information and the main concepts of the thesis. Official statistics published by the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Eurostat and *VluchtelingenWerk Nederland* will be used to illustrate the numbers and statistical facts of the

¹⁴ the Oxford English Dictionary, *Definitions of Refugee in English*, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/refugee> (30.11.16)

¹⁵ Philip Marfleet, ‘Refugees and History Why We Must Address the Past’, *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, vol. 26 (2007) 138.

¹⁶ Marfleet, ‘Refugees’, 138-139.

¹⁷ Marfleet, ‘Refugees’, 140.

two crises. The main primary source, and focus, of the thesis are the televised NOS news bulletins on the Yugoslav and the 2015 European refugee crisis. Access to the news bulletins was gained through an internship at the Dutch institute for Sound and Vision in Hilversum.

The main issue encountered when dealing with these news items was their large quantity. Whilst the Yugoslav refugees in the 1990s received some 30 bulletins worth of attention over the entire duration of the conflict, the 2015 European refugee crisis had over 400 unique items. This amount of coverage was way too large to be able to be included in a master's thesis. The way this problem was dealt with, will be explained below in chapter 3 of the thesis. The amount of news bulletins on the European crisis was cut down to 160 by focussing on the period of August until November 2015, the high-point of the crisis in the Netherlands. In this period of leading up to November 2015, the 160 news items analysed in this thesis were published.

Public broadcasting channels, like the *Nederlandse Publieke Omroep* (NPO) of which *NOS Journaal* is part are obliged by law to provide information enabling viewers to form fair ideas of current events. This might be considered problematic considering public news channels are financed by the state. Independence and delivering an unbiased view on events is one of the most important attributes of public service broadcasts. One of the ways in which public broadcasting networks can maintain their independence and credibility is by having as much transparency in their relationship with the government as possible.

1.5 Literature report

This literature report serves to explore the positioning of the topic in historical research, since over the years the topics of refugees and framing have received a lot of attention from a large variety of angles. I will demonstrate how the concepts developed over time and discuss some of the important research done on the topic of my master thesis.

1.5.1 Yugoslavs in the Netherlands

Before the breakdown of the Yugoslav state in the 1990s, there was already a significant community of migrants hailing from Yugoslavia in the Netherlands. Thomas Hessels in his article '*Voormalig Joegoslaven in Nederland*' (Yugoslavs in the Netherlands) which appeared in 2005 notes that starting from 1920, Slovenes started arriving in the Netherlands in order to work in the mines of Zuid-Limburg. However, most of these migrants returned to their country of origin after having worked in the mines for a period. The strongest increase of the Yugoslav population in the Netherlands occurred in the 60s and 70s, when large numbers came over as labour migrants. Most of the Yugoslav men found jobs in shipyards, cleaning, metal and textile

industries, whilst most women were employed in the fishing and leather industries. Hessels writes that about half of the Yugoslavs returned to their country after several years of working in the Netherlands, From this period, a total 28.000 of Yugoslavs remained in the Netherlands permanently.¹⁸

When ethnic violence starting breaking out in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992, roughly 25.000 migrants requested political asylum within the Netherlands. The majority of these refugees were Bosnian Muslims fleeing the violence. Hessels writes that over the following years of the conflict, which lasted from 1991-2001, numbers of refugees from the disintegrating state of Yugoslavia kept coming in, albeit in much smaller numbers than the initial wave in 1991. Hessels describes the numbers and origins of the Yugoslav refugees in great detail, this can probably be explained to his employment at the Directorate of Migration Policy of the ministry of justice, he also make great use of statistics and data provided by the CBS, the Central Bureau of Statistics.

Another article written by Lada Mulalic, Carel Harmsen and Ko Oud in 2007 criticizes some of Hessel's findings though. In their article '*Schatting van het aantal voormalig Joegoslaven naar huidig herkomstgebied*' (2007) tries to update the current statistical data of the CBS which still shows that the land of origin for the refugees from the Yugoslav civil war is 'Former-Yugoslavia' instead of the current states in that area, like Serbia, Kosovo, Croatia etc. However, with the help of information about the place of birth, most refugees' new 'country of origin' can be determined. By going through the data and updating the places of birth, a better picture was established about the origins of the Yugoslav refugees. With more than 40% of all refugees coming from areas that are now within Bosnia, and Croats and Kosovars representing 13% and 11% respectively.¹⁹ What is interesting in this article is that the writers note that before their work all refugees from the Yugoslav war were simply labelled as being 'former Yugoslavs'. This is a salient note seeing that Hessels, in his article that appeared 3 years earlier, already goes into great detail about the place of origins of the refugees. One point of critique I'd have on the article written by Mulalic, Harmsen and Oud is that they seem to equate the location where a refugee was born with a current nationality. This is problematic considering just how intermixed the different ethnicities were in the Yugoslav Federal Republic before the collapse.

Next to Thomas Hessels, Leo and Jan Lucassen also give some attention to Yugoslav

¹⁸ Thomas Hessels, *Voormalig Joegoslaven in Nederland* (2004) 2.

¹⁹ Lada Mulalic, Carel Harmsen and Ko Oud, *Schatting van het aantal voormalig Joegoslaven naar huidig herkomstgebied* (2007) 1.

refugees in their book *‘Winnaars en Verliezers, een nuchtere balans van vijfhonderd jaar immigratie’* (2011) (Winners and Losers, a sober balance of five hundred years of immigration). The amount of attention given to Yugoslav refugees is substantially smaller however, with only a single mention of them coming into the country as refugees in the 90s.²⁰

1.5.2 The Dutch debate on refugees

In 1999 Pieter Lakeman released a book titled *‘Binnen zonder kloppen’* (Entering without knocking) in which he criticised Dutch immigration policies. In his work Lakeman focusses on Turkish and Moroccan migrants coming to the Netherlands, whom according to him, have been tremendously costly for Dutch society. Lakeman blames left-leaning politicians, journalist and officials for the large amount of immigrants who do not contribute to Dutch society and undermined the welfare state. Despite this blaming by Lakeman, he does not go into evidence that would confirm his claim. Even though Lakeman’s publication drew relatively little attention at the time, it did cause other writers to take up their pens and start writing on the topic of immigration.²¹

Another important figure in the Dutch debate on migration was publicist and politician Pim Fortuyn. In the pamphlet *‘Tegen de islamisering an onze cultuur’* (Against the islamisation of our culture) Fortuyn describes his views on immigrations and Islam as follows: Islam is a terrible culture that is diametrically opposed to the ‘traditional Judaeo-Christian humanistic Dutch culture’. He notes that large amounts of migrants of Moroccan and Turkish decent have ended up in the poor lower classes of society. Which according to Fortuyn makes them vulnerable to dangerous fundamentalist Islamic ideologies. Despite this controversial opinion, Fortuyn also shows his social democratic roots by saying that he does not exclude the possibility of successful emancipation and integration of migrants, to help them their social-economic circumstances need to be improved.²² In spite of admitting to notions that immigrants can successfully integrate into Dutch society, Fortuyn’s rhetoric establishes a ‘them versus us’ mentality and consequently frame the migrants as a threat to society.

This ‘us versus them’ mentality can also be identified in the works of publicist Paul Scheffer in his book *‘Het land van aankomst’* (The Land of Arrival) which appeared in 2007. In the book Scheffer states that it is time to protect western values such as freedom of speech and secularism through the embracing of a ‘healthy nationalism’²³ Scheffer takes Lakeman’s

²⁰Leo Lucassen, Jan Lucassen, *Winnaars en Verliezers, een nuchtere balans van vijfhonderd jaar immigratie* (Amsterdam 2011) 41.

²¹ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Winnaars en Verliezers*, 22.

²² Pim Fortuyn, *De islamisering van onze cultuur, Nederlandse identiteit als fundament* (1997) 9.

²³ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Winnaars en Verliezers*, 30.

earlier work and draws the conclusion that the migrants coming into the country are a cultural threat to the Dutch identity. The arrival of migrants from cultures very different from the Dutch culture are a threat to Dutch society as a whole. He calls the large scale immigration of the 90s a ‘multi-cultural disaster’ and blames politicians, journalist and scholars for closing their eyes to the negative effects of migration.²⁴ According to Scheffer, the embracing of ‘healthy nationalism’, which he leaves undefined, is necessary in order to make clear to (Muslim) migrants which values are important in the Netherlands. Once again the idea that Muslim migrants form a fifth column that will undermine Dutch society comes to the fore.

As a reaction to all these books with a negative view on immigration, journalist Frans Verhagen wrote his book *‘Hoezo Mislukt?’* (2011) (How do you mean Failed?). The book gives a much more positive view on the integration of migrants and directly challenges the views of sceptics such as Scheffer and Lakeman. In his work Verhagen makes use of governmental reports about migrant issues, from these reports he draws the conclusion that there are no immigrant-ghettos and that the children of migrants are doing much better in school and society as a whole.²⁵ Verhagen also looks at why the issues surrounding immigrants have become so heated in recent years. He thinks that this is due mostly to what he describes as globalisation, which rapidly changes the environment of the average citizen, which in some cases would lead to some citizens feeling threatened by foreigners and migrants.²⁶

Another very noteworthy book on the subject of the Dutch immigration debate is the earlier mentioned *‘Winnaars en verliezers’* by Leo and Jan Lucassen which appeared in 2011. In their work the Lucassen brothers seek to fact-check claims made by immigration-pessimist like Fortuyn and Scheffer. The authors state that the discourse surrounding migrants has changed dramatically over the past years. They argue the dominant discourse is one in which the Netherlands are threatened by a mass-immigration of Muslims and that the integration of earlier migrants like the Moroccans, Turks and Antilleans has failed. This wave of mass-immigration gets blamed on the political left, who in their blindness for the dangers have invited hordes of dangerous migrants. In *Winnaars en Verliezers* many of these assumptions are compared to actual facts, and the conclusion drawn from most of these comparisons is that they are usually false or at most half-truths.²⁷ Next to testing some of the claims made by those

²⁴ Ibidem, 24.

²⁵ Hans Krabbendam, review of *Hoezo mislukt? De nuchtere feiten over de integratie in Nederland* (Amsterdam 2009) 1.

²⁶ Krabbendam, review of *Hoezo mislukt*, 2.

²⁷ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Winnaars en Verliezers*, 231.

opposed to immigration, the book also provides a valuable history of immigrants in the Netherlands which provides a solid historical context for the work.

1.5.3 The NOS News Broadcast

The news broadcast published by the *Nederlandse Omroep Stichting* or NOS is without a doubt the most important news broadcasts over the last 60 years of Dutch televised news, with only three days going unreported on in the 1960s due to strikes²⁸, and on the 29th of January 2015 a hostage situation caused a broadcast to be cancelled.²⁹ This continuous presence throughout the years makes the NOS news bulletins a valuable historical source. The NOS journal began its lifespan on the 5th of January 1956 as the NTS-journal, which stands for *Nederlandse Televisie Stichting*, or Dutch Television Foundation. Due to the dominance of written press, the televised news broadcast's main aim was to draw attention to the new medium of television by copying the tested formula of the news broadcasts that were shown in cinemas before the main movie. Over the years of its existence the NOS Journaal developed alongside a large rise in popularity of television in the Netherlands. While the NOS produced three broadcasts a week with just five journalists in the 1950, the staff had grown to around 250 people that produced 85 bulletins per week in the early 2000s.³⁰ Next to a development in size, the way of reporting on actualities changed over time. Initially the atmosphere of the NOS was one of a news magazine, with lots of attention for human interest angles included in the broadcasts. During the 1980s and 1990s this changed into more a more critical, hard-hitting way of reporting following the increased technological possibilities and more pressing competition from the commercial media companies.³¹

Because of these development, the NOS shifted away from reporting almost exclusively on official agendas, politicians and institutions, issues concerning what were considered interests of the average viewer, however being more defined. The NOS started collecting footage from more diverse locations to report on different and more varied viewpoints within a news item. The aim of the NOS became to connect the individual and emotional stories of the people with the reactions of the authorities and institutions in order to make the news stories more relatable to a broader audience. On top of bringing the news closer to the people, the quality of the reporting itself was also improved by the appointment of dedicated research

²⁸ Huub Wijfjes, *De journalistiek van het journaal, vijftig jaar televisienieuws in Nederland* (2005) 1.

²⁹ Beeld en Geluid, *NOS Journaal* http://beeldengeluidwiki.nl/index.php/NOS_journaal (10/07/2017)

³⁰ Ibidem. 5.

³¹ Ibidem. 6.

journalists. The NOS moved from merely reporting on developments to actively (re)searching for news.³²

1.5.4 Refugee Framing

Leen d'Haenens and Mariëlle de Lange of the University of Nijmegen researched how asylum seekers were framed in Dutch regional newspapers in 2001. They systemically analysed the news frames in 298 articles found in Dutch newspapers by using twenty yes-or-no questions in order to determine which frames were used in reporting on asylum seekers. They tried to identify the five frames that Semetko and Valkenburg identified in their earlier research mentioned above. Overall, they found that, the human interest frame is most strongly evident in all the examined newspapers, with the attitude of the population making very little difference. Furthermore the morality frame was absent in the analysed newspaper articles, which D'Haenens and de Lange argue indicates that papers didn't want to tell its readers how to behave or think about the asylum seekers.³³ They also note that many of the articles do not purely belong to one single frame, but that there are elements of multiple frames identifiable in some.³⁴

Keith Greenwood and Joy Jenkins released an article in 2013 in *Journalism Studies* entitled '*Visual Framing of the Syria Conflict in News and Public Affairs Magazines.*' In the article Greenwood and Jenkins seek to analyse the ways in which the Syrian conflict as a whole is framed in various magazines and newspapers. Their research indicates that international news is most often framed in terms of violence and disaster. Conflicts are visually framed in terms of those who actively partake in the battle instead of those who are affected by it, the peace negotiation also receive relatively little attention.³⁵ In their study of framing of the Syrian conflict they analysed 193 photographs published in two news magazines and nine public affairs magazines in order to determine whether visual framing is different among various political and editorial orientations. The outcome of their analysis is that the dominant frame used in the Syrian conflict is indeed one of active fighting with relatively little attention for victims, but they also note that public affairs magazines tend to publish a higher proportion of photographs which emphasise peaceful demonstrations and negotiations.³⁶

³² Ibidem. 19.

³³ Leen d'Haenens & Mariëlle de Lange 'Framing of asylum seekers in Dutch regional newspapers', in *Media, Culture & Society* Vol. 23: 847-860 (2001) 859.

³⁴ d'Haenens & de Lange, Framing of asylum seekers, 859.

³⁵ Keith Greenwood & Joy Jenkins 'Visual Framing of the Syrian Conflict in News and Public Affairs Magazines', in *Journalism Studies* Vol. 16 No. 2: 207-227 (2015) 223.

³⁶ Greenwood & Jenkins 'Visual Framing of the Syrian Conflict, 225.

Whilst Greenwood and Jenkins analyse framing of the Syrian conflict in news and public affairs magazines, Jill Walker Rettberg & Radhika Gajjala investigate the framing of Syrian male refugees on social media. In their 2016 article titled '*Terrorists or cowards: negative portrayals of male Syrian refugees in social media*' they state that one of the dominant claims surrounding Syrian refugees is that the majority of refugees is male, and that framing seems to support this claim.³⁷ Walker and Gajjala speak of an increased sympathy towards Syrian refugees in many European mainstream media outlets as well as in social media, which has led to a more nuanced portrayal of Middle-Eastern people. In spite of this increased sympathy however, male refugees are still subject to negative framing. Walker and Gajjala claim that the framing of male refugees falls into two broad categories: as the title suggests, they are either terrorist or cowards. The Syrian men are often framed as being dangerous because they are either terrorist or rapists. One of the frames that is commonly used to support the claim that they are dangerous is the one of relatively well-dressed and healthy looking male refugees on a boat crossing the Mediterranean. This frame suggests that since they all look quite healthy and well-off, they can hardly be refugees, therefore: they must be coming to Europe to do something else altogether.³⁸ The second dominant theme in anti-refugee framing is that of the Middle-Eastern man as a coward. The frame presents male refugees as cowards who flee their homes rather than staying to fight, this frame is sometimes reinforced by the contrasting image of the Kurdish female fighters of the PKK.³⁹

In the article '*Representing the European refugee crisis, in Germany and beyond: Deservingness and difference, life and death*' anthropologists Seth M. Holmes and Heide Castañeda look at the struggle over meaning legitimization, and power in representation of the refugee crisis, specifically through a German lens. Representations of refugees in media and political discourse participate in a Gramscian 'war of position' over symbols, policies, social and even material resources. These different representations shift responsibility of the crisis from historical, political-economic causes to the refugees themselves. Many of the representations either frame the displaced people as 'deserving' refugees in need of help or 'undeserving' migrants out for their own gain.⁴⁰ According to Holmes and Castañeda, those that frame the displaced people as being undeserving migrants usually play into public fears

³⁷ Jill Walker Rettberg & Radhika Gajjala 'Terrorists or cowards: negative portrayals of male Syrian refugees in social media' in *Feminist Media Studies* Vol.16 No.1, 178-181 (2016) 179.

³⁸ Walker Rettberg & Gajjala 'Terrorist or cowards' 180.

³⁹ Walker Rettberg & Gajjala 'Terrorist or cowards' 180.

⁴⁰ Seth M. Holmes & Heide Castañeda, 'Representing the European refugee crisis, in Germany and beyond: Deservingness and difference, life and death' in *American Ethnologist, Journal of the American Ethnological Society* Vol. 43 No.1 (2016) 16-17.

of cultural, religious and ethnic difference in order to rile up an already anxious public. In general, the European response to the refugee crisis can be divided between two responses: compassionate pragmatism and fear of cultural, ethnic and religious difference.⁴¹ They also note that the fear of being overwhelmed by displaced people can be readily observed in the use of metaphors of water, such as ‘‘a flood of refugees’’ being commonly used in news media and discussions surrounding refugees.

1.6 A Note regarding Notes

As noted above, the main primary sources used in writing this thesis are the NOS news bulletins released during the two crises. Whenever reference will be made to these sources, I will note down the data needed to find the relevant news item in the archives of the Institute for Sound and Vision in Hilversum. The note will look like this:

‘‘ NOS Journaal, 05-09-1992, Nr. 481586 B&G.’’

The first part refers to the show the news item was featured on, followed by the date it was aired on television. The long number at the end of the note is the unique reference number of the item by which it is registered in the digital archives of Sound and Vision.

⁴¹ Holmes & Castañeda, Representing the European refugee crisis, 18.

2. Historical Background

Before turning to the core of the thesis, the news coverage on the refugee crises of Yugoslavia and Syria, this chapter will provide some important historical context necessary for understanding the topic. Attention will be given to the two refugee streams at the centre of the thesis: the Yugoslav and the Syrian refugee crises. Both the origins and the developments of the refugee crises will be analysed. The emphasis in the historical context will however be placed on what caused the refugees to come to Europe, instead of the day-to-day developments of the conflicts at the root of the crises

2.1 The Yugoslav conflict, 1991-2001

In the last decade of the 20th century, Europe was going through the fall of communism and the start of a new era. Throughout Eastern Europe, the threatened communist bureaucracies had to rapidly come up with ways of adapting to these new conditions in their countries. In Poland and Hungary, communist reshaped themselves into capitalist. In Romania and Bulgaria, the renamed communist parties of old managed to hang on to power for considerable time by playing on people's fear for change. In the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, aggressive nationalism was the way by which communist bureaucrats of old sought to remain in power.⁴²

At the start of the 1990s, ethnic tensions in Yugoslavia were rising. Under the leadership of the Serbian president Slobodan Milošević, a communist politician who reinvented himself as a Serbian nationalist, the Serbs were pushing the other Yugoslav republics to submit to Serbian rule, with more centralised powers being allocated to Belgrade as opposed to the federal republics. This push for dominance by the Serbs had the unsurprising consequence that the two richest republics of the federation, Slovenia and Croatia, began to seek independence from the Serbian dominated Yugoslav Federation.⁴³ One problem with this was that the Yugoslav Federal constitution was unclear on the legality of secession. Another issue arose from the fact that the Yugoslav republics, with the notable exception of Slovenia, were all highly heterogeneous when it came to ethnicities. For instance, of all the ethnic Serbs in Yugoslavia, roughly 25% of them lived outside of the 'mother republic' of Serbia. The Republic of Bosnia was home to 1.9 million Bosnians but at the same time there were also roughly 75.0000 Croats and 1.3 million Serbs living within the republic.⁴⁴

This ethnic heterogeneity led to problems when it came to the question of secession

⁴² Misha Glenny, *The Balkans, Nationalism, War and the Great Powers, 1804-2012* (Toronto 2012) 634-635.

⁴³ Gail Harmon, *War in the Former Yugoslavia: Ethnic Conflict or Power Politics?* (Boston 2007) 144.

⁴⁴ Borislav Radovic, *A Brief Retrospective on the problem of refugees in the Yugoslav Wars in 1991-99* (2003) 7.

from the Yugoslav Federation. For the ethnically homogenous republic of Slovenia, which had no native-born minorities and lacked pockets of Slovenes outside of the republic, the question of secession was relatively easy.⁴⁵ While the matter of secession was relatively straightforward in the Slovene Republic, matters were not that simple in Croatia. The problem arose from the substantial minority of 500.000 Serbs living in the Republic of Croatia. The secession of Croatia was to be blocked by the Serbs and Yugoslav state under Milosevic, unless the Croats were willing to give up the areas of their republic with a Serbian presence to the Serb Republic, secession was out of the question. This can be seen as Milosevic trying to protect the ethnic Serbs in Croatia, but it can also be construed as Milosevic using the Serb minority to pressure the Croats to remain in Yugoslavia.⁴⁶ The complicated dispersal of ethnical groups throughout the Yugoslav republics is further illustrated in the figure below, taken from Borislav Radovic's *'A Brief Retrospective on the problem of refugees in the Yugoslav Wars.'*

DISTRIBUTION OF THE MAIN ETHNIC GROUPS in the REPUBLICS of the SFRY (according to the 1991 census)¹⁰						
	Croats	Slovenians	Moslems	Serbs	Montenegrins	Macedonians
in Croatia	3 708 308	23 802	47 603	580 762	9 521	4 760
in Slovenia	53 688	1 718 318	26 725	47 097	4 233	4 412
in Bosnia	755895	▣	1 905 829	1 369 258	▣	▣
in Serbia (with both autonomous provinces)	109 214	8 340	237 358	6 428 420	140 024	47 577
in Montenegro	6 249	407	89 932	57 176	380 484	860
in Macedonia	▣	▣	▣	44 159	▣	1 314 283
Total	4 633 354	1 750 867	2 307 447	8 526 872	534 262	1 371 892
Outside of the "mother" republic	925 046	32 549	401 618	2 098 452	153 778	57 609
% outside of the "mother" republic	19.96	1.86	17.4	24.6	28.79	4.2

▣ = included in the census column "Others". We assume that these were small, numerically negligible contingents.

⁴⁷ It was feared that if the Croats were to become a nation state, the other ethnicities in Yugoslavia would also start demanding their own nation states. In a state with such intermixed ethnic groups as Yugoslavia, this would cause chaos and the dissolution of the federal state. In the face of this looming crisis, the many ethnic groups of the federal republic began to arm and

⁴⁵ Harmon, *War in the Former Yugoslavia*, 145.

⁴⁶ Harmon, *War in the Former Yugoslavia*, 145.

⁴⁷ Ibidem.

organize themselves into paramilitary organisations, something which only served to escalate the tensions further. At the same time, both the Croats and Serbs started making territorial claims on pieces of Bosnia. On top of this, when the first democratic elections were held 1990 in both Croatia and Bosnia, nationalist parties rose to power.⁴⁸

As the nationalist rhetoric grew more and more divisive, ethnic violence started to take hold. Especially in the predominantly Serbian region of Krajina within Croatia, Serbian nationalist clashed with the Croatian police on many occasions, with the violence only being halted when the Yugoslav army intervened. By 1991, the rise of nationalism, ethnic violence, and the calls for independence made clear that the days of the Yugoslav federation were numbered. The question now was not whether Croatia and Slovenia should be granted independence; it became more a matter of how and when this would happen.⁴⁹ In an attempt to stop this from happening, the Yugoslav government let it be known that they would oppose any move towards secession with all available means. In spite of this threat, the Croats declared their independence on the 5th of June 1991, followed the next day by the Slovenes. The war in Yugoslavia had begun.

The initial conflict for Croat and Slovene independence was halted in 1992 under a UN-monitored ceasefire, but the next bout of fighting erupted later that year when Bosnia-Herzegovina also made its bid independence. Bosnia with its many different ethnic groups erupted into violence when the Bosnian Serbs, backed by the Serbs from the rest of Yugoslavia, resisted the secession of Bosnia from the Yugoslav Republic. Yugoslav army units supported the Bosnian Serbs in carving out a large swathe of Serb-dominated territory within Bosnia-Herzegovina. The conflict that followed was both long and extremely brutal, with many atrocities and acts of ethnic cleansing by nearly all sides involved in the conflict. The presence of United Nations peacekeeping formations proved ineffective in halting the atrocities that occurred. The atrocities perpetrated by the Serbs against Muslim civilians had an especially large impact on Western public opinion⁵⁰. International peace efforts all broke down, and eventually NATO directly intervened and bombed Serbia into signing a peace treaty in 1995. Despite this peace treaty, war soon broke out again as the other republics, Macedonia and Montenegro, pushed for their independence, Serbia ended the conflict, beaten, battered and alone.

The violence and chaos forced many civilians to become refugees. Over the course of

⁴⁸ Harmon, *War in the Former Yugoslavia*, 147.

⁴⁹ Glenny, *The Balkans*, 638.

⁵⁰ Glenny, *The Balkans*, 638.

the Yugoslav war, more than 3.7 million people were forced to flee their homes, which represents about 16% of the total Yugoslav population before the war. Statistics provided by Borislav Radovic in his work *'Brief Retrospective on the problem of refugees in the Yugoslav Wars in 1991-99 (2003)'* show that these figures become even more dramatic when one looks purely at the territories where the conflict actually took place. His calculations show that every third inhabitant of Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia suffered the fate of displacement during the war.⁵¹ It is also interesting to note that the majority of NOS news bulletins on Yugoslav Refugees were aired during the first year of the conflict, in 1992.

Radovic gives several compelling reasons as to why the refugee crisis was so severe when war broke out in Yugoslavia. On top of the "usual" reasons as to why people flee their homes: the threat of violence, and conscription, general misery of war, he also describes reasons specific to the Yugoslav conflict. Firstly he notes that almost all of the military operations of the war took place within urban areas. A great many cities underwent sieges and bombardments, which means that a large number of civilians were in locations where fighting took place. On top of this, civilians were often deliberately targeted by armed groups and authorities who pursued policies of ethnic cleansing. The most important factor resulting in mass displacement during the Yugoslav conflict identified by Radovic, is the fact that the Yugoslav war was fought between ethnic groups in ethnically intermixed territories.⁵²

The response of the European Union member states regarding the refugees of the Yugoslav conflict should be seen in the broader context of EU politics. In the 1990s EU states had great interest in improving the control of refugee flows, before eliminating internal barriers to freedom of movement between states with the implementation of the Schengen agreements in 1995. The states recognized that the abolition of internal borders severely limited their national competency with regards to immigration.⁵³ When the first refugees of the conflict started crossing international borders in order to seek safety and refuge, most countries within the EU responded by accepting several thousand refugees. With some countries like Germany, Sweden and Switzerland accepting tens of thousands of refugees. However, as soon as the war started to escalate after 1992, many of these previously receptive countries started to limit the number of refugees arriving in their territories by toughening their asylum policies.⁵⁴ When news of ethnic cleansing started to spread to the rest of Europe however, most EU countries once again

⁵¹ Radovic, *A Brief Retrospective*, 13.

⁵² Radovic, *A Brief Retrospective*, 15-16.

⁵³ Michael Baratciski, 'EU States and the Refugee Crisis in the Former Yugoslavia' in *Refugee* vol. 14, no. 3 (June-July 1994) 32.

⁵⁴ Baratciski, 'EU States and the Refugee Crisis', 32.

relaxed their admission requirements. In the course of the war the policies regarding refugees in the EU were continually changed, depending on the public mood at the time.⁵⁵

Desires to contain the refugee flow led many Western European states to respond positively to Slovenian proposals for the creation of so called ‘safe havens’ within the conflict zones. By creating safe areas within the conflict zones, it was hoped that people would choose not to leave the country in the first place, relieving the pressure on asylum countries. Next to these ‘safe havens’ the EU states also sought other ways in which to try and limit the influx of refugees from former Yugoslavia, one of these approaches was the ‘right to remain’. It was hoped that by protecting the right of people to remain in safety in their homes, less people would be forced to leave and seek asylum elsewhere. The idea behind the ‘right to remain’ is that refugee protection will be enhanced if emphasis is placed on the basic right of the individual to not be forced to flee in the first place.⁵⁶ Along with the EU, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) started to pay more attention to preventive protection, aimed at eliminating the cause of displacement and give potential refugees the option of remaining in their homes. During the Yugoslav war the focus of the refugee policies pursued by EU member states changed from providing shelter outside of the conflict zone to making sure that the refugees would be taken care of within the region of conflict. This development can be linked to the European states giving up part of their sovereignty in order to participate in the Schengen zone, whilst at the same time trying to hold on to the right to regulate the inflow of migrants and asylum seekers.⁵⁷

2.3 The European Refugee Crisis

The second refugee crisis at the centre of the thesis is the European refugee crisis. It should however be noted that whilst the Syrians are the single largest group seeking refuge in Europe and the Netherlands, they are far from the only group seeking asylum in European countries. Although the Syrians make up as much of 42% percent of refugees coming to the Netherlands, there are also considerable groups of Eritreans, Afghans, and Iraqis taking the same route to asylum in Europe and the Netherlands. Similarly to the Syrians, many of the Iraqi and Afghani refugees are fleeing the ongoing conflicts in their own countries. Eritreans are mainly seeking to flee from the repressive government of their country.⁵⁸ In addition to this, there are also large amounts of asylum seekers, mainly from sub-Saharan Africa, crossing the Mediterranean from

⁵⁵ Baratciski, ‘EU States and the Refugee Crisis’, 32-33.

⁵⁶ Baratciski, ‘EU States and the Refugee Crisis’, 33.

⁵⁷ Baratciski, ‘EU States and the Refugee Crisis’, 35.

⁵⁸ Arjan Leerker, Peter Scholten, *Landen in Nederland, De Vluchtelingenstroom in Intergratieperspectief*, (Rotterdam 2016) 8.

the coasts of Tunis and Libya in rickety open boats in order to reach Europe by way of Italy. For the purposes of this thesis however, the focus will remain on the ‘Syrian’ refugee crisis and the refugees coming to Europe via what is known as the ‘Balkan route’. As opposed to the asylum seekers coming to Europe via the Mediterranean route.

The Syrian conflict is central to the current refugee crisis, and it finds its roots in what became known as the 2011 Arab Spring revolts. Starting in Tunisia and spreading quickly to Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, Libya and Syria, the Arab Spring was a wave of political protests that were unprecedented in scope and ambition. Quickly after the outbreak, two authoritarian rulers, Tunisian president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak were removed from power. And in other afflicted countries leaders were in grave jeopardy a few months later.⁵⁹ At the time of the Arab Spring, most of the Arab countries were dealing with serious internal problems, there was little political freedom, and large scale unemployment was rife amongst the younger generation. What little economic growth there was, went only to benefit a few in high places, the young generation was restive. It was widely thought that the unrest would spread to Syria and the regime led by president Bashar al-Assad would collapse like the ones in Egypt and Tunisia did. This did not happen.

Initial unrest in Syria broke out in march 2011 after 15 school students were detained and tortured for having written graffiti in support of the Arab Spring. One of the boys, who was only 13 years old, did not survive this ordeal. In reaction to this, protest erupted in the city of Daara. Confrontations between protestors and heavy handed security forces escalated, and resistance quickly spread to the rest of the country through tribal networks and sympathy protests.⁶⁰ In the early days of the crisis, effective leadership could have quelled the worst of the unrest. Particularly if Assad had reacted with democratic concessions instead of repression, the repressive response of the regime disillusioned many of the people and drove them to more violent means of resistance.⁶¹ One of the main differences between the Syrian uprising and other ones like the Egyptian and Libyan uprisings is the protracted nature of the conflict in Syria, which resulted in the stalemate in which neither side can defeat the other. Although foreign intervention by Russia and Iran has been shifting the advantage in favour of the regime.

Although the initial protests were mostly non-sectarian in character, the outbreak of

⁵⁹ Eva Bellin, ‘Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East, Lessons from the Arab Spring’ in *Comparative Politics* (January 2012) 126.

⁶⁰ Raymond Hinnebusch, ‘The Tangent of the Syrian Uprising’ in *Ortadoğu Etütleri*, Volume 6, No 1, (August 2014) 4.

⁶¹ Raymond Hinnebusch, *Authoritarian Upgrading and the Arab Uprising: Syria in Comparative Perspective* (London 2012) 9.

armed violence led to the emergence of harder sectarian divisions. Minority religious groups tend to support the Assad government, who is an Alawite, which is considered a sub-sect of Shia Islam.⁶² Although around 59% of the population are Sunni Muslims, they are a far from homogenous group within the country and conflict. The sectarian angle only crept into the conflict slowly, as armed rebels began targeting other religious groups. The situation worsened after more radical Salafists started to move in on the Syria conflict and the involvement of Al Qaeda expanded.⁶³ This increased sectarian violence, Al Qaeda, and the war raging across the border in Iraq also led to the Islamic State, ISIS, becoming an important factor in the Syrian civil war from 2014.

As was the case with the Yugoslav conflict, the Syrian war has caused large scale forced displacement amongst the people of Syria, both within the country and across the region. Currently the UNHCR estimates that there are as many as 5 million Syrian refugees who fled their country, and a further 7.6 million people who are internally displaced within Syria. The vast majority of Syrians have sought refuge in neighbouring countries like Turkey and Lebanon, with 2.9, and 1 million Syrian refugees respectively.⁶⁴ In the period of September 2015 until March 2016, approximately 700.000 migrants headed for Western Europe via the Balkan Route. The route crosses the Aegean Sea between Turkey and Greece, upwards through the territories of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. All four countries served as transit routes for migrants who were on their way to Austria, Germany and Sweden.⁶⁵

Conclusion

In this chapter the historical context surrounding the Yugoslav and European Refugee crises has been presented. Although both of the conflicts are considered civil wars, the Yugoslav wars were a conflict which arose from the disintegration of a multi-ethnic federal state, while the Syrian civil war on the other hand started out as a more politically oriented conflict to oust President Bashar al Assad, and slowly descended into a sectarian civil war with international dimensions. Despite the different origins, both wars had strong ethnic and sectarian characteristics.

The two following refugee crises were also different. Whilst the Yugoslav refugee crisis was a direct result of the Yugoslav wars, and the refugees hailed exclusively from the territory

⁶² Al Jazeera, *Syria's civil war explained from the beginning*.

⁶³ Haran, 'Roots of the Syrian Crisis', 3.

⁶⁴ UNHCR, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> (20/04/2017)

⁶⁵ Senada Šelo Šabic and Sonja Boric, *At the Gate of Europe, Refugees on the Western Balkan Route* (Zagreb 2016) 1.

of Yugoslavia, the Syrian civil war was just one of the factors which caused the European refugee crisis. Next to Syrians fleeing the Syrian war, the refugees of the European refugee crisis hail from many different nationalities besides Syrians, the Syrians are merely the largest single identifiable grouping in the European refugee crisis. As shall become clear in the following chapters, the different characters of these two refugee crises are also reflected in the refugees coming to the Netherlands and the news-coverage they received.

3. General Aspects of the Refugees

As has become clear, the historical context surrounding the two crises and refugees in the Netherlands is long and at times complicated. This chapter moves on to analysing how the Dutch public news broadcasts of the NOS reported on the two different refugee crises at the time. The focus of this chapter will lie on the general aspects of the news coverage, such as the depiction of demographics, nationality and amounts of refugees coming to the Netherlands. In short: who are being depicted in the NOS news broadcasts on the two crises? These representations will then be compared to the situation on the ground as described by reports and studies from NGO's, the authorities and academic sources. Furthermore, the issue of combatants as asylum seekers, and terms used when describing the asylum seekers will receive attention. The main question that this chapter seeks to answer is: How were the broader characteristics of the two refugee crises reported on by the NOS?

3.1 The quantity of news items

The period used to analyse the Syrian refugee crisis is August 2015 up to November 2015. This relatively narrow focus within the much larger and crisis, which went on into 2016, is necessary because the amount of relevant NOS source material is far too large to analyse in a master thesis. As the total amount of news items concerning the current refugee crisis stands at roughly 400 individual items aired by the NOS over the course of the crisis. Moreover, the period of August until November 2015 saw the largest inflow of refugees of the crisis into Europe in general and the Netherlands in specific. In tandem with the record inflow, the amount of NOS news coverage also reached an all-time high, with more than 150 individual news items on refugees being produced in a three month period. So while the period is short, analysing it will provide a snap-shot of the news coverage at the very height of the Syrian refugee crisis.

In the time frame of August until November 2015, a total of 27,549 people applied for asylum in the Netherlands, with as many as 11,875 requesting asylum in October alone.⁶⁶ To put this into perspective: over the course of 2015, 58,880 people applied for asylum. Therefore, out of this annual total, over 46% of the asylum requests were made in the three month period of August until November.⁶⁷ As the amount of refugees in the Netherlands increased over the course of 2015, a similar trend can be identified in the amount of news coverage allocated to reporting on the refugee crisis by the NOS. With 65% of the total amount of news items dealing with the refugee crisis in 2015 being produced and aired in the August-November period of

⁶⁶ Ministry of Security and Justice, Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), *Asylum Trends December, Monthly Report on Asylum Application in the Netherlands and Europe* (2015 Rijkswijk) 1.

⁶⁷ Ministry of Security and Justice, *Asylum Trends December*, 1.

analysis. Further scrutiny of the amounts of produced news coverage in the period shows that the vast majority was produced during the latter half of the analysed timeframe. With a mere 12 news items, representing 7%, regarding refugees being aired in the month of August, all the way up to 77 unique items in October, representing 47% of the selected news items. This increase in news items roughly reflects the increase in asylum applications in the same time span, with the top being reached in both asylum applications and news items in October.

In contrast to the Syrian refugee crisis and the related conflict, it appears that the Yugoslav situation received much less attention from the NOS in the 1990s. In the entire duration of the conflict, the NOS aired a mere 25 unique news items on television relating to the conflict and refugees fleeing from it. This stands in stark contrast to news coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis, which, as noted above, had as many as 77 unique items in October 2015 alone at the height of the crisis. This difference in the amount of coverage can in part be explained by the change in the media landscape that took place in the years between the two crises. During the 1990s the NOS had just two televised news broadcasts per day, with one at 18:15 and the main one airing at 20:00. The media landscape has changed drastically since the 1990s. There has been a sharp increase in the amount of television channels at a commercial and regional level, and the rise of the internet also contributed to the change of landscape. Due to this increase of competition, the media market has changed from a sellers to a buyers' market.⁶⁸ On the old seller's market, the media had to pay little attention to what the consumer wanted to see and hear, the media tended to show what they thought was right for the public to see, not what it wanted to see.⁶⁹ The changing media landscape caused the NOS to increase the amount of individual news broadcasts to as many as 7 individual broadcasts a day.⁷⁰ The obvious result of this increase in overall broadcasting time is an increase in the amount of news items in general. Although the total amount of news items regarding the Yugoslav situation is much smaller than the quantity of items on the Syrian refugee crisis, this will allow for a much more complete overall analysis of the news coverage of refugees in the conflict than is the case with the Syrian refugee crisis.

In addition to a changing media landscape, the differing amounts of news coverage given by the NOS to the two crises can also be explained by comparing the amounts of refugees coming to the Netherlands. Over the course of the Yugoslav wars, a total of 76.000 people from

⁶⁸ Adriaansen, M.L, van Praag P. 'Nieuwe scheidlijnen en de turbulente relatie tussen media en burgers' in H. Dijkstra, P. den Hoed, J. W. Holtslag, & S. Schouten (editors) *Het gezicht van de publieke zaak: openbaar bestuur onder ogen* Nr. 23 (Amsterdam 2010) 243.

⁶⁹ Adriaansen and van Praag, 'Nieuwe Scheidslijnen' 234.

⁷⁰ NOS, *De NOS in Cijfers 2015* (2015) 4.

the former Yugoslav republics were granted asylum in the Netherlands during the conflict. The single largest influx of refugees came at the beginning of the war, when ethnic violence broke out in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a response to the violence, roughly 25.000 refugees requested political asylum in the Netherlands between 1992 and 1993.⁷¹ Although the 76.000 refugees seeking asylum in the Netherlands during the Yugoslav wars is a large number of people, the amount seems relatively small compared to the European refugee crisis. It was estimated by *VluchtelingenWerk Nederland*, an organisation that concerns itself with refugees coming to the Netherlands, that there were as many as 58.000 to 80.000 refugees seeking asylum in the country in 2015.⁷² So it seems logical that because of the difference in scale of the two crises, and the increase of broadcasting time in general, that the Syrian crisis has many more relevant news items produced.

3.2 Countries of Origin

An important difference between the two refugee crises is where the refugees were coming from. As opposed to the Yugoslav refugees back in the 1990s, most of the refugees coming to Europe and the Netherlands during the European refugee crisis are coming from non-European countries. The largest amount of asylum requests in the period from August to November 2015 was made by people with Syrian citizenships, representing between 54% and 61% of the total monthly requests. Eritreans, Afghans and Iraqis accounted for about a quarter of the total amount of asylum requests made in the period.⁷³ On top of this, roughly 10% of the persons requesting asylum were considered to be stateless, which means that the person in question is not considered a national by any state and therefore lacks citizenship. These stateless asylum seekers are often Palestinians who have lived in Syrian refugee camps. A further 9% of asylum seekers is made up of residents from 42 different countries.⁷⁴

In the refugees coming to the Netherlands during the Yugoslav conflicts, one can distinguish two distinct peaks of inflow. The first group of refugees fled the country during the wars in Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia in the period of 1991-1995. The second wave of refugees started followed the conflict in Kosovo and the NATO bombardments of 1998-2000. Although asylum seekers came to the Netherlands in between these two peaks, most of them arrived in the two periods described above.

⁷¹ Thomas Hessels, *Voormalig Joegoslaven in Nederland* (2004) 2.

⁷² VluchtelingenWerk Nederland, *Vluchtelingen in Getallen 2015* (2015) 3.

⁷³ Ministry of Security and Justice, *Asylum Trends December*, 1.

⁷⁴ Dr. Arjen Leerkes and Dr. Peter Scholten, *Landen in Nederland, De vluchtelingenstroom in intergratieperspectief* (Rotterdam 2016) 3.

It is important to note that there are considerable difficulties in determining the national and ethnic make-up of Yugoslav refugees. This is due to the fact that in the course of the war the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia broke up into smaller national states like Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. So even though the Yugoslav Republic ceased to exist as a country in the course of the war, people fleeing the country in the 1990s were all still officially registered as being born in the Yugoslav Republic, as opposed to their 'new' states.⁷⁵ Because of this lack of specific information it is impossible to determine the exact ethnic make-up of the refugees, which is in contrast with the crisis of 2015. Alders and Nicolaas have however managed to establish rough estimates based on immigration numbers from the period before the conflict and the populations of the federal republics.

The largest group of 25.000 Yugoslav refugees arrived in the Netherlands in the years of 1992 and 1993. This group was made up mostly out of people hailing from Bosnia Herzegovina, whom accounted for roughly two thirds of the total. The next largest group within this first wave consisted of refugees from Croatia. Even though the federal republics of Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo weren't officially involved in the early stages of the conflict, there was an increase in immigration from these areas during the war in Bosnia.⁷⁶ To which extent these immigrants from 'peaceful' areas were ethnic minorities and refugees fleeing from the Milosevic regime or regular immigrants is unknown. It is however safe to say that the first peak of refugees was made up mostly out of Bosnians and a smaller amount of Croats fleeing the conflict in their home areas.⁷⁷ During the second peak of inflow, in the period of 1998-2000, more than 50% of the refugees hailed from the republics of Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro. Although the amount of refugees from Bosnia had declined in this period, compared to the early 1990s, they still made up a considerable portion of the total intake.⁷⁸ When looking at how the issue of nationality is approached in NOS news bulletins concerning the Yugoslav crisis, it is interesting to note how early on most of the refugees aren't denominated as being Croats, Serbs or Bosnians, but merely as 'coming from' the regions Bosnia or Croatia.⁷⁹ This hesitance to attribute a nationality to the refugees coming to the Netherlands can probably be explained by the fact that the situation on the ground in the Yugoslav Republic was still very nebulous and confusing in the early years of the conflict.

⁷⁵ Maarten Alders and Han Nicolaas, 'Allochtonen uit voormalig Joegoslavië', in *Maandstatistiek van de bevolking*, Jaargang 50 (2002) 12.

⁷⁶ Lada Mulalic, Carel Harmsen and Ko Oudhof, 'Schatting van het aantal Joegoslaven naar huidig herkomstgebied' in *Bevolkingstrends* (2007) 41-42.

⁷⁷ Mulalic, Harmsen, Oudhof, 'Joegoslaven naar huidig herkomstgebied' 42.

⁷⁸ Ibidem.

⁷⁹ NOS Journaal, 05-09-1992, Nr. 481586 B&G.

Furthermore, due to the multi-ethnic nature of each of the federal republics it was hard to ascribe a certain nationality or ethnicity to the refugees as a whole. Only in news bulletins aired around the time of the conflict in Kosovo and Albania in 1998 does the NOS refer more explicitly to nationality and ethnicity in its broadcasts, with the Kosovars and Albanians receiving specific mention.⁸⁰

As noted above, refugees coming to the Netherlands in this time were mostly categorized as being ‘from the area of’ Bosnia or Croatia. Out of all refugees coming into the country, the ones hailing from Bosnia received most of the attention in the broadcasts, with as much as 60% of the bulletins concerning them, or mentioning their plight. Also when there is general talk concerning refugees within a news bulletin, these are usually identified as being ‘Bosnians’ or from the region of Bosnia Herzegovina. This amount of attention by the NOS is hardly unjustified however, as estimates indicate that most of the refugees coming to the Netherlands did belong to this group. While refugees from Croatia, Kosovo, Albania and especially Bosnia receive attention on the broadcasts, the one group that is conspicuously absent from them are the Serbians. This absence can be explained by the relatively low number of Serbians coming to the Netherlands in the course of the war. Most of the Serbians that became displaced during the conflicts chose to seek refuge within the Federal Republic of Serbia as opposed to fleeing the Yugoslav Republic as many Bosnians and Croats did.⁸¹

When it comes to matters of nationality and ethnicity in reporting on the European refugee crisis, there is an important difference to be seen. Whereas during the Yugoslav crisis the reporting referred mostly to the area or region where the refugees hailed from, in the European crisis the issue of nationality is more complicated. On the one hand, the NOS bulletins sometimes refer explicitly to the nationality of a group of refugees, for instance when reporting on a specific case of a group of Syrians moving into a newly opened temporary housing unit in the Netherlands.⁸² On the other hand, the NOS usually refrains from specifying or attributing a nationality to especially large groups of asylum seekers in news items concerning refugees in more general terms: in these items they are simply referred to as ‘refugees’, ‘asylum seekers’ or at times when showing large groups of people ‘migrants’ is used.⁸³

In the cases where a nationality is ascribed to a group of refugees it is usually in bulletins on a specific occurrence or individual human interest oriented items. For instance: a number

⁸⁰ NOS Journaal, 07-03-1998, Nr. 99794 B&G.

⁸¹ Borislav Radović, *A Brief Retrospective on the Problem of Refugees in the Yugoslav Wars 1991-99* (2005) 23-24.

⁸² NOS Journaal, 02-10-2015, Nr. 5288171 B&G.

⁸³ NOS Journaal, 18-09-2015, Nr. 5273892 B&G.

of broadcasts from early August concerned themselves with a group of refugees being found illegally travelling in the back of a lorry headed to England. The broadcast explicitly identifies the small group of 12 refugees as being ‘Syrians, Iranians and Iraqis.’ In news items where a homogenous group of asylum seekers is covered, the nationality in question is usually mentioned also. Interestingly enough, this is not always the case when an individual asylum seekers gets interviewed. Sometimes the nationality of the interviewed person is mentioned, but in many instances he or she is simply a refugee, leaving the national identity out of the reporting. That being said, when nationalities are being mentioned in news items, the representation of the different nationalities focusses mostly on people from Syria and Eritrea, which considering that they make up the largest two groups coming to the Netherlands is logical and seems justified.

When it comes to reporting on larger groups of refugees coming to the EU and the Netherlands over the Balkan route, specific nationalities are hardly ever mentioned. In the many items concerning the broader refugee crisis and the route over the Balkans, the people are referred to as being simply refugees or migrants. Especially when covering the large mass of people coming over the Balkan Route, terms like ‘stream’ and ‘wave’ are frequently used. One of the reasons that can explain this lack of denomination is the fact that a lot of the refugees coming over the route haven’t yet requested asylum or registered officially with any authorities, and therefore the exact proportions of nationalities are uncertain.

To conclude: there is a difference in how the issue of nationality was approached in the NOS broadcasts on the Yugoslav and the Syrian refugee crises. During the Yugoslav crises the issue was mostly avoided by describing the region where the asylum seekers were coming from. This can mostly be explained by the difficulties of ascribing a nationality to people fleeing from a multi-ethnic, disintegrating state like the Yugoslav Federal Republic. Meanwhile, for the refugees of the European refugee crisis, the issue of nationality is even more complicated. In NOS news bulletins, the nationality of refugees is only explicitly mentioned if the items concerns a small group of people whose nationalities can be established with certainty. Bulletins dealing with larger masses of refugees usually don’t mention a single nationality, because the unregistered, multi-national character of the mass of asylum seekers makes accurate reporting nigh impossible.

3.3 Demographics

Next to the issue of nationality, another interesting matter to analyse are the demographics of the two refugee crises and how they were represented in the NOS news bulletins. One of the main differences that becomes apparent in the demographic make-up of the two refugee streams is the different proportions of men and women within them. Statistical data from the CBS shows that in the Yugoslav refugee crisis, the genders proportions of the group coming to the Netherlands were roughly equal at 53% male and 47% female⁸⁴ Meanwhile the refugees of the current refugee crisis tend to be mostly male, with as many as 75% of the registrations for asylum in 2015 being entered by men.⁸⁵ While the majority of immigrants heading for the EU over the Balkan Route were individual males, whole families were also making their way to Europe together. According to UNHCR data, 13% of the total arrivals in Europe in 2015 were women, and 18% were categorized as children.⁸⁶ There is a good explanation as to why young men make up the largest group of refugees seeking asylum in the EU. Men are usually sent ahead to make the arduous journey to the country where asylum will be sought, once they have applied for asylum it is a lot easier for them to also request asylum for their families staying behind in their country of origin. Another factor in explaining why so many young Syrian men are fleeing their country is that they want to avoid being drafted into Assad's army to fight in the war.⁸⁷ So even though male refugees are highly represented in NOS news bulletins, this reflects the actual situation at the time.

A particularly striking characteristic of the European refugee crisis is the large number of unaccompanied minors (UAMs) amongst asylum seekers. Over all of 2015, 88.300 refugees seeking asylum in the European Union were considered to be unaccompanied minors. This was nearly the quadruple amount of UAMs that requested asylum in 2014, when the total stood at 23.000. A large majority, 91%, of UAMs were males. 57% of the UAMs were aged 16 or 17 years old, while those aged 14 to 15 accounted for 29% and those younger than 14 made up the rest. Around half of all the unaccompanied minors applying for asylum in the EU in 2015 hailed from Afghanistan.⁸⁸ In the Netherlands a total of 3855 UAMs applied for asylum in 2015, meaning that 36,5% of all the applications filed by minors were filed by UAMs. Unlike the

⁸⁴ Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland, *VluchtelingenWerk IntergratieBarometer 2009, Een onderzoek naar de Integratie van vluchtelingen in Nederland* (2009) 16.

⁸⁵ Leerkes and Scholten, *Landen in Nederland*, 8.

⁸⁶ Victoria Metcalfe-Hough, *The Migration Crisis? Facts, Challenges and Possible Solutions* (2015) 2.

⁸⁷ NOS, 'Waarom vluchten meer mannen dan vrouwen?' <http://nos.nl/op3/artikel/2067181-waarom-vluchten-meer-mannen-dan-vrouwen.html> (27/05/17)

⁸⁸ Eurostat, *Almost 90.000 unaccompanied minors among asylum seekers registered in the EU in 2015* (2016) 1.

wider European trend, most of the UAMs coming to the Netherlands were Syrians, representing 38% of the UAM applications made.⁸⁹ It is interesting to note that although UAMs make up a substantial amount of the asylum seekers coming to Europe as a whole, the NOS doesn't allocate any attention to them in their news coverage.

Whilst the asylum seekers of the European crisis are predominantly male, in the times of the Yugoslav crisis the gender proportions were much more equal. A possible explanation for this could be that a lot of refugees from the Yugoslav crisis made use of relatives already living in the Netherlands to find their way into the country.⁹⁰ This was possible because of a substantial Yugoslav minority already living in the Netherlands since the 60s and 70s due to labour migration.⁹¹ The prior existence of a Yugoslav community cut out the need for the men to go ahead and claim asylum first. Furthermore, the Red Cross, the Dutch and Croat authorities cooperated in selecting who could come to the country: refugees came to the country on invitation after selection by the Croats.⁹² This selection process probably did favours for the gender proportions of the Yugoslav refugees. In the news items of the time the demographics that got the most attention are the women, children and the elderly however. Especially early on in the conflict, the images that got used most often were ones depicting said groups waiting around hopelessly in Bosnia for their evacuation to the Netherlands. Also the language used in the news bulletins emphasises that these refugees are 'the weakest of the weak' and in dire need of help.⁹³

3.4 Combatants as Refugees

When going through the NOS news bulletins from the Yugoslav war, a highly interesting news bulletin was found. A news item from the 5th of September 1992 shows a group of wounded, young to middle-aged men, reclining in hospital beds. When the voice-over starts up, it becomes clear that the wounded men pictured were in fact soldiers of the HOS, the Croatian armed forces, who were injured in combat and consequently are being hospitalized in the Netherlands.⁹⁴ Although little has been written about these wounded combatants who came to the Netherlands as refugees, a bit of information was found in a NRC newspaper article from around the same time. The article explains that the Croat authorities selected 300 Muslim

⁸⁹ Eurostat, *unaccompanied minors*, 2-4.

⁹⁰ <http://www.vijfeeuwenmigratie.nl/term/Vluchtelingen%20uit%20voormalig%20Joegoslavi%C3%AB/volledige-tekst> (31/05/2017)

⁹¹ Hessels, *Voormalig Joegoslaven*, 2.

⁹² NRC, "Moslim-Soldaten naar Nederland", *NRC-Handelsblad*, 1st of September 1992.

<https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/1992/09/01/moslim-soldaten-naar-nederland-7154546-a1157816> (01/06/17)

⁹³ NOS Journaal, 05-09-1992, Nr. 481586 B&G.

⁹⁴ NOS Journaal, 05-09-1992, Nr. 481587 B&G.

soldiers for asylum in the Netherlands, since they and their families were deemed to be at risk if they stayed in the conflict zone.⁹⁵ The wounded fighters in the NOS bulletin presumably made up a small part of this group. When interviewed it becomes clear that the soldiers themselves were unhappy about their evacuation and consequent asylum in the Netherlands: they say that they would have preferred to stay in Croatia to fight.⁹⁶

This taking in of combatants as asylum seekers isn't an isolated incident. Later in the same year, on the 19th of September 1992 the NOS mentions that another group of asylum seekers arriving in the country consists of 'women, children and wounded soldiers'.⁹⁷ The exact size of this group of refugees isn't mentioned in the bulletin. A third instance of former soldiers being given asylum occurred around December 1992, when the NOS reports on a group of Bosnian soldiers who were being given asylum in the Netherlands after being freed from the Serbian concentration camp Trnopolje.

Even though the perspective represented at the time by the NOS was a humanitarian one, in which the combatants were victims in need of help, it is possible to add some annotations and question marks to the issue of taking in combatants. From all sources it becomes clear that the soldiers that were sent for asylum in the Netherlands by the Croat authorities were mostly ethnic Bosnians serving in the Croat armed forces.⁹⁸ Whilst there were good humanitarian arguments for evacuating ethnic Bosnians at the time, an important factor to consider is the fact that the newly independent Croats went to war with Bosnia Herzegovina in 1992 in support local ethnic Croats.⁹⁹ Croat militias and armed forces started to expel ethnic Bosnians from their ranks as the conflict in Bosnia Herzegovina started to heat up.¹⁰⁰ In this light, the asylum extended to the wounded ethnic Bosnian fighters of the HOS takes on a different dimension: were they selected for asylum in the Netherlands by the Croat authorities in order to purge the HOS of non-Croat elements or simply because they were at serious risk if they stayed in the conflict zone?

In spite of these possibly problematic dimensions, the NOS does not allocate any attention to the background of these issues. The wounded combatants are put in the same category as the other asylum seekers coming to the Netherlands; they were simply wounded

⁹⁵ NRC, "Moslim-Soldaten naar Nederland" *NRC-Handelsblad*, 1st of September 1992.

<https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/1992/09/01/moslim-soldaten-naar-nederland-7154546-a1157816> (01/06/17)

⁹⁶ NOS Journaal, 05-09-1992, Nr. 481587 B&G.

⁹⁷ NOS Journaal, 06-09-1992, Nr. 481585 B&G.

⁹⁸ NRC, "Moslim-Soldaten naar Nederland"

⁹⁹ Gail Harmon, *War in the Former Yugoslavia: Ethnic Conflict of Power Politics* (Boston 2007) 167.

¹⁰⁰ Reneo Lukic and Allen Lynch, *Europe from the Balkans to the Urals: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union* (1996) 212.

soldiers in need of care. Whether they wanted to be here or not. This attitude towards combatants as asylum seekers has changed over the years leading up to the European refugee crisis. Due to the nature of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq there is a fear of war criminals and radical Islamic terrorist belonging to organisations such as ISIS who would employ the refugees as a cover for entry into EU countries.¹⁰¹ The NOS does not give a lot of attention to the subject of possible jihadist travelling to the EU as asylum seekers in the examined period. There was just one news item, aired on the 24th of September, dealing with this issue. The bulletin concerns a statement released by the Dutch intelligence service, the AIVD, stating that there are no indications of jihadists arriving in the Netherlands posing as refugees.¹⁰² In a news item released on the 23rd of October, concerns are raised about the possibility of war criminals coming into the country as asylum seekers, and the difficulty in finding them out.¹⁰³ Overall, the NOS dedicates little attention to the possibility of combatants coming to the EU as refugees, with just two items on the topic in the period of analysis. A possible reason for this is that at the time, the single biggest terrorist attack in Europe in 2015, the Bataclan attack on November 13th in France, was yet to take place. Since no major attack had taken place yet, the issue wasn't in the forefront of attention. Further indication of this is the fact that more NOS attention went out to the issue after the Bataclan attack took place, with increased reporting on the possible danger of Jihadist travelling disguised as refugees.

Conclusion

The chapter above shows that there were large differences in the amount of coverage the two crises received, with the current refugee crisis getting much more attention than the Yugoslav crisis at the time. This disparity was explained by comparing the absolute amount of refugees that came into the Netherlands because of the crises, and taking into account the changes that the media landscape went through in the intervening years. Next, the countries of origin and nationalities represented in the two crises were also compared. It quickly became clear that there are serious difficulties in assigning nationalities to refugees from the Yugoslav conflicts due to the nature of the war. The NOS countered these problems by sidestepping the issue of nationality, instead they chose to identify refugees by their general area of origin. The situation is different with the European refugee crisis: although the largest national groups coming to the Netherlands are Syrians, Eritreans and Afghans, there are over 42 different nationalities

¹⁰¹ AIVD, *Jaarverslag 2015*, 14-15.

¹⁰² NOS Journaal, 24-09-2015, Nr. 5275095 B&G.

¹⁰³ NOS Journaal, 13-10-2015, Nr. 5296314 B&G.

represented in the refugee stream as a whole. Because of these clearer countries of origin, the NOS was able to mention nationalities more explicitly in its news broadcasts. The issue of demographics were less confused, with the NOS creating content that broadly reflected the situation as reported by statistical agencies in both cases. The one side note in this case being the lack of mention of the unattended minors coming to Europe in record numbers. The treatment of combatants as refugees is more diverse. During the Yugoslav wars, the NOS devotes a decent amount of attention on wounded or threatened soldiers who were given asylum in the Netherlands. In the later period of analysis the possibility of combatants coming to the country as refugees is barely brought up by the NOS in their broadcasts.

4 The Dutch Domestic Response

Among the analysed news bulletins on the European refugee crisis, there are a great many dealing in part with the public reaction to the arrival of refugees in the Netherlands. It is interesting to note that 94 out of the total of 163 news items (58%) can be considered negative in tone. News items were deemed to be negative in coverage when its contents dealt with: protests and otherwise negative reactions by the public, refugees objecting to their treatment, discord in parliament and other wider European disagreements. Within this large body of negative coverage, a large amount is framed as being a conflict, as they emphasize conflict between locals and refugees, civilians and the authorities, and between local and national authorities. When looking more specifically at the contents of these conflict frame news items, there were 24 items dealing specifically with citizens of municipalities objecting to the coming of refugees to their towns and villages, 23 dealing with shortages of spaces for refugees to stay, and 9 dealing with parliamentary discord. Further items dealt with issues such as violence within refugee centres against homosexuals, religious minorities, and general altercations between asylum seekers. Two items even discussed the need for screening refugees for dangerous diseases like tuberculosis, for fear of bringing them into the country.¹⁰⁴ As will be seen, the tone of coverage and the issues being discussed are vastly different from the reporting on the Yugoslav refugee crisis. This chapter will analyse the ways in which the NOS reporting on the two refugee crises itself differed by comparing the themes found within the coverage, the spokespeople given airtime and the terms used to describe the refugees coming to the Netherlands. Furthermore, a more in depth look will be taken at the reporting on events during the European refugee crisis in the Netherlands where municipality councils and residents resisted the coming of asylum seekers to their towns.

4.1 Themes of Coverage

A general analysis of the themes found in the news bulletins on the two refugee crises has been done in order to see which themes the NOS reported on in the two crises. The themes and method for the analysis are based on the UNHCR report titled: '*Press Coverages of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries*' by Mike Berry, Inaki Garcia-Blanco and Kerry Moore which appeared in 2015. A full list of the themes and their explanations can be found in the appendix. Although Berry et al analysed the themes of newspaper articles, I found their approach could also be readily applied to the NOS news bulletins on the two refugee crises. It should be noted that some news bulletins deal with more

¹⁰⁴ NOS Journaal, 23-10-2015, Nr. 5296314 and NOS Journaal, 27-10-2015, Nr. 5297758, B&G.

than one theme, it is for instance possible for an item to discuss the human rights issues surrounding the refugee crises and afterwards move on to what the political response to these issues is. This hypothetical item would therefore deal with both themes h) human rights, and k) Political response/policy. What became apparent after analysing the themes found within the news bulletins was an increase in variety of themes in NOS coverage on the European refugee crisis compared to the Yugoslav crisis. The majority of news items covering the Yugoslav crisis dealt with the humanitarian (61%) and aid supplies/resources (54%) themes. The humanitarian theme came up in many of the bulletins through giving attention to the plight asylum seekers either through direct interviews with them, or by devoting attention to the situation within refugee camps and asylum centres.¹⁰⁵ A large amount of items also fall within theme g) aid Supplies/resources, which deals with the provision of healthcare, food and shelter to asylum seekers upon arrival in the Netherlands. An example of a typical items dealing with both these themes was aired on the 5th of September 1992, the bulletin reports on a group of refugees arriving at an asylum centre in Luttelgeest and shows them going into the holiday bungalows in which they were being housed. The humanitarian aspect comes into play when the NOS reporter interviews some of the refugees, who state that they still can't believe that they are now in safety away from the horrors of war.¹⁰⁶

Theme	Percentage of coverage during the Yugoslav Crisis	Percentage of coverage during the European Refugee crisis
a) Immigration figures	33%	22,4%
b) Mortality	-	0,8%
c) Threat to national security	-	4,3%
d) Welfare/benefits/ resources:	-	3,4%
e) Threat to communities/ Cultural threat:	-	9,5%
f) Health risk for country of destination	-	1,6%
g) Aid Supplies/ resources	54%	41,4%
h) Human Rights	15%	1,6%
i) Migrant/ refugees/ asylum seekers success stories	-	-
j) Mafia/Traffic:	-	0,8%
k) Political response/Policy	38%	35,4%
l) Receiving / Rejecting:	-	8,6%
m) Post-arrival integration:	-	7,8%
n) Humanitarian	61%	13,8%
o) Crime:		6,9%
p) journey:	30%	3,4%

Table 1: NOS Themes of coverage during the Yugoslav and European refugee crisis.

When looking at table 1, it becomes clear that there are substantial differences between themes of coverage during the two crises. Although the majority of news items aired during the Yugoslav crisis have a humanitarian angle, this theme is much less common in the NOS coverage on the European refugee crisis, where just 13,8% of items dealt with the plights and experiences of refugees and asylum seekers. However, a related theme that was not covered

¹⁰⁵ NOS Journaal, 5-12-1992, Nr. 481896 B&G.

¹⁰⁶ NOS Journaal, 5-09-1992, Nr. 481586 B&G.

during the Yugoslav crisis that received attention in 2015 was post-arrival integration of asylum seekers into Dutch society. The NOS aired multiple items dealing with themes of integration, either through reporting on volunteers helping refugees integrate and giving them clothes¹⁰⁷ or in bulletins reporting on Asylum seekers learning Dutch.¹⁰⁸

Next to an increase of focus on the integration of refugees into Dutch society, themes dealing with refugees as a threat to national security, crime, and as a threat to communities/cultural threats have also become more prevalent. Taken together these themes appear in 20,7% of the news items on the European refugee crisis, while in the Yugoslav coverage these themes were not brought up at all by the NOS. The threat to communities/cultural threat theme came to the fore 11 times in coverage on the European refugee crisis, accounting for 9,5% of themes encountered. An item aired on the 10th of October 2015 for example talks about the worries of national and local Jewish organisations about an asylum centre opening up in a neighbourhood with a Jewish community in Amersfoort. The spokesperson for the Jewish organisation claimed that a part of the Syrian and Iraqi refugees which were to be housed in the neighbourhood are sure to be anti-Semitic due to their upbringing.¹⁰⁹ Another item dealing with the cultural threat theme reports on protests in Enschede on the 31st of October 2015, within the item protesters state that, among other things, refugees are a danger to Dutch society and should not be let into the country.¹¹⁰ A theme that was also not apparent in the NOS coverage of the Yugoslav crisis was theme o) Crime. The news reporting during the 90s makes no mention of the asylum seekers in relation to crime at all, whilst the European crisis coverage does contain news items where fears of war criminal coming into the country disguised as refugees are talked about.¹¹¹ This difference can in part be explained by the change in the public and political discourse that took place between the two refugee crises. In the early 2000s and 2010s the discourse became more anti-immigration and anti-Muslim in character, as seen in the first chapter when discussing the Dutch debate on refugees. The NOS also reports on instances where fights broke out within asylum centres on two separate occasions.¹¹² A theme that is conspicuously absent from the news items on both crises is that of migrant/refugees/asylum seekers success stories. In case of the European refugee crisis this might be explained by the fact that the analysed bulletins were are from the

¹⁰⁷ NOS Journaal, 4-9-2015, Nr. 5270084, B&G.

¹⁰⁸ NOS Journaal, 30-10-2015, Nr. 5298811, B&G.

¹⁰⁹ NOS Journaal, 12-10-2015, Nr. 5293678 B&G.

¹¹⁰ NOS Journaal, 31-10-2015, Nr. 5298954 B&G.

¹¹¹ NOS Journaal, 23-09-2015. Nr. 5274878, B&G.

¹¹² NOS Journaal, 30-09-2015, Nr. 5287556. B&G and NOS Journaal, 25-09-2015, Nr. 5278813 B&G.

early stages of the crisis, asylum seekers were just arriving into the country and were merely settling in, it was perhaps too early for success stories.

4.2 Spokespeople

Spokespeople are an important factor to consider when doing a media analysis. It is interesting to take note of who gets airtime to convey their viewpoint and message, and who don't. Spokespeople have the task of representing their organisation and the policies belonging to it, and their job often consists of trying to steer the public debate in their direction. Whoever is asked for comment about a particular issue within a news story has an impact on how that issue is portrayed to the public.¹¹³ With this in mind, a tally of spokespersons was undertaken. First four categories were determined: refugees, Dutch citizens, politicians and organisation/NGO representatives. Subsequently all news items were watched, and the spokespersons in the bulletins were simply counted and categorized. After the tally, it became clear that there was a substantial difference between spokespersons represented in the coverage on the two crises.

The most striking difference was the abundance of politicians represented in the NOS coverage on the European refugee crisis. Whilst during the Yugoslav crisis politicians accounted for 18% of the total spokespersons, this percentage was all the way up to 51% of the total during the European crisis. This growth in representation of politicians might be explained by the fact that the European refugee crisis is framed as being much more of a conflict between society and the politicians than was the case with the Yugoslav crisis (see below). While the politicians get a lot of air time relative to other groups, it should be noted that the NOS endeavours to maintain a balanced approach when it comes to airtime per political party. Although State Secretary of Justice Dijkhoff is represented 16 times in the news items, this amount of attention can be justified by his position as State Secretary of Justice. When prime minister Mark Rutte or other prominent politicians from parliament are on a news bulletin, the NOS takes care to also represent the other parties in the same items.¹¹⁴ That being said, the ruling parties of the VVD and the PvdA get the most attention, and the populist PVV also gets a larger than average amount of coverage. During the Yugoslav crisis there was much less of an emphasis on politicians as spokespersons. When they were shown in the news bulletins it was not in a capacity as a party member, but solely as minister of an involved ministry.¹¹⁵

Next to a different approach to politicians, another difference that can be noted is the representation of experts and representatives of NGO's like the Red Cross and

¹¹³ Douglas Gould and Co. *Writing a Media Analysis* (Washington 2004) 7.

¹¹⁴ NOS Journaal, 16-09-2015, Nr. 5273165 B&G.

¹¹⁵ NOS Journaal, 30-07-1992, Nr. 481638 B&G.

Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland. During the Yugoslav refugee crisis they made up about a third (32%) of the represented spokespersons involved in the bulletins, in the European crisis they made up less than a fifth of the people quoted (19%). In both the crises organisations were given airtime mostly when the news items was about charity events, such as giving out clothes and food to asylums seekers.¹¹⁶ Other instances when representatives of organisations were frequently brought on the NOS was when during the European crisis, there were severe housing shortages for the refugees.¹¹⁷

Next to a decrease in attention for organisations and experts, both the refugees and citizens saw their percentages of airtime drop in similar fashions. Refugees got 26% of the airtime in the 1990s while they received just 14% in the European refugee crisis. The same is true for civilians, whom went from 24% of airtime to 16% in 2015. It is however noteworthy that the messages conveyed by Dutch citizens shown on the NOS changed between the two crises. When there were private individuals represented in the bulletins during the Yugoslav crisis, they were all positive or supportive towards the refugees, sometimes even to such a degree that they wanted to host refugees in their own homes.¹¹⁸ This stands in stark contrast with the public reaction portrayed by the NOS during the European refugee crisis. The range of views expressed in the bulletins by the public are more varied than was the case during the Yugoslav Crisis. Supporters and opponents of asylum seekers coming to the Netherlands both receive air time, with supporters mostly shown in items relating to the opening of new asylum centres, and opponents get airtime when there are demonstrations and town hall meetings.

Even though both of the crises are labelled as being ‘refugee crises’, the refugees themselves receive only a small amount of the allotted airtime in the NOS bulletins compared to the Dutch spokespeople and public. The changed media landscape might have something to do with this: with the increased competition from commercial and regional channels, and changing demographics the NOS seeks to keep the Dutch public engaged by airing more items representing them in the news. This could be part of what linguist Martin Montgomery deems a shift in the presentational style of television news.¹¹⁹ Montgomery, drawing on the work of fellow linguists, writes that news broadcasts have become more personal in their way of communicating, and have gone from a man in a suit reading out the day’s events to a much more conversational style of news reporting which tries to keep the audience more in mind and

¹¹⁶ NOS journaal, 14-09-2015, Nr. 5272437 B&G.

¹¹⁷ NOS Journaal, 07-10-2015, Nr. 5292553 B&G.

¹¹⁸ NOS Journaal, 19-07-1994, Nr. 481639 B&G.

¹¹⁹ Martin Montgomery, *The Discourse of Broadcast News, A linguistic approach* (New York 2007) 200.

tries to involve multiple points of view¹²⁰ This so-called conversationalisation of news broadcasts can explain the large increase in airtime that politicians got between the two refugee crises, as the NOS felt the need to represent a broad range of viewpoints in times of heated political debate surrounding immigration during and before the European refugee crisis.

4.3 Civil Disobedience and Frames

A major difference in NOS coverage between the Yugoslav and European refugee crises is the amount of attention given to instances of civil disobedience and protest against the coming of asylum seekers during the European refugee crisis. This topic was not covered by the NOS during the Yugoslav crisis. During the 2015 European refugee crisis a lot of attention and airtime was devoted to instances where citizens demonstrated against the establishment of new asylum centres in their neighbourhoods or towns.

The first such occurrence happened in the municipality of Zeewolde in early September 2015. The mayor's council had provided for an open information evening to inform citizens about the soon to be opened asylum centre, and allow for them to ask questions. A group of citizens of Zeewolde organised themselves into a group opposed to the opening of an asylum centre in their area called 'AZC-Alert' and voiced their disagreement against the plan.¹²¹ Furthermore, because the municipality did not restrict the information evening to the citizens of the municipality, Dutch politician Geert Wilders, of the Eurosceptic, anti-immigration PVV, came to the information evening in order to ask the citizens of Zeewolde to resist the coming of the refugee centre. Next to Wilders, Tunahan Kuzu of the progressive DENK party also came to Zeewolde to speak in support of the asylum centre.¹²² He was however not mentioned in NOS bulletins at the time. Overall the proceedings of the Zeewolde information evening were quite orderly in nature, and despite the objections of some of the locals and Wilders the asylum centre with a total capacity of 600 was opened in early 2016¹²³

Although the Zeewolde information evening in early September proceeded in an orderly fashion, as the crisis was reaching its height similar conferences in other towns were more chaotic and heated. Towards the end of September, residents of Purmerend were starting to mobilize against government plans that called for the rich municipality to provide 120 refugees with emergency housing in a soon to be constructed asylum centre. Protests at a public council

¹²⁰ Montgomery, *Broadcast News* 220.

¹²¹ NOS Journaal, 03-09-2015, Nr. 5269776 B&G.

¹²²NOS, *Wilders roept op tot verzet tegen asielzoekerscentrum Zeewolde* (03/09/2015)
<http://nos.nl/artikel/2055787-wilders-roept-op-tot-verzet-tegen-asielzoekerscentrum-zeewolde.html>

¹²³ NOS, *Na de weerstand bij AZC Zeewolde volgt vandaag de gastvrijheid* (24/09/2015)
<http://nos.nl/artikel/2134215-na-de-weerstand-bij-azc-zeewolde-volgt-vandaag-de-gastvrijheid.html>

meeting escalated to such a degree that the police had to intervene and break up the protesters.¹²⁴ In the following days, protests both for and against the refugee centre continued, and Geert Wilders again made an appearance in support of the side opposing the centre. Eventually, on the 10th of October the council decided against opening up a refugee centre in Purmerend, with councilmembers saying that they felt the need to listen to the residents protesting against the centre.¹²⁵ Interestingly, the council approved the idea of researching the idea of local smaller scale accommodation of some 200 refugees. Although the information meeting in Zeewolde in early September was the first of its kind covered by the NOS, the events in Purmerend were much more extensively covered. A total of two items were made about the events in Zeewolde, whilst the Purmerend received five bulletins. The larger amount of attention might be explained by the fact that the refugee crisis was at a much more severe level at the time of the events in Purmerend. On top of that, the affairs in Zeewolde proceeded more orderly than those in Purmerend, where the atmosphere was much more heated.

The NOS coverage of the events in Purmerend are somewhat typical when it comes to the reporting on protests against asylum centres in the period of study. Although newspaper articles from the same period covering the same protests usually mention there also being counter demonstrations welcoming refugees, most of the NOS attention goes out to the people protesting against the asylum centres and the authorities' response to them. As the crisis dragged on there were many more instances of people protesting against (planned) refugee centres in their neighbourhoods on which the NOS reported. Out of all the instances of protest covered by the NOS, none received as much attention as the events that unfolded in the small community of Oranje in the province of Drenthe. In September of 2014 the village of Oranje with around 140 inhabitants is asked by the government to house 1400 asylum seekers in the local, vacant, vacation village.¹²⁶ The owner of the vacation village quickly agreed, taking in the refugees meant the government would pay rent for the entire complex for a three year period, making it instantly profitable again. In spite of this economic gain, the local population quickly grows resentful of the asylum seekers housed in Oranje. There were many instances in which there were mutual annoyances between the locals and the newcomers, and before long the mayor of Oranje decides to cap the amount of asylum seekers at 700.¹²⁷ The trouble, and

¹²⁴ Laura Klompenhouwer, "Purmerend wijst permanent asielzoekerscentrum af", *NRC-Handelsblad*, 12 oktober 2015.

¹²⁵ NOS, *Raad Purmerend stemt tegen asielzoekerscentrum* (12/10/2015)

¹²⁶ Just Fontein, "Hoe minidorp Oranje uitgroeide tot omstreden opvangcentrum", *De Volkskrant*, 7 oktober 2015.

¹²⁷ Fontein, "Hoe minidorp Oranje uitgroeide tot omstreden opvangcentrum".

NOS attention, started in early October 2015 when the authorities under Secretary of State Klaas Dijkhoff decide to transfer another 700 refugees to the vacant spaces they hired in Oranje. Upon hearing this, the mayor of Oranje tells the Secretary of State to come down to Oranje himself in order to explain his decision to the inhabitants.¹²⁸ Unfortunately, Dijkhof's explanation failed to appease the outraged civilians, and he was forced to flee the scene whilst the local citizens harassed his car.¹²⁹

Overall, the NOS coverage of the situation in Oranje is an excellent example of how the conflict frame is applied to the events surrounding the European refugee crisis. The NOS bulletins focus on the reaction of the inhabitants of Oranje and Secretary of State Dijkhof to the unfolding crisis, and how the two parties strongly disagree with each other. For one thing, something that keeps being brought up in the earlier news items is the early agreement between the authorities and the owner of the vacation village in Oranje to take in 1400 refugees, which was later set to just 700. The image is created as if Dijkgraaf reneged on his word that there were only going to be 700 instead of 1400 asylum seekers in Oranje, this image was often accompanied by outraged civilians from Oranje who felt betrayed and cheated. There is a clear conflict frame being applied to the situation between the authorities and the locals.

Another clear instance of conflict that was reported on were events that unfolded in Woerden in the middle of October 2015. In the evening of the 9th of October, a group of 20 men stormed a sports centre that was being used as temporary housing unit for 148 asylum seekers awaiting placement in proper asylum centres. Even though the men didn't manage to gain entrance into the sports centre, they threw fireworks, eggs and shouted insults outside of the centre before being broken up by police.¹³⁰ Interestingly the approach taken in the television coverage of the incident by the NOS fits more into a Human Interest frame than in a conflict frame. Woerden received a total of 3 news bulletins, with one short report on the incident itself, in which the voice-over informs the viewer of what happened on the night itself.¹³¹ The following two items focus more on the human impact that the storming of the asylum centre had on the people living in Woerden. With various people being asked their opinion and reaction to the event, in this coverage an interesting spread of opinion is shown. In one item the NOS asks people on the street how they feel about the event, with some condemning the assault, saying they are ashamed of their town, and others calling it an instance of 'logical resistance'

¹²⁸ NOS Journaal, 06-10-2015, nr. 5289175 B&G.

¹²⁹ NOS Journaal, 07-10-2015, nr. 5290158 B&G.

¹³⁰ NOS, *Elf Mannen opgepakt na bestorming Woerden*, <http://nos.nl/artikel/2062272-elf-mannen-opgepakt-na-bestorming-woerden.html> (13-06-15)

¹³¹ NOS Journaal, 10-10-2015, Nr. 5293206 B&G.

or mere mischief.¹³² In interviewing the people on the street and the local politicians with a broad spectrum of views on the matter, the NOS focusses more on the public reaction than the event itself, giving it a human face and an emotional angle.¹³³ It should also be noted that not a single refugee from the centre that got assaulted was interviewed by the NOS.

The largely negative coverage of the NOS does not mean that the NOS does not report on counter demonstrations or people welcoming refugees. But when it does report on these positive movements, they do so in separate bulletins, and less frequently or extensively than on the demonstrations against the asylum centres. It should be noted that a mere total of 15 news items produced by the NOS in this period cover positive events or reactions, representing just over 9% of all coverage. On top of that, most of these items were aired in August and mid-September, before the high point of the crisis in October. The most encountered frame in the coverage of positive movements regarding refugees is the human interest frame, as supporters and asylum seekers themselves are interviewed directly in order to give their views of the situation.

When it comes to the frames encountered in the coverage of the Yugoslav refugee crisis, a difference in approach quickly becomes apparent. Whilst the European refugee crisis was framed mostly as a conflict between unhappy civilians and the authorities, the Yugoslav crisis is framed more in the human interest and responsibility frames. In bulletins dealing with the arrival of refugees in the Netherlands, the items often include interviews with the asylum seekers themselves and people belonging to the organizations supportive of their coming. Out of a total of 30 news items concerning the Yugoslav refugees, roughly a 28% have refugees being directly interviewed within the bulletins, giving the coverage more of a human interest angle. Furthermore there is not a single news bulletin from the Yugoslav crisis that shows any sign of domestic unrest with regards to the coming of refugees to the country, while there were so many in the European crisis. The one news bulletin that does deal with the domestic response from the Yugoslav crisis, is a piece about people who want to take refugees into their own homes in order to give them asylum.¹³⁴

When the conflict at the root of the crisis is covered in the news, two frames are applied, the first of these is the human interest frame. The human cost of the conflict is made apparent by the emphasis on the displaced people within Yugoslavia, who are in desperate need of

¹³² NOS Journaal, 21-10-2015, Nr.. 5295817 B&G

¹³³ Holli A. Semetko and Patti M. Valkenburg *Framing in European Politics: a Content Analysis of Pres and Television News* (2000) 4.

¹³⁴ NOS Journaal, 29-07-1992, Nr. 481639 B&G.

asylum an help due to the conflict.¹³⁵ Blame or responsibility for the conflict is also squarely placed at the feet of the Serbians, with them being portrayed as the aggressors and perpetrators of ethnic violence in the news items.¹³⁶ This responsibility frame also finds its way into the NOS items in a less explicit way: in several items reporting on Bosnian asylum seekers coming to the Netherlands, the NOS explains that many of these refugees were liberated from prison camps in which ethnic cleansing and genocide was taking place at the time.¹³⁷ The refugees were victims of Serb brutality and deserved a safe haven in the Netherlands for the duration of the conflict.

Conclusion

There are clear differences in the reporting of the NOS on the two refugee crises. Although themes of coverage dealing with the providing of aid and shelter to the refugees were prevalent in the bulletins of both the crises, a larger emphasis was placed on concerns surrounding threats to national security, crime and culture the refugees supposedly posed in the NOS coverage of the European crisis. On the other hand, there was also more attention going out to the process of integrating the asylum seekers into Dutch society in the latter refugee crisis. Something that was conspicuously absent in both was the theme of refugee success stories. Next to the themes covered by the NOS, there was also a noticeable difference in the spokespeople employed to be seen. Although both citizens and the refugees themselves received less airtime in the European crisis compared to the Yugoslav one, politicians saw a sharp increase in the amount on airtime allocated to them. When politicians received airtime during the Yugoslav refugee crisis, they were interviewed solely in their function of being the relevant minister dealing directly with the issue at hand. Years later, politicians are employed as spokespeople much more often in the NOS coverage of the European refugee crisis, not merely the ministers get a say but nearly the entire political spectrum receives airtime in the analysed news bulletins.

A matter that stood out in the NOS' bulletins dealing with the European refugee crisis was the large amount of attention that went out to instances of civil disobedience against the coming of asylum centres, a topic which was entirely absent during the Yugoslav crisis. In its coverage of the civil disobedience in places such as Woerden and Oranje, the NOS made frequent use of the conflict frame which emphasized conflict between individuals or groups of citizens and the state authorities as a means of capturing audience interest. On the other hand,

¹³⁵ NOS Journaal, 19-08-1992, Nr. 481614 B&G.

¹³⁶ NOS Journaal, 07-03-1998, Nr. 99794 B&G.

¹³⁷ NOS Journaal, 11-08-1992, Nr. 960737 B&G.

the frame most often encountered in the bulletins dealing with the Yugoslav crisis are the human interest and responsibility frames. The responsibility frame presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for its cause or solution to either the government, an individual or a group, and in the case of the Yugoslav coverage, the responsibility was often placed at the feet of the Serbians. The human interest frame was also prevalent by the interest given to the plight of the asylum seekers.

5. Conclusion

The main objective of this thesis was to analyse the NOS news coverage of the Yugoslav and European refugee crises and compare them to one another. In doing so, the origins of the conflicts at the root of the refugee crises were discussed together with the history of refugees coming to the Netherlands in order to have a better understanding of the crises and their historical context. Having established the historical background, the general characteristics of the two crises and how the NOS reported on them were discussed. Issues such as the depiction of different demographic groups, nationalities and amount of individual news bulletins per crisis received attention. The thesis also sought to analyse which themes were covered by the NOS during the two crises, as well as who got airtime as a spokesperson and which frames were encountered within the bulletins. Further attention was also given to how instances of civil disobedience were reported on by the NOS.

5.1 Main Findings

There are clear differences to be found in the way the NOS covered the Yugoslav refugee crisis in the 1990s and the way in which it covered the European refugee crisis between August and November of 2015. First of all, during the course of the entire Yugoslav refugee crisis the NOS produced a substantially smaller amount of news bulletins on the subject than was the case at the high point of the European refugee crisis. This difference in the amount of unique news items could be explained by the change that the media underwent in the intervening years between the two crises. During the 1990s the NOS televised just two broadcasts per day, which stands in sharp contrast with the 7 broadcasts a day in 2015. Next to an increase of available airtime that could be dedicated to the latter crisis, the amount of refugees seeking asylum within the Netherlands was also considerably larger. 76,000 people sought asylum in the Netherlands over the course of the Yugoslav wars in comparison to 58,880 asylum seekers in 2015 alone, with around half of that amount arriving in the country during the analysed period of August until November 2015. This difference in scale taken together with the changed media landscape explain the difference in media attention between the two crises.

Variation was also encountered in the way the issue of the nationality of refugees was approached. During the Yugoslav wars the issue was mostly avoided by instead of tying the refugees to a certain nationality, the broadcasters usually described the region where the refugees hailed from. So instead of saying ‘these are Bosnian refugees’, the NOS used phrases like ‘these refugees hail from the region of Bosnia’. This was done because the situation on the ground during the Yugoslav crisis was highly confusing, and there were considerable difficulties ascribing nationalities to a group of people fleeing Yugoslavia at the time. At the

same time, the issue of nationality in the European refugee crisis was also far from uncomplicated for different reasons. In NOS news items, the nationality of refugees is only mentioned if the bulletin deals with a small groups of, or individual asylum seekers whose nationalities can be established with certainty. Bulletins dealing with larger groups of refugees tend to not mention nationalities, as the wide variety of different nationalities found within the larger groups of refugees complicated accurate reporting on the matter.

Further differences were encountered in NOS reporting on the demographic make-up of the asylum seekers coming to the Netherlands. During the European refugee crisis the majority of asylum seekers coming to the Netherlands in 2015 were male, something which is reflected in the NOS reporting at the time. Meanwhile the demographic spread during the Yugoslav crisis was much more even. In spite of this the majority of NOS items made from the early part of the crisis dedicate most of the attention to women, children and the elderly. Notably absent from NOS news coverage were unaccompanied minors, whom did not receive any mention despite being a substantial part of the refugees coming to the country in 2015. The themes covered by the NOS in its reporting on the two refugee crises also differs, in the European refugee crisis a greater emphasis was placed on themes such as threats to national security, crime, and threat to culture that the asylum seekers supposedly posed than was the case in the Yugoslav coverage. At the same time however, there were also more news items dealing with themes of integrating asylum seekers into Dutch society than in the Yugoslav coverage. One of the most prevalent themes in both crises was the providing of aid and shelter to the asylum seekers coming in, this theme usually came to the fore by devoting attention to the arrival of refugees to their (temporary) asylum centres. Another constant theme found in both crises' coverage was the political aspect, although the coverages of this theme differed in their make-up. The bulletins from the Yugoslav period dealing more with politics at the ministerial level and the European crisis bulletins portray the views and opinions of the wider political spectrum.

When it comes to the matter of spokespeople given airtime by the NOS there were further differences to be seen. Although both citizens and the refugees themselves received less airtime in the European crisis compared to the Yugoslav crisis, politicians saw a sharp increase in the amount on airtime allocated to them, going from 18% in the Yugoslav coverage all the way to 51% in the European crisis. As mentioned, politicians received airtime during the Yugoslav refugee crisis within their capacity as relevant minister dealing directly with the issue at hand whilst in the later European crisis the NOS endeavoured to portray the much wider political spectrum by giving airtime to most of the major parties found within parliament. The other categories of spokespeople identified (citizens, refugees and experts/NGOs) saw their

airtime decline as a result of this large increase of attention for politicians. The group that was hit the hardest by this development were the experts and NGO representatives, who went from being represented in 32% of news items in the Yugoslav coverage to just 19% in the European crisis coverage.

When it comes to the frames encountered in the coverage of the two refugee crises, additional disparities become clear. The European refugee crisis was framed mostly as a conflict between Dutch citizens and the authorities. The NOS devoted a lot of attention to instances where citizens spoke up against the opening of asylum centres in their municipalities, as the reporting on such occurrences in places like Oranje and Purmerend shows. The Yugoslav crisis is framed more in the human interest and responsibility frames by the NOS. This becomes apparent through the many items including interviews with refugees and people working for organisations supporting their coming in, these interviews help give the coverage a more human interest oriented angle. The responsibility frame finds its way into the NOS reporting on the Yugoslavian refugees by emphasising the human cost of the conflict and the plight of the refugees coming to the Netherlands. Furthermore there is not a single news bulletin from the Yugoslav crisis that shows any sign of domestic unrest with regards to the coming of refugees to the country.

5.2 Wider Relevance

Based upon the findings, it is clear that there are differences in the way the NOS reported on the Yugoslav and European refugee crises. In the author's opinion these differences can be explained by looking at developments the NOS went through in its reporting style, and the changing political landscape in the Netherlands in general. Between the two crises, the NOS changed its style from reporting almost exclusively on official agendas, politicians and institutions to a more public minded and relatable approach. More attention was dedicated to the concerns of citizens and more airtime was also dedicated to illustrating the various political viewpoints. The change that took place in the Dutch political landscape with the rise of figures such as Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders also changed the debate surrounding the coming of immigrants and refugees to the Netherlands. They brought the view that the Netherlands are threatened by mass-immigration of people from predominantly Muslim countries to the political mainstream.

Both of these developments are clearly visible in the NOS reporting on the European refugee crisis, with the NOS taking care to represent as many parties of the political spectrum as possible and devoting attention to instances where citizens protested the coming of refugees. The NOS has moved away from the more official style of reporting on the Yugoslav wars with

its focus for the government's response to a more public driven style during the European refugee crisis. This thesis has shed some light on an interesting and relevant subject, but the subject is still very much open for further analysis. Due to the limited scope of this thesis, it was not possible to analyse and investigate all the NOS news bulletins of the entire European refugee crisis due to the sheer amount of them, something which would have allowed for a more complete image of the NOS reporting on the matter. Subsequent research should therefore aim to include all of the sources on the European refugee crisis to gain a complete understanding and allow for more in depth comparison.

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Appendix : Themes of coverage

- a) Immigration figures/levels:** Mention/discussion of immigration figures or levels
- b) Mortality/Mortality figures:** Mention/discussion of mortality of migrants (including mortality figures)
- c) Threat to national security:** Mention/discussion of any threats to national security (understood as the security of the state, not the safety of individuals). Includes any mention to terrorist threats/attacks
- d) Welfare/benefits/resources:** Any mention/discussion of the benefits/welfare system. Includes mentions of the impact migrants have on welfare, benefit abuse, and the pressure over social/health services. It also includes mentions to the ‘call effect’/‘pull factor’ the benefits system may have upon potential migrants
- e) Threat to communities/Cultural threat:** Mention/discussion of any threats to the cultural identity or cultural homogeneity of a country or area. Includes religious and linguistic diversity.
- f) Health risk for country of destination:** Mention/discussion of increased health risks due to migrants carrying health problems with them (i.e., Ebola) or the items they carry with them (i.e. unauthorised food)
- g) Search and Rescue/Aid Supplies:** Mention/discussion of search and rescue operations, and the provision of healthcare, food and shelter to migrants on arrival.
- h) Human Rights:** Mention/discussion of the Human Rights of migrants. Includes abstract discussions, and also discussions focussing on particular individuals or groups. Explicit mention to particular rights (such as the right to claim asylum, right to public relief and assistance, right to access the courts...) or including the words ‘Human Rights’ in relation to migrants is required.
- i) Migrant/refugees/asylum seekers success stories:** Mention / discussion of stories which focus on achievements of migrants (studying an academic degree, succeeding as a professional, obtaining a prize...). Presents individual migrants under a positive light. The integration of migrants in the society of destination is not considered to be an achievement in itself. Obtaining a residence permit, or a judicial/administrative victory over the country of destination should not be considered an achievement either.
- j) Mafia/Traffic:** Mention/discussion of cases of human trafficking or mafia. Any unlawful profiteering from migrants should be coded under this category.
- k) Political response/Policy:** Refers to any political response, including policy debates. The implementation of search and rescue policy or the provision of aid should be coded under category g (above), as opposed to this category, which should be used in more general policy debates. The day to day actions of rescue teams must be coded under category g too. Please identify any solutions proposed in the coverage (variable 13).
- l) Receiving / Rejecting:** This theme refers exclusively to the admission and rejection of migrants to a specific country. It includes deportation. It does not deal with the principles inspiring the reception or rejection (which belong under category k), nor with the provision of care, food and shelter upon arrival (which belong under category g).
- m) Post-arrival integration:** This theme refers to the integration of migrants in the communities of the country of destination. It may have cultural, civic, political, linguistic and job-market aspects. It also includes any discussion of the benefits (civic/economic/cultural) migration brings to communities in the countries of destination. This theme presents migrants under a positive light.
- n) Humanitarian (elements):** This theme focuses on the suffering of migrants, and presents them under a sympathetic/empathetic light, and/or presenting migrants as victims. This theme is applicable when there is a small number of brief mentions of migrants as victims or suffering

o) Crime: This theme refers to crimes committed by migrants in the countries of destination. It includes mentions/discussion of crime levels in countries of destination. For stories to be coded under this theme, an explicit mention of migrants as criminals must be made. The trafficking of human lives should be coded under category j (above) as opposed to this category.