Consonance and Diversity of Voices and Viewpoints:
A New Paradigm to Study Actors' Cumulative Influence
on Viewpoints in Immigration News

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Social groups debating contested issues aim to talk in the media to convey their opinions. The extent to which their voices trigger the presence of their views in the news can be evaluated through the analysis of consonance, which is the co-occurrence, in the same news item, of an actor's voice and her/his preferred viewpoint on the debated topic. However, consonance must be analyzed with diversity to pinpoint which speakers actually get the chance to convey their views. In this study, consonance and diversity were investigated in the context of newspaper coverage of immigration in Belgium, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom (2013–2014). The results show that national authorities, immigrants, proimmigration nongovernmental organizations, and radical right-wing politicians have the potential to trigger their preferred views on immigration when talking in the news, but it is authorities who mostly get the chance to speak and put forward their favorite viewpoints.

Keywords: content analysis, news voices, content diversity, immigration news, journalism

Complex social phenomena, especially when they are salient and politically relevant, are contested in the mediatized public arena by a large array of social actors who aim to promote their preferred views on the issue under discussion (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002; Hänggli, 2012; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2016). Social groups' hunger for media attention, thus, is not just a matter of visibility: They want to talk in the news to convey their opinions to the public. Actors talking in the media might express viewpoints directly in their quotes (see Benson & Wood, 2015; Ferree et al., 2002). However, as observed by Benson and Wood (2015), their statements often do not include any opinion: Does it mean, then, that they do not have anything to say? Contrarily, as the Benson and Wood claim, the presence of actors' "opinionless" statements can have an indirect impact on the presence of viewpoints in the news. I argue that this indirect influence is enabled when an actor's quotes are presented in the same news item with his or her preferred viewpoints, that is, with arguments and ideas that reflect the actor's position on the issue under discussion.

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But to what extent do actors succeed in being quoted along with their own viewpoints in the news content? My main goal in this article is to systematically examine the co-occurrence of voices with their preferred viewpoints, which I define as *consonance*, by measuring the extent to which actors' quotes and viewpoints that reflect their typical position on a debated topic are simultaneously present in the same news item. In this study, I focused on the newspaper coverage of the relevant and socially contested issue of immigration in Belgium, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom (2013–2014) as a generalizable case to investigate consonance between the presence of voices and viewpoints in the content. In these four countries, the news coverage of immigration shares similar characteristics in terms of voices and viewpoints that participate in the mediated debate on immigration. Starting from the assumption that the same group of actors in different countries will have the same position on immigration—which they will try to put forward in the media—the purpose of this study was not to compare consonance across countries. In other words, this was not a comparative study on consonance, but an investigation of consonance in European news on immigration.

However, the analysis of consonance needs to be integrated with the investigation of diversity, which reveals how many and which voices get the chance to coexist in the news with the speakers' preferred viewpoints. To this purpose, I explore the interplay between consonance and diversity, showing that consonance coupled with low levels of diversity result in an "oligopoly" of a limited number of voices and a small range of viewpoints presented to the audience.

The article proceeds as follows. After reviewing previous studies on the influence of actors' voices on the viewpoints represented in the news, I formulate hypotheses on consonance between the presence of key voices and viewpoints in immigration news. Then, expectations on the interplay between consonance and diversity of voices and viewpoints are set. Finally, after outlining the methodology of the study, I present and discuss the findings.

Actors' Success in Setting Viewpoints in the News: A New Paradigm for Evaluation

Drawing on the constructivist approach that has been adopted by Gamson (Gamson, 1988; Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989), we know that social actors aim to shape the perception of reality by making their interpretations visible in the public sphere. Nowadays, as observed by a number of scholars (e.g., Beyeler & Kriesi, 2005; Kepplinger & Lemke, 2016), the flow of information between social groups and the audience is mostly mediated by the media, which can act as a channel for actors' spreading of ideas (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001). By giving visibility to their claims, news media allow actors to directly express viewpoints in the news. Although the reporting of their actions might also play a key role in the construction of meaning, the presence of actors' statements in the reporting—in the form of direct and indirect quotes—is of crucial importance to convey their opinions to the audience. Previous studies have tracked the link between voices and viewpoints. Benson and Wood (2015) shed light on "who says what" in the coverage of immigration in the United States, Norway, and France (2011–2012). Similarly, Ferree and colleagues (2002) pinpoint the connection between speakers and frames in news about abortion in Germany and the United States. Likewise, studies that follow the method of political claims

analysis (Koopmans & Statham, 1999) focus on the direct verbal expression of political opinions by social groups.

Nonetheless, Benson and Wood (2015) observe that actors' voice in the news can also have an indirect effect on the presence of viewpoints. Even when quotes do not include any opinion, they can still trigger the presence of actors' preferred viewpoints. As Benson and Wood note, actors' views "may be paraphrased through the journalistic voice, or might subtly shape the themes, frames, or word choice of reporters" (p. 805). Therefore, it does not matter whether speakers in the news express views in a direct or indirect way: They succeed in putting forward their opinions when the presence of their quotes ensures the presence of their favorite viewpoints. I argue that actors' successful influence on viewpoints manifests itself in the content in the form of consonance, which is the co-occurrence of actors' voices and their favorite viewpoints in the same news item.

To evaluate actors' success in putting forward their preferred viewpoints on immigration in the news, this study focused on a range of key actors participating in the mediatized immigration debate, as well as on a range of recurring views on the issue, and examined the extent to which the presence of actors' voices goes together with the presence of the viewpoint that reflects their position on immigration in the same news item.

Voices and Viewpoints in the News Coverage of Immigration

Besides being an increasingly salient topic in the public agenda of many Western countries, immigration is a "multifaceted and complex" issue (Benson, 2009, p. 403), open to different interpretations and evaluations and usually debated by a wide range of social actors (Branton & Dunaway, 2009). Concerning news voices, this study focused on four social groups that have a major stake in the national immigration debate. First, there are no doubts that immigrants are the "protagonists" of the immigration topic, as they are those who migrate. Second, as noted by Cuttitta (2014), a crucial role is played by state authorities, in the form of governmental, judicial, police, and military actors, in that they set the rules on immigration and guarantee their enforcement. Third, in the context of a highly contested and politicized public debate on immigration (Ihlen, Figenschou, & Larsen, 2015), there are actors who advocate in favor or against immigration. Whereas the raison d'être of proimmigration nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) is to take the side of immigrants, radical right-wing political parties, especially in Europe, traditionally fulfill the opposing role of anti-immigration advocates (Benson, 2013). Indeed, studies on the news coverage of immigration demonstrate that these four groups are among the most prominent speakers in the news (Benson, 2013; Benson & Wood, 2015; De Swert, Schacht, & Masini, 2015).

Furthermore, a number of communication scholars have pinpointed the main views that are expressed about immigration in the media (see, for example, Benson, 2009, 2013; Van Gorp, 2005). Unlike the majority of existing literature, this study does not identify frames in the content as interpretative packages that define the problem, diagnose causes, and suggest moral judgments and possible remedies (Entman, 1993); instead, the focus here is on manifest evaluations of immigration and/or immigrants that are usually found in the journalistic text. Specifically, I consider four recurrent viewpoints on immigration. On the one hand, immigration can be seen as a negative phenomenon. For example, it can be presented as

a social problem (Kim, Carvalho, Davis, & Mullins, 2011), as a threat for the economy, national cohesion, or public security (Benson, 2013). On the other hand, positive viewpoints are used to portray immigration as beneficial for society. For example, Benson (2013) argues that well-integrated immigrants may be represented as "heroes," contributing to the development of the host community. Finally, besides negative and positive viewpoints, scholars note that migrants can also be presented in the news as an administrative burden, when immigrants' arrival and relocation create logistic problems for national authorities. Although not positive, the view of immigration as an administrative burden does not imply an ideological aversion to immigration, which is instead intrinsic to negative viewpoints. Moreover, immigrants are very often portrayed in the public debate as victims (Benson, 2013; Van Gorp, 2005). Specifically, they can be represented as victims of global economic inequality, as "humanitarian victims"—when their rights are not respected, or when they face dangers while travelling—or as victims of racism.

Therefore, these four social groups—national authorities, immigrants, proimmigration NGOs, and radical right-wing parties—might talk in the news, and their voices can trigger the representation of four different viewpoints on immigration—negative, administrative burden, positive, or those that portray migrants as victims. To evaluate their success in influencing viewpoints, however, we first have to pinpoint the actors' preferred positions on immigration.

Consonance Between Actors' Voices and Their Preferred Viewpoints on Immigration

Drawing on the concept of "self-interestedness of frame sponsors" (Geiβ, Weber, & Quiring, 2016, p. 6), the overarching theoretical assumption of this study is that social actors have a preferred position regarding the topic that they debate in the media. Although actors can express a wide range of different opinions in the news, I argue that they particularly aim to promote viewpoints that reflect their interests on the topic under discussion to influence public opinion (Wolfsfeld, 2011. Social groups' arguments and ideas on the debated issue can either imply policy measures in their favor—or in favor of the group they represent—or they can be beneficial to them vis-à-vis voters and public opinion. In the context of the immigration debate, immigrants advocate in favor of their rights, backed by proimmigration NGOs, typically by pinpointing situations of suffering, as well as by stressing the benefits of immigration for the host society. On the contrary, radical right-wing parties usually express negative stances on immigration, mostly driven by ideological "anti-immigration" considerations (Alonso & da Fonseca, 2012). Finally, because national authorities (governmental, justice, and law enforcement actors) have the responsibility to manage the influx of immigrants, they are more likely to stress the problematic aspects connected to their reception and relocation when they talk in the media. Consistent with this, Cuttitta (2014) observes that the context of emergency connected to migrants' arrivals by sea—which was particularly evident in the period under study—provides fertile ground for the increased use of a "securitarian" discourse by national authorities, which points to the financial, logistic, and organizational difficulties posed by the entry of immigrants.

Previous studies on the content of immigration-related news give support to this study's main assumption that social actors have their own "preferred" position on immigration, which they put forward in the mediated debate on the issue. As observed by Benson and Wood (2015), governmental voices in U.S. and French media mostly focus on the "law and policy" aspects of immigration, referring to problems for the authorities and society, and promoting enforcement as the main solution frame. By contrast, immigrants'

voices in the news are usually audible in accounts of their past and present suffering—stories of their dangerous travel to Europe or about their detention in camps—which present them as "idealized victims" (Ihlen et al., 2015, p. 832). Alternatively, immigrants' quotes might feature news stories that portray them as "heroes," as competent, ambitious people who can enrich the host society (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015). More specifically, I argue that the positive viewpoints are more likely to be triggered by the voice of individual immigrants. In fact, we know from previous studies that there exists a "person positivity bias" related to immigration (Sears, 1983). As demonstrated by Iyengar et al. (2013), individual immigrants can spark more positive reactions than groups of migrants. According to this, I expected that journalists would be more prone to include positive viewpoints when they quote individual immigrants rather than when they cover groups of migrants. Moreover, previous studies point out that the voice of proimmigration NGOs is usually connected to positive viewpoints, or it is associated with a more empathetic characterization of immigrants as victims (Ihlen et al., 2015; Moeller, 1999, 2002). Finally, studies by Benson (2009) and Benson and Wood (2015) give support to the idea that the voice of radical right-wing politicians in the news is typically associated with negative viewpoints on immigration.

Hence, the general "consonance hypothesis" posits that, because of the cumulative influence of actors' voices, the association between actors' voices and their preferred viewpoints is likely to be reflected in the media coverage of immigration. More specifically, I expected that, in a news item,

H1:   *The presence of national authorities' voice is likely to coincide with the presence of administrative burden viewpoints on immigration.*

H2:   *The presence of an individual immigrant's voice is likely to coincide with both positive viewpoints on immigration (2a) and views of immigrants as victims (2b).*

H3:   *The presence of immigrant groups' voice is likely to coincide with views of immigrants as victims.*

H4:   *The presence of proimmigration NGOs' voice is likely to coincide with positive viewpoints on immigration (4a) and with views of immigrants as victims (4b).*

H5:   *The presence of radical right-wing parties' voice is likely to coincide with negative viewpoints on immigration.*

The Interplay Between Consonance and Diversity of Voices and Viewpoints

So far, I have hypothesized that actors' cumulative influence on viewpoints would result in the consonant presence of actors and their preferred viewpoints on immigration in the news. But how many actors have the chance to speak in the news and trigger their preferred viewpoint? To tackle this problem, we need to explore the relationship between consonance and diversity. Content diversity is considered here as the heterogeneity of voices and viewpoints presented in the news (Benson, 2009; Masini et al., 2017; van Cuilenburg, 1999). Many scholars advocate for the enhancement of content diversity, building on the democratic pluralist ideal that the press should guarantee equal access to a wide range of social groups and reflect the spectrum of existing opinions on the topic that it covers (Gans, 1979, 2011). When consonance

coexists with high levels of content diversity, a wide range of voices will be included in the news with the viewpoints that reflect their position. Alternatively, in a situation of low content diversity, just a few actors will be quoted along with their preferred viewpoints, and other voices and corresponding opinions will be left out. In other words, consonance coupled with low levels of voice and viewpoint diversity correspond to an oligopoly of a few voices with the viewpoints that they "own." This matter is of particular importance when analyzing immigration news. The results of studies that measure content diversity of news about immigration are mixed. First, it is important to note that measurements of content diversity at different levels yield different results. For example, Masini et al. (2017) found that the range of voices and viewpoints represented in a single news article on immigration is more often than not very limited, but levels of content diversity are higher when measured in the whole newspaper. On top of this, research in this field has shown that content diversity of immigration news can vary across news outlets, as well as across countries. Benson (2009, 2013) found higher levels of content diversity in newspapers with low advertising support and those targeted to audiences with higher cultural capital such as *Libération*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and *L'Humanité*. Moreover, Benson's longitudinal analysis gives support to the idea that the news coverage of immigration has been more diverse in the French press than in the United States since the 1970s, although he points to a certain degree of convergence in the last 30 years.

Nonetheless, content diversity at the level of a single article is likely to be low, often resulting in articles that quote only one social group—in most of the cases political elites —and only one set of viewpoints (e.g., Masini et al., 2017). Considering the social groups and viewpoints analyzed in this study, this leads to the expectation that a large number of news items will give space only to national authorities and their preferred viewpoints, which I assumed to be referring to immigration as an administrative burden. Hence, I expected the following:

H6:   *The most frequent association between voices and viewpoints in the news articles is likely to be the consonant combination of national authorities with administrative burden viewpoints.*

Data and Method

This study analyzed news about immigration in a sample of newspapers in Belgium (Flanders), Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom between January 1, 2013, and April 30, 2014. In these countries, immigration was a salient public topic in the period under study. Although these four countries' media systems have different characteristics according to Hallin and Mancini's (2004) framework (with Belgium and Germany belonging to the democratic corporatist model, Italy to the polarized pluralist model, and the United Kingdom to the liberal model), the main purpose of this study was not to compare and explain cross-national differences in the main elements of immigration news. Instead, the focus was on the consonance between the presence of voices and viewpoints in immigration news, which I did not expect to vary in the countries under study. As shown by Benson (2013), the interests of social groups vis-à-vis immigration can vary across countries, as well as across time. However, I argue that the positions on immigration of the social groups that I analyzed do not vary across countries. In specific, immigrants and NGOs are equally likely to advocate in favor of immigration in Belgium, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom; also, radical right-wing parties in these four countries are similarly critical toward immigration. Finally, in the period under study, Belgian, German, Italian, and British national authorities were equally concerned—although in

different ways—with the problematic aspects of immigration. In different countries, members of the same social group will try to put forward in the media the same favorite positions on immigration, which led to the expectation that there would be no intercountry variation in terms of consonance.

The newspaper sample included 22 outlets that vary in terms of political orientation (see the Appendix). For Belgium, six news newspapers from Flanders, the Dutch-speaking community, were selected: *De Morgen*, *de Standaard*, *De Tijd*, *Gazet van Antwerpen*, *Het Nieuwsblad*, and *Het Laatste Nieuws*. The sample for Germany included the following five titles: *Die Welt*, *Berliner Morgenpost*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*. The Italian sample comprised five outlets: *La Repubblica*, *Gazzetta di Modena*, *Il Giornale*, *Il Messaggero*, and *Il Mattino*. Finally, for the United Kingdom, I selected *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Sun*, *Daily Mirror*, *Manchester Evening News*, and *London Evening Standard.*

Articles about immigration were searched in online databases by means of country-specific Boolean strings, following the broad definition of immigration adopted by the UN's International Organization for Migration as the entrance and the presence of people in a country other than their country of birth with the purpose of settling.[2] After filtering the first results, I retrieved a final sample consisting of 2,490 news items (642 for Belgium, 484 for Germany, 822 for Italy, 542 for the United Kingdom). The articles were coded quantitatively by coders based in each country of the study, who followed an extensive training provided by a master coder. I tested intercoder reliability for each country on a 10% subsample. Concerning the variable "voices," Krippendorff's alpha scores ranged from .62 to 1.00, with an average of .78. Coefficients of the variables indicating viewpoints ranged from .60 to .66. Due to alpha's sensitivity to skewed variables (like those for voices and viewpoints, which present a large amount of missing values), the percentage of intercoder agreement was also calculated by using Holsti's (1969) formula. For the news voices, Holsti's scores ranged from .70 to 1.00, with an average of .87, and the scores ranged from .88 to .96 for the viewpoint variables (average = .92). In addition, I calculated intercoder reliability across countries on a smaller subsample of articles in English, with satisfying results.

To code news voices, we coded a maximum of 10 quoted or paraphrased actors in every article. To be coded as voices, actors had to convey a statement (not necessarily including a viewpoint on immigration), both in a direct or indirect way. An actor was directly quoted when his or her statement appeared in the text between quotation marks. Alternatively, he or she was indirectly quoted—or paraphrased—when his or her utterance was not reported between quotation marks, but rather using expressions such as, for example, "he/she said that . . . ," "he/she thinks that . . . ," and "according to him/her. . . ." Voices were identified by codes corresponding to different actor groups in society.[3] For the

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[2] See "Key Migration Terms" in the International Organization for Migration website, http://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms

[3] Actors belonging to the following categories were coded: national politics, international politics; immigrants (both individuals and groups); proimmigration NGOs; civil society (other than proimmigration NGOs); judiciary, police, and military; public agencies/organizations; public opinion and ordinary people; business/corporate/finance; journalists and media celebrities; traffickers/smugglers; religion.

purpose of this study, I particularly focused on direct and indirect quotes by members of the following groups:

- *National authorities:* actors making decisions on immigration policies and laws (members of the national government); actors enforcing immigration laws, often deciding on single cases (members of the justice system); or actors in charge of public security (law enforcement agencies) or of the rescuing of migrants (the military, especially the navy in the Mediterranean);[4]

- *Individual immigrants:* a single immigrant who talks in the news (his/her name does not necessarily need to be mentioned);

- *Groups of immigrants:* immigrants represented as a collective entity (e.g., "Refugees in the camp reported that . . ." or "Mamadou, Abdou, and Idrissa from Senegal said they travelled to Europe by boat"). This category does not include formally organized groups of migrants, which would otherwise be coded under the NGOs category;

- *NGOs:* organizations specifically advocating in favor of immigration (which I call "proimmigration NGOs");

- *Radical right-wing parties and their members:* defined according to their ideology and their party manifesto, especially their position toward immigration.[5]

It is important to note that, in the period and in the countries under study, radical right-wing parties were not members of government coalitions. Moreover, with the exception of Italy where one of these parties was represented in the parliament (the Lega Nord), radical right-wing parties did not have any seats in the national assemblies of Belgium, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

Coders indicated the presence of "viewpoints about immigration and immigrants" in every news item. Based on existing literature that I reviewed earlier, I distinguished between four types of distinct viewpoints:

- *Negative:* Negative characterization of immigrants/immigration (e.g., immigration is bad for the economy; immigrants carry diseases; they commit crimes; concerns about the management of the arrivals, food supply, hygiene, etc.).

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[4] Accordingly, this category was coded as a combination of "government actors" (a subcategory of national politicians) and "judiciary, police, and military."

[5] For the period of reference, these parties were the following. In Belgium: Vlaams Belang; in Germany: Allianz für Deutschland, Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands; in Italy: Lega Nord, Fratelli d'Italia; in the United Kingdom: UK Independence Party, British National Party.

- *Administrative burden:* immigration represented as an administrative/logistic problem, that is, as bringing practical problems related to the reception and relocation of incoming immigrants (e.g., mentions of difficulties related to saving immigrants at sea, problems in reception centers related to food, hygiene, etc.).

- *Victimization:* immigrants portrayed as victims (e.g., immigrants are victims of unjust government policies, traffickers; they have to deal with racism/xenophobia, etc.).

- *Positive:* positive characterization of immigrants/immigration (e.g., immigrants work hard, immigration is positive for the economy, immigrants enhance "positive multiculturalism," etc.).

The presence of voices and viewpoints in a news article, which was the unit of analysis, was operationalized as a dummy variable. It did not matter whether an actor was coded in the news item multiple times or whether a certain viewpoint was reiterated. It was just relevant to know whether a certain actor category was quoted in the article and whether a specific viewpoint was expressed.

In the following section, the results of the study are outlined. After presenting descriptive statistics on speakers and viewpoints in the news sample, I test consonance between the presence of voices and the presence of viewpoints by means of a multilevel logistic regression—because articles are nested in newspapers, and variables at both levels are considered in the analysis—which was run for each type of viewpoint. Moreover, a number of important control variables were added. First, we know that a newspaper's political slant might influence the way in which a topic is presented in the news (Berkel, 2006). Because a newspaper's adherence to a right-wing ideology—which is more adverse to immigration (Alonso & da Fonseca, 2012)—may foster the presence of negative viewpoints, I added a dummy for newspapers' center-right or right-wing political orientation. The latter was defined based on the extant literature, as well as on national experts' judgments (see the Appendix). Second, previous studies have shown that unexpected key events (Kepplinger & Habermeier, 1995; Vasterman, 2005) might create waves of reporting and alter the way in which an issue is reported in the news (e.g., Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2008). During the period under study, the shipwreck of a migrant boat close to the island of Lampedusa (Italy) on October 3, 2013, in which more than 360 migrants died, was extensively covered in the news in Europe. Due to the tragic nature of the event, articles written in the aftermath of this tragedy might have conveyed the representation of immigrants' suffering to a greater extent than articles written in routine periods. Hence, I added a dummy variable to indicate articles that were written in the first three weeks after the Lampedusa shipwreck (October 3–24, 2013). Finally, to account for the clustering of the articles in countries, I added country dummies to the model, which also allowed to control for intercountry differences in the presence of viewpoints.

Furthermore, the interpretation of the results was facilitated by the use of a correspondence analysis, which is a descriptive, exploratory technique designed to analyze the structure of a data matrix and to represent it graphically in terms of points in a low-dimensional space, with the purpose of exploring associations between two variables (de Leeuw & van der Heijden, 1988). In the correspondence analysis plot, distances between points can be interpreted directly as degrees of similarity (Yelland, 2010). Finally, I evaluated the interplay between consonance and diversity by counting the number of different voices and

viewpoints presented in every news article (excluding articles that did not present any voice or viewpoint) among the actors and viewpoints categories that were presented, pointing out the cases in which there was a consonant presence of these two elements.

Results

Descriptive Statistics: Voices and Viewpoints in the News

First, I shed light on the presence of actors' quotes in the news. Figure 1 shows that the distribution of voices was very similar across nations. In every country, national authorities were the most quoted actors. Individual immigrants were more quoted than groups of immigrants. Their voice was particularly audible in Belgium, where 15% of the articles gave space to their voice, whereas it was less present in the British coverage (in 8% of articles). Finally, Figure 1 shows intercountry differences regarding the presence of radical right-wing voices. More specifically, the results seem to suggest that the presence of parties of this kind in the national parliament was a strong predictor of their capability to talk in the media. Radical right-wing politicians were almost invisible in Germany and Belgium, and were barely present in the British coverage, but they were prominent actors in the Italian sample, where they were quoted in 15% of the articles. Hence, whereas in Belgium, Germany, and the United Kingdom, these actors' absence from the national parliaments practically coincided with their exclusion from the mediatized debate on immigration, the presence of the Lega Nord in the Italian parliament seemed to allow politicians of this party to be prominent voices in immigration news.
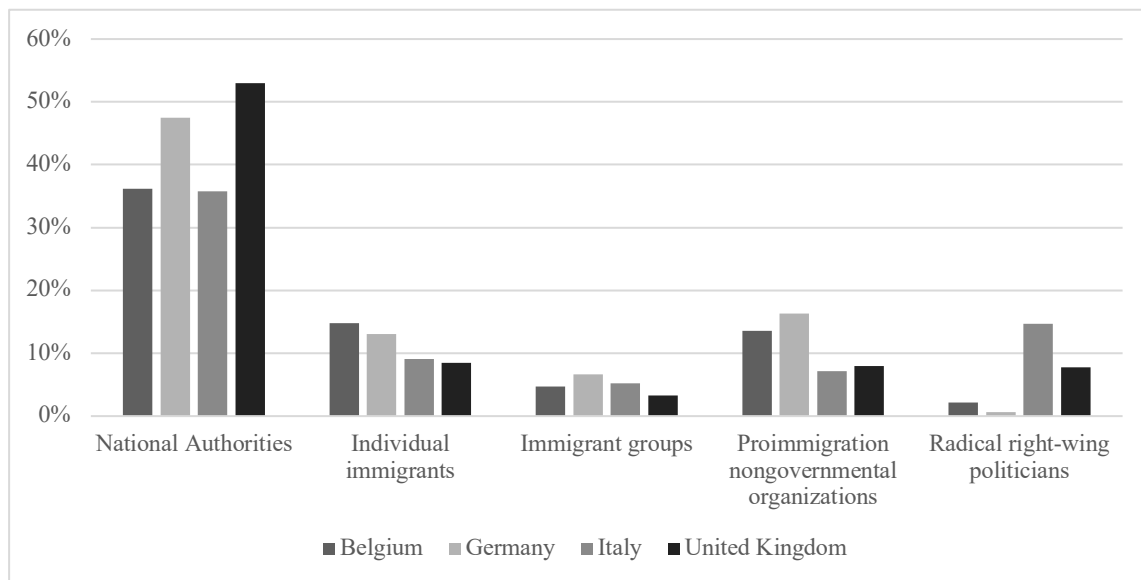

Figure 1. Cross-country proportion of articles including the voice of the different actor categories (Belgium, n = 642; Germany, n = 484; Italy, n = 822; United Kingdom, n = 542).

Figure 2 shows the cross-country proportion of articles including negative, administrative burden, victims, and positive viewpoints on immigration.
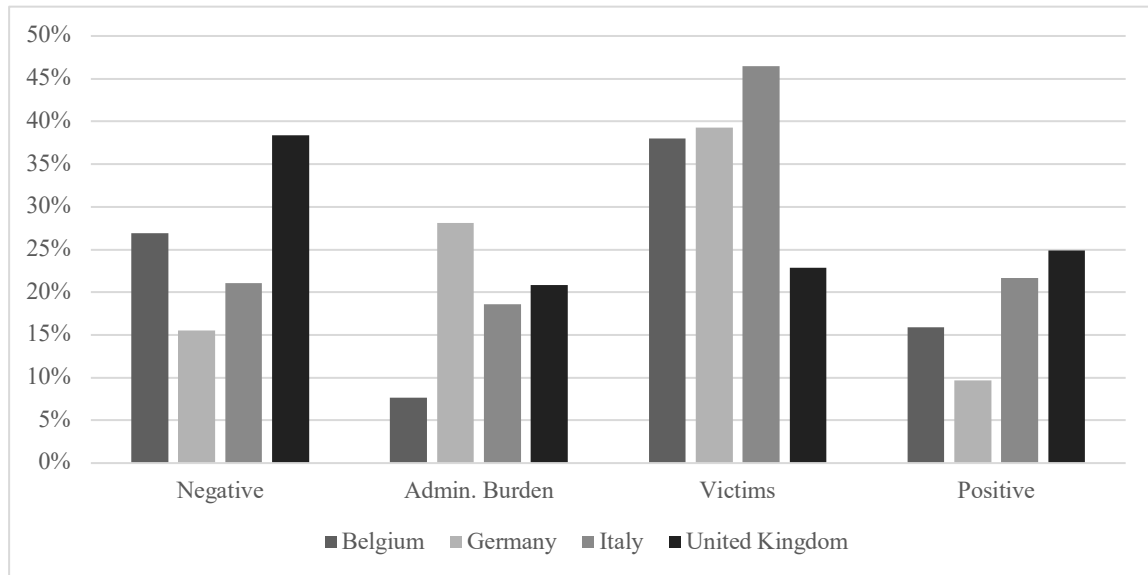

Figure 2. Cross-country proportion of articles including the four viewpoint categories (Belgium, n = 642; Germany, n = 484; Italy, n = 822; United Kingdom, n = 542).

Multivariate Test of the Consonance Hypotheses

The graph points out that viewpoints that portray immigrants as victims were the most present in every country, except for the United Kingdom, where more space was allotted to negative viewpoints. However, the British sample also gave a substantial amount of space to a positive characterization of immigration, which was found in one quarter of the news items. By contrast, German articles focused on victims and administrative burden viewpoints (mainly present in news stories concerning problems in asylum centers), but they gave less space to positive viewpoints. Finally, the fact that almost half of the Italian articles featured victimization viewpoints seems to be ascribable to the numerous accounts of tragedies at sea in the immigrants' attempt to reach the island of Lampedusa.

I move now to a multivariate test of consonance between voices and viewpoints in the news. Table 1 provides support for the first hypothesis, as the presence of national authorities was significantly positively associated with the presence of administrative burden viewpoints on immigration (Model b). Likewise, Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 3 were confirmed: Individual immigrants' voices were significantly more likely to be related to the presence of both victimization and positive viewpoints (Models c and d, respectively), but quotes by groups of immigrants were significantly more likely to be coupled with victimization viewpoints (Model c), but not with positive ones. Moreover, the results in Table 1 give support to Hypothesis 4b in that the inclusion of proimmigration NGOs' voices in an article significantly coincided with the inclusion of views

of migrants as victims (Model c), but not to the inclusion of positive viewpoints, which led to the rejection of Hypothesis 4a. Table 1 also shows that the presence of radical right-wing parties' voices significantly increased the odds that negative viewpoints on immigration were present in the same news item (Model a). Hypothesis 5 was therefore confirmed.

Table 1. Results of the Multilevel Regression Model on Negative, Administrative Burden, Victims, and Positive Viewpoints (N= 2,490).

Variable	Negative	Administrative burden	Victims	Positive
	Model a	Model b	Model c	Model d
	b (SE)	b (SE)	b (SE)	b (SE)
Presence of social groups				
National authorities	0.130 (0.10)	0.320 (0.11)**	0.128 (0.10)	−0.380 (0.11)**
Individual immigrants	−0.090 (0.17)	0.067 (0.18)	1.531 (0.15)**	0.800 (0.16)**
Immigrants as a group	−0.318 (0.26)	−0.120 (0.26)	1.451 (0.23)**	−0.499 (0.28)
Proimmigration nongovernmental organizations	−0.292 (0.18)	0.214 (0.17)	1.103 (0.15)**	−0.343 (0.19)
Radical right-wing politics	1.160 (0.19)**	−0.074 (0.21)	−0.864 (0.21)**	−0.369 (0.23)
Center-right political orientation	0.439 (0.31)	0.204 (0.34)	−0.546 (0.16)**	−0.046 (0.28)
Real-world context				
Lampedusa tragedy (October 2013)	−0.230 (0.16)	−0.553 (0.18)**	1.075 (0.12)**	−0.226 (0.15)
Countries (ref.=Belgium)				
Germany	−0.670 (0.41)	1.464 (0.45)**	0.071 (0.20)	−0.319 (0.38)
Italy	−0.390 (0.40)	1.235 (0.45)**	0.242 (0.19)*	0.589 (0.36)
United Kingdom	0.390 (0.38)	0.845 (0.44)*	−0.518 (0.20)**	0.769 (0.35)*
Constant	−1.157 (0.29)	−2.703 (0.34)	−0.996 (0.15)	−1.790 (0.28)

*$p < .05$.   **$p < .01$.

Furthermore, focusing on the control variables, Table 1 provides an indication that newspapers with a more right-wing political orientation were less inclined to portray migrants as victims (Model c), but it does not show any significant effect regarding the presence of negative viewpoints. Regarding the influence of the real-world context on the inclusion of viewpoints, the findings show that articles that were published in the aftermath of the Lampedusa tragedy presented significantly more views of immigrants as victims (Model c), and were also less likely to characterize immigration as an administrative burden (Model b). Last but not least, the results relative to cross-country differences were in line with the descriptive results displayed in Figure 2, pointing out that articles in Italian newspapers were significantly more likely to entail

empathetic views of immigrants as victims (at the 5% level), as compared with Belgian and British outlets. Moreover, Table 1 indicates that the coverage of immigration in the United Kingdom presented significantly more positive viewpoints (Model d) and significantly fewer views of immigrants as victims (Model c) compared with the other countries. Finally, consistent with Figure 2, the table shows that German, Italian, and British articles were more likely to include views of immigration as an administrative burden compared with Belgian items.

The signs of a consonant presence of voices and viewpoints in the news revealed in Table 1 are best illustrated by the correspondence analysis displayed in Figure 3.
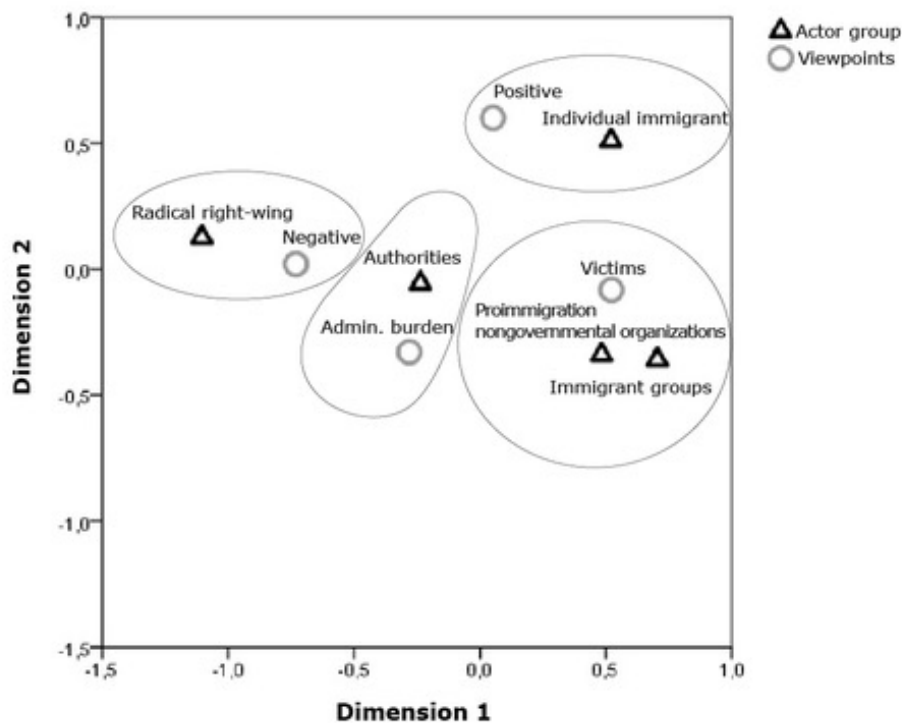

Figure 3. Correspondence analysis mapping voices and viewpoints in the news.

Figure 3 displays a specific compartmentalization of the news voices, which are grouped in the proximity of the viewpoints they were associated with in the news (which are, in turn, positioned away from each other). Specifically, we see that the voice of the authorities was closely associated with administrative burden viewpoints, whereas the voice of radical right-wing politicians was strictly connected to negative viewpoints. In line with the findings, Figure 3 shows that groups of immigrants and proimmigration NGOs were positioned in the proximity of views of immigrants as victims. Only individual immigrants were closely

associated with positive viewpoints, which reinforces the idea that migrants have more chances to be linked to positive viewpoints when they speak as individuals rather than as a collective actor.

Interplay Between Consonance and Diversity

Finally, I introduce the last part of this section that deals with the relationship between consonance and diversity. First, Table 2 gives support to the idea that content diversity in immigration news is low. The table shows that more than half of the articles that contained actors' quotes (of the groups analyzed) and that expressed views on immigration gave space to just one category of voice and to one kind of viewpoint, whereas 18.5% gave space to the quotes of only one group and to two different viewpoints. Articles that presented two voices and one viewpoint made up to 14.2% of the total, whereas 8.8% of them contained quotes of two different actor groups and two different viewpoints on immigration.

Table 2. Percentage Frequencies of Combination Between Voices and Viewpoints in Articles That Included at Least One Voice Category and at Least One Viewpoint Category (n = 1,179).

Different viewpoint (n)	Different voices (n)			
	1	2	3	4
1	52.6	14.2	0.3	0.1
2	18.5	8.8	0.5	0.3
3	2.4	1.0	0.3	0.0
4	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.0

A closer analysis reveals that the most frequent associations were those that combined, in one article, the voice of national authorities with negative viewpoints (10.4%) and the voice of national authorities with victimization viewpoints (9.6%). The third most frequent combination (6.1%) was the consonant association of national authorities with administrative burden viewpoints. Hence, although Hypothesis 6 could not be fully confirmed, I found support for the idea that this was indeed one of the most recurring "bundles" of voices and viewpoints in the news. Consistent with this, among the other most frequent combinations, I found that national authorities' quotes went together with administrative burden and victimization viewpoints (2.6%), as well as with administrative burden viewpoints and negative viewpoints (2.5%). Other frequently reoccurring associations combined the voices of authorities and NGOs with victimization viewpoints (2.5%) or the voices of national authorities and radical right-wing politicians associated with negative viewpoints (1.9%). Hence, the findings suggest that quotes by national authorities were all but present in the most frequent combinations of voice and viewpoints, reinforcing the idea that they were key actors in the immigration coverage.

Conclusions and Discussion

Overall, these findings provide support for the idea that social actors debating immigration in the media can exert a cumulative impact on the construction of meaning through their voice, triggering the presence of their preferred viewpoints on the issue in the news. This influence manifests itself in terms of consonance between actors' voices and viewpoints in the same news item. As pointed out by the correspondence analysis in Figure 3, as well as by the results of the regression model displayed in Table 1,

the presence of national authorities' quotes is associated—in a news article—with administrative burden viewpoints on immigration, and the presence of radical right-wing politicians' voice comes along with negative views on this topic; on the contrary, the voice of individual immigrants is mostly connected to positive viewpoints, as well as to empathetic views of immigrants as victims. The latter viewpoints, in turn, are likely to be connected to quotes by groups of immigrants and by proimmigration NGOs. Nevertheless, only a very limited range of actors has the possibility of talking in a news article and "bringing along" their preferred viewpoints. Low levels of content diversity coupled with consonance result in a sizeable amount of news items presenting a narrow consonant selection of a single category of voices with a single consonant set of viewpoints. In most of the cases studied here, the only audible voice was that of the most powerful actors, namely national authorities, who were likely to convey "tougher" opinions on immigration to the audience. And even when the range of voices was slightly larger, authorities seemed to have a "reserved spot" in the article.

This article draws on the actor-centered assumption that consonance is the result of the cumulative influence of actors' voices (direct and indirect) on viewpoints in the news. Nonetheless, the media are not just passive providers of space for actors' spreading of information: They also have a more autonomous role in shaping the presence of voices and viewpoints in the news (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001). Hence, from this perspective, consonance might be seen as the outcome of journalists' choice to make a coherent selection of voices and viewpoints when reporting about immigration, which is consistent with the overarching journalistic objective to convey a coherent message to the audience (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). However, I argue that even if consonance is the product of journalists' practice, it might still manifest actors' indirect influence on viewpoints. Specifically, the fact that media practitioners are likely to combine speakers with their preferred positions on immigration means that actors can trigger their favorite viewpoints by being selected as speakers in the news, even if their quotes do not include any viewpoint. Further research on this topic should distinguish between quotes that directly express viewpoints from those that do not to disentangle the direct and indirect effect of actors' quotes on viewpoints.

Actors who have a stake in the immigration topic can extrapolate a lesson from the results of this study. Whereas some of them clearly succeed in being associated with their preferred position, as is the case for radical right-wing politicians or individual immigrants, others partially fail. This is the case of proimmigration NGOs, whose quotes go together with the representation of immigrants as victims, but are not significantly associated with positive viewpoints. Nevertheless, to succeed in setting viewpoints in the news, social groups must first get a chance to talk. The odds of getting this chance, to paraphrase Wolfsfeld (2011), seem to be directly proportional to political power in that national authorities are those who mostly get the exclusive opportunity to speak in the news. Even more important, this article shows that the analysis of consonance to evaluate actors' success in influencing viewpoints in the news has to be combined with the investigation of diversity. In fact, although the analysis of consonance shows the potential for all voices to influence viewpoints, the examination of diversity reveals how many and which actors have a real chance to talk in the news and trigger their preferred viewpoints.

Finally, this study is based on the assumption that actors that debate immigration have their own "preferred" viewpoints on the issue. Nonetheless, these preferences are not written in stone. For example, as observed by Benson (2013), labor unions in the United States were generally opposed to immigration in

the 1970s, but switched to more proimmigration positions by the end of the 1980s. Future research might therefore adopt a longitudinal approach to gauge variation in consonance between voices and viewpoints that is due to changes in actors' positions on immigration.

To sum up, this study has successfully introduced a new paradigm for the evaluation of actors' success in influencing viewpoints in mediatized public debate, based on the analysis of consonance and diversity of voices and viewpoints in the news. I hope future studies in this field will embrace this method, ideally testing the consonance hypothesis beyond the case of the immigration debate, in the context of other relevant social topics that involve different stakeholders and different categories of viewpoints to support the generalizability of this innovative method.

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Appendix

Table A1. Newspaper Samples' Characteristics.

Newspaper	Country	Political orientation
De Morgen	Belgium (Flanders)	Center-left
de Standaard	Belgium (Flanders)	Center
De Tijd	Belgium (Flanders)	Center-right
Gazet van Antwerpen	Belgium (Flanders)	Center-right
Het Nieuwsblad	Belgium (Flanders)	Center
Het Laatste Nieuws	Belgium (Flanders)	Center-right
Die Welt	Germany	Center-right
Berliner Morgenpost	Germany	Center-right
Der Tagesspiegel	Germany	Center-left
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Germany	Center
Stuttgarter Nachrichten	Germany	Center
La Repubblica	Italy	Center-left
Gazzetta di Modena	Italy	Center-left
Il Giornale	Italy	Center-right
Il Messaggero	Italy	Center
Il Mattino	Italy	Center
The Times	United Kingdom	Center-right
The Independent	United Kingdom	Center
The Sun	United Kingdom	Right
Daily Mirror	United Kingdom	Center-left
Manchester Evening News	United Kingdom	Center-left
London Evening Standard	United Kingdom	Center-right