

MEDIA COVERAGE OF ASYLUM AND MIGRATION IN MALTA

The People for Change Foundation

Media Coverage of Asylum and Migration in Malta
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Abstract

This research set out to review the way that issues surrounding migration are portrayed in Maltese mass media, namely newspaper articles as well as programmes broadcast on the television and radio. The survey, which covers all broadcasts and articles relating to migration between July and September 2009, shows that although most features were submitted as factual pieces of information, they were nevertheless scripted with an influential pen. Words chosen to describe the migration issue, including migrants themselves, and the article tone and direction contributed to a negative depiction of migration as a problem. Additionally, very few efforts were made to describe migration from the migrants' perspective.

Table of Contents

1. Background

2. Literature review

Doing things with words

Constructing the self

Insults

Self-discreditation

Summation

3. Methodology

Newspaper Questionnaire

Radio Questionnaire

Television Questionnaire

4. Results

Newspapers

Television

 Television viewing

 Migration coverage on Maltese Television

Radio

 Radio listening in Malta

 Migration coverage on Maltese Radio

5. Conclusion

List of Figures

Figure 1: Frequency of Publication per month

Figure 2: Frequency of Newspaper Articles relating to migration

Figure 3: Number of articles published each day

Figure 4: Newspaper Ownership

Figure 5: The language of the newspaper

Figure 6: The Page Heading where article was published

Figure 7: Article colour

Figure 8: The Presentation of Images

Figure 9: Pie Chart showing whether the picture had a caption

Figure 10: Bar Chart showing picture source

Figure 11: Pie Chart showing Headline Reference type

Figure 12: Bar chart showing the referents used in the headline

Figure 13: Frequency of statistics quoted in the articles

Figure 14: Bar graph showing the number of articles each Migrant Centre was mentioned in

Figure 15: Pie chart showing article aim

Figure 16: Bar Graph showing the tone in which the articles were written

Figure 17: Bar graph showing number of articles offering a contingency plan

Figure 18: Pie Chart showing Television Stations

Figure 19: Bar graph showing Programme name

Figure 20: Pie Chart showing the Programme Type

Figure 21: Bar Chart showing the number of broadcasts each referent was used in

Figure 22: Bar chart showing the number of times each referent was used

Figure 23: Bar Chart showing person featured in the broadcast

Figure 24: Frequency of Listeners per Radio Station

Figure 25: Gender distribution of Radio Listeners by Station

Figure 26: Graph showing Frequency of Migration-related programmes by Radio Station

Figure 27: Bar Chart showing the number of broadcasts in which each referent was used

Figure 28: Bar chart showing the number of times each referent was used

List of Tables

Table 1: Frequency of issues relating to migration and asylum in Maltese newspapers.

Table 2: Cross tabulation of Newspaper by publication day

Table 3: The Page Heading where article was published

Table 4: Article colour

Table 5: Frequency of Images in articles

Table 6: Picture Sources

Table 7: Cross tabulation of name of newspaper and article type.

Table 8: Migrant referent used in the Headline

Table 9: Frequency table showing the referents used in the headline

Table 10: Frequency table of the number of articles in which each referent was used

Table 11. Frequency of statistics quoted in the articles

Table 12: Frequency table showing the number of articles each Migrant Centre was mentioned in

Table 13: Frequency table showing article subject

Table 14: Migrant portrayal in the Headline

Table 15: Cross tabulation of the Newspaper and the article aim

Table 16: Tone of voice in which the readers perceived the articles to have been written

Table 16: Frequency table showing number of articles discussing a contingency plan

Table 17: Frequency table showing Television Stations

Table 18: Frequency Table of the Programme name

Table 19: Article distribution by TV Station ownership

Table 20: Frequency Table showing the Programme Type

Table 21: Frequency table showing the days of broadcast

Table 22: Frequency table of the number of programmes each referent was used in

Table 23: Table showing the number of television broadcasts in which each referent was used

Table 24: Frequency table of Guest speaker on TV broadcast

Table 25: Distribution of Radio Listeners by Gender and Station

Table 26: Frequency table showing Radio Stations

Table 27: Frequency of Referents used

Table 28: Crosstabulation of the Referents used by TV Station

1. Background

The research initiative carried out within the context of the media coverage of asylum project, aimed to provide a snapshot of the way in which issues of migration and asylum are being reported within the Maltese media. As such, its research was limited to a relatively small, time-bound sample. The project also aimed to provide a solid basis for further development of media monitoring mechanisms, on issues relating to migration specifically, but also integration more broadly.

Since 2005 Malta has been faced with an influx of irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa. These mainly enter the country on rickety boats after having their journey to mainland Europe intercepted by the Armed Forces of Malta. There was a sharp increase in the number of immigrants entering Malta between 2003 and 2008. The total number of new arrivals in Malta was 502 in 2003, 1,388 in 2004, 1,822 in 2005, 1,780 in 2006, 1,694 in 2007 and a record high of 2,704 in 2008. Most migrants arrived during the summer months, when calm sea conditions in the Mediterranean favour the crossing from North Africa to Europe. It was therefore anticipated that 2009 would be no different, and that Malta will receive more immigrants than it had in 2008, particularly over the summer months. It was with this pattern in mind that this project was planned.

However, 2009 was in itself an interesting year not only due to the decrease in the number of arrivals (which was supported mainly by the decision of the Italian government to re-route boats to Italy) but also because a substantial proportion of the year's arrivals arrived in the first months of the year implying an even sharper decrease of arrivals in the period under review. It was also a period of time of intense political discussions on a European level on the issue of responsibility sharing, with the national government as well as MEPs pushing for what would later come to be known as the relocation package.

2. Literature review

Doing things with words

In Austin's seminal text "How to do things with Words" (1962) Austin shows that words are not merely utterances (descriptions or factual statements), but also have verb-like qualities. Performatives act on reality, leaving a mark on the listener and, sometimes, the speaker too (Austin 1962:6-8; Duranti 2005:24). Thus, "by saying or in saying something we are doing something" (Austin 1962:12). For this reason, words can be considered "speech acts" (ibid.).

Speakers weigh their words and are selective in their choices (ibid 25). Since, following Austin, language is "extended doing" (Butler 1997:6) - that is, an act with effects – what one says has definitive consequences on how one is conceptualized and on the way that the people one is talking about are regarded.

Constructing the self

Mauss (1985:4-12) uses the concept of *personnage* to refer to a socially-defined person, established through norms, roles, rituals and interaction with others. Language has infinite consequences on one's *personnage*: what is said about people in the mass media thus affects their *personnage*.

In daily life, people engage in face-work to keep their *personnage* (or face) untarnished (Goffman 1967 in Keltner et al 2001:232). People continually battle with their positive and negative faces (Brown and Levinson 1987 in Keltner et al 2001:232). Negative face is one's desire to act with freedom from imposition of others (ibid. 232). Conversely, positive face is one's desire to promote a socially-acceptable face, thus establishing one's own *personnage*. Positive face is performed through acts of demeanor, i.e. following norms of politeness, modesty and self control, and deference, expressing the appreciation of others (Goffman 1967 in ibid. 232). When one talks about other people in their absence, the subjects are disempowered as they can neither take an active part in negating what is being said in their discredit, nor promote a positive face. This is the case when people are spoken about in the mass media: such media are one-sided and allow little space for people to negate such comments and promote a positive face. The damage done to

one's personage by the mass media is not easy to rectify, particularly in the case of migrants, since most people get information about migrants and migration through the media and not through personal experience.

Insults

Insults generally consist of violations of “unspoken but very significant norms” (Flynn in Guimaraes 2003:136) which occurs through discourse or behaviour (Gabriel 1998:1332). They are “perceived, experienced, constructed, and sometimes intended as slighting, humiliating, or offensive” (ibid. 1332). In sum, insults are “words [that] wound” (Mastuda in Butler 1997:4). Applying these definitions to Goffman and Mauss, insults tarnish one's personage, and, consequently, one's face. Hence, in Austinian terms, insults are perlocutionary acts: they “produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons” (Austin 1962:101).

Insults always involve at least two parties: the perpetrator and the target (Gabriel 1998:1332). At times, they also involve an audience. Insults that appear in the mass media (be it newspaper, radio or television) have more than one perpetrator: the journalists who write them and the editors who accept them. In the case of radio and television there may be an added perpetrator: the newscaster. Thus, what is acceptable to be said in the news involves an entire team of people, all of which are contributing to the image/reputation of African migrants in Malta. The news is published/broadcast through mass media and is thus aimed at a very vast audience, which is very heterogeneous in nature. Because of such heterogeneity, journalists can never be sure about who is reading their words and what consequences these may have.

Self-discreditation

Negative talk about migrants in the Maltese mass media may contribute to migrants' feelings of unworthiness and lack of hope for the future. Goffman (1990:12) highlights the fact that people from stigmatised groups may consider themselves as “discounted” people (Goffman 1990:12). This occurs when there is a negative disparity between one's virtual and actual social identity (ibid. 12). *Virtual* social identity is the identity that society demands (ibid, 12). *Actual* social identity is the identity that one is actually proved to possess (one's standing on the scale) (ibid. 12). The ability to doubt one's personhood demonstrates that personhood is not achieved simply by being human, but by being human in a valued and meaningful manner

(Reynolds-Whyte&Ingstad 1995:11). Categorizing someone as a “discounted person” is a “distortion” of the vocation of fully achieving personhood since it is the product of an unjust social order (Freire 2000:44). Self-discreditation occurs when people doubt that they hold attributes considered fundamental for meeting the virtual social identity (Charmaz 1983:184). This occurs when (1) a person feels *vulnerable*, (2) the person *identifies* with the individual(s) who discredit him or her, and (3) the discrediting person *validates a hidden fear* or *recasts* the stigmatised person's *self-images* in new unattractive light (ibid. 184, emphasis in original). Self-discreditation also occurs when people realise that an aspect of their life is having a larger impact on their lives than they had hoped for and when they see themselves as “permanent failures and as burdens to others” (ibid. 188).

Summation

People’s choice of words have verb-like qualities and thus affect both the speakers and those who are being spoken about. What is said about people in the mass media thus affects their personage, leaving little means for these people to negate or rectify what is being said about them. This is especially consequential when people are being insulted or discredited in the media. Negative talk about migrants in the Maltese mass media serves to assert and reproduce migrants’ vulnerable position vis-à-vis the Maltese population and may contribute to migrants’ feelings of unworthiness and lack of hope for the future. It is for these reasons that the People for Change Foundation calls for more sensitive and legally sound discourse surrounding migrants.

3. Methodology

This methodology adopted in the preparation of this report is based mainly on desk research. Data for this project was collected by team of media surveyors. The surveyors listened to the programmes at the time of broadcast and/or read the articles on the day of publication, while filling in a questionnaire about each programme/article. The questionnaires were designed by the People for Change Foundation in collaboration with the Malta Broadcasting Authority prior to the start of the data collection. The questionnaires used for each medium can be found in annex to this report.

The sample used for the project was selected from coverage occurring between July and September 2009, both dates included. The decision to use this sampling frame was that these are the months when, traditionally, migration was high on the media's agenda.

This chapter presents the results of this media review. The results will be presented according to media source, i.e. newspapers, television and radio for clarity.

Newspapers

Frequency of Publication

A total of 502 newspaper articles were analyzed over the period under review. These were taken from the whole variety of Maltese newspapers, which add up to 15. A breakdown of the number of articles published each month is shown in Figure 1 (below).

Figure 1: Frequency of Publication per month

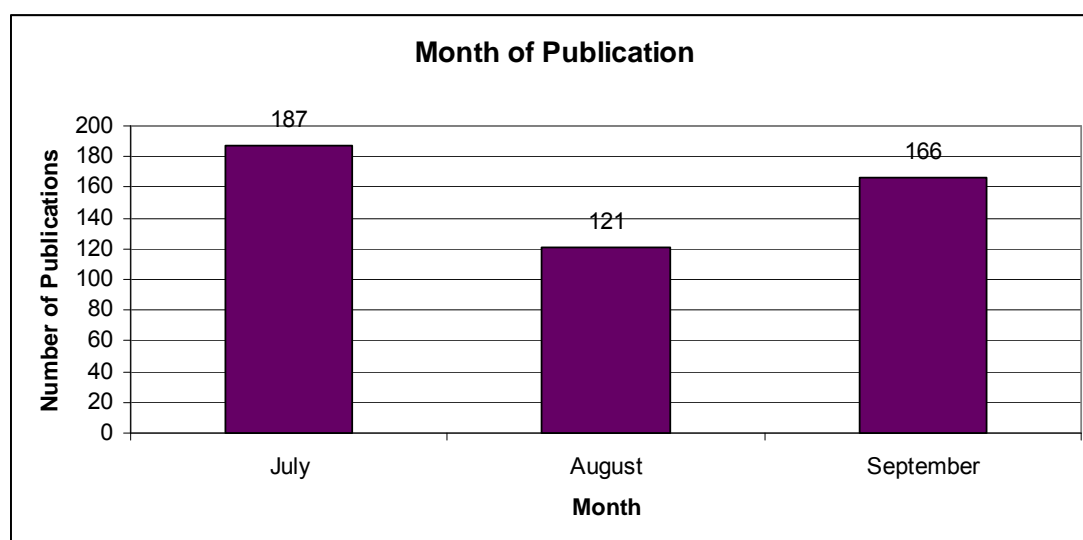


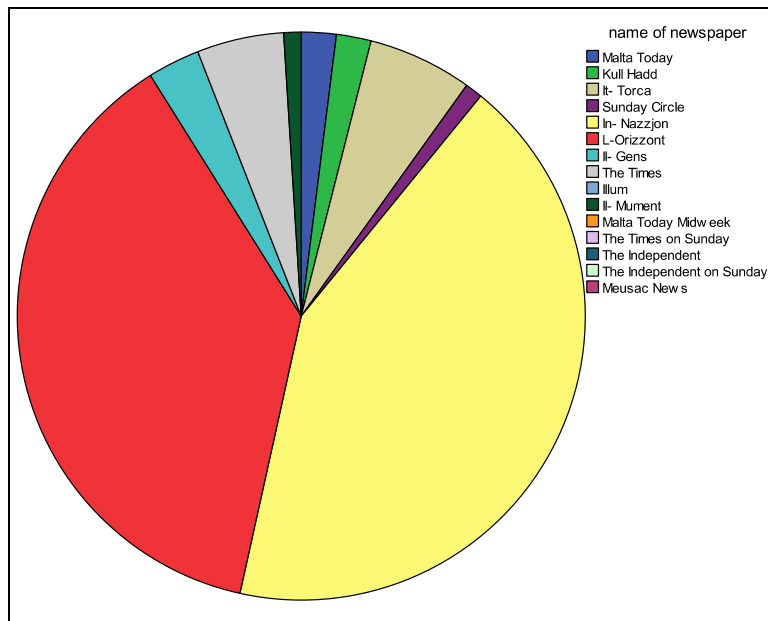
Table 1 and Figure 2 (below) indicate the sources of the articles. The Times of Malta had the largest proportion of articles related to migration or migrants (24% i.e. n=121 articles). This was followed by The Malta Independent (n=96 i.e. 19%), In-Nazzjon (18%, n=89) and L-Orizzont (14%, n=71). The proportion of articles published reflects the frequency of publication of the newspapers, as all these three are daily newspapers published six times a week.

The Malta Independent was the Sunday paper with the largest number of published articles regarding migration (n=41). This was followed by The Times (n=27) and Malta Today (n=22). Il- Mument came third with 14 articles relating to migration. Kull Hadd and The Malta Independent on Sunday each published 9 articles on the matter (1.8%).

Table 1: Frequency of issues relating to migration and asylum in Maltese newspapers.

Newspaper	Frequency	Valid Percent
Malta Today	47	9.4
Il- Mument	14	2.8
The Times	137	25.3
The Malta Independent	105	20.9
Meusac News	2	.4
Kull Hadd	9	1.8
It-Torca	15	3.0
Sunday Circle	1	.2
In- Nazzjon	89	17.7
L- Orizzont	71	14.1
Il- Gens	5	1.0
Illum	7	1.4
Total	502	100.0

Figure 2: Frequency of Newspaper Articles relating to migration



Sunday is the day with the largest number of published articles (n=135) relating to migration, as reflected in Figure 3 below. This can also be seen as a reflection of the number of newspapers which are solely published on Sundays and is also indicative of greater readership, as people are more likely to read newspapers on the weekend than on weekdays.

Most weekdays had similar number of articles published, with numbers ranging from 60 to 79 between Tuesday and Saturday (see table 3).

Table 2: Cross tabulation of Newspaper by publication day

		Publication day							Total
		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
Newspaper	Malta Today	n/a	n/a	25	n/a	n/a	n/a	22	47
	Il- Mument	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	13	13
	The Independent	9	16	6	15	12	6	41	105
	Meusac News	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	2
	Kull Hadd	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	9
	It- Torca	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	15	15
	Sunday Circle	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1
	In- Nazzjon	10	13	13	16	14	13	0	79
	L-Orizzont	10	10	11	9	15	13	0	68
	Il- Gens	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	n/a	4
The Times	4	21	24	18	23	20	27	137	

	Illum	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	7
Total		33	60	79	58	64	58	135	487

Figure 3: Number of articles published each day

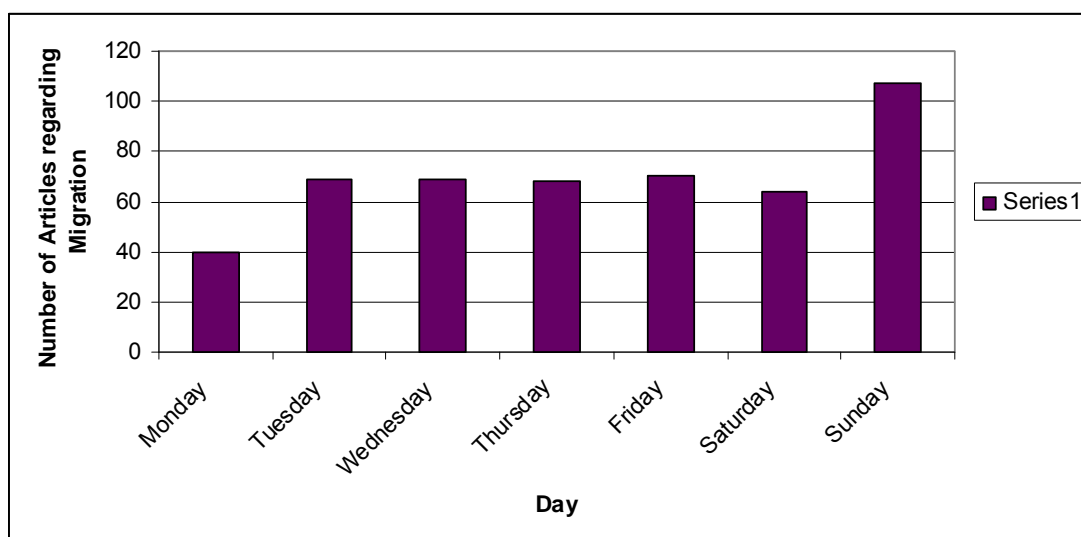


Figure 4 divides the articles according to whether they were published in newspapers that are privately owned, owned by a political party, the Church or owned by a trade Union. Most articles (n=297) were published in privately-owned newspapers, namely the Times of Malta, Malta Today and Illum, and The Malta Independent. 112 articles were published in political newspapers. Most of these (n=103) were published in newspapers owned by the Nationalist Party (In- Nazzjon and Il- Mument), while only 9 articles were published in Kull Hadd, the weekly Labour Party newspaper. However, left-wing opinion was also expressed in the 86 articles published by the General Workers' Union in L-Orizzont and It-Torca. The Church also entered the migration debate, through 5 articles published in its newspaper Il- Gens.

Figure 4: Newspaper Ownership

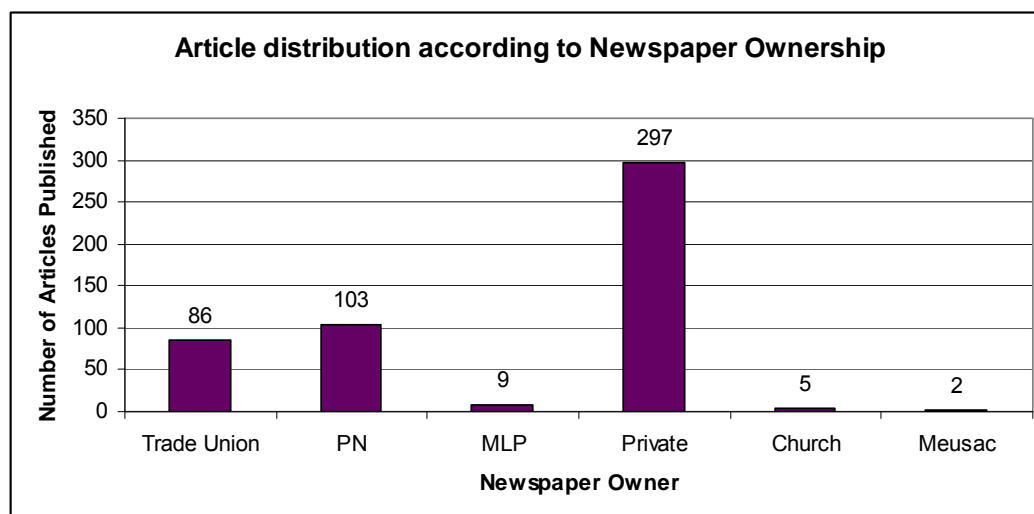
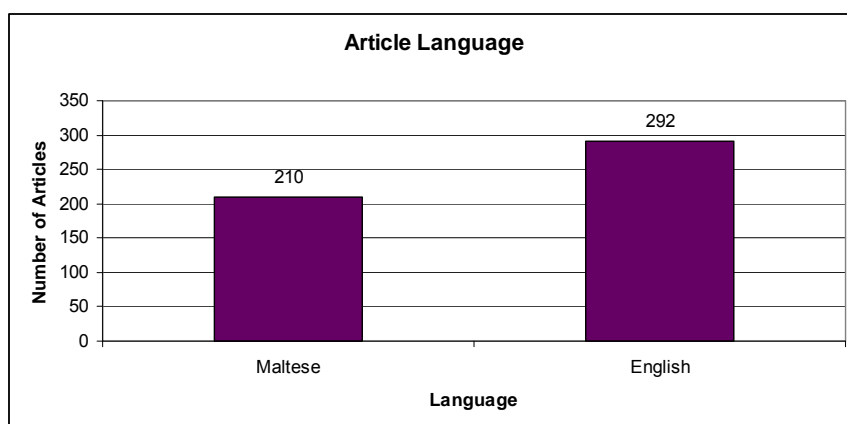


Figure 5 divides the articles according to the language used. The Times of Malta, The Malta Independent, MaltaToday, as well as the Sunday Circle and Meusac News are published in English. On the other hand, il- Mument and in- Nazzjon, it-Torca and l-Orizzont, Kull Hadd, il- Gens and Illum are published in Maltese. Most articles (n=292) were published in English.

Figure 5: The language of the newspaper



Article emphasis

Table 3 and Figure 6 (below) divide the articles according to the page heading. It is interesting to note that over 10% (n=53) of the items were found on the front page and 5% (n=25) were on the back page. Over half the articles (n=272 i.e. 54.5%) were found in the local news section. This is a reflection for the fact that many of the items have a primarily local sphere, including for instance, arrivals and events within the closed and open centers.

Figure 6v. The Page Heading where article was published

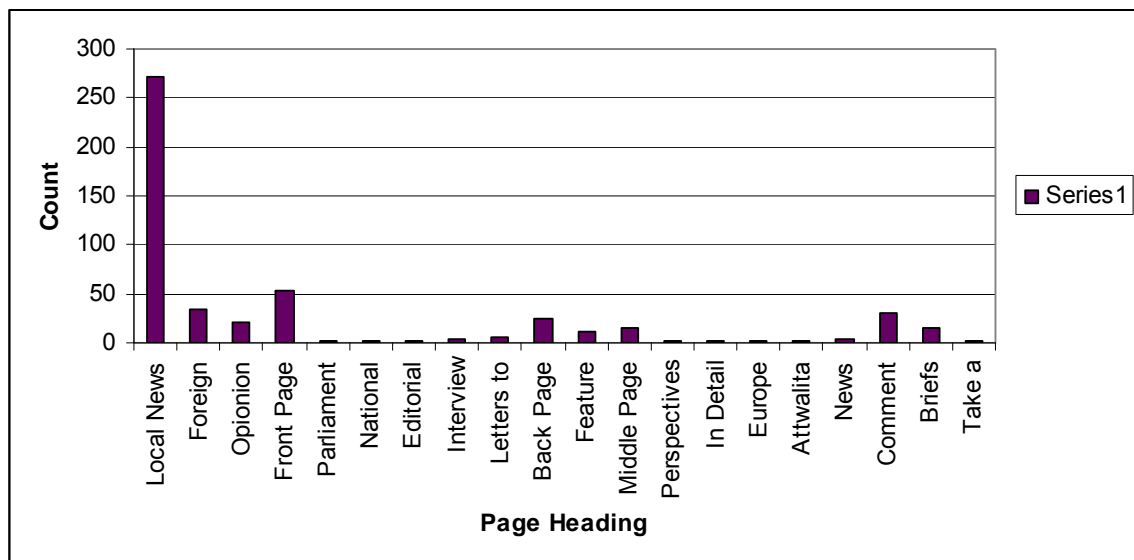


Table 3: The Page Heading where article was published

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Local News	275	55.1
	Foreign News	34	6.8
	Opinion	21	4.2
	Front Page	53	10.6
	Parliament	1	0.2
	National	2	0.4
	Editorial	1	0.2
	Interview	3	0.6
	Letters to the Editor	5	1.0

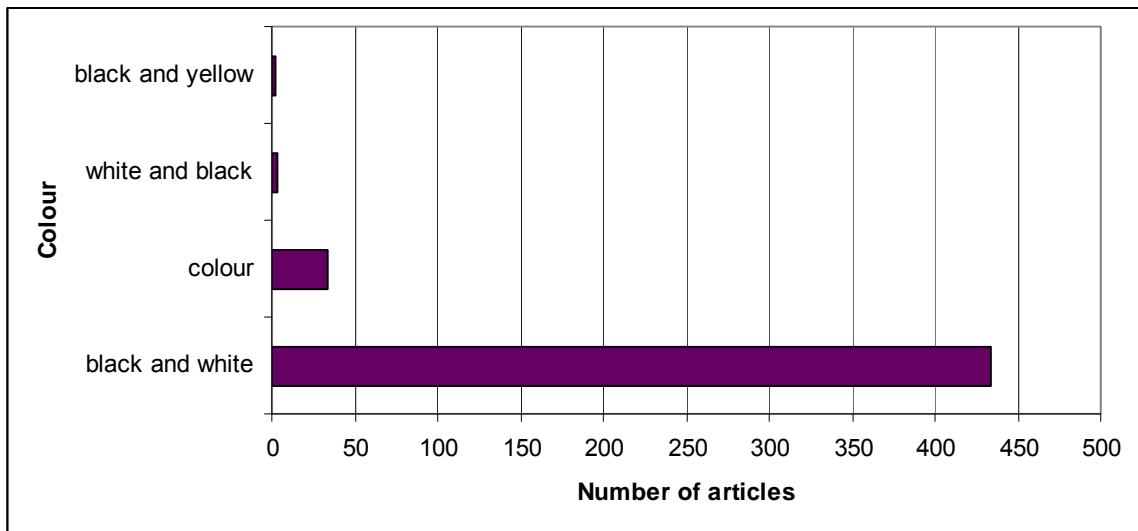
Back Page	25	5.0
Feature	12	2.4
Middle Page	16	3.2
Perspectives	1	0.2
In Detail	1	0.2
Europe	2	0.4
Attwalita	1	0.2
Comment	30	6.0
Briefs	15	3.0
Take a Break	1	0.2
Total	499	100.0

In terms of emphasis given to articles, it can be noted that the vast majority of articles were black on white, which implies that not much emphasis is attracted to them. Having said this, some 6.8% of the items were in colour (n=34), 0.6% (n=3) were white on black and 0.4% (n=2) were black on yellow (see table 4 and figure 5 below).

Table 4: Article colour

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Black on white	434	86.5	91.8
	Colour	34	6.8	7.2
	White on black	3	.6	.6
	Black on yellow	2	.4	.4
	Total	473	94.2	100.0
Missing	.00	29	5.8	
Total		502	100.0	

Figure 7: Article colour



Another means of attracting attention to an article is presenting a picture. Indeed, 37.6% of the items analyzed had a picture (n=189, 13 of which were on the front page), whilst 60.3% (n=313) did not (see table 5). Of the items with pictures just under half were in colour (n=94) whilst the rest were in black and white (n=95) (see figure 6). Most pictures were not accompanied by a caption, leaving much to the viewers' interpretation (see figure 8).

Table 5: Frequency of Images in articles

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Yes	189	37.6
No	313	62.4
Total	502	100.0

Figure 8: The Presentation of Images

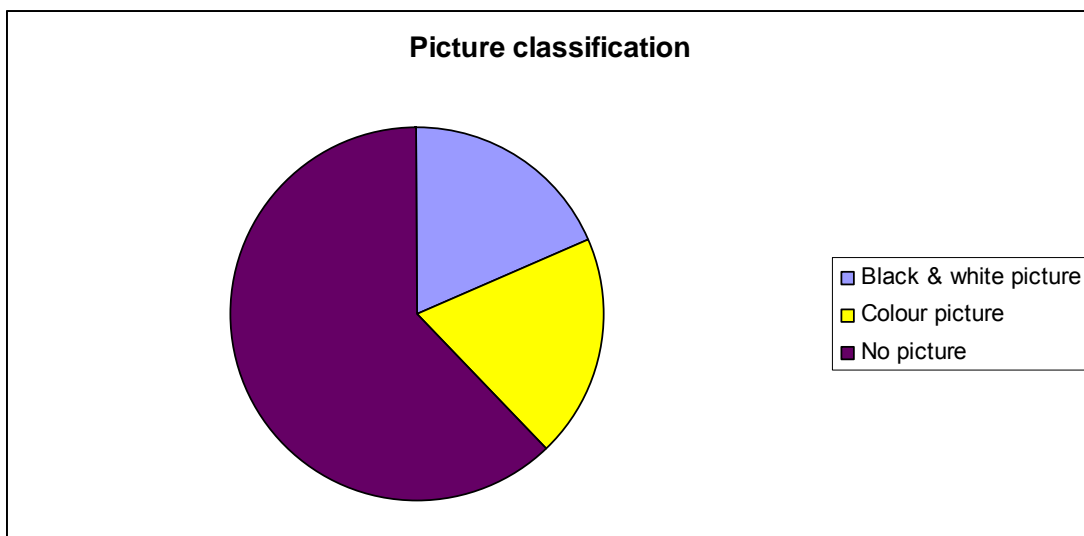
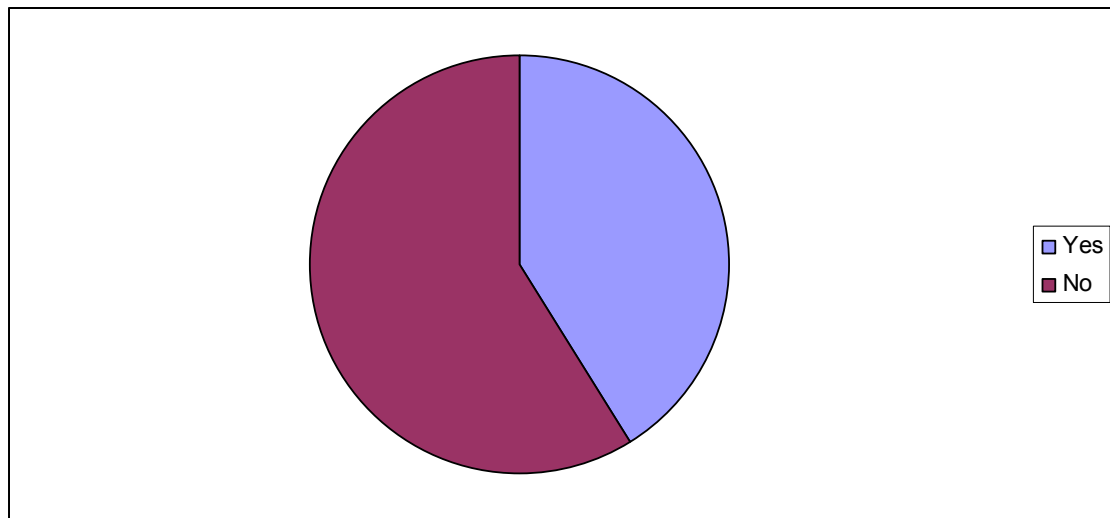


Figure 9: Pie Chart showing whether the picture had a caption



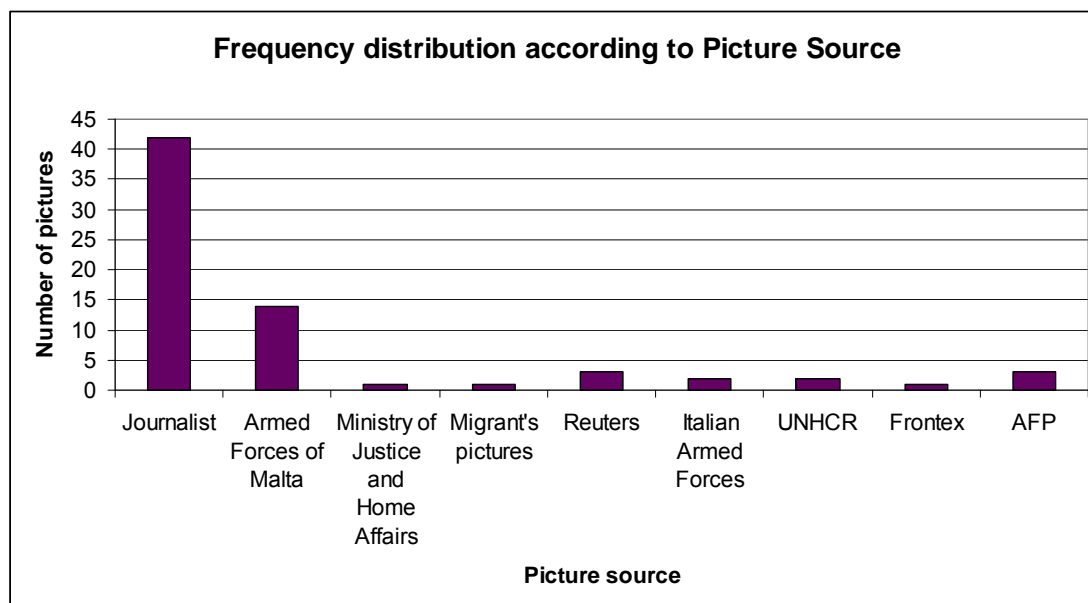
Most of the pictures were provided by official sources (see table 6), namely political entities such as the Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs and UNHCR (n=3 i.e. 4.2%), law enforcement institutes namely the Armed Forces of Malta, Italian Armed Forces, AFP and Frontex (n=20 i.e. 28.5%) and journalists (n=45 i.e. 65.2%). Only 1 picture (1.4%) was taken by a migrant. Thus, most pictures show an outsider's perspective on migration and do not take into account the migrants' viewpoint.

Table 6: Picture Sources

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Journalist	42	8.4	60.9
	Armed Forces of Malta	14	2.8	20.3
	Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs	1	.2	1.4
	Migrant's pictures	1	.2	1.4
	Reuters	3	.6	4.3
	Italian Armed Forces	2	.4	2.9
	UNHCR	2	.4	2.9
	Frontex	1	.2	1.4
	AFP	3	.6	4.3
	Total	69	13.7	100.0
	Missing	No source given	119	23.7
No picture		313	62.4	
System		1	.2	

Total	433	86.3	
Total	502	100.0	

Figure 10: Bar Chart showing picture source



Article Type

The vast majority (84%) of articles published were considered by the data analysts to be factual rather than of conferring an opinion (see table 7). This is not to say that the article did not include bias, one way or another, but the general article was meant to report news rather than provide someone's opinion.

Table 7: Cross tabulation of name of newspaper and article type.

Newspaper	Article type		Total
	Factual	Opinion	
Malta Today	30	17	47
Il- Mument	12	2	14
The Malta Independent	94	11	105
Meusac News	2	0	2
Kull Hadd	8	1	9
It-Torca	14	1	15
Sunday Circle	1	0	1
In- Nazzjon	83	6	89

L- Orizzont	64	7	71
Il- Gens	3	2	5
The Times	106	30	136
Illum	5	2	7
Total	422	79	501

Referents

Just over half the items analyzed (n=272, i.e. 53.9%) referred to migrants in the title (directly or indirectly). Of these, over half referred to migrants 'en mass' (n=144 i.e. 53%), using terms such as 'immigrants', 'illegal immigrants' or 'boat people'. 29% referring to individual migrants (n=78) by name or as 'migrant'. 18% (n=49) referring to a particular number of migrants (see Table 8 and Figure 11).

Table 8: Migrant referent used in the Headline

Newspaper	Headline reference to migrants			Total
	Mass	Number	Individual	
Malta Today	15	2	1	18
Il- Mument	5	2	0	7
The Independent	23	5	24	52

Kull Hadd	4	1	0	5
It- Torca	4	2	1	7
In- Nazzjon	25	15	16	56
L-Orizzont	32	6	11	49
Il- Gens	1	0	1	2
The Times	33	14	24	71
Illum	2	2	0	4
Total	144	49	78	271

Figure 11: Pie Chart showing Headline Reference type

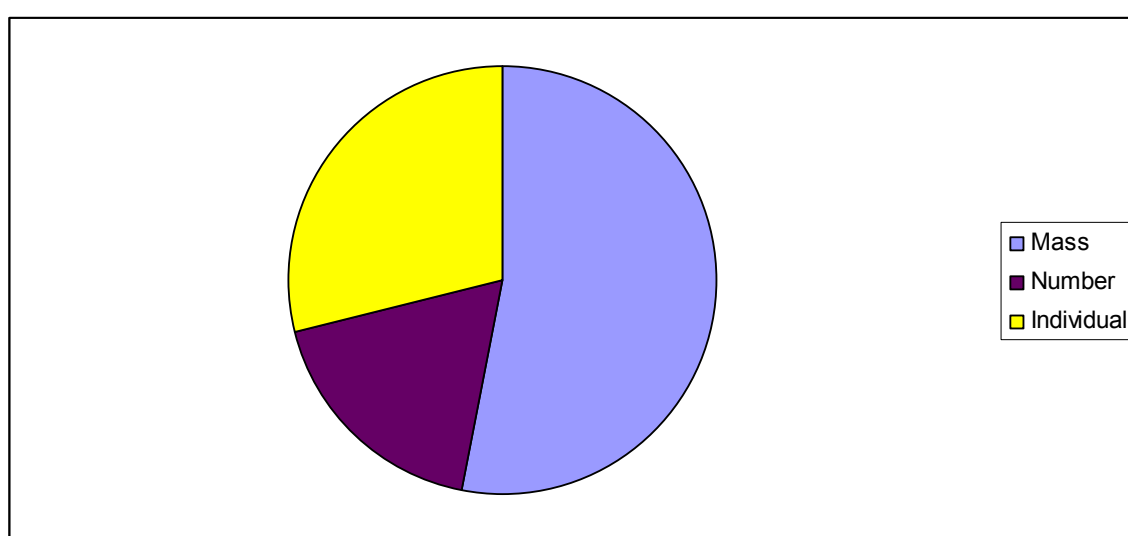


Table 9 and figure 12 (below) provide a description of the words used to refer to immigrants and immigration in the headlines of the various articles. From the headlines that made a direct reference to migration (n=347 i.e. 69%) “illegal immigrants” seems to be the term of choice, despite its connotations (n=137 i.e. 39.5%). A substantial number of articles also made a direct reference to the specific nationality/ies of the persons concerned (n=57 i.e. 16.4%). “Refugee” was used in 27 headlines (7.8%) and 17 headlines (4.9%) referred to “asylum seekers”. 12 headlines (3.5%) included the word “clandestines”, 5 (1.4%) included “irregular immigrants” and 3 (i.e. 0.9%) referred to “foreigners”. The terms “boat people”, “immigrants”, “illegals” and “blacks” were each used once (i.e. 0.3%).

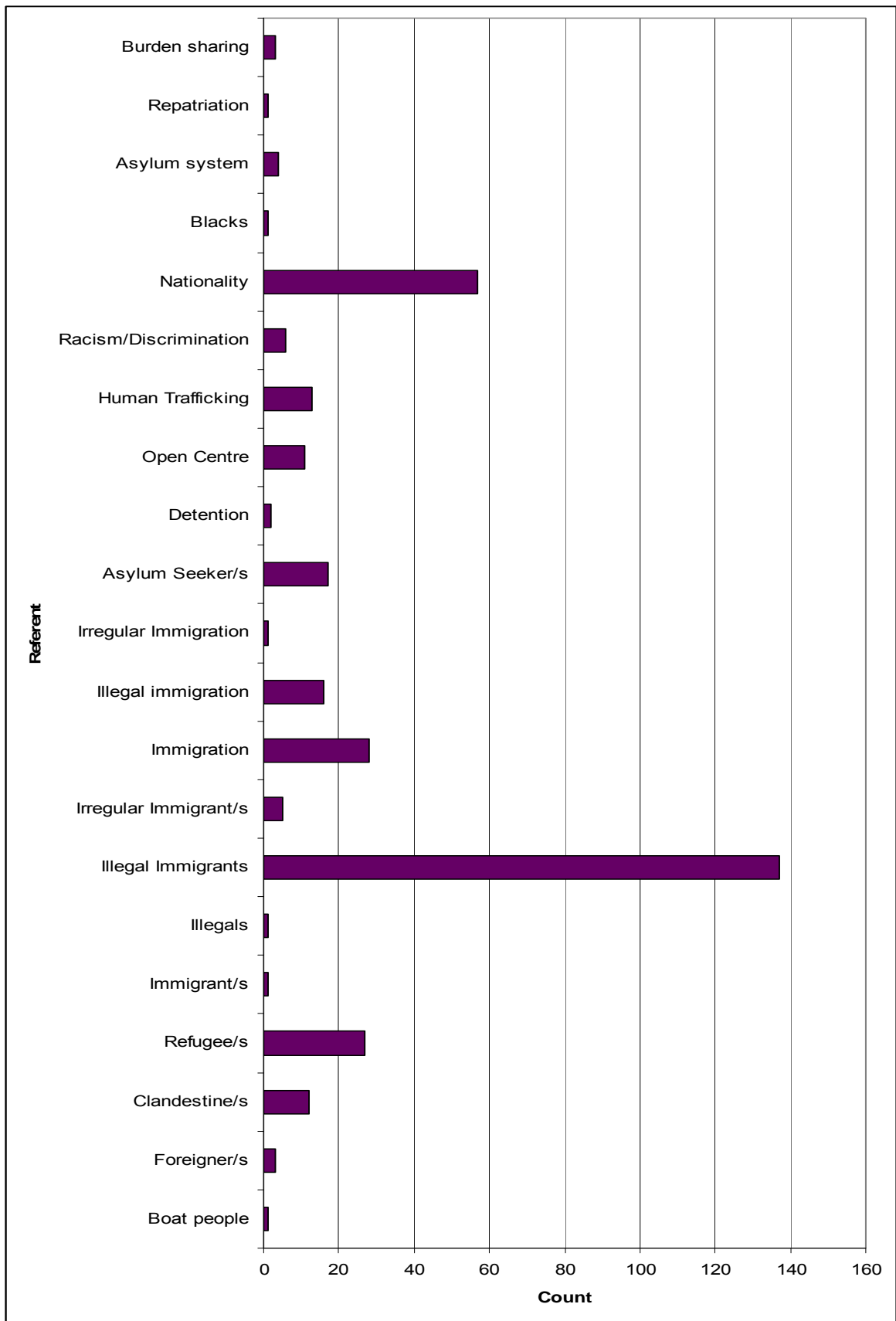
“Immigration” was used in 28 headlines (8.1%), while “illegal immigration” was used in 16 headlines (4.6%) and “irregular immigration” was used once (0.3%). The “asylum system” was referred to in 4 headlines (1.2%), “burden sharing” in 3 headlines (0.9%) and “repatriation” once (0.3%).

Table 9: Frequency table showing the referents used in the headline

Referent	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Boat people	1	0.2	0.3
Foreigner/s	3	0.6	0.9
Clandestine/s	12	2.4	3.5
Refugee/s	27	5.4	7.8

Immigrant/s	1	0.2	0.3
Illegals	1	0.2	0.3
Illegal Immigrants	137	27.3	39.5
Irregular Immigrant/s	5	1.0	1.4
Immigration	28	5.6	8.1
Illegal immigration	16	3.2	4.6
Irregular Immigration	1	0.2	0.3
Asylum Seeker/s	17	3.4	4.9
Detention	2	0.4	0.6
Open Centre	11	2.2	3.2
Human Trafficking	13	2.6	3.7
Racism/Discrimination	6	1.2	1.7
Nationality	57	11.4	16.4
Blacks	1	0.2	0.3
Asylum system	4	0.8	1.2
Repatriation	1	0.2	0.3
Burden sharing	3	0.6	0.9
Total	347	69.1	100.0
No direct reference	155	30.9	

Figure 12: Bar chart showing the referents used in the headline



A similar, but not identical, picture emerges when considering the frequency of referents used in the article body. The term “migrant” was used in over half the

articles (n=278). The term “illegal immigrant” was used in 137 articles, “clandestines” was used in 36 articles, and “illegals” in 4 articles.

39 articles referred to the migrants’ nationality and 4 articles referred to “Africans”. 10 articles referred to “people” or “person” and 2 articles referred to “boat people”. “Undocumented migrant” and “displaced person” were each used in one article, as were “third country national”, “non-EU national”, “non-British”, “scroungers” and “parasites”. “Refugee” was used in 103 articles, “asylum seeker” in 28 articles, “irregular immigrants” was used in 31 articles and “economic migrants” was used once.

On the same note, “migration” was used in 102 articles, “illegal immigration” in 69 whilst “irregular immigration” is only used in 29 articles and “asylum” in 26. An equal number of articles refer to “repatriation” and “clandestine journey” (n=5), while “relocation” is used 8 times. The terms “illegal departure” and “deportation” are each used twice; “clandestine immigration” and “invasion” are both used once.

Table 10: Frequency table of the number of articles in which each referent was used

Referent	Number of articles
Migrant/s	278
Economic migrant/s	1
Irregular immigrant/s	31
Illegal immigrant/s	137
Nationality	39
Person	10
Clandestine/s	36
Undocumented migrant/s	1
Displaced persons	1
Boat people	2
Illegals	4
Refugee	103
Asylum seeker	38
African	4
Third country national	1
Non EU nationals	1
Non British	1
Scroungers	1
Parasites	1
Migration	102
Clandestine journey	5
Clandestine immigration	1
Illegal migration	69
Irregular migration	29
Illegal departure	2
Invasion	1
Asylum	26
Relocation	8
Repatriation	5
Deportation	2

In short, consideration of the referents used for migrants and migration in both headlines and articles reveals that terms with negative connotations are more often chosen than neutral or positive terms.

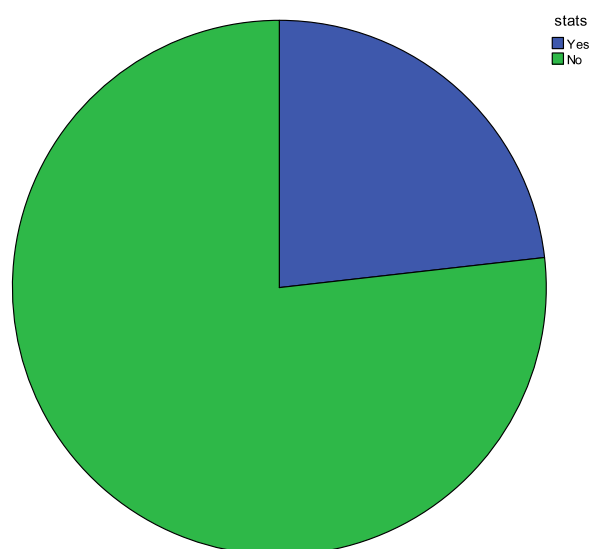
Supporting evidence

Just over 23% of the articles analyzed provided some form of statistics, whether this was about the number of arrivals on a particular boat or statistics of trends more broadly (See Table 11 and Figure 13).

Table 11. Frequency of statistics quoted in the articles

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	116	23.1	23.2
	No	384	76.5	76.8
	Total	500	99.6	100.0
Missing	System	2	.4	
Total		502	100.0	

Figure 13: Frequency of statistics quoted in the articles

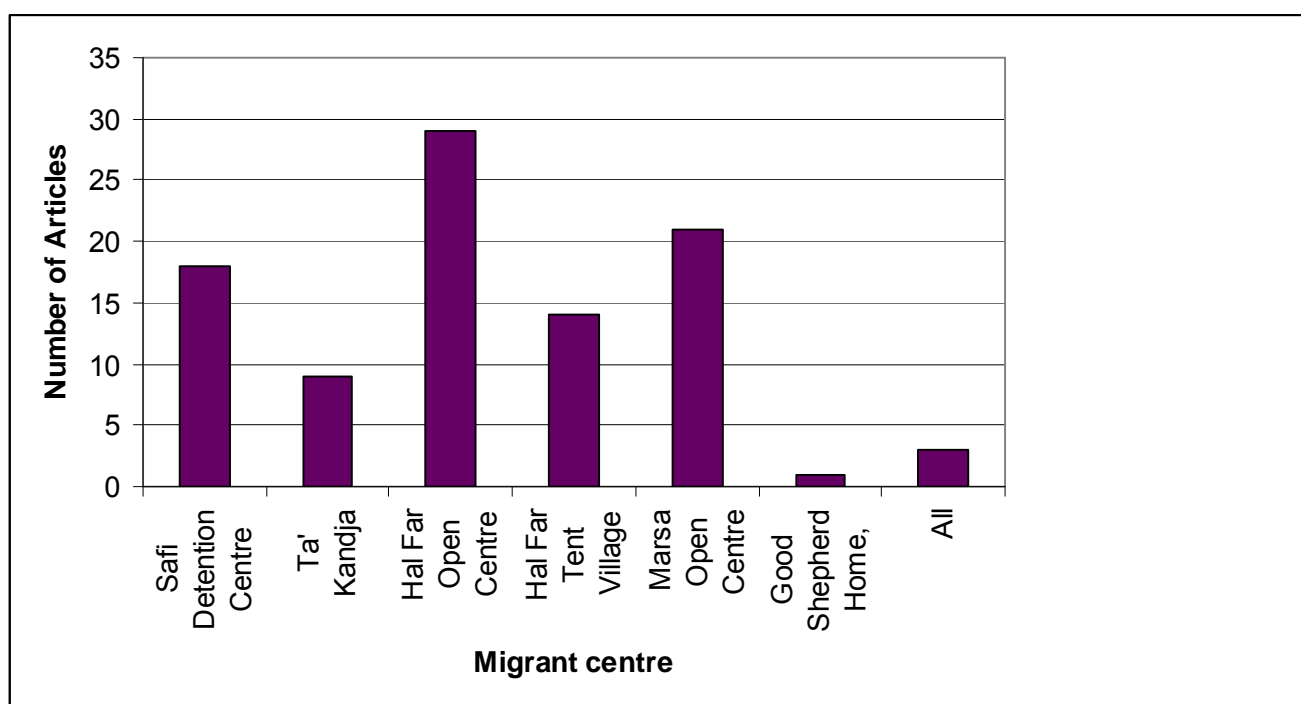


Detention and open centers were mentioned quite regularly (see table 12 and figure 14). The centre within most references was the Hal Far Open Centre (n=29), with Marsa Open Centre and Safi Detention Centre following closely (n=21 and n=18 respectively). Smaller centres are mentioned less frequently and specific reference to migrants living in private residences is not made at all. This perpetuates the idea of migrants “en mass” and living on the system.

Table 12: Frequency table showing the number of articles each Migrant Centre was mentioned in

Migrant Centre	Number of Articles
Safi Detention Centre	18
Ta' Kandja	9
Hal Far Open Centre	29
Hal Far Tent Village	14
Marsa Open Centre	21
Good Shepherd Home, Balzan	1
All	3

Figure 14: Bar graph showing the number of articles each Migrant Centre was mentioned in



Article subject

In terms of article subjects one notes a number of areas which seem to attract quite a lot of attention. These include migrants and crime (n=85 i.e. 18.7%), government efforts related to migration (n=79 i.e. 17.3%) and migrant arrivals (n=60 i.e. 13.2%). Issues relating to racism/discrimination featured in 19 articles (4.2%) and migrants' rights was the subject of only one article (0.2%). Such results show that the Maltese press mostly orientates on a negative presentation of migration problems. Only 20% of articles in the Maltese press promote positive attitude towards migrants and asylum seekers.

Table 13: Frequency table showing article subject

Article subject	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Government Efforts - collaborating with EU	43	8.6	9.4
Government Efforts – General	19	3.8	4.2
Government Efforts - Planning with other States	17	3.4	3.7
EU Efforts	21	4.2	4.6
Employment	5	1.0	1.1
Resettlements	26	5.2	5.7
Commemoration	1	.2	.2
Arrivals	60	12.0	13.2
Racism and Discrimination	19	3.8	4.2
Migrants denied access to Europe	1	.2	.2
Open Centres	13	2.6	2.9
Detention	3	.6	.7
Migrants escaping from detention centre	4	.8	.9
Repatriations	10	2.0	2.2
Simshar tragedy	3	.6	.7
Eritrean boat tragedy	28	5.6	6.1
Migrants and Health	2	.4	.4
Migrants trying to escape from Malta	15	3.0	3.3
Human Trafficking	13	2.6	2.9
Migrants sent to prison	14	2.8	3.1
Migrants and drugs	9	1.8	2.0
Migrants and other crime	62	12.4	13.6
Immigration - general situation	41	8.2	9.0
Protest against immigration law	4	.8	.9
Protests in migrant centres	14	2.8	3.1
Police/Military action	8	1.6	1.8
Migrants' rights	1	.2	.2
Total	456	90.8	100.0
Missing	46	9.2	
Total	502	100.0	

A look at the way migrants are described in the headline mainly focuses on migrants' arrivals (n=36) and migrants being sent to prison (n=24). Migrants were also frequently presented as victims or as relocating (n=21 in each case) or escaping from Malta (n=20). The Maltese press rarely presents migrants as workers (n=2),

migrants engaging in voluntary work (n=1), migrants as friends (n=1) or migrants winning the lottery (n=1).

During the research period, migrants' personal narratives appeared only four times. Thus, the information which newspaper readers receive regarding migration is highly influenced by journalists' formulated information. (See table 13).

Table 14: Migrant portrayal in the Headline

	Newspaper											
	Malta Today	Il-Mument	The Independent	Kull Hadd	It-Torca	Sunday Circle	In-Nazzjon	L-Orizzont	Il-Gens	The Times	Illum	Total
Migrants as workers	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Migrants with illegal documents	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	3	0	9
Migrants as violent people	0	0	5	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	0	11
Migrants being sent to jail	0	0	12	1	1	0	4	4	0	2	0	24
Migrants escaping from Malta	1	0	5	0	0	0	6	3	0	5	0	20
Migrants protesting	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	5
Migrants as scapegoats	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Relocation	0	1	3	0	1	0	8	3	0	4	1	21
Migrants and drugs	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Repatriation	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	4
Migrants rape	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Migrants involved in sham marriages	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Migrant's story	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Migrants as disease-carrying	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Migrants winning lottery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Migrants doing voluntary work	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Migrants as friends	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Migrants should be sent back	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Migrants arriving	4	1	6	2	2	0	2	2	2	13	2	36
Migrants escaping from the detention centre	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Migrants facing poverty	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Migrants stealing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Migrant families	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Migrants as victims	2	0	5	1	1	1	1	0	0	10	0	21
Total	8	2	45	5	5	1	33	17	2	46	3	176

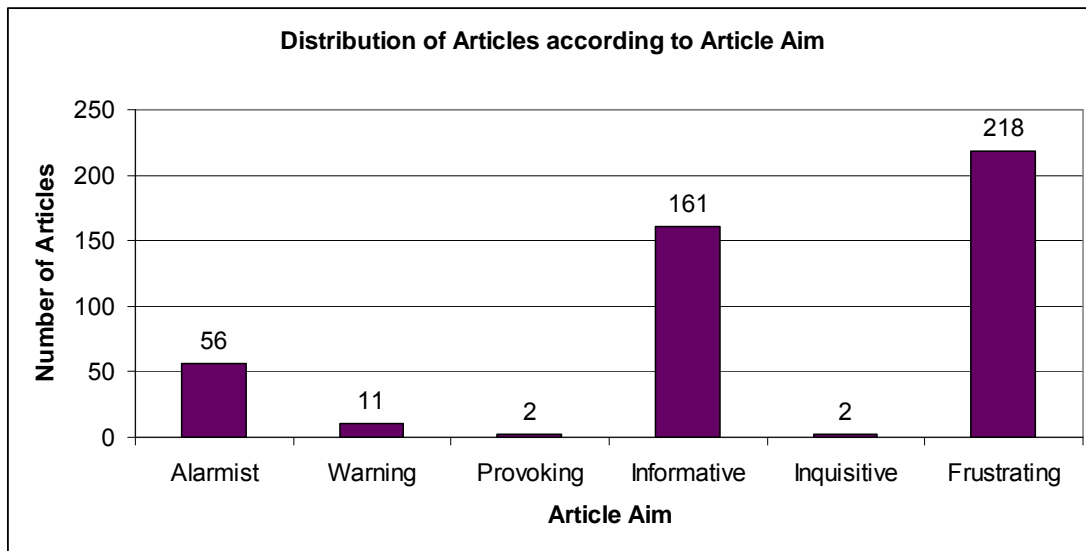
Article aim and tone

Articles were also classified according to the aim that they seemed to put forward to the readers (see table 15 below). Most articles seemed to create a sense of frustration about migration issues among readers (n=218 i.e. 49%). 78% of the articles that were considered to be frustrating were published in The Times and The Malta Independent (n=90 and n=80 respectively). 37% of articles (n=161) aimed at informing the public (most of these articles were published in L-Orizzont, n=50, and In-Nazzjon, n=65), 12% seemed to cause alarm (these were mainly published in The Times) and 2% tried to warn the readers of future happenings.

Table 15: Cross tabulation of the Newspaper and the article aim

		Article aim						Total
		Alarmist	Warning	Provoking	Informative	Inquisitive	Frustrating	
Newspaper name	Malta Today	2	0	0	0	0	24	26
	Il- Mument	1	1	0	12	0	0	14
	Malta Today Midweek	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
	The Independent	5	0	0	3	0	88	96
	Meusac News	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
	Kull Hadd	4	0	0	5	0	0	9
	It- Torca	1	3	0	10	0	0	14
	Sunday Circle	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	In- Nazzjon	10	3	0	65	0	3	81
	L-Orizzont	10	3	1	50	1	1	66
	Il- Gens	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
	The Times	21	1	1	4	1	100	128
	Illum	1	0	0	5	0	0	6
Total		56	11	2	161	2	218	450

Figure 15: Pie chart showing article aim

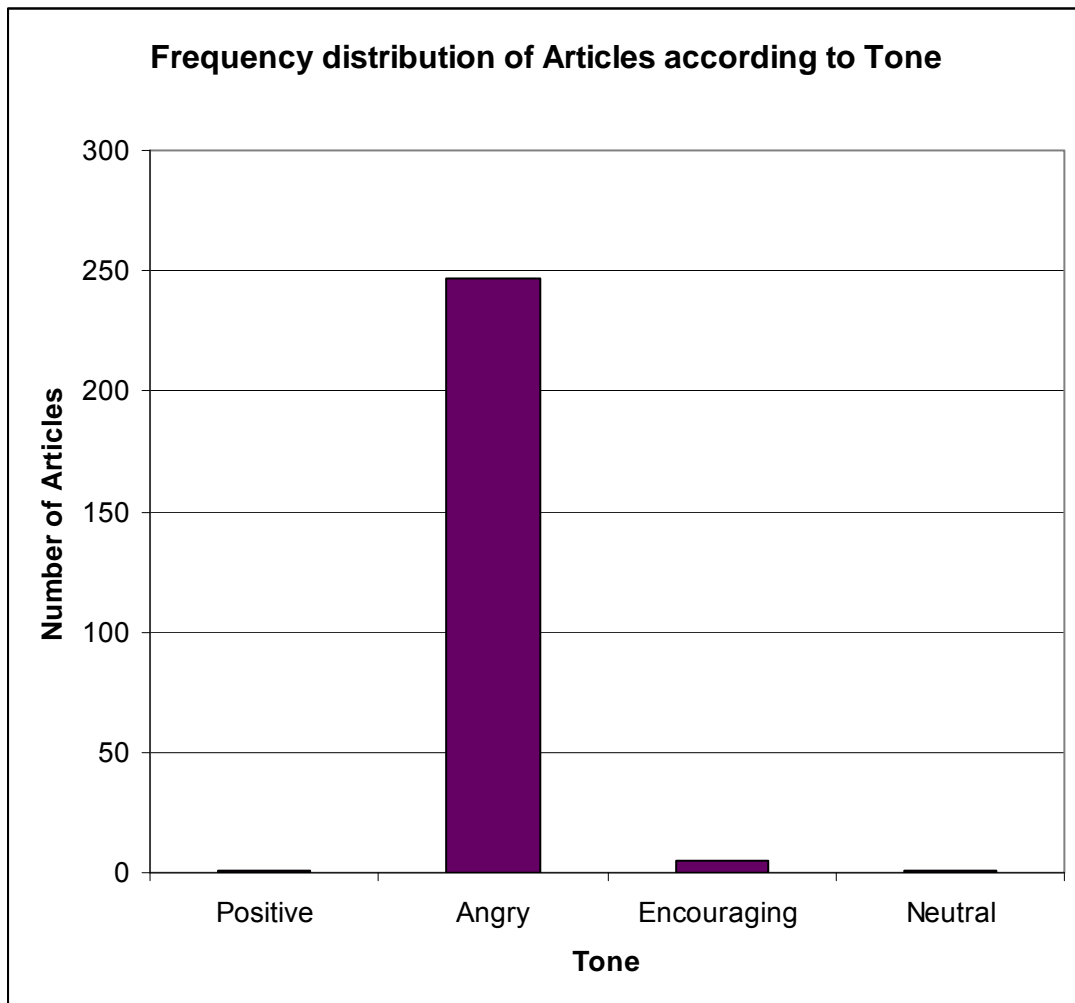


Almost half the articles seem to have been written in an angry tone (n=247 i.e. 49.2%). Conversely, only 1 article was written in a neutral tone (i.e. 0.4%). Very few articles were written in a positive or encouraging tone (n=1 i.e. 0.4% and n=5 i.e. 1.8% respectively). Thus, once again the authors seem to have been writing with an influential pen that does not give readers an objective view of the situation, nor does it shed positive light on it (See Table 14 and Figure 14).

Table 16: Tone of voice in which the readers perceived the articles to have been written

Tone	Number of Articles
Positive	1
Angry	247
Encouraging	5
Neutral	1

Figure 16: Bar Graph showing the tone in which the articles were written



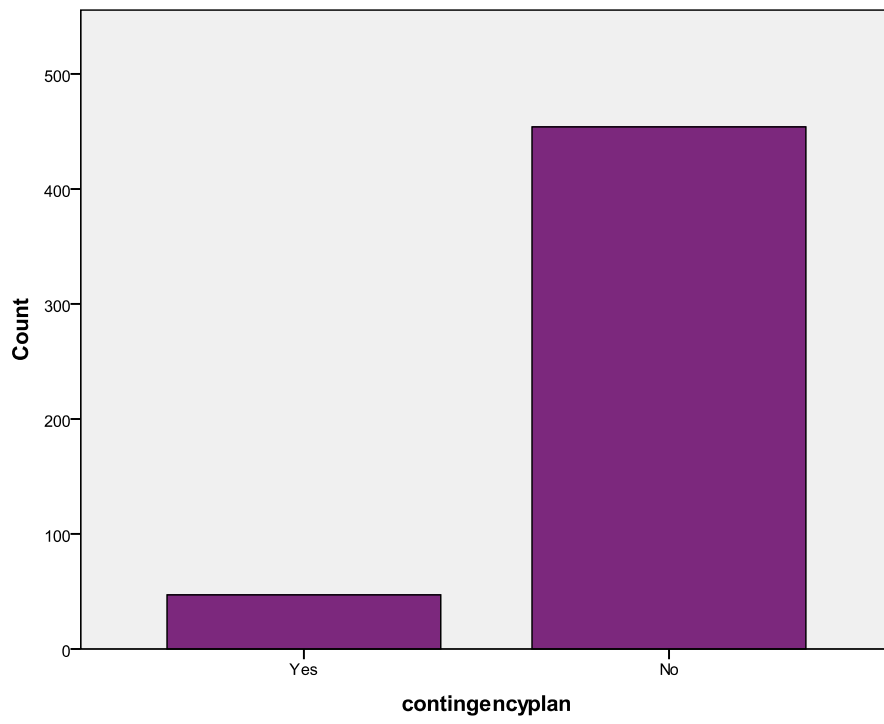
Future plans

Only 47 articles (9.4%) included a contingency plan.

Table 16: Frequency table showing number of articles discussing a contingency plan

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	47	9.4	9.4
	No	454	90.4	90.6
	Total	501	99.8	100.0
Missing	System	1	0.2	
Total		502	100.0	

Figure 17: Bar graph showing number of articles offering a contingency plan



Television

This study incorporated all Maltese television stations (5). These stations broadcasted migration issues 87 times over the period in question.

Television viewing

TVM was the preferred station between July and September 2009, with a following of 21.3% of television viewers (see figure 10 below). OneTV followed, with 14.1% of viewers in the same timeframe. In third place came NET TV, with 6.3% of viewers.

Female viewers outnumbered male listeners by 8.6 percentage points. Visual inspection of the gender distribution of viewers of each channel indicates that women outnumbered men for each of the channels under review.

TVM was also the preferred television station across four out of seven of the age brackets. In fact, TVM dominated viewer statistics for people aged 30 and over, while the younger age groups preferred Italian television channels¹.

While the majority of Bay Radio's listeners (45.2%) are aged between 15 and 24, the majority of XFM's listeners (41.3%) fall into the 30-49 age group. Radio 101's listeners mainly fell into the 30-49 and 50-64 age brackets, both of which incorporated 31.1% of Radio 101's. The majority of the listeners of the other stations fell into the 50-64 age bracket, with 43.4% of Super One Radio's, 41.3% of Radju Malta's and 36.7% of RTK's listeners falling into this category.

Migration coverage

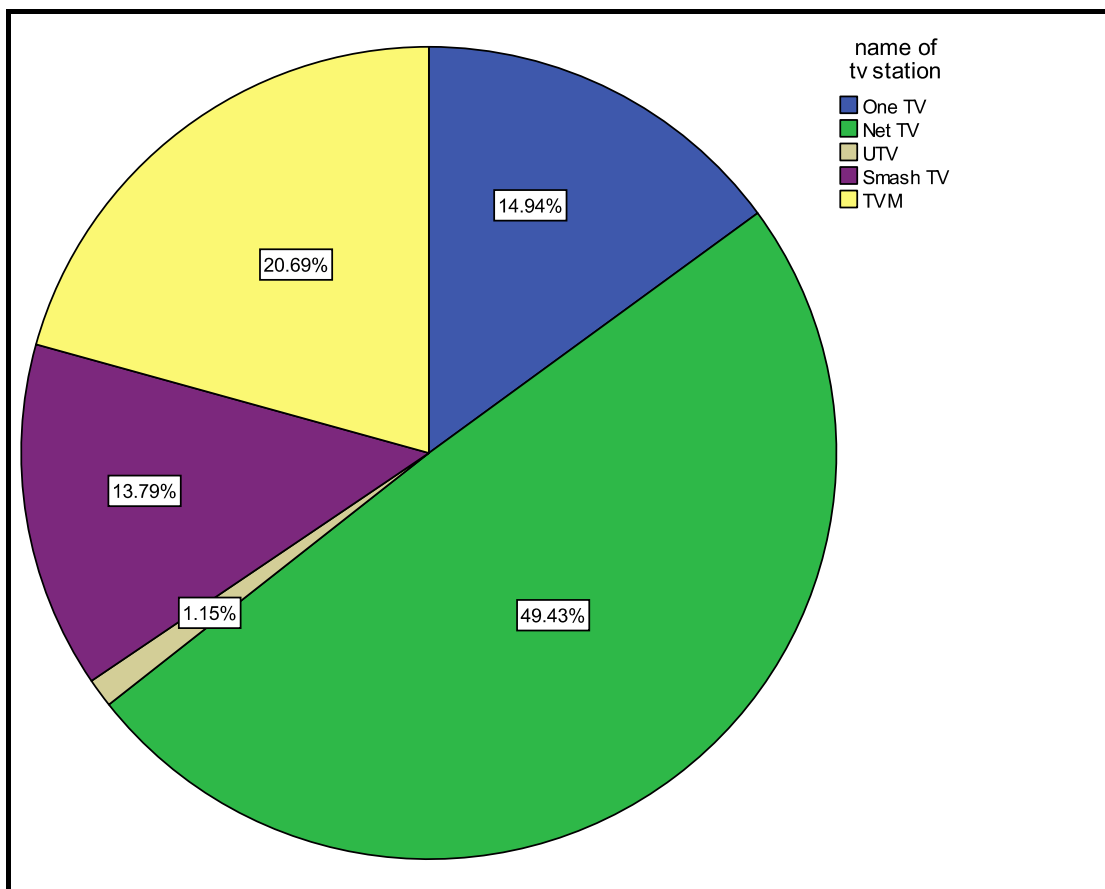
However, the extent to which migration issues are covered by each television station varies dramatically. Almost half the broadcasts (49.4%) were shown on Net TV, while iTV only showed one programme on the matter. The remaining television stations, TVM, One TV and Smash TV, respectively featured 18, 13 and 12 programmes about such issues (see table 1 and chart 1).

Table 17: Frequency table showing Television Stations

¹ 23.68% of 30-49 year olds, 25.16% of 50-64 year olds, 22.03% of 65-79 year olds, and 33.33% of 80+ year olds watch TVM. Italia 1 was the preferred channel of people between 12-14 year olds.

	Frequency	Percent
One TV	13	14.9
Net TV	43	49.4
iTV	1	1.1
Smash TV	12	13.8
TVM	18	20.7
Total	87	100.0

Figure 18: Pie Chart showing Television Stations

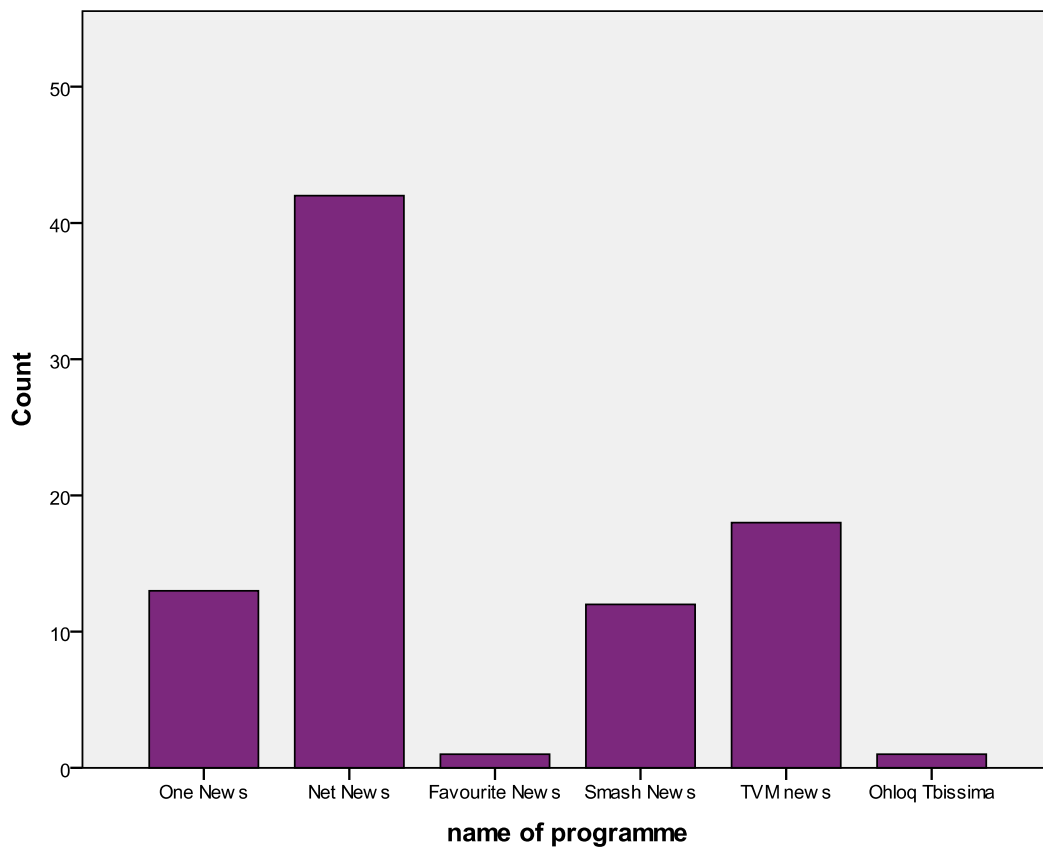


The study focused on the main news programmes. Below is a frequency distribution of news programmes by channel.

Table 18: Frequency Table of the Programme name

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	One News	13	15.11
	Net News	42	48.84
	Favourite News	1	1.16
	Smash News	12	13.95
	TVM news	18	20.93
	Total	86	100.0

Figure 19: Bar graph showing Programme name



News bulletins on channels owned by a political party featured migration issues considerably more frequently than privately-owned or state-owned channels.

Table 19: Article distribution by TV Station ownership

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Political party	55	63.93
	Privately owned	13	15.11
	State	18	20.93
	Total	86	100.0

Most of the news stories presented were of a political (n=44, i.e. 50.6%) or human (n=32, i.e. 36.8%) nature, while court news stories only featured four times (i.e. 4,6%).

Figure 20: Pie Chart showing the Programme Type

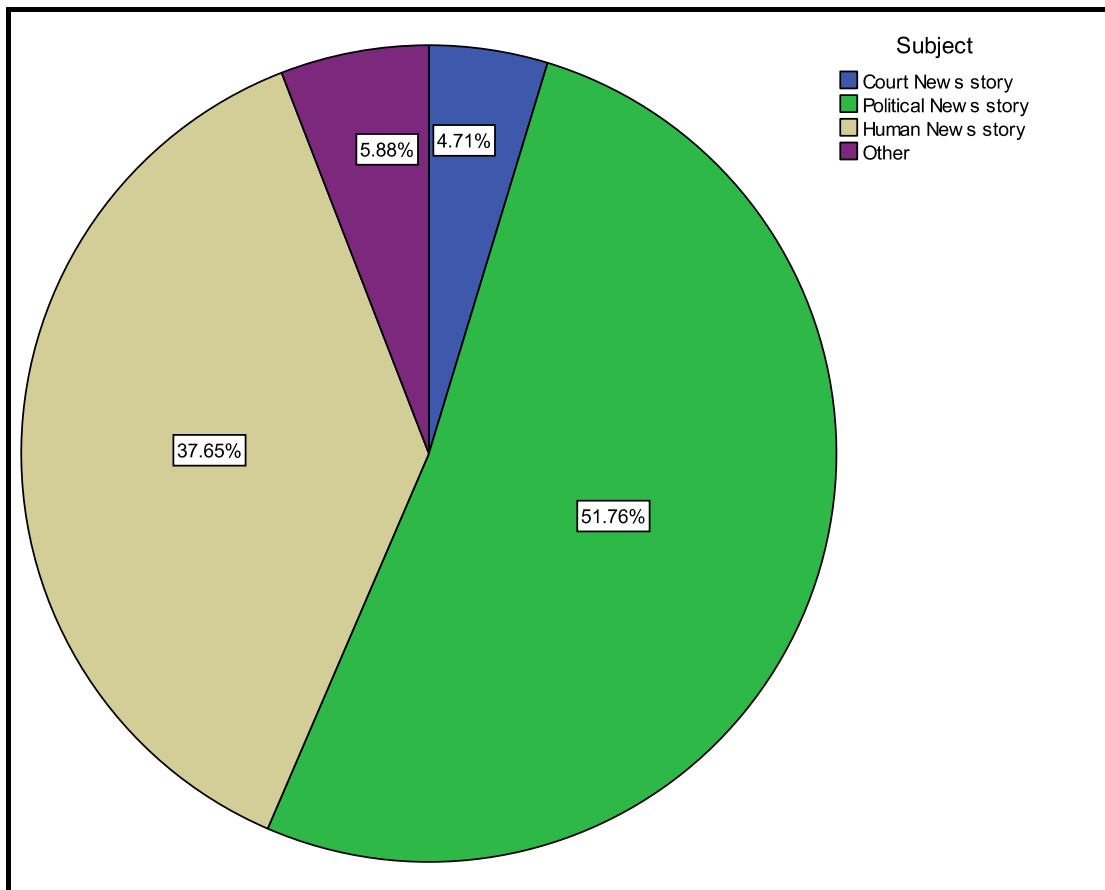


Table 20: Frequency Table showing the Programme Type

	Frequency	Percent	
Programme Type	Court news story	4	4.6
	Political news story	44	50.6
	Human news story	32	36.8
	Other	5	5.7
	Not Applicable	2	2.3
	Total	87	100.0

Programmes covering migration issues were shown every day of the week. However, most programmes were shown on a Friday (n=30 i.e. 34.5%), while very few programmes on the matter were broadcast on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday (n=6 i.e. 6.9%, n=5 i.e. 5.7% and n=7 i.e. 8% respectively).

Table 21: Frequency table showing the days of broadcast

	Frequency	Percent	
Day	Monday	11	12.6
	Tuesday	10	11.5
	Wednesday	6	6.9
	Thursday	11	12.6
	Friday	30	34.5
	Saturday	5	5.7
	Sunday	7	8.0
	Total	80	92.0
	Missing	7	8.0
Total	87	100.0	

The topic was broadly referred to as 'immigration' in most programmes (n=87 times in 36 programmes). While the type of immigration was specified to be 'irregular immigration' only once, the harsher specification of it being 'illegal immigration' was used 43 times in 21 programmes. 'Repatriation' and 'relocation' were seldom mentioned (the former was used once and the latter was used three times in two programmes).

Actors in such stories are mainly referred to as 'immigrants' (n=167 times in 52 programmes) or 'illegal immigrants' (n=63 times in 44 programmes). The former was the most used referent for each TV station. On the other hand legal terms such as

'refugee' or 'asylum seeker' feature less frequently (n=58 times in 16 programmes and n=once in 1 programme respectively). Reference to migrants as 'people' is made in 12 programmes.

Table 22: Frequency table of the number of programmes each referent was used in

Referent	Number of Programmes in which referent was used	Number of Times referent was used
Refugee	16	58
Immigration	36	87
Immigrants	52	167
Irregular immigrants	4	4
Irregular immigration	1	1
Asylum seeker	1	1
Nationality	8	11
Illegal immigrants	44	63
Illegal immigration	21	43
Clandestines	1	6
Clandestine journey	3	3
Relocation	2	3
Repatriation	1	1
Person	12	24
Total	87	472

Table 23: Table showing the number of television broadcasts in which each referent was used

		TV station					
		One TV	Net TV	iTV	Smash TV	TVM	Total
Referents	Refugee	2	9	0	3	2	16
	Immigration	3	2	1	4	3	36
	Immigrants	7	26	1	5	13	52
	Irregular immigrants	1	2	1	0	0	4
	Asylum seeker	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Nationality	1	3	0	2	2	8
	Illegal immigrants	7	26	0	3	8	44
	Illegal immigration	2	15	0	1	3	21
	Clandestines	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Clandestine journey	0	3	0	0	0	3
	Relocation	1	0	0	1	0	2
	Repatriation	0	2	0	0	0	1
	Person	2	4	0	6	0	12

Figure 21: Bar Chart showing the number of broadcasts each referent was used in

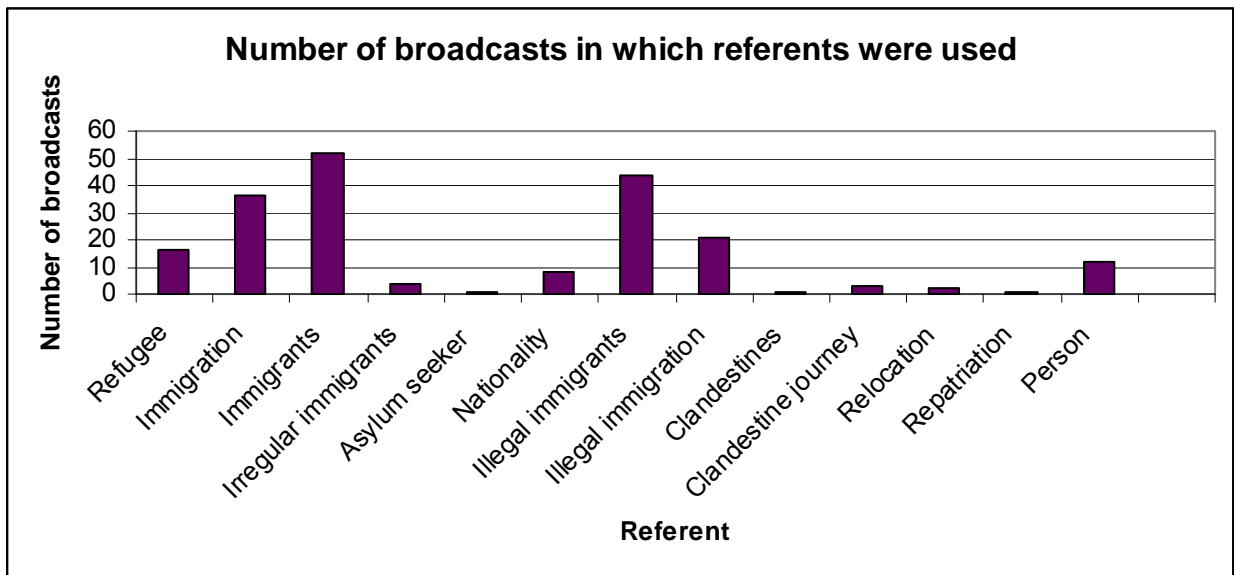
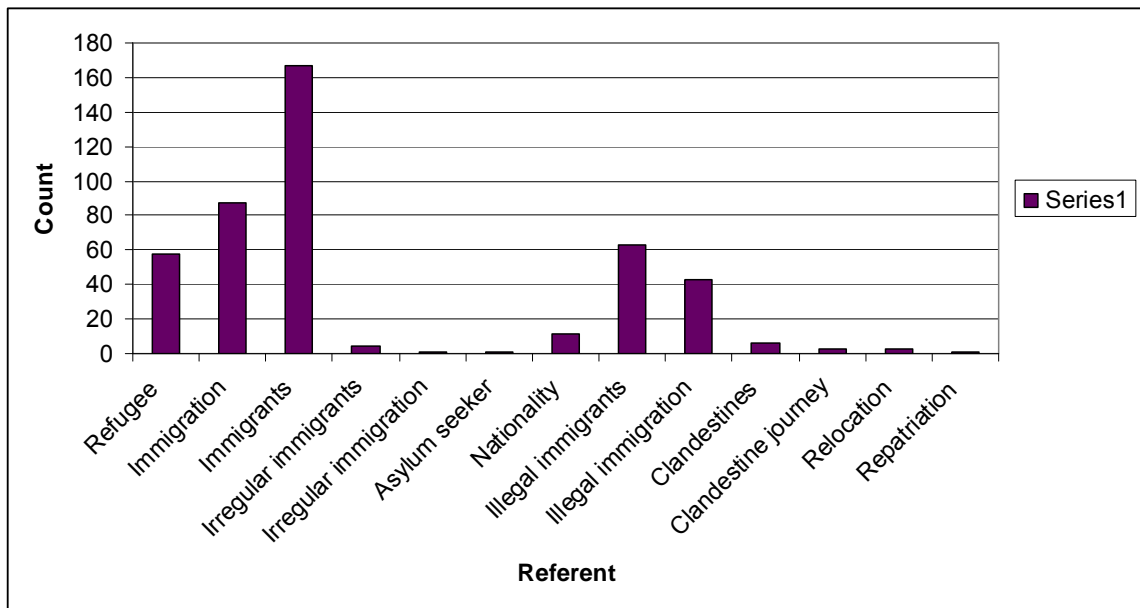


Figure 22: Bar chart showing the number of times each referent was used

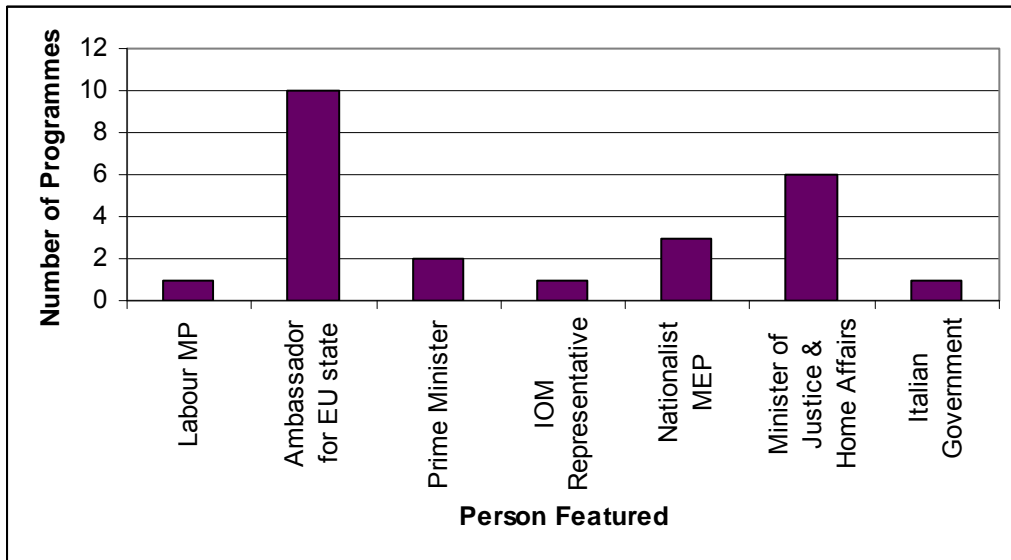


A number of programmes also featured guest speakers, namely EU ambassadors (n=10), Maltese politicians (n=12), a representative from the Italian government and a representative from the International Organisation of Migration.

Table 24: Frequency table of Guest speaker on TV broadcast

Person	Count
Labour MP	1
Ambassador for EU state	10
Prime Minister	2
IOM Representative	1
Nationalist MEP	3
Minister of Justice & Home Affairs	6
Italian Government	1
Total	24

Figure 23: Bar Chart showing person featured in the broadcast



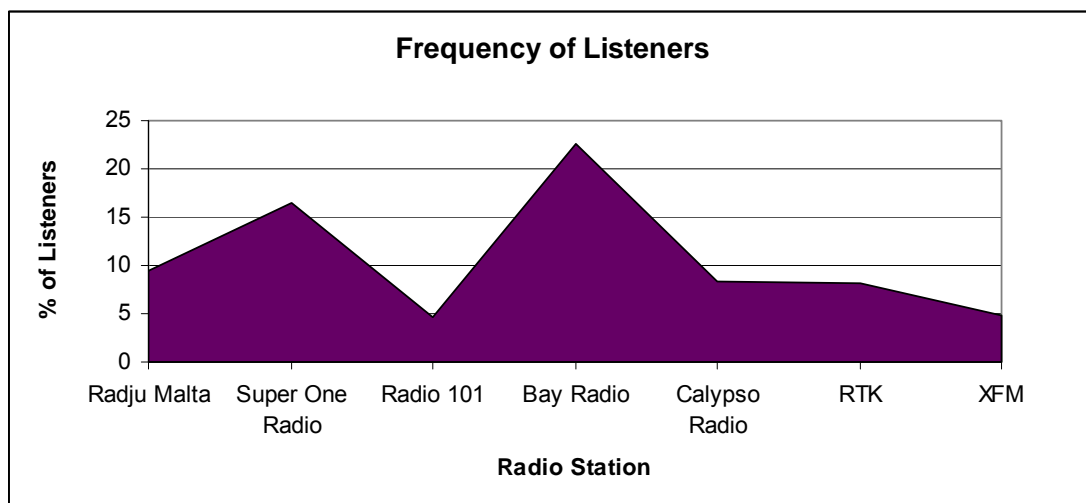
Radio

This study incorporated Maltese radio stations, which broadcast nationally and have news programmes. Thus, local radio stations and stations with no news broadcasts (namely music-only radio stations) were eliminated from the study. The study thus incorporates a total of seven radio stations, which collectively broadcasted migration issues 147 times over the study period.

Radio listening in Malta

Bay Radio was the preferred station between July and September 2009, with 22.67% of listeners (see figure 23 below). This was followed by Super One Radio, which had 16.46% of listeners in the same timeframe. In third place came Calypso Radio, with 9.42% of listeners, followed by Radju Malta (8.28% of listeners). The other radio stations included in this study, i.e. RTK, XFM and Radio 101, had 8.18%, 4.76%, and 4.66% of listeners respectively that season.

Figure 24: Frequency of Listeners per Radio Station



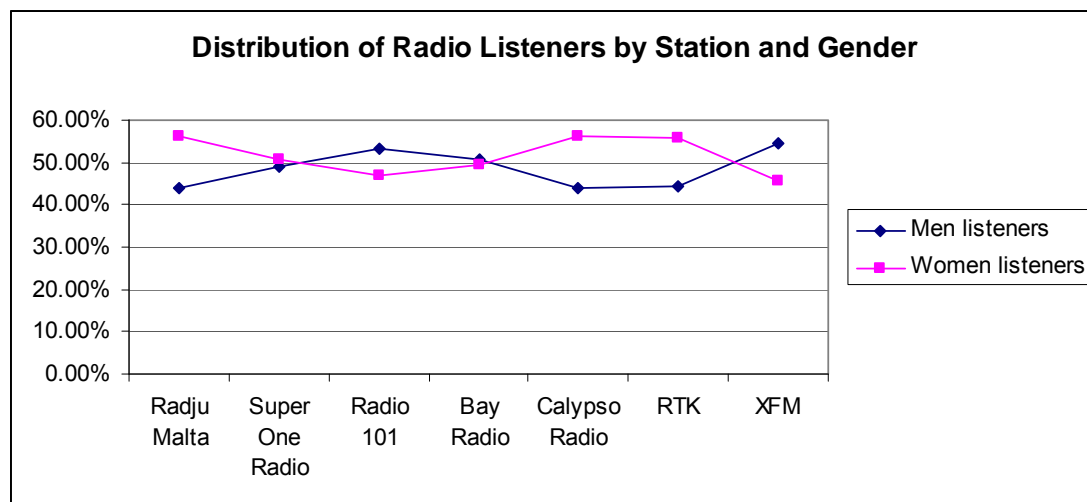
Female listeners outnumbered male listeners by 7.8 percentage points. 24.08% of male respondents and 21.39% of female respondents listened to Bay Radio.

Table 25: Distribution of Radio Listeners by Gender and Station

<u>Radio Station</u>	<u>Men listeners</u>	<u>Women listeners</u>
----------------------	----------------------	------------------------

Radju Malta	43.8%	56.3%
Super One Radio	49.1%	50.9%
Radio 101	53.3%	46.7%
Bay Radio	50.7%	49.3%
Calypso Radio	44.0%	56.0%
RTK	44.3%	55.7%
XFM	54.3%	45.7%
Total	46.1%	53.9%

Figure 25: Gender distribution of Radio Listeners by Station



Bay Radio was also the preferred radio station across four out of seven of the age brackets covered by the study. In fact, 52% of 12-14 year olds, 64.29% of 15-24 year olds, 48.48% of 25-29 year olds and 19.79% of 30-49 year olds tune in to Bay Radio. Super One Radio was the preferred station of the older age groups: 26.14% of listeners aged 50-64, 32.39% of listeners aged 65-79 and 25% of listeners aged 80 and over listen to Super One Radio.

While the majority of Bay Radio's listeners (45.2%) are aged between 15 and 24, the majority of XFM's listeners (41.3%) fall into the 30-49 age group. Radio 101's listeners mainly fell into the 30-49 and 50-64 age brackets, both of which incorporated 31.1% of Radio 101's. The majority of the listeners of the other stations fell into the 50-64 age bracket, with 43.4% of Super One Radio's, 41.3% of Radju Malta's and 36.7% of RTK's listeners falling into this category.

Bay Radio was the preferred station across all districts in Malta, with Super One being the preferred station for Gozo and Comino.

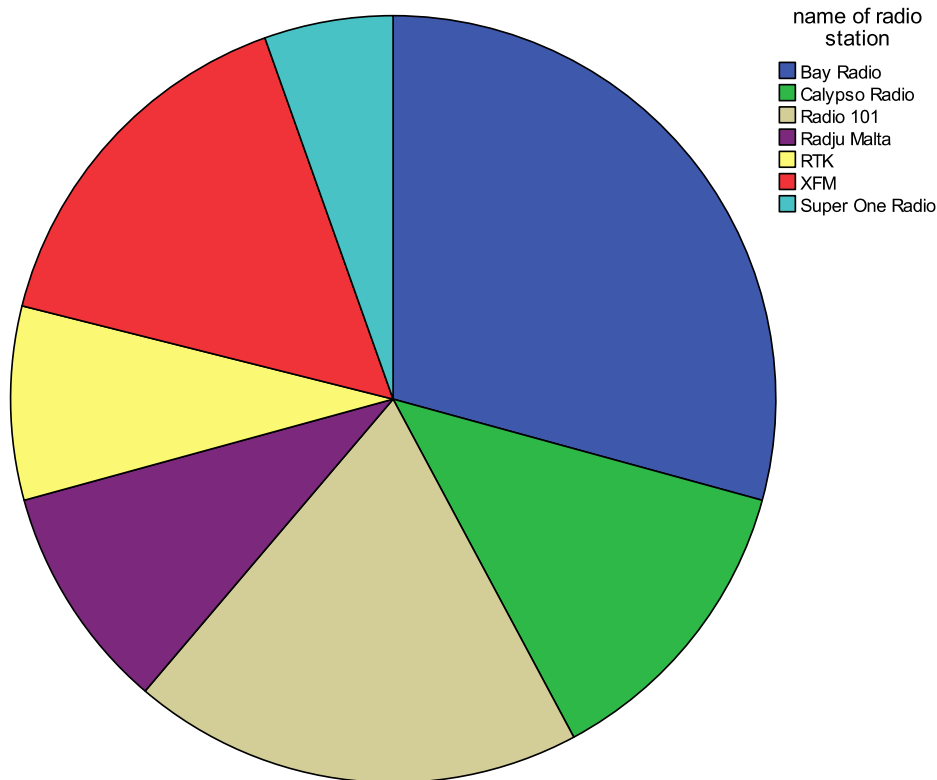
Migration coverage

Programmes relating to migration issues were most frequently aired on Bay Radio (n=43 i.e. 29%), which had almost twice as many programmes on such issues as Radio 101, XFM and Calypso Radio (n=28 i.e. 19%, n=23 i.e. 15.6% and n=19 i.e. 12.9% respectively). Radju Malta and RTK broadcast an almost even number of programmes on the matter (n=14 i.e. 9.5% and n=12 i.e. 8.2% respectively), while Super One radio had the least number of such broadcasts (n=8 i.e. 5.4%). All such programmes were news bulletins.

Table 26: Frequency table showing Radio Stations

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Bay Radio	43	29.3
Calypso Radio	19	12.9
Radio 101	28	19.0
Radju Malta	14	9.5
RTK	12	8.2
XFM	23	15.6
Super One Radio	8	5.4
Total	147	100.0

Figure 26: Graph showing Frequency of Migration-related programmes by Radio Station



The topic was broadly referred to as ‘immigration’ in most programmes (n=87 times in 21 programmes). While the type of immigration was specified to be ‘irregular immigration’ in only two programmes, the harsher specification of it being ‘illegal immigration’ was used in 23 programmes. ‘Resettlement’, ‘repatriation’, ‘deportation’ and ‘relocation’ were seldom mentioned (n=4, 3, 2 & 1 times in an equal number of programmes respectively), as was ‘human trafficking’, which was used only once.

Actors in such bulletins were referred to as ‘immigrants’ 249 times in 86 of the programmes, while ‘illegal immigrants’ was used in 77 times in 50 broadcasts and ‘irregular immigrants’ 31 times in 20 programmes. ‘Illegal person’ was used once, while ‘clandestines’ was used in twice in two programmes and ‘illegal person’ was used once. ‘Refugee’ was used in 31 times in 13 bulletins and ‘person’ 16 times in 16 programmes. The term ‘asylum seeker’ was never used on radio.

Table 27: Frequency of Referents used

Referent	Number of Broadcasts in which referents were used	Number of times referents were used
Refugee	13	31
Immigration	21	39
Immigrants	86	249
Irregular immigrants	20	31
Irregular immigration	2	2
Nationality	23	30
Illegal immigrants	50	77
Illegal immigration	23	67
Clandestines	2	2
Deportation	2	2
Relocation	3	3
Repatriation	1	1
Resettlement	4	4
Person	16	16
Illegal person	1	1
Human Trafficking	1	1

Figure 27: Bar Chart showing the number of broadcasts in which each referent was used

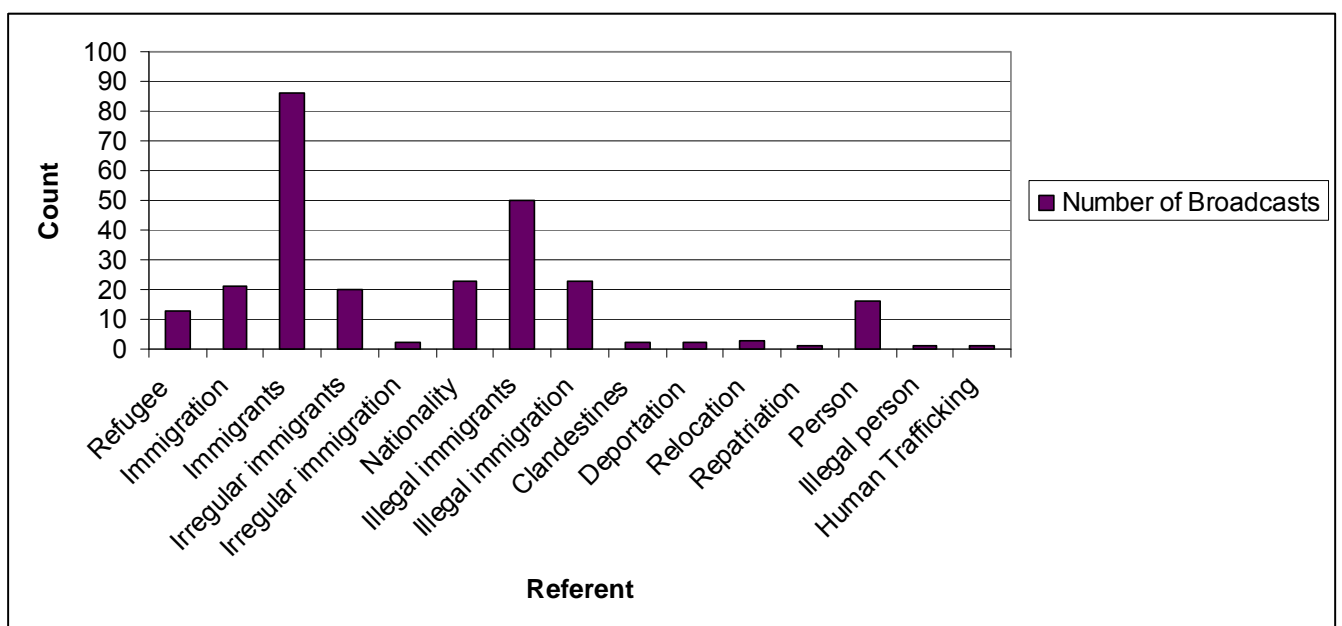


Figure 28: Bar chart showing the number of times each referent was used

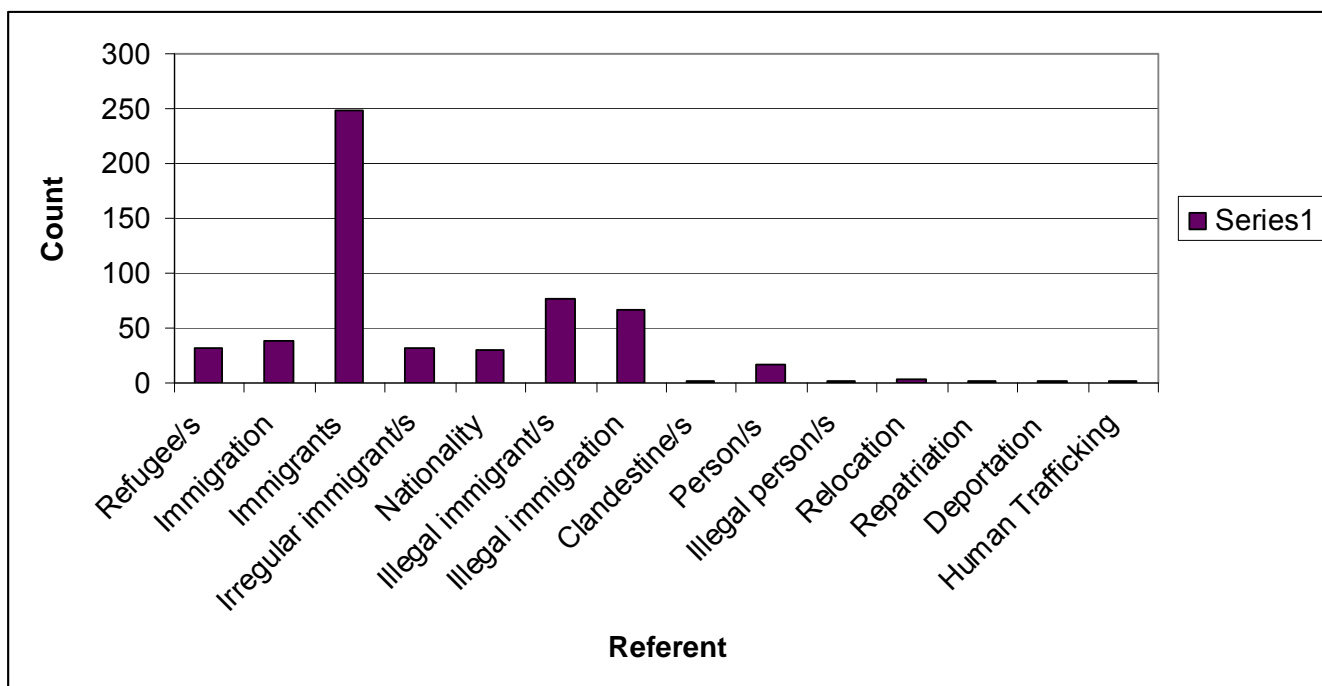


Table 28: Crosstabulation of the Referents used by TV Station

	Radio station								
	Bay Radio	Calypso	Radio 101	Radju Malta	RTK	XFM	Super 1	Total	
Refugee	3	3	4	1	1	1	0	13	
Immigration	2	0	9	5	2	2	1	21	
Immigrants	28	11	16	9	5	12	5	86	
Irregular immigrants	5	4	1	0	7	2	1	20	
Irregular immigration	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	
Nationality	7	5	4	1	1	4	1	23	
Illegal immigrants	10	4	15	9	0	1	7	50	
Illegal immigration	2	5	11	1	0	4	1	23	
Clandestines	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	
Deportation	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Relocation	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Repatriation	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Person	9	1	4	0	2	0	0	16	
Illegal person	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Human Trafficking	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	

5. Conclusions

A review of the portrayal of migrants across Maltese mass media, namely television, radio and newspapers, reveals that journalists are key players in bringing issues related to migration close to the Maltese population. Thus, journalists are not simply burdened with having to report factual happenings, but also with building migrants' identity. This is because people earn value through the way that they are defined socially. Since most people in Malta do not engage with migrants directly, the media plays the role of primary informant regarding migrants and migration issues, having a principal role in creating migrants' social standing.

Portraying migrants in a negative light, speaking about them as numbers rather than people and confusing legal terminology surrounding migrants and migration serve to stigmatize migrants, diminishing their migrants' social worth and hindering their ability to achieve personhood (*personnage*) within Maltese society. This paves the way for discrimination to take place in several contexts in Malta. Consequently, realizing that their status as migrants has taken over all other roles that migrants may have or have had, migrants feel vulnerable, helpless and worthless.

Baring this in mind, journalists should have a professional interest in presenting an objective and ethically-sound depiction of migration issues in their work. The People for Change Foundation has compiled a Manual for Journalists on reporting asylum issues, where one can find recommendations and guidelines regarding reporting such issues along with an explanation of the asylum process.

Newspaper Questionnaire

The following questionnaire was designed by the People for Change Foundation in collaboration with the Malta Broadcasting Authority. This questionnaire is the basis of a research project that seeks to review the way that migration is portrayed in Maltese Newspapers.

Newspaper name: _____

Date: _____

Page number: _____ Page title: _____

Author/s:

Article

leader:

Article title: _____

Article subtitle: _____

Article headline: _____

Words to describe migration in the headline:

Immigration

Migration

Illegal immigration

Irregular immigration

Clandestine journey

Other: _____

Words to describe migrants in the headline:

Immigrants

Irregular immigrants

Illegal immigrants

Clandestines

People

Other: _____

Article type:

Black and white

Colour (specify) _____

Does the article have a picture?

Yes

No

Picture size:

Not applicable

Picture content:

Migrants only

Objects only

Migrants and army officers

Migrants and police

Other:

Not applicable

Picture colour:

Colour

Black and white

Not applicable

Does the picture have a caption?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Picture caption:

Not applicable

Picture source:

Journalist

Independent photographer

Government entity (specify): _____

Other: _____

Was the article principally factual or did it put forward an opinion?

Factual

Opinion

Words to describe migration in the article:

Immigration

Migration

Illegal immigration

Irregular immigration

Clandestine journey

Other: _____

Words to describe migrants in the article:

Immigrants

Irregular immigrants

Illegal immigrants

Clandestines

People

Other: _____

Does the author quote people's speech?

No

Yes (specify in table below)

Person Quoted	Quoted text

Were statistics given in the article?

No

Yes (specify below)

Source of statistics	Statistics given

Did the article mention any detention centres or open centres for migrants?

No

Yes specify below:

Safi detention centre

Ta' Kandja detention centre

Hal Far open centre

Hal Far tent village

Hal Far reception centre

Hal Far AWAS

Marsa Open Centre

Good Shepherd Home, Balzan

Peacelab

Other: _____

Does the article mention a contingency plan?

No

Yes specify below:

What words are used to describe the present situation relating to migration in Malta?

What words are used to describe the Maltese government's efforts regarding migration in Malta?

What tone is the article written in? _____

What reaction does the article stimulate within readers?

Please add anything about the article that has not been covered by the questionnaire:

Radio Questionnaire

The following questionnaire was designed by the People for Change Foundation in collaboration with the Malta Broadcasting Authority. This questionnaire is the basis of a research project that seeks to review the way that migration is portrayed in Maltese radio.

Radio Station: _____

Day of broadcast:

Monday Tuesday Wednesday
Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

Date of broadcast: _____ Time of broadcast: _____

Length of broadcasting: _____ minutes

Programme type:

News
Discussion
Breakfast show

Other: _____

Programme name: _____

Were people quoted in the programme?

No

Yes specify below:

Person Quoted	Quoted text

Was there a vox pop in the programme?

No

Yes specify below:

Speaker	Main message
1	
2	
3	
4	

Were there any phone interviews relating to migration?

No

Yes specify below:

Person interviewed	Topic of interview

Were there any guests on the programme?

No

Yes specify below:

Guest	Topic of conversation

Was there an audience in the studio?

Yes

No

Words to describe migration in the programme:

Word	Speaker	Frequency of occurrence
Immigration		
Migration		
Illegal immigration		
Irregular immigration		
Clandestine journey		

Words to describe migrants in the programme:

Word	Speaker	Frequency of occurrence
Immigrants		
Migrants		
Illegal immigrants		
Irregular immigrants		
Clandestines		
Refugees		
Asylum Seekers		
People		

Answer this section for news programmes only:

Headline:

Yes

No

News type (fill in both columns):

Local

Court news story

International

Political news story

Human news story

Other (specify) _____

Was there a feature integrated into the news?

Yes

No

Please add anything about the article that has not been covered by the questionnaire:

Television Questionnaire

The following questionnaire was designed by the People for Change Foundation in collaboration with the Malta Broadcasting Authority. This questionnaire is the basis of a research project that seeks to review the way that migration is portrayed in Maltese television.

TV Station: _____

Day of broadcast:

Monday Tuesday Wednesday
Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

Date of broadcast: _____ Time of broadcast: _____

Length of broadcasting: _____ minutes

Programme type:

News
Discussion
Breakfast show

Other: _____

Programme name: _____

Were people quoted in the programme?

No

Yes specify below:

Person Quoted	Quoted text

Was there a vox pop in the programme?

No

Yes specify below:

Speaker	Main message
1	
2	
3	
4	

Were there any phone interviews relating to migration?

No

Yes specify below:

Person interviewed	Topic of interview

Were there any guests on the programme?

No

Yes specify below:

Guest	Topic of conversation

Was there an audience in the studio?

Yes

No

Words to describe migration in the programme:

Word	Speaker	Frequency of occurrence
Immigration		

Migration		
Illegal immigration		
Irregular immigration		
Clandestine journey		

Words to describe migrants in the programme:

Word	Speaker	Frequency of occurrence
Immigrants		
Migrants		
Illegal immigrants		
Irregular immigrants		
Clandestines		
Refugees		
Asylum Seekers		
People		

Answer this section for news programmes only:

Headline:

Yes

No

News type (fill in both columns):

Local

Court news story

International

Political news story

Human news story

Other (specify) _____

Was there a feature integrated into the news?

Yes

No

Please add anything about the article that has not been covered by the questionnaire:
