THE NEXUS BETWEEN EXTREMIST VIOLENCE AND THE REFUGEE INFLUX:

The Netherlands 2012-2016

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ISGA Report

The nexus between extremist violence and the refugee influx: The Netherlands 2012-2016.

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The nexus between extremist violence and the refugee influx: The Netherlands 2012-2016.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the scope and nature of the potential nexus between the increase of refugees to the Netherlands and the possible increase of politically or ideologically driven crime in the period of 2012-2016 in the Netherlands. We studied four phenomena of crimes with a political or ideological bias: (1) crimes committed by Salafists or Islamists; (2) crimes committed against migrants or asylum seekers; (3) inter-migrant crimes with a political and/or ideological bias; and (4) confrontation crimes between extremists of various political convictions. These four phenomena of crimes with a political or ideological basis were studied while using a wide array of sources. These sources, and the preliminary conclusions we were able to draw from these sources, will now be briefly examined in turn.

The refugee crisis in 2015

The first part of this research provided an analysis of immigration data. We mapped out the scope of refugee migration to the Netherlands in the period of 2012-2016. The data demonstrated that the Arab Spring in 2011 and the civil war in Syria which also started in 2011, coupled with the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS, ISIL or IS) contributed to a constant stream of refugees towards Europe, which eventually culminated in the refugee crisis in 2015. For the Netherlands, this meant that the amount of first-time applicants for asylum doubled in 2015 compared to the year before.

Crimes with a political or ideological basis

In the timeframe of this study extremist support increased. Extremist groups opposing asylum policies, predominantly left-wing, besmirched houses of policy makers and buildings to protest in favour of lenient asylum procedures; however, they opposed the strict asylum procedures even before the refugee crisis in 2015; it is an on-going trend. Radical groups opposing the influx of refugees, mainly extreme right-wing organisations, established vigilant organisations and organised protests. Confrontations between groups of various political convictions occurred, which created polarisation. Jihadist and Salafist movements used this polarisation to gain more ground for their organisations. In addition, there was an increase in foreign fighters leaving and returning to the Netherlands. All these incidents that occurred were not necessarily relating to the influx of refugees, but it is worth to mention these since they show an increasing polarisation in the Netherlands and they display a slight increase in crimes with a political or ideological basis.

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Media analysis

The media analysis consisted of two parts. First, we analysed traditional media sources in the form of two newspapers. Second, we analysed two social media pages; one left-wing oriented page, and one right-wing oriented page. For the newspaper articles, we developed tags and gathered data and coded these according to the four phenomena. *De Telegraaf* and the *NRC*, two newspapers on opposite ends of the political spectrum were the topic of this study. *The Telegraa*f is a right wing newspaper, whereas the *NRC* is a liberal orientated newspaper. The search yielded a total of 448 articles, 147 articles from *De Telegraaf,* and 301 articles from the *NRC*. Findings showed that the influx of refugees caused an overall increase in newspaper articles on the four phenomena. Content analysis of newspaper articles published in the first and last quarter in 2015 showed that *De Telegraaf* wrote in a predominant negative manner about the four phenomena, whereas the NRC wrote in a more positive, neutral manner. In addition, the *NRC* provided background information on the issues relating to the influx of refugees and tried to provide a more nuanced story, contrary to *De Telegraaf.*

Two Facebook groups, the "*Eigen volk eerst*" (a right-wing oriented page) and "*Socialisme.nu*" (a left-wing oriented page) were the topic of this part of the study. Examining all posts regarding the topics migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, we quickly noted that the right-wing oriented page only posted negative posts on their Facebook page related to this topic, whereas the left-wing oriented Facebook page posted only positive or neutral posts on the three aforementioned topics. We noticed that the right-wing group was predominantly focused on one issue, the refugee crisis, whereas the left-wing group focused on other topics, such as climate change, gender equality and social housing as well.

Election programmes of incumbent political parties

The election programmes of the incumbent political parties after the 2012 and 2017 national elections in the Netherlands constituted the last source of data. In 2012, eleven parties were elected into the House of Representatives. In 2017, thirteen parties were elected in the House of Representatives. The main issues in 2012 were education and the economy, whereas in 2017 safety and security increased in importance. After a careful analysis of the 2012 and 2017 election programmes, we noticed that the issues of migration, asylum seekers and refugees was slightly higher on the political agenda in 2017 than it was in 2012. Right-wing parties predominantly saw the refugee crisis and migration in general as a risk to safety and security in the Netherlands whereas the left-wing parties saw the influx of refugees as an opportunity to learn from and about different cultures.

Conclusions

The analysis of the aforementioned sources provided us with a small number of preliminary conclusions. First, the Netherlands saw an increase in the inflow of refugees leading up to 2015 with a peak in October 2015. At the same time, we saw a polarisation in the political and societal climate. This does not mean that a causal conclusion can be drawn from this information, but it is worth mentioning. Traditional and social media outlets both saw an increase in newspaper articles and Facebook posts on this topic. Lastly, when we focused on the election programmes, we saw that the topic of migration was slightly higher on the agenda. In the period of 2012-2016 polarisation increased but this did not result in an increase in violent incidents.

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1. Introduction

The influx of refugees from mainly Middle-Eastern and African countries to Europe was a hot topic in the past couple of years. Europe experienced a rise in migration flows in 2015, linked to the civil war in Syria and the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.[1] In 2011, the Arab Spring, demonstrations in Tunisia and Egypt, which caused their respective leaders to step down, started. In March 2011 similar sentiments were shared in Syria, which initially led to peaceful protests. The Syrian government reacted to these protest with force, killing hundreds of demonstrators and imprisoning others.[2] This crackdown on the protesters caused the country to split up in two camps; individuals supporting the government and the Assad-regime, whereas others supported the rebels. These consecutive events, coupled with the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, ISIS, or IS) caused many people seeking refuge in Western Europe.[3]

The aim of this research is at least twofold. First, it seeks to shed light on the migration in- and outflow of the Netherlands. Second, we aim to analyse the possible nexus between the increase of migrants and asylum seekers and the increase between politically or ideologically driven crimes. We will try to find an answer as to what extent the increased migration flows related to societal unrest in several Middle Eastern countries gave rise to socio-political and interpersonal violence. This does not mean that there is a definite correlation between the inflow of refugee and asylum seekers and the increase in politically or ideological driven crime; but it is worth examining since the latest rise in refugees and asylum seekers is a new phenomenon. We aim to provide an overview of the nature and scope of (1) crimes committed by Salafists and/or Islamists; (2) crimes committed against migrants and asylum seekers; (3) inter-migrant crimes with a political or ideological bias; and (4) confrontation crimes between extremists of different political convictions. In doing so, this research will offer a preliminary reflection on this topic.

This study is part of a larger research project on the possible increase in crimes with a political and ideological basis, possibly connected to the influx of refugees in 2015.[4] It is important to note that the migration flows between various EU member states vary in quantity and quality. Since the influx of refugees in 2015, migration and asylum issues have dominated public debates in the Netherlands, ranging from matters related to integration of asylum seekers who

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[1] IND, De IND in 2015: Jaarverslag, p.2
[2] Al Jazeera, Syria's Civil War Explained, 7 February 2017, last accessed on 28/02/2017
http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/syria-civil-war-explained-160505084119966.html
[3] Ibid.
[4] This study is part of the PoMigra project, in which politically and ideologically motivated violence related to migration is examined in various European countries, such as Germany, Greece, Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic and Belgium.

have been granted a residence permit, to issues concerning the housing of asylum seekers and providing education for this population.

On the level of national security, concerns arose that within these migrant population refugees were recruited by ISIL to conduct terrorist attacks in Western Europe.[5] The terrorist attacks in Paris (November 2015) and Brussels (March 2016) showed that ISIS sent ISIS-Operatives from Syria and Iraq to Europe, disguised as refugees to carry out attacks. The *citizens' report* (burgerperspectieven) of the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) of the last four months of 2015 reflected that some people were afraid that refugees were manipulated or utilized by terrorist organizations in order to carry out terrorist attacks.[6] Throughout the study period, the leader of the Dutch political Party for Freedom, Geert Wilders, repeatedly pointed out that terrorists and extremists were coming to Europe and the Netherlands under the guise of refugees.[7] In addition, migration flows to Western Europe, including the Netherlands, provoked many demonstrations and protests from both left- and right-wing extremist groups. Finally, given the vulnerable status of many refugees, including women and children, questions arose regarding the nature and scope of intra-immigration violence.

Structure

This report is set up in two parts. The first part will provide an overview of the current situation in the Netherlands in terms of incoming refugees, their country of origin, their application status and the number of times they applied for citizenship. It will do so for the period 01 January 2012 through 31 December 2016. The data will be gathered from the Dutch Immigration and Naturalization Service, part of the Ministry of Justice and Security. The second part of this research will provide a situational overview by focusing on the four phenomena. It will start with an analysis of threat assessments of the Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism. Then, we will continue with a newspaper analysis of two selected newspapers, *De Telegraaf* and the *NRC.* Next, we will analyse two selected Facebook groups, one right-wing and one left-wing, in order to provide an overview of the sentiment within society. We will also make use of political party programmes. For this we selected thirteen significant parties, which are all parties that participated in the elections of September 2012 or March 2017.

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[5] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 42, July 2016
[6] SCP, Continue Onderzoek Burgerperspectieven, Kwartaal 4 2015, 30 december 2015, p. 25
[7] PVV.nl, Inbreng Geert Wilders bij debat over aanslagen in Parijs, 19/11/2015, last accessed on 27/02/2017 https://www.pvv.nl/index.php/36-fj-related/geert-wilders/8776-inbreng-geert-wilders-bij-debat-over-aanslagen-in-parijs.html
PVV.nl, Inbreng Geert Wilders bij Bootvluchtelingendebat, 11/06/2015, last accessed on 27/02/2017 https://www.pvv.nl/index.php/36-fj-related/geert-wilders/8405-inbreng-geert-wilders-bij-bootvluchtelingendebat.html

The next chapter will describe in detail the type of data collected and the analysis applied to answer the research questions posed above. Next, chapter three will present the data gathered on immigration, while chapter four will present the analysed threat assessments and annual intelligence reports. Chapter five will present the analysed data from newspapers and chapter six will present the social media analysis. Chapter seven will present the analysed election programmes of thirteen political parties in the Netherlands. We will end with a conclusion in chapter eight. In doing so, this report seeks to shed light on the consequences of migration to the Netherlands; this will be a preliminary reflection rather than a comprehensive answer to the issue.

2. Methodology

This chapter consists of two parts. The first part provides background information on the scope of the issue and describes the varying flows to European countries. With this information, it is possible to provide a clear and concise comparison between European member states. The second part analyses the issue in depth, considering the four phenomena that were mentioned in the introduction.

2.1 Data sources

This part of the research provides the sources we used for this research in order to offer background information on the issue at hand.

2.1.1 Immigration data

In order to provide insight into the scope of migration to Western Europe, we used open-source information from the Dutch Immigration and Naturalization Service (Immigratie en Naturalisatie Dienst, IND)[8], Statistics Netherlands (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, CBS)[9], and the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Centraal Orgaan Asielzoekers, COA).[10] The IND, as part of the Ministry of Security and Justice, is the organization that carries out immigration policy in the Netherlands. This includes refugees, people who wish to work or study in the Netherlands or those who come to the Netherlands for family reunification and meet the legal requirements for reunification.[11] The IND is responsible for all visa applications, which implies that the data they provide are based on the actual amount of applications they receive on a yearly basis. These data offer an accurate and overall reliable overview of migration into the Netherlands. Every year, the IND provides an annual report on migration into the Netherlands, covering the previous year. The reports for the years 2012-2015 will be used for this end. At the time of writing, the annual report for 2016 was not available yet. However, the IND published monthly reports in 2016 as well, covering each month in that year. These were used to cover the year 2016.

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[8] Immigratie en Naturalisatie Dienst, IND. www.ind.nl, last accesed on 06/03/2017
[9] Statistics Netherlands, www.cbs.nl, last accesed on 06/03/2017
[10] Centraal Orgaan Asielzoekers, COA, www.coa.nl, last accesed on 06/03/2017s
[11] IND.nl, what does the IND do?, last accessed on 06/03/2017 https://ind.nl/en/about-ind/Pages/What-does-the-IND-do.aspx

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2.1.2 Migration related violence

Threat assessments and annual intelligence reports constitute a second source of data, to determine the nature and scope of the following migration related crimes: crimes committed by Salafists and Islamists, crimes committed against migrants or asylum seekers, confrontation crimes between left-wing and right-wing extremist and inter-migrant crimes with political bias. This information was gathered from the quarterly threat assessments developed and published by the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism, the annual reports developed and published by the General Intelligence and Security Agency and reports on discrimination from the Verwey-Jonker Institute and Anne Frank Foundation. Originally, we planned to gather the statistical information from the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) of the Ministry of Justice, Statistic Netherlands and publically accessible court documents, accessible via *www.rechtspraak.nl.* However, this information proved to be inaccessible via open sources, which is why we had to resort to other information. Of the three selected sources, the Verwey-Jonker Institute is the only source that provides quantitative information.However, the Verwey-Jonker Institute did not differentiate between extremist-right wing crimes against asylum-seekers and migrants and Muslims in general. We therefore decided to use the qualitative information regarding extremist-right wing violence against Muslims. Subsequently, we analysed and examined these three sources in order to see to what extent these four phenomena occurred in the Netherlands.

2.1.3 Newspaper data

In order to shed light on the nature and scope of refugee-related violence in the Netherlands in the period 2012-2016, we used newspaper data. In obtaining newspaper data, we made use of the database LexisNexis Academic, a database in which all newspaper articles and news wires are gathered. We have used LexisNexis[12] to gather the data instead of the European-Media Monitor tool (EMM-Tool)[13] since LexisNexis is more user-friendly. During a pilot screening while using the EMM-Tool, the search yielded a similar amount of articles with similar coverage, but since the EMM-Tool proved to be less user-friendly, we decided to use LexisNexis instead. In retrieving articles, we developed and applied so-called tags. These tags reflect on the four phenomena central to this research. By applying these tags in combination with one another (see Table 2.1 through 2.6), all newspaper articles that are applicable to these topics will be found and included in a database constructed to this end. A pilot screening of violent events relating to the refugee influx revealed the following tags (in Dutch) which were then used to

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[12] LexisNexis Academic,
http://academic.lexisnexis.eu/
[13] European Media Monitoring Tool
http://emm.newsbrief.eu/NewsBrief/clusteredition/nl/latest.html

obtain all relevant newspaper articles: 'criminality'; 'violence'; 'crime'; 'abuse'; 'trial'; 'ideology'; 'extremist right'; 'extremist left'; 'confrontation'; 'Salafism'; 'Islamist'; 'IS';   'ISIL'; 'ISIS'; 'Caliphate'; 'radicalisation'; 'refugees'; 'migrants'; 'asylum seekers'; 'asylum reception centre'; 'anti' and 'against'.

With these tags, we searched for newspaper article in Dutch newspapers, which meant we had to translate the tags into Dutch. This was relatively straightforward, although it should be noted that 'Islamism' proved to be an unpopular word used in newspaper articles. We discovered that the tags did not yield many articles. The reason for this is unknown; we can only provide a preliminary reflection at this point; we believe that the tags and keywords developed are not used in newspaper articles on reports and articles on the four phenomena.

To further assess the nature of the discourse of refugee-related violence, we collected newspaper articles from two major Dutch newspapers, including the *NRC* (Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant) and *De Telegraaf*. *De Telegraaf* is considered a more right wing newspaper, whereas the *NRC* is known as a more liberal newspaper.[14] By choosing these two newspapers, both ends of the political spectrum were covered which provided an accurate overview of the state of affairs for the period 2012-2016.

2.1.4 Social media data

We selected two Dutch Facebook groups that were assessed and analysed. The Facebook groups are all regarded as Facebook groups with a populist connotation. For the purpose of this research, we defined populism as follows: (1) Populism always refers to the people and justifies its actions by appealing to and identifying with the people; (2) it is rooted in anti-elite feelings; and (3) it considers the people as a monolithic group without internal differences except for some very specific categories who are subject to an exclusion strategy.[15] The groups we selected are *"Eigen volk eerst"*, a right-wing Facebook and "*Socialisme.nu*", a left-wing Facebook group. At the time of writing, the *Eigen volk eerst* Facebook group had 43.484 likes, whereas *Socialisme.nu* had 4.421 likes. We know that there is a significant difference between the two Facebook groups, but we decided to include a right-wing and a left-wing Facebook group. We aimed to only focus on Facebook groups active between 2012-2016; however, not all Facebook groups were active during this time-period due to violation of Facebooks' rules and regulations.

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[14] Semetko, H.A., and Valkenburg, P.M, "*Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News",* Journal of Communication, Spring 2000, p. 97
[15] Jagers, J., and Walgrave, S., Populism as Political Communication Style, An empirical study of political parties' discourse in Belgium, European Journal of Political Research, 2007, 46, p.322 (pp. 319-345).

2.1.5 Election programmes of political parties in the Netherlands

The most recent national elections in the Netherlands were in March 2017. The election programmes of the thirteen parties that are currently represented in the Parliament are included in this report. Two of the thirteen parties were new parties and these were also included. The previous elections were held in September 2012. After this election, eleven parties were represented in parliament. The two biggest parties of the 2012 elections (the right-wing Liberal VVD and the left-wing PvdA) together formed the coalition. After the March 2017 elections, the political landscape changed drastically; the two biggest parties of the September 2012 elections, the VVD and the PvdA both lost seats; the VVD lost eight seats, whereas the PvdA lost a historical amount of 29 seats. The current formation negotiations collapsed after exploring the possibility of a new cabinet with the Liberal Right party (VVD: 33 seats), the Green Left party (GroenLinks; 14 seats), the Christian Democrats (CDA; 19 seats) and the Democrats (D66; 19 seats). The talks stranded on multiple disagreements between the Green party on the one side, and the other three at the other; one of the issues was migration.[16] The main themes during the 2012 elections were the economy and education, whereas in 2017 the polarisation of the Netherlands and migration were emphasised.

2.2 Analysis

This paragraph presents the various methods we used to analyse the data that we gathered.

2.2.1 Immigration data analysis

The retrieved raw data focused on refugees. For the purpose of this research, we broke down these data into country of origin and issued residence permits. In doing so, this report differentiated between various groups of migrants. First, we distinguished between work-migrants, namely individuals who migrated to the Netherlands based on their skills. The second group involved students, who are considered as *"non-EU citizens accepted by a higher education institution and admitted to the territory of an EU country to pursue as his or her main activity a full-time course of study leading to a to a higher education qualification recognized by the EU country, including diplomas, certificates or doctoral degrees in a higher education institution, which may cover a preparatory course before such education, according to its national legislation."*[17] It is important to note that students from within the EU/EEA member states do not need to report to the IND and are thus not part of these data. The last group included refugees and asylum seekers. Refugees are individuals who, *"owing to well-founded*

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[16]AD.nl Zo klapten de formatiegesprekken met Jesse Klaver, 13/06/2017, last accessed on 27/06/2017
http://www.ad.nl/politiek/zo-klapten-de-formatiegesprekken-met-jesse-klaver~adfd3f3f/
[17] European Commission, Student, last accessed on 21/02/2017
http://ec.europa.eu/immigration/glossary_en#glosS

fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."[18] This definition differed from the definition of an asylum seeker since an asylum seeker is someone who is considered to be an individual seeking an official residence permit in the Netherlands. Applicants for asylum need to meet several requirements (see box 2.1). Within the category of asylum seekers, there is a distinction between first-time asylum applications and multiple-time asylum applications. First time asylum seekers are asylum seekers who have only applied for asylum one time. Multiple time asylum seekers are asylum seekers who have been rejected, but apply again after rejection. Asylum seekers can choose to do so when there are new facts or circumstances that improve their application.[19]

Box 2.1: Requirements Asylum Seekers.[20]

> An asylum seeker needs to meet one of the following conditions:
> - In your country of origin, you have real reasons to fear persecution because of your race, religion, nationality, political convictions or because you belong to a particular social group.
> - You have real reasons to fear the death penalty or execution, torture or other inhuman or humiliating treatment in your country of origin.
> - You have real reasons to fear that you will be a victim of random violence due to an armed conflict in your country of origin.
>   Your husband/wife, partner, father, mother or minor child has recently

2.2.2 Threat assessments and annual intelligence reports

In order to shed light on the migration related crimes, we opted to provide an in-depth analysis of the quarterly threat assessments of the Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism, the annual intelligence reports from the General Intelligence and Security Service, and the Verwey-Jonker reports. We analysed these reports and provided a concise overview on the four phenomena when they were mentioned in the abovementioned reports.

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[18] The Text of the 1951 Convention and Protocol relating to the status of refugees, 1951 p.14
[19] CBS-Statline: Asylum seekers and family reunification, last accessed on 28/06/2017
http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=83102NED&D1=1-2&D2=0&D3=0&D4=0-4,6,10-12,16-17,19-21,23,29-32,34-35,37-38,41-42&D5=0-2,4-6,8-10,12-14,16&HDR=T,G4&STB=G1,G2,G3&VW=T
[20] IND.nl, Asielzoeker, last accessed on 30/03/2017
https://ind.nl/asiel/Paginas/Asielzoeker.aspx

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2.2.3 Newspaper data analysis

Applying the developed tags to the database LexisNexis, for the period 2012-2016, yielded a total of 448 articles; 147 stemmed from *De Telegraaf*, and 301 articles stemmed from the *NRC*. Next, we coded and inserted each of these news articles. Coding was done by combining various tags together in order to find all the available newspaper articles needed to cover the four phenomena. In total, there were twenty-one codes, numbered from 01 to 21 (Table 2.1 through 2.6). The coding is based on grouping together similar tags in order to provide an overview (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Coding of Newspaper Tags and Topics.

Code	Topics	Code	Topics
01	Criminal behaviour and Salafism	12	Crimes against migrants
02	Convictions and Salafism	13	Crimes against refugees
03	Refugees and Salafism	14	Crimes against asylum seekers
04	IS/ISIL/ISIS/Caliphate and Salafism	15	Crimes against asylum reception centres
05	Radicalisation and Salafism	16	Confrontation crimes extreme right
06	Criminal behaviour and Islamism	17	Confrontation crimes extreme left
07	Convictions and Islamism	18	Confrontation crimes extreme right and extreme left
08	Refugees and Islamism	19	Confrontation crimes extreme left extreme right
09	IS/ISIL/ISIS/Caliphate and Islamism	20	Inter-migrant crimes asylum reception centres
10	Radicalisation and Islamism	21	Ideologically motivated inter-migrant crimes asylum reception centres
11	Migrants and Ideological biased acts		

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Table 2.2: Tags and Coding for Crimes committed by Salafists/Islamists.

Salafism and Crime Coding	Tags	Islamism and Crime Coding	Tags
Code 01:	Criminaliteit + Salafisme;	**Code 06:**	Criminaliteit + Islamisme;
	Geweld + Salafisme;		Geweld + Islamisme;
	Ideologie + Geweld + Salafisme;		Ideologie + Geweld + Islamisme;
	Fraude + salafisme;		Fraude + Islamisme;
	Mishandeling + Salafisme.		Mishandeling + Islamisme.
Code 02:	Rechtszaak + Salafisme;	**Code 07:**	Rechtszaak + Islamisme;
	Politie + Salafisme.		Politie + Islamisme.
Code 03:	Vluchtelingen + Salafisme;	**Code 08:**	Vluchtelingen + Islamisme;
	Asielzoekers + Salafisme;		Asielzoekers + Islamisme;
	Migranten + Salafisme.		Migranten + Islamisme.
Code 04:	IS/ISIL/ISIS/Kalifaat + Salafisme.	**Code 09:**	IS/ISIL/ISIS/Kalifaat + Islamisme.
Code 05:	Radicalisering + Salafisme;	**Code 10:**	Radicalisering + Islamisme;
	Radicalisering + Salafisme + Misdrijf;		Radicalisering + Islamisme + Misdrijf;
	Radicalisering + Salafisme + Rechtszaak.		Radicalisering + Islamisme + Rechtszaak.

Table 2.3: Tags and Coding for migrants and ideological based acts.

Migrants and Ideological biased acts	Tags
Code 11:	Migranten + Terrorisme
	Asielzoekers + Terrorisme
	Migranten + Vluchtelingen + Terrorisme
	Migranten + Asielzoekers + Terrorisme
	Vluchtelingen + Asielzoekers + Terrorisme
	Moslims + Terrorisme
	Moslims + Criminaliteit
	Vluchteling + Moslims + Criminaliteit
	Moslims + Geweld
	Moslims + ISIS
	Vluchtelingen + ISIS

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Table 2.4: Tags and Coding for Crimes against Migrants or Asylum Seekers.

Code 12	Code 13	Code 14	Code 15
Criminaliteit + Migranten + Anti	Criminaliteit + Vluchtelingen + Anti	Criminaliteit + Asielzoekers + Anti	Criminaliteit + Asielzoekerscentrum + Anti
Criminaliteit + Migranten + Tegen	Criminaliteit + Vluchtelingen + Tegen	Criminaliteit + Asielzoekers + Tegen	Criminaliteit + Asielzoekerscentrum + Tegen
Geweld + Migranten + Tegen	Geweld + Vluchtelingen + Tegen	Geweld + Asielzoekers + Tegen	Geweld + Asielzoekerscentrum + Tegen
Geweld + Migranten + Anti	Geweld + Vluchtelingen + Anti	Geweld + Asielzoekers + Anti	Geweld + Asielzoekerscentrum + Anti
Mishandeling + Migranten + Anti	Mishandeling + Vluchtelingen + Anti	Mishandeling + Asielzoekers + Anti	Mishandeling + Asielzoekerscentrum + Anti
Mishandeling + Migranten + Tegen	Mishandeling + Vluchtelingen + Tegen	Mishandeling + Asielzoekers + Tegen	Mishandeling + Asielzoekerscentrum + Tegen

Table 2.5: Tags and Coding for Confrontation Crimes.

Code 16	Code 17	Code 18	Code 19
Extreem rechts + Geweld	Extreem links + Geweld	Extreem rechts + Extreem links	Extreem links + Extreem rechts
Extreem rechts + Misdrijf	Extreem links + Misdrijf	Extreem rechts + Confrontatie	Extreem links + Confrontatie
Extreem rechts + Geweld +Asielzoekerscentrum	Extreem links + Geweld + Asielzoekerscentrum		
Extreem rechts + Rechtszaak	Extreem links + Rechtszaak		

Table 2.6: Tags and Coding for Inter-Migrant Crimes.

Code 20	Code 21
Geweld + Asielzoekerscentrum	Geweld + Ideologie + Asielzoekerscentrum
Criminaliteit + Asielzoekerscentrum	Criminaliteit + Ideologie +Asielzoekerscentrum
Mishandeling + Asielzoekerscentrum	Mishandeling + Ideologie + Asielzoekerscentrum
Misdrijf + Asielzoekerscentrum	Misdrijf + Ideologie + Asielzoekerscentrum

2.2.4 Content analysis of Facebook groups

We analysed the content of the two selected Facebook groups. Members of the Facebook groups contributed to these posts, or these posts were written and posted by the owner(s) of the Facebook groups. In order to narrow the scope of the Facebook posts, we decided to search for Facebook posts in which the words migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were mentioned. We gathered all the Facebook posts for the period between 2012-2016 using the Netvizz-tool created by Facebook. This tool extracted posts from Facebook pages for research purposes. We analysed these posts by extracting the data to excel and searched for the three keywords. Subsequently, we grouped these posts together and analysed them based on their content in order to see if they wrote in a positive or negative manner about migration, refugees and asylum seekers. The following criteria have been used:

1. Equating migrants/refugees to terrorists/extremists;
2. Mentioning the strengthening of security measures with respect to migrants/refugees;
3. Mentioning a migrant/refugee as a suspect or offender of terrorist attack;
4. Mentioning extremist action against a migrant/refugee;
5. Implying an increase in extremist thoughts and actions while explicitly referring to the refugee crisis.

A post is considered to be negative when one of these five criteria was met; if none of these are met the Facebook posts are considered to be positive/neutral. This is in accordance with methodology by neighbouring countries (Belgium).[21] For the purpose of this research we have grouped neutral and positive together.

2.2.5 Content analysis of newspaper data

In order to assess the content of the newspaper articles, we utilized the five criteria mentioned in the previous paragraph. These five criteria are the same criteria we used for the content analysis of the Facebook posts:

1. Equating migrants/refugees to terrorists/extremists;
2. Mentioning the strengthening of security measures with respect to migrants/refugees;
3. Mentioning a migrant/refugee as a suspect or offender of terrorist attack;
4. Mentioning extremist action against a migrant/refugee;
5. Implying an increase in extremist thoughts and actions while explicitly referring to the refugee crisis.

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[21]Following personal correspondence with Belgian colleagues on 28/06/2017, we decided to consider a post negative when one (or more) of the five criteria are met, while we considered a post positive or neutral when none of the five criteria were met. This is a dichotomous way to analyse the content; however, due to time-related constrictions we decided that this is the best way to analyse the content.

The nexus between extremist violence and the refugee influx: The Netherlands 2012-2016.

If one (or more) of these five criteria are met, the content of the articles is considered to be negative. When none of these five criteria have been met, the content is considered to be neutral/positive.[22]

2.2.6 Election programmes analysis

This research analysed the election programmes of eleven parties that were elected into the House of Representatives in September 2012 and thirteen parties that were elected into the House of Representatives in the March 2017 elections. In order to provide a concise and clear analysis we used the Atlas.ti tool. We focused on three aspects of the election programmes. First, we described the importance of this topic during the 2012 and 2017 election by focusing on the election programmes. Specifically, we looked at how often migration, refugees asylum and asylum seekers (in Dutch) were mentioned, the position on the table of content of these issues and if it was indicated as a priority. Second, we assessed the way in which migration was framed; a risk; a potential terrorist threat or an opportunity for Dutch society. Lastly, we described the goal each party set for immigration and the outlook on the future relating to immigration.

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[22]Following personal correspondence with Belgian colleagues on 28/06/2017, we decided to consider a post negative when one (or more) of the five criteria are met, while we considered a post positive or neutral when none of the five criteria were met. This is a dichotomous way to analyse the content; however, due to time-related constrictions we decided that this is the best way to analyse the content.

3. Immigration in the Netherlands: 2012-2016

Of the years relevant to this research, the year 2015 marked the peak influx of migration to Europe and although the majority of the asylum applications were directed towards Germany, the Netherlands saw a doubling of the amount incoming refugees.[23] Due to the difference in size, population and refugee applications in the previous years, it might seem as if there was a disproportionate difference between refugee applications in various European countries. Thus, this is the reason why it is necessary to provide an overview of the data. The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the migration in- and outflow in the Netherlands, between 2012-2016. This chapter examined the trends between 2012-2016 by focusing on managed migration (family reunification, education, remunerated activities and other reasons, asylum requests), in which we differentiated between first time and multiple time asylum applicants per year, and irregular migration.

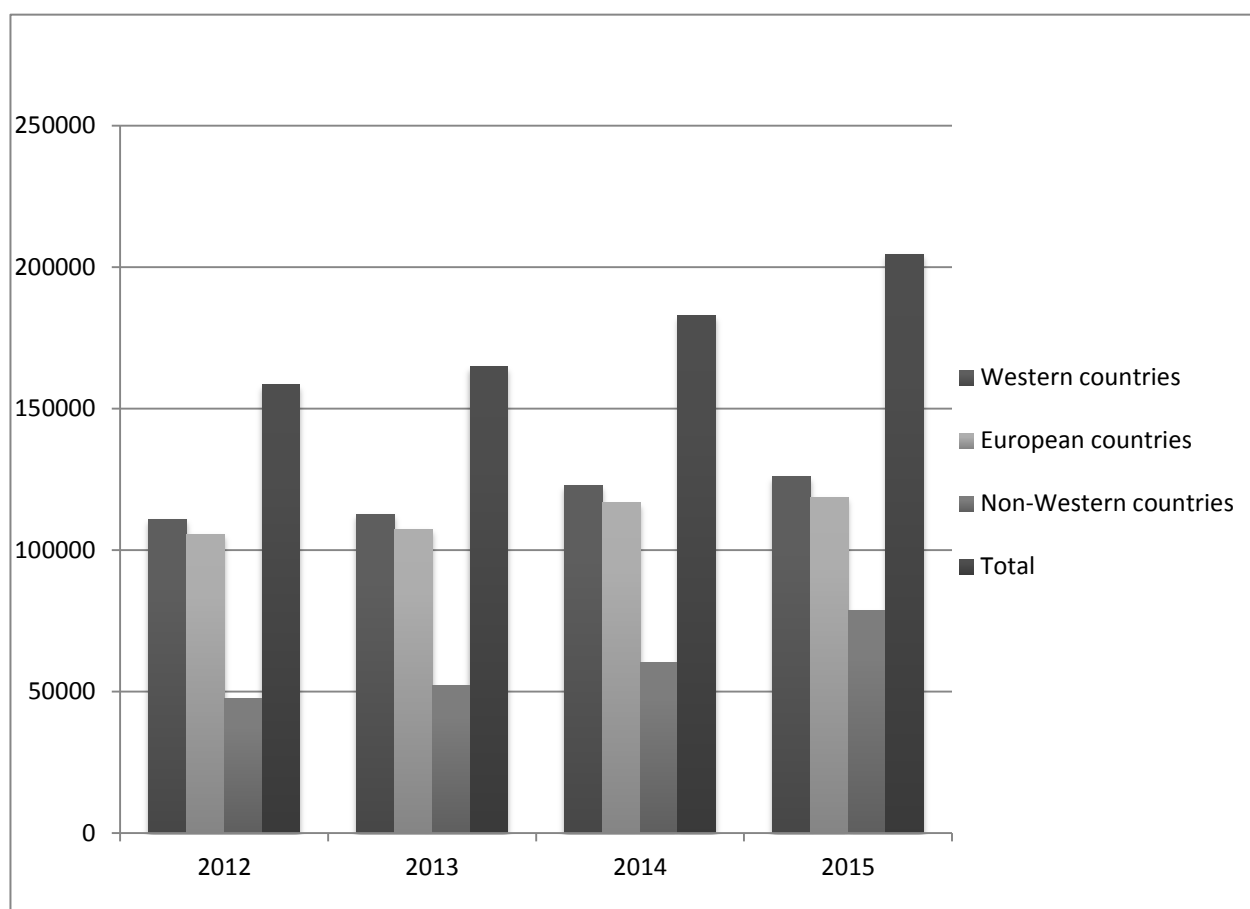### 3.1 Immigration to the Netherlands

Historically, the Netherlands has been a country of immigration. Many people migrated to the Netherlands for various reasons, ranging from work and study to fleeing prosecution and war.[24] The influx of 2012-2015 can be compared to the influx of refugees in the second half of the 1990s after the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Somalia. The majority of the refugees in 2014 and 2015 originated from Syria; Syrians fleeing the civil war in 2014 and 2015 are comparable to Iraqi in the 1990s since the socio-economic conditions are similar.[25] Figure 3.1 focuses on recent migration to the Netherlands and demonstrates the areas of origin. This figure suggests that that migration from Western, European and Non-Western countries have increased in the period 2012-2015. Compared to previous years, 2015 saw a larger increase in migration from non-Western countries; this is related to the conflict in Syria which will be discussed in the next part.

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[23]Eurostat Newsrelease, 44/2016, March 4, 2016, last accessed on 30/03/2017
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203832/3-04032016-AP-EN.pdf/790eba01-381c-4163-bcd2-a54959b99ed6
[24] Engbersen, Godfried, Jaco Dagevos, Roel Jennissen, Linda Bakker and Arjen Leerkes with the assistance of Jeanine Klaver and Arend Odé (2015) No time to lose: from reception to integration of asylum migrants, WRR-Policy Brief 4, The Hague: WRR., p.9
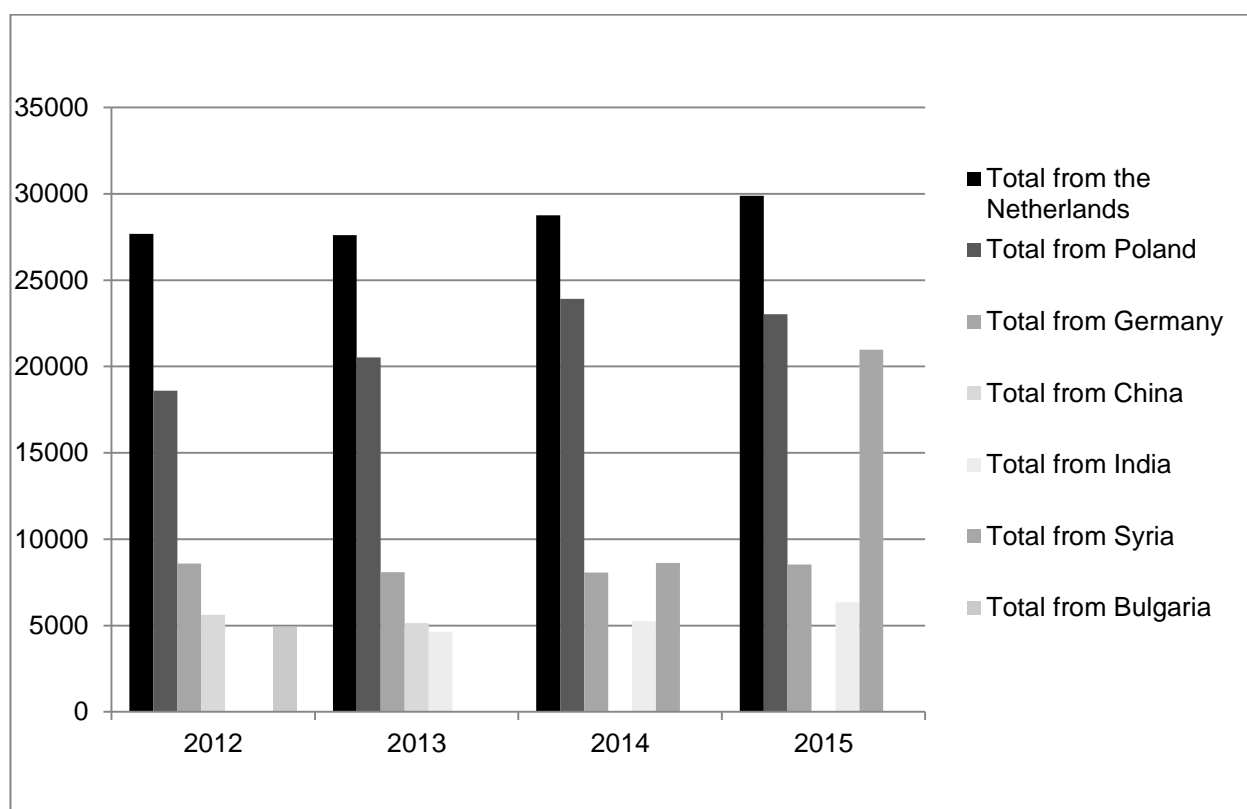[25] Ibid.

The nexus between extremist violence and the refugee influx: The Netherlands 2012-2016.

Figure 3.1: Immigration to the Netherlands, 2012-2015.[26]

[26]CBS Statline, Immigration to the Netherlands, 2012-2015, last accessed on 30/03/2017
http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=03742&D1=0-
1,6&D2=0&D3=0&D4=a&D5=0&D6=17-20&HDR=T,G5&STB=G1,G2,G4,G3&VW=T

Figure 3.2: Top five countries of origin: Migration to the Netherlands 2012-2015.[27]


When focusing on migration to the Netherlands in general, not specifying for the reasons of migration, Figure 3.2 shows an increase in the past couple of years. The top countries of origin the past years have shown various results; the top three countries have always been the Netherlands (re-immigration), Poland and Germany but the other countries contributing to the top five were varied. Bulgaria was in the top five in 2012 but did not return to the list in subsequent years; India was in the top five between 2013 and 2015. It is clearly visible that before 2014 Syria was not part of the top five countries of origin; however, in 2014 and 2015 there was an increase in Syrians migrating to the Netherlands, relating to the civil war in Syria.

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[27]CBS Statline, Immigration to the Netherlands, 2012-2015, last accessed on 30/03/2017
http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=03742&D1=0-
1,6&D2=0&D3=0&D4=a&D5=0&D6=17-20&HDR=T,G5&STB=G1,G2,G4,G3&VW=T

The nexus between extremist violence and the refugee influx: The Netherlands 2012-2016.

Focused on the net migration to the Netherlands (the ratio of emigration to immigration per year) it is interesting to see that there was a decline in net migration. This was related to the fact that immigration to the Netherlands increased at a higher rate than emigration. In the years between 2012-2015 emigration did not significantly increase, whereas immigration numbers show a higher increase in 2015 than the years before. It stands to argue that this influx was related to the civil war in Syria. Figure 3.3 displays immigration and emigration, together with the migration balance and net migration.

Figure 3.3: Migration Balance and Ratio in the Netherlands 2012-2015.[28]
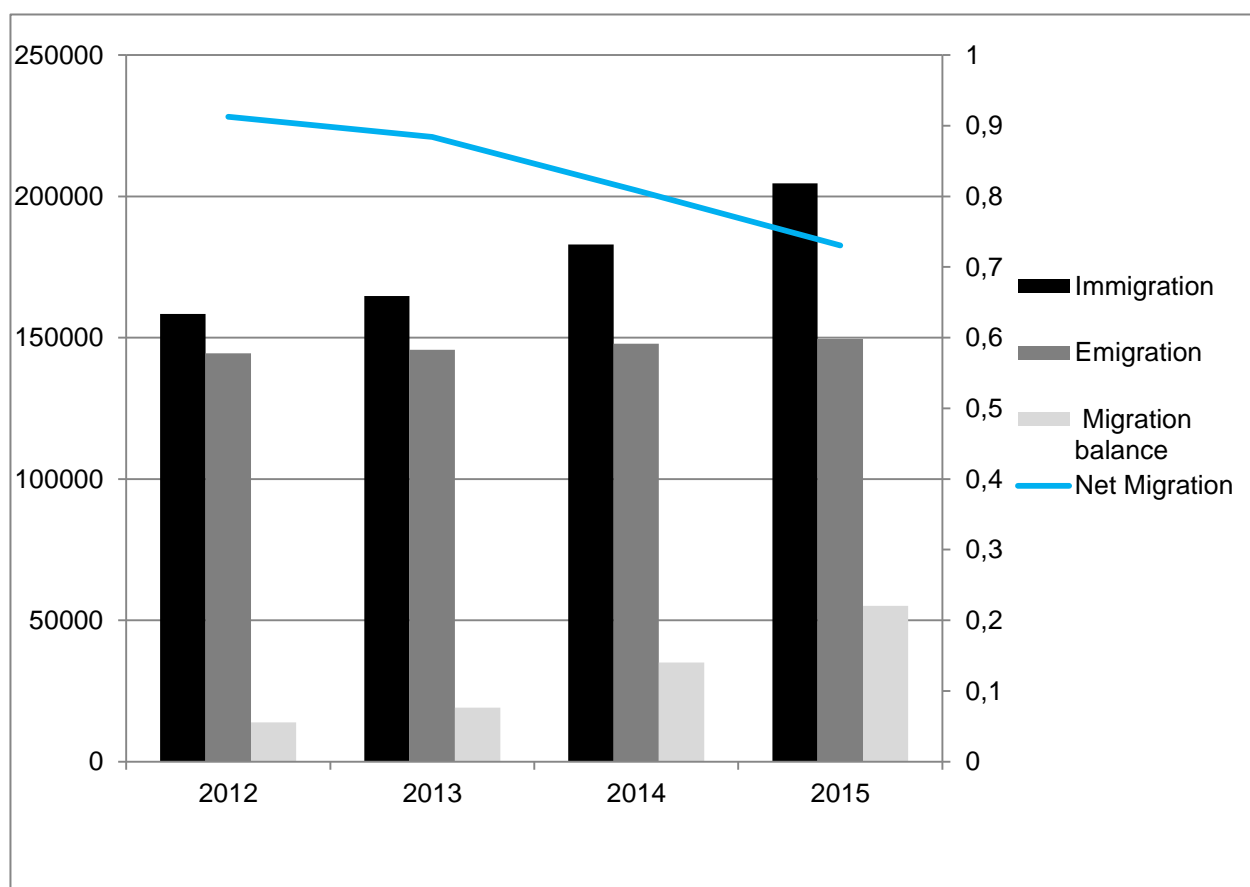
[28] CBS Statline, Immi- en emigratie naar geboorteland, leeftijd (31 december) en geslacht, last accessed on 13/04/2017
 http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=03742&D1=0-1,3,5&D2=0&D3=0&D4=0-2&D5=0&D6=17-20&HDR=T,G5&STB=G1,G2,G4,G3&VW=T

The nexus between extremist violence and the refugee influx: The Netherlands 2012-2016.

Figure 3.4: Granted Residence Permits in the Netherlands 2012-2015: Subsidiary Protection and Humanitarian Status.[29]
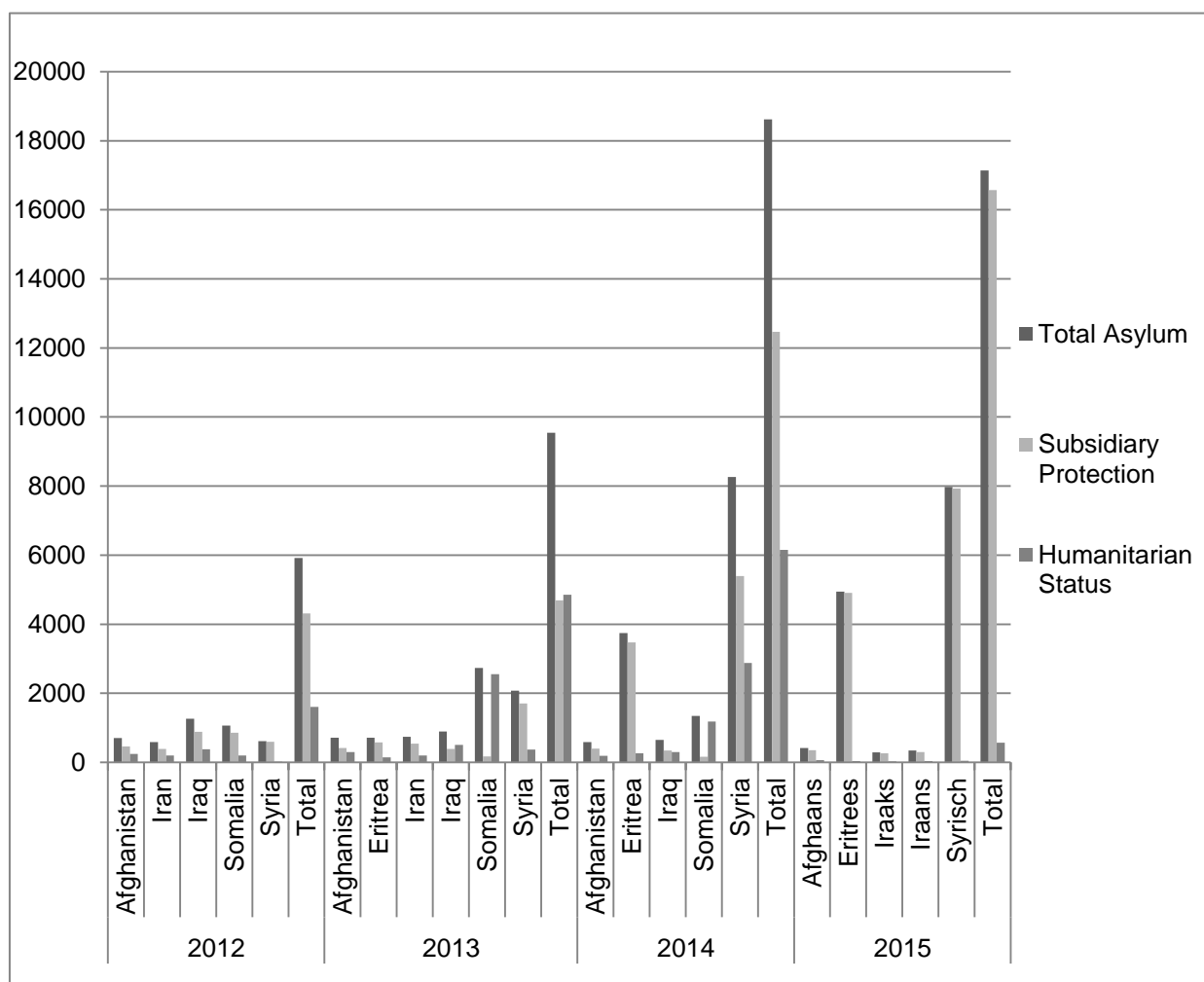

Figure 3.4 displays the granted residence permits based on subsidiary protection and humanitarian status and the main five countries of origin between 2012-2015. Statistics Netherlands described subsidiary protection as a person who does not qualify for the refugee status, but is at risk of severe threats to his or her life in their country of origin.[30] When a person received a residence permit based on humanitarian reasons, a residence permit is awarded based on, for example, traumatic experiences, human trafficking or domestic violence. [31] Figure 3.4 shows that there was an increase in granted residence permits based on subsidiary protection. 2014 and 2015 show an increase the granted residence permits based on subsidiary protection and humanitarian status for refugees coming from Syria.

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[29] CBS Statline, Verblijfsvergunningen voor bepaalde tijd: Verblijfsgrond en Nationaliteit 2012-2015,last accessed on 13/04/2017
http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=82027NED&D1=0-2&D2=a&D3=4-7&VW=T
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

3.2 Managed Migration

Managed migration refers to the number of migrants migrating to the Netherlands for family reunification, education or work. An important aspect of this is the amount of issued residence permits in the Netherlands. Figure 3.5 demonstrates the granted residence permits between 2012 and 2015; data regarding immigration to the Netherlands in 2016 is unavailable at the time of writing.

Figure 3.5: Granted Residence Permits in the Netherlands 2012-2015: Motivation and top five country of origin 2012-2015.[32]
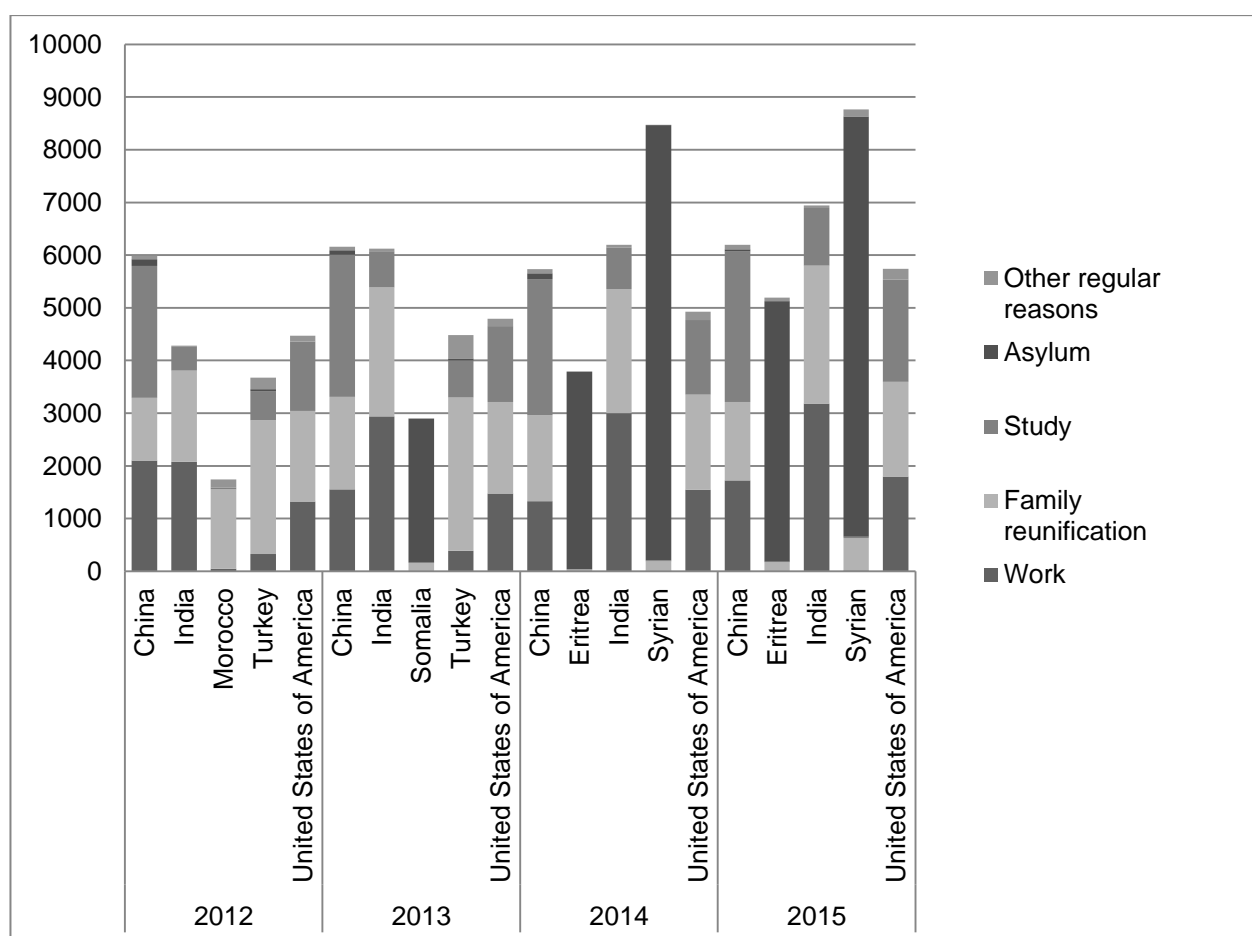
As migration to the Netherlands increased the granted residence permits increased accordingly. An increase in issued residence permits was particularly visible when focused on family reunification and asylum requests. The asylum applications for Syria saw a vast rise in granted residence permits based on the request of an asylum; before 2014 Syria was not part of the top five countries of origin, after 2014, it was. This is an interesting development which was, in all

[32]CBS Statline, Residence permits, 2012-2015, last accessed on 30/03/2017
http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=82027NED&D1=a&D2=a&D3=4-7&VW=T

likelihood, connected to the crisis in Syria. The majority of the top five countries receiving residence permits were based on study and work. According to the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Centraal Orgaan Asielzoekers) there was a backlog in terms of application processes due to the influx of refugees in 2014 and 2015.[33] The next part will focus on the influx of asylum seekers and refugees specifically.

3.3 First-Time Asylum Applications

The data regarding this topic differentiated between first- and multiple applicants. First time applicants are applicants who applied for asylum for the first time. Asylum seekers fall within the category of multiple applicants if they appealed angst the decision made the first time. The information in Figure 3.6 provides an overview of first time asylum applications between 2012-2016.

Figure 3.6: Total First Time Applications in the Netherlands 2012-2016.[34]
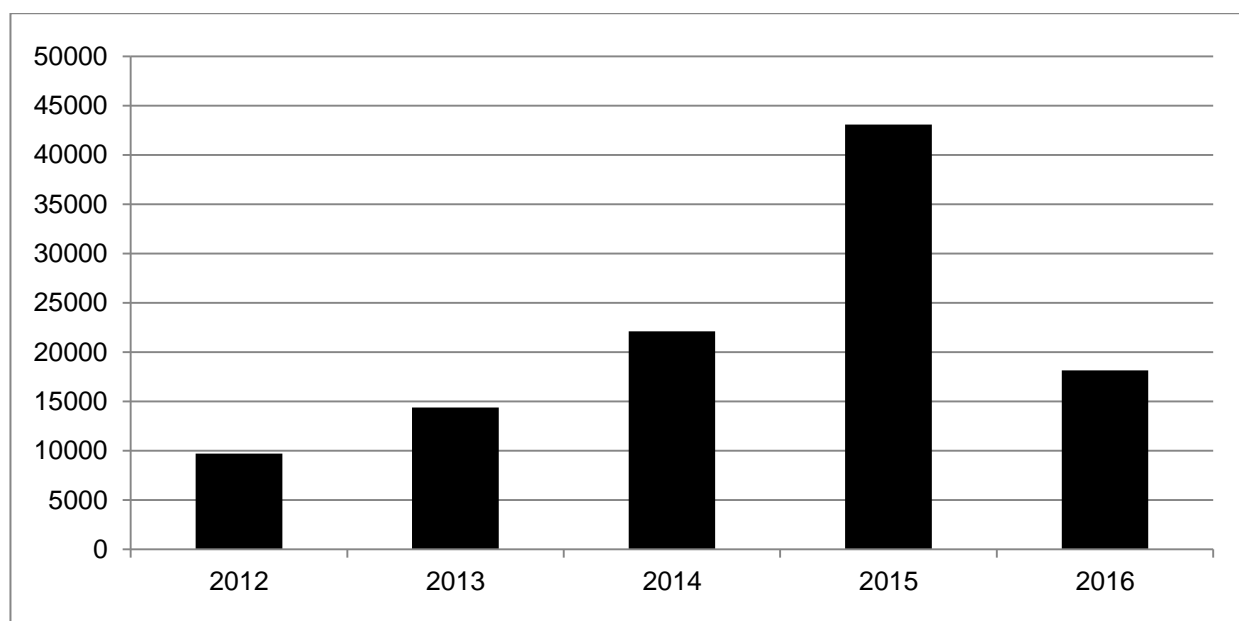
It is important to note that the information demonstrated in Figure 3.6 is the total amount of first time applications between 2012-2016; it does not provide any data on the number of issued residence permits. What is clear, however, is the fact that 2015 marked an increase in first time applications for asylum. There was a decline after 2015, which was demonstrated by first time

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[33]COA.nl, Asielzoekers en hun procedure,
 last accessed on 30/03/2017 https://www.coa.nl/nl/actueel/veelgestelde-vragen/asielzoekers-en-hun-procedure#Hoe lang
[34] CBS Statline, Immigration to the Netherlands, 2012-2015, last accessed on 30/03/2017
http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=03742&D1=0-1,6&D2=0&D3=0&D4=a&D5=0&D6=17-20&HDR=T,G5&STB=G1,G2,G4,G3&VW=T

applications for the year 2016. Figure 3.7 demonstrates the first time asylum applications in 2015. One aspect that is clearly visible is that the influx of refugees almost doubled between 2014 and 2015; this too, was, in all likelihood, connected to the crisis in Syria.

Figure 3.7: First Time Asylum Applications in the Netherlands in 2015.[35]
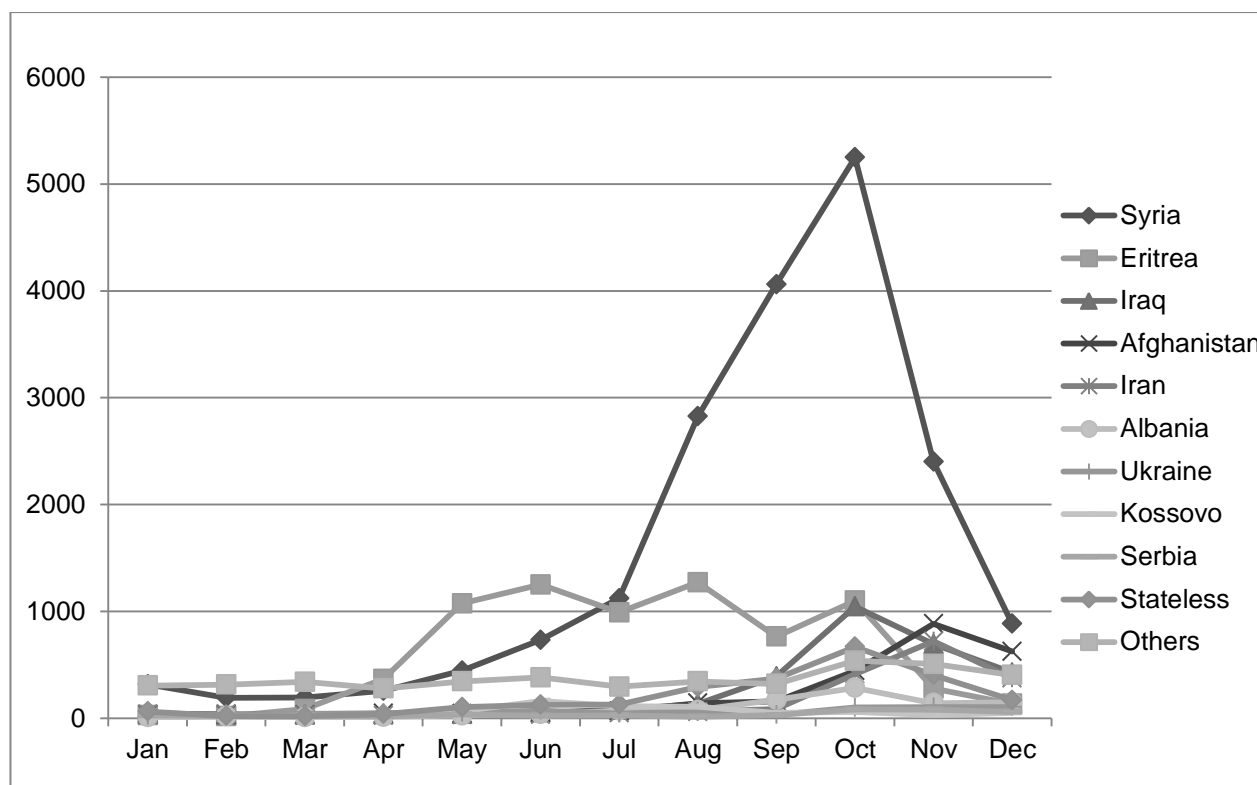
This report chose to shed light on the specific increase of refugees in 2015 since there has been a vast increase in refugees. Figure 3.7 explicitly highlights the top ten countries of origin of asylum application and it is clear that there was a rise of Syrian asylum applications starting in July and ending in December 2015. After the influx of October 2015, the EU-Turkey deal on the Migrant Crisis was developed and came into effect in March 2016.[36] This rise did not continue in the first months of 2016; instead, there was a decline in first time applications. It stands to

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[35]CBS Statline, First time asylum applications, 2012-2015, last accessed on 30/03/2017
https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_January_2014.pdf and https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_June_2013.pdf
and https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_January_2014.pdf and
https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_September_2014.pdf and
https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_February_2015.pdf and
https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_December_2015.pdf and
https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_February_2016.pdf and
https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_December_2016.pdf
[36]European Commission Press Release, EU-Turkey Statement, 19 March 2016, last accessed on 30/03/2017,
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-963_en.htm

reason that the growth in asylum applications in 2015 was related to the civil war and rise of the Islamic State in Syria.

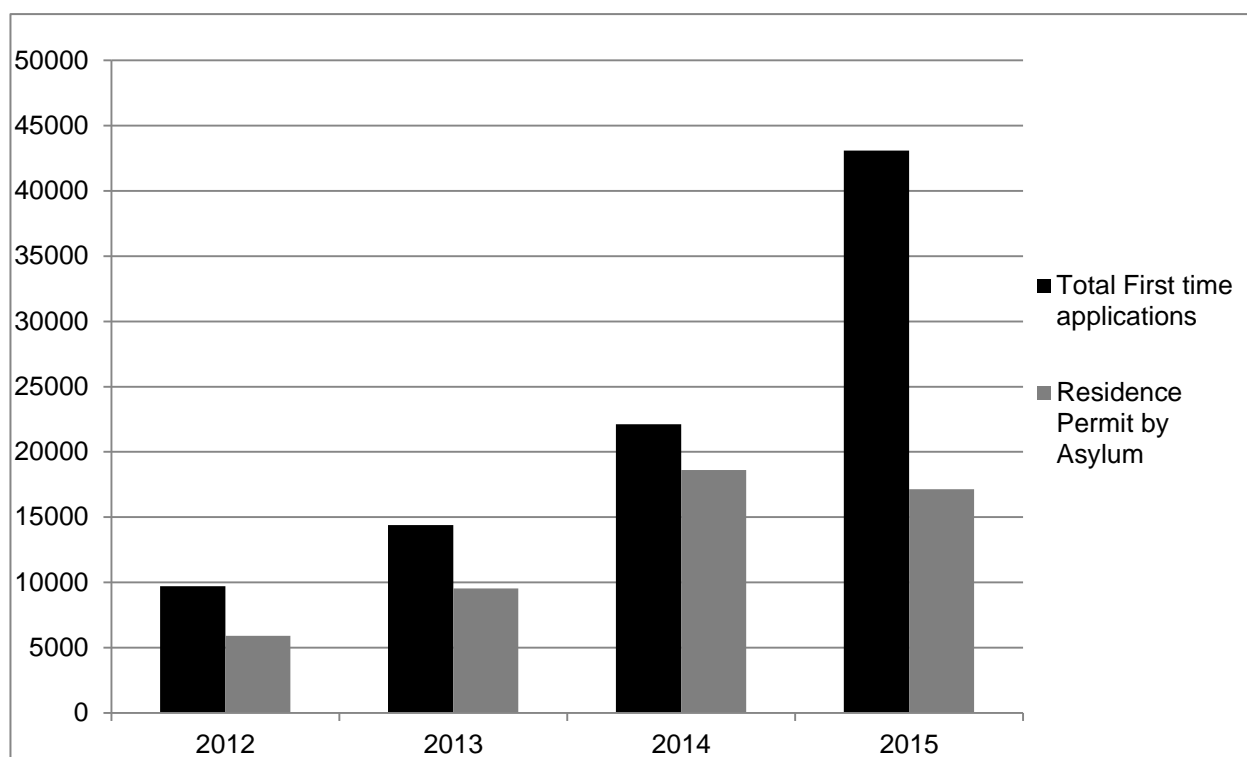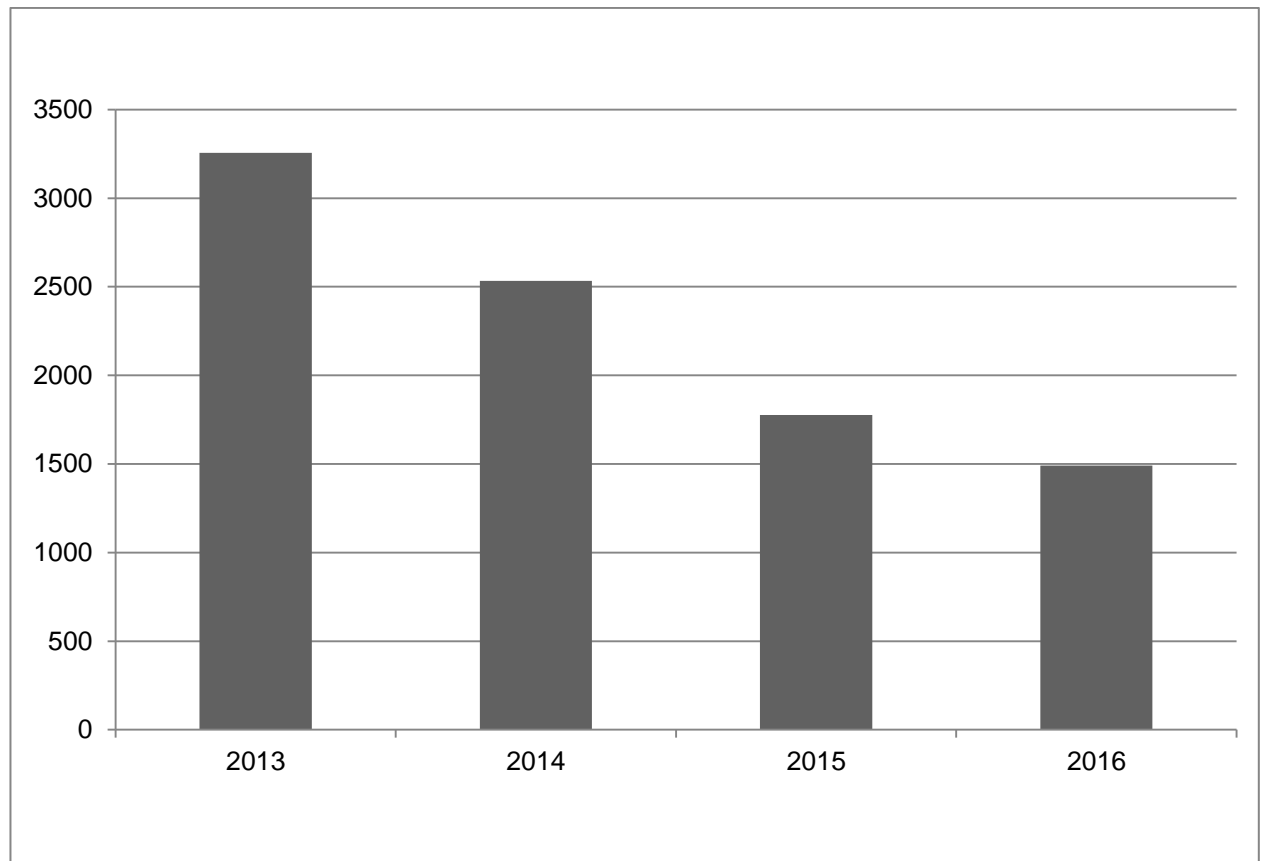Figure 3.8: First Time Applications and Issued Residence Permits in the Netherlands 2012-2015.[37]

Figure 3.8 demonstrates the decisions made on residence permits for asylum seekers between 2012-2015 and the requests for asylum applications between 2012-2015. Even though Figure 3.8 has not been specified by country it is clear that there is a big difference between 2012 and 2014, although there is a slight decline in 2015. As mentioned before, this could be related to the backlog of issuing residence permits.

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[37]CBS Statline, First time asylum applications, 2012-2015, last accessed on 30/03/2017
https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_January_2014.pdf and https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_June_2013.pdf and https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_January_2014.pdf and
https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_September_2014.pdf and
https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_February_2015.pdf and
https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_December_2015.pdf and
https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_February_2016.pdf and
https://ind.nl/en/Documents/AT_December_2016.pdf
 and
CBS Statline, Residence permits, 2012-2015, last accessed on 30/03/2017
http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=82027NED&D1=a&D2=a&D3=4-7&VW=T

3.4 Multiple time asylum applications

This category demonstrates the amount of multiple asylum applications. These are applications which have been rejected the first time, and the asylum seeker has appealed against this decision. Figure 3.9 shows that there was a decline in multiple applications. The information for 2012 is missing since this has not been available.

Figure 3.9: Multiple asylum applications in the Netherlands 2013-2016.[38]

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[38] CBS Statline, Multiple Asylum Applications, 2012-2015, last accessed on 30/03/2017
http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=83102NED&D1=2&D2=0&D3=0&D4=0-4,6,10-12,16-17,19-21,23,29-32,34-35,37-38,41-42&D5=0-2,4-6,8-10,12-14,16&VW=T

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3.5 Resettlements

According to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) resettlement is the process in which refugees move from one asylum country to another state that has agreed to admit them.[39] Figure 3.10 demonstrates the number of resettlements between 2012-2015.

Figure 3.10: Resettlements from the Netherlands 2012-2015.[40]
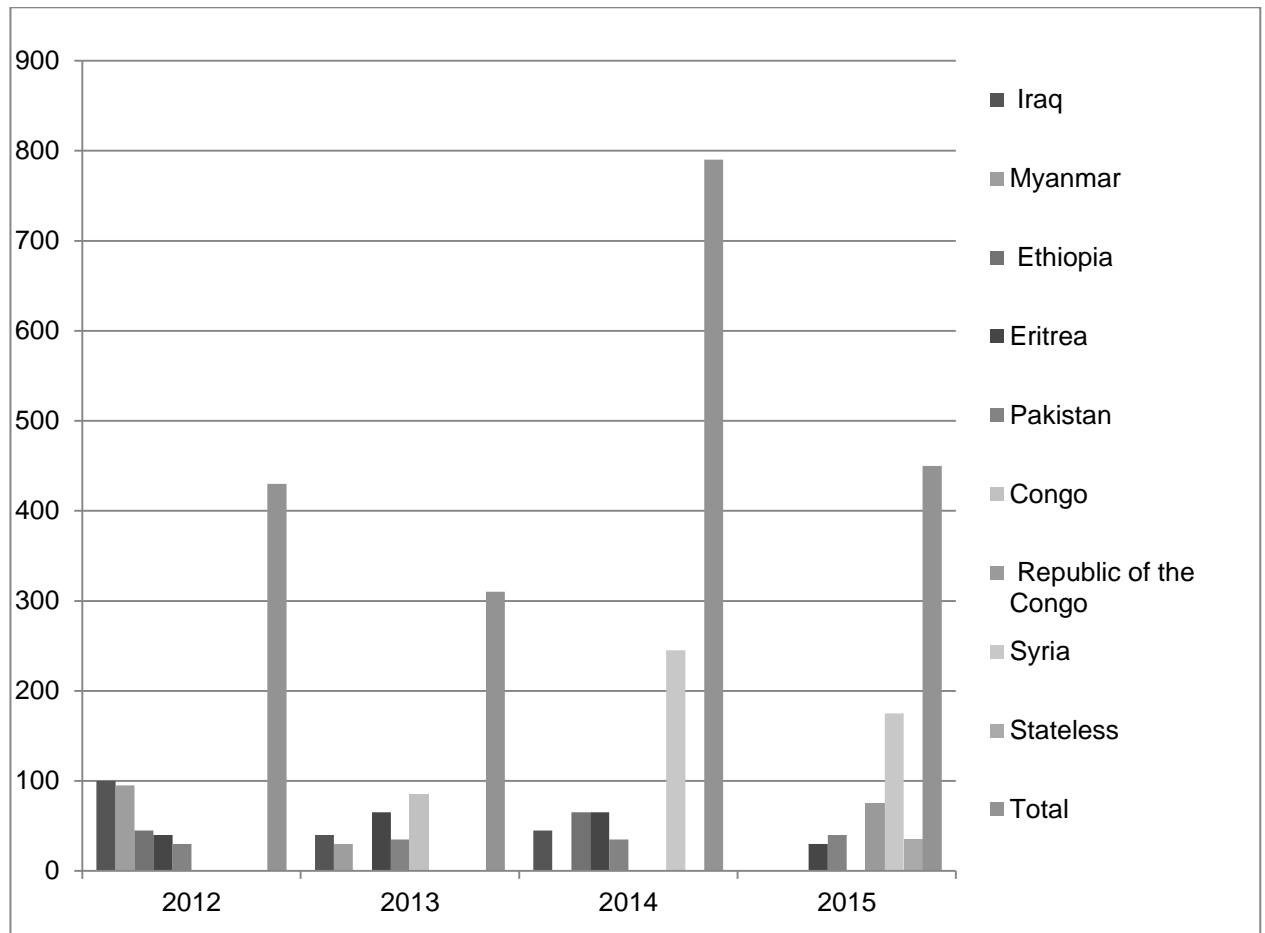
Many countries are reflected in Figure 10 but here too, it is clear that the highest number of resettlements constitutes individuals originating from Syria. This is especially visible for the year 2014 and 2015.

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[39] UNCHR, Resettlements, last accessed on 30/03/2017
http://www.unhcr.org/resettlement.html
[40] CBS Statline, Resettlements, 2012-2015
http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=82025NED&D1=0&D2=0&D3=0&D4=a&D5=4-7&VW=T

4. Migration-related extremist violence

The purpose of this chapter is to shed light on the nature and scope of migration related violence and the possible nexus between the influx of refugees and the four phenomena in the Netherlands in the period 2012-2016. However, since it is difficult to find data on this specific topic, (i.e. the nature and scope of migration related violence relating to the influx of refugees) but information regarding extremism in general was freely available, we decided to focus on both issues. This chapter is based on the threat assessments of the Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV), the annual reports of the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD) for the period of 2012-2016 and data provided by the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) for the period of 2015-2016. The Verwey-Jonker institute, an institute researching societal issues, publishes their annual reports on extremist-right violence, partly based on police data, although these data cannot be broken down into categories relating to asylum seekers. This chapter will first address the many forms of extremism the Netherlands acknowledges, before assessing the four phenomena of crimes. In doing so, we will also address extremism in general. We will do so in a chronological order for the time-period of this study. Box 4.1 displays the three movements within the Salafist movement, and Box 4.2 portrays the definitions of extremist right and left wing organisations.

Box 4.1: Three movements within Salafism.[41]

Salafism conists of three movements:
1. Apolitical Salafists, who focus on religious education and dismiss politics;
2. Political Salafists, who do not dismiss politics but engage in political processes and want to reach their political and societal goals through preaching;
3. Salafi Jihadists who are not afraid to use violence to reach their goals.

For the purpose of this research we use the definition of *Salafi Jihadists* since the other two movements eschew violence.

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[41]AIVD and NCTV, Salafisme in Nederland: Diversiteit en Dynamiek: een publicatie van de NCTV en AIVD, 23 september 2015, p.5

Box 4.2: Extreme Right wing organisations and extreme Left wing organisations.[42]

Extremist right organisations:
Organisations that are anti-islam, anti-Semitic, ultranationalistic, xenofobic and anti-refugees based on the otherness of such groups.
Extremist left organisations:
Left wing extremist organizations are organizations that try to block (perceived) extremist right movements; these organisations could also be against the asylum policies in the Netherlands; finding the asylum policies too harsh and believe that more leniency is necessary. There are also extremist left organisations focusing on countering animal cruelty, but this type is not relevant for this research.

It should be noted that there is no raw data, such as police-recorded data, publically available on the four phenomena of crime central to this research. Following personal correspondence with a member of the Dutch police force, we found that they were unable to provide us with the data required to give us an insight in the recordings of arrests and incidents.[43]

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[42]AIVD.nl, links-extremisme, last accessed on 30/03/2017
https://www.aivd.nl/onderwerpen/extremisme/inhoud/links-extremisme and
AIVD.nl, verzet tegen het asielbeleid, last accessed on 30/03/2017
https://www.aivd.nl/onderwerpen/extremisme/inhoud/links-extremisme/verzet-tegen-asielbeleid
AIVD.nl, rechts-extremisme, last accessed on 30/03/2017
https://www.aivd.nl/onderwerpen/extremisme/inhoud/rechts-extremisme
[43] This consultation occurred on the 5th of July, 2017 with a member of the Dutch National Police.

4.1 Many forms of extremism

According to the Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV), there are many types of ideologically driven violence. It is important to differentiate between activism, extremism and terrorism; all are driven by ideologies, but there is a difference in the manner in which they carry out their ideologies, as shown in box 4.3.

Box 4.3: Activism, extremism and terrorism.[44]

> Difference between activism, extremism and terrorism:
> - Activism: persons or groups who express their opinions (sometimes loudly) but are non-violent and stay within the boundaries of the law.
> - Extremism: persons or groups who intentionally cross the boundaries of the law while pursuing their ideals.
> - Terrorism: persons or groups who threaten, or prepare, for ideological reasons, acts of serious violence directed at people or other acts intended to cause property damage that could spark social disruption, for the purpose of bringing about social change, creating a climate of fear among the general public or influencing political decision-making.

Most radical extreme right and extreme left groups in the Netherlands are characterised by their activist actions and should not be described as extremist groups. A small minority of individuals however commit illegal acts, including violence. For this study, several categories of ideologically driven violence are relevant. The first type of extremist violence distinguished by the NCTV constitutes right-wing extremist violence motivated by xenophobic, anti-Islam and anti-Semitic motives. Due to the perceived jihadist threat, the organized far right-wing groups in the Netherlands were able to gain momentum and were able to reach a broader public. Extreme right wing groups played in on anti-Islam and anti-refugee sentiments. The high influx of refugees caused concern amongst the Dutch public and this was used by extremist right-wing groups to create more support for their ideology.[45] The NCTV observed that the main incidents of this type were concentrated on local government levels and were targeted against migrants and proponents of asylum reception centres and mosques.[46]

The second type of extremism concerns far left wing activists and extremists which includes various types such as animal-right extremists. This specific type however, is not relevant to our research. Thus, in light of this research we saw that left-wing extremism was expressed by

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[44] NCTV, Extremism, for the definitions of activism and extremism, last accessed on 18/5/2017
https://english.nctv.nl/organisation/counterterrorism/to-counter-terrorism/Extremism/index.aspx
and NCTV, Terrorism, for the definition of terrorism, last accesed on 18/5/2017
https://english.nctv.nl/organisation/counterterrorism/to-counter-terrorism/index.aspx
[45] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 40, November 2015, p. 4
[46] ibid.

protesting against perceived right-wing movements and against institutions connected to (according to their opinion) unjust asylum procedures.[47]

The last type of extremism relevant to this study is Jihadism. According to the Dutch definition of Jihadism, it is a type of Salafism in which the individuals supporting this type of Salafism are not afraid of using violence to reach their goals. Salafism in itself is not illegal in the Netherlands; however, when religious or ideological convictions undermine the democratic rule of law, it becomes illegal.[48] Islamism is a form of political Islam, whereas Salafism is a more collective term for a fundamentalist movement within the Sunni Islam (see Box 4.1 in chapter four for the definition of Salafism relevant for this research).[49]

Thus, for the purpose of this research, migration-related crime has to be committed by an individual within the category of one of the aforementioned forms of extremism (i.e. crimes committed against migrants/asylum seekers, inter-migrant crimes with a political or ideological bias and confrontation crimes).

4.2 Threat assessments in the Netherlands 2012-2016

Since their first threat assessment in January 2005, each quarter, the NCTV developed a threat assessment, focused on the threats faced by Dutch society. Next, we have described the development of ideologically and politically motivated violence in the Netherlands between 2012 and 2016. The NCTV is responsible for assessing the terrorist threat level in the Netherlands. The threat level consists of a five-point scale (see box 4.4) and currently the threat level for the Netherlands is substantial (level 4).[50] The threat level was increased from 'significant' to 'substantial' in March 2013, which was caused by three developments: (1) the increase of Dutch foreign fighters to the Middle East and Africa; (2) the increase of Islamic radicalisation in the Netherlands; and (3) the increase of Jihadist organisations in Middle Eastern countries after the Arab spring.[51]

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[47] Ibid.
[48] NCTV en AIVD, Salafisme in Nederland: Diversiteit en Dynamiek. 24/09/2015, last accessed on 11/04/2017.
[49] NCTV.nl, Jihadism (violent extremism), last accessed on 11/04/2017
https://english.nctv.nl/organisation/counterterrorism/to-counter-terrorism/Jihadism/index.aspx
[50] NCTV.nl, About Terrorist Threat Assessment Netherlands, last accessed on 05/04/2017
https://english.nctv.nl/organisation/counterterrorism/TerroristThreatAssessmentNetherlands/index.aspx
[51] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 32, March 2013, p.2

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Box 4.4: Threat levels in the Netherlands.[52]

Threat Levels in the Netherlands:
- Level 1: Minimal: It is unlikely that a terrorist attack will occur in the Netherlands.
- Level 2: Limited: There is a slight chance of a terrorist attack in the Netherlands.
- Level 3: Significant: A terrorist attack in the Netherlands is conceivable.
- Level 4: Substantial: There is a real chance of a terrorist attack in the Netherlands.
- Level 5: Critical: A terrorist attack in the Netherlands is imminent.

The subsequent part of this research will focus on extremist violence committed by Salafists and/or Islamists; crimes committed against migrants or asylum seekers; inter-migrant crimes with a political bias and confrontation crimes between individuals or groups of different political convictions, but we will also address extremism in general.

Crimes committed by Salafist-jihadists

According to the annual report of the AIVD of 2012 there was an increase in the departure of Dutch Jihadists to Syria. The annual report of 2012 mentioned the involvement of Sharia4Holland, an extremist network that calls for the implementation of the Sharia law in the Netherlands,[53] in recruiting Jihadists for Syria. It is interesting to note that there was a decline in jihadists movement to regions in which Al-Qaida operates; more jihadists moved to regions in Syria, which was related to the ease in which Syria is accessible.[54] The movement towards Syria was emphasised by the threat assessments of the NCTV as well; at this point in time, it seemed as if the radical Islamic organisations were mainly focused on activities in Syria.[55]

Support for Jihadist movements in terms of numbers of sympathisers, continued in 2013. There was an increase in the number of foreign fighters migrating to Syria. This resulted in an increased concern with Dutch authorities; the returning foreign fighters could plan an attack in Europe upon return.[56] After the establishment of the Islamic State, the emphasis of the AIVD annual reports was placed on returning foreign fighters.[57] The 2014 annual report of the AIVD claimed that there was a possibility that returning foreign fighters could influence other, vulnerable individuals, which could lead to more radicalised individuals.[58] However, the AIVD

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[52] ibid.
[53] Trouw.nl, Sharia4Holland wil vechten voor de wetgeving van Allah, 22 december 2010, last accesed on 18/05/2017
https://www.trouw.nl/home/shariah4holland-wil-vechten-voor-de-wetgeving-van-allah~ad2ec1076/
[54] AIVD, Annual report 2012, 23 April 2013, pp. 23-24
[55] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 30, October 2012, p. 2 and NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 32, March 2013, p. 5 and NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 33, July 2013, p. 5
[56] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 35, February 2014, p. 5
[57] AIVD, Annual Report 2014, 22 April 2015, p. 14
[58] AIVD, Annual report 2013, 1 April 2014, p. 11

also mentioned that if foreign fighters would return, this could lead to an increase in radicalisation caused by the stories of the returning foreign fighters.[59] Another main concern were the terrorist attacks in Europe by representatives or supporters of ISIS. Attacks like the ISIS-coordinated attack in Paris (November 2015) and the attack in Copenhagen by a ISIS-inspired individual (February 2015) could potentially also happen in the Netherlands [60] There were at least two incidents in the Netherlands in which two men on two different occasions were apprehended related to the recruitment of possible foreign fighters amongst the refugee population in asylum reception centres in 2015 and 2016.[61]

The various attacks in Europe in 2014 and 2015 (in France, Denmark and Belgium) showed the terrorist threat in Europe; radicalised individuals committed attacks in the country they grew up in.[62] However, not all of the involved terrorists grew up in Europe; at least two of the terrorists involved in the terrorist attacks on November, 13, 2015 in Paris arrived in Europe under the guise of refugees.[63] In this year, Jihadists continued to arrive in Europe under the guise of refugees.[64] There were no terrorist attacks in the Netherlands with a salafist-jihadist inspired background, but the AIVD mentioned several incidents relating to extremist violence; a person with a weapon, munitions and ISIS-propaganda material was detained. A similar incident occurred earlier that year when they apprehended an individual in the Netherlands, who was linked to a French/Belgian terrorist cell.[65] The AIVD further acknowledged that there were incidents within Islamic circles; Salafist Muslims tried to gain support from moderate Muslims and in some instances they used intimidating forms of personal violence.[66] This development was mentioned by the NCTV as well; between July and November 2016 the threat assessment mentioned the on-going efforts of Radical Islamist and Salafist movements to gain more ground in the Netherlands.[67] The Salafist dawa efforts were also targeted specifically at asylum seekers with an Islamic background.[68] This means that there has been an increase in Salafist and Islamist extremism, but this increase was visible even before the influx of refugees in 2015.

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[59] Ibid. p. 14
[60] Ibid. p.15
[61] Van Wijk, J. and Bolhuis, M., Jihadisme en de vreemdelingenketen: De Signalering van vermoedelijke Jihadisten onder asielzoekers en Jihadistische activiteiten in en rond asielzoekerscentra nader onderzocht, 29 September 2016.
[62] AIVD, Annual report 2015, 21 April 2016, p. 13
[63] Ibid, p. 14
[64] AIVD, Annual report 2016, 4 April 2017, p. 4
[65] Ibid, p.4
[66] Ibid. p. 5
[67] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 42, July 2016
[68] Ibid.

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Crimes committed against migrants and/or asylum seekers

The AIVD mentioned no threats from the extremist right wing organisations in 2012, 2013 and 2014 against asylum seekers or migrants.[69] Although it did mention anti-Islamic activism in their 2013 annual report, there was a slight increase in the subsequent years relating to anti-Islam sentiments; the threat assessment published in March 2015 mentioned the threats and besmirching of Mosques. One such incident involved the occupation of a Mosque in February of 2015.[70] Concurrently, international events, such as the attacks in Paris and Copenhagen in 2015 were used by extremist right movements in the Netherlands to gain support for their ideology and organisation.[71] These extremist right movements were not violent, but the threat assessment mentioned that the Muslim community felt threatened by this.[72] In this time frame, *Pegida*, an far right organisation focused on countering the arrival of (economic) refugees[73] and "the Islamisation of the Netherlands", tried to organise demonstrations. These did not result in violent incidents against asylum seekers or migrants According to the Verwey-Jonker Institute, an institute that researches extremist-right violence in the Netherlands while using closed-source data, the past years (up until 2016) showed some incidents regarding extreme-right violence, but these were small incidents.[74] This is further acknowledged by the threat assessments published in the study period of this research. There were incidents near asylum reception centres in which group of protesters used fireworks to show their discontent. Mayors and council members received various threats after publically supporting the reception of asylum seekers in certain municipalities. In the first quarter of 2016 there were various incidents related to extremist movements in which houses and buildings were besmirched.[75] There have been aggressive outbursts during publically accessible information meetings about the arrival of asylum reception centres in certain municipalities.

Between July 2015 and November 2015 there was an influx of refugees and this was frequently mentioned in the threat assessment of the NCTV; this influx resulted in a feeling of unease and discontent with many people in the Netherlands.[76] This proved to be a viable atmosphere for

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[69] AIVD, Annual report 2012, 23 April 2013, p. 32 and AIVD, annual report 2013, 1 April 2014, pp. 25-26 and AIVD, annual report 2014, 22 April 2014, p.33

[70] Tierolf, B., and Hermens, N., Second report on racism, anti-Semitism, and right-wing extremist violence in the Netherlands: Incidents, report, offenders and settlements in 2012, p. 46, 2013; Verwey-Jonker Institute and Anne Frank Foundation.

[71] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 38, March 2015, pp. 3-4

[72] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 38, March 2015, pp. 3-4

[73] Nu.nl, Pegida: een korte uitleg van de Protestbeweging, 11 October 2015, last accessed on 22/05/2017, http://www.nu.nl/dvn/4143009/pegida-korte-uitleg-van-protestbeweging.html

[74] Tierolf, B., van Kapel, M., and Hermens, N., Vijfde rapportage racisme, antisemitisme en extreemrechts geweld in Nederland, Verwey-Jonker Institute and the Anne Frank Stichting, p.51

[75] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 41, March 2016, pp. 7-8

[76] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 40, November 2015, p.4

extremist sentiments; both left- and right-wing. The threat assessment stated that there was a violent incident near an asylum reception centre in Woerden.[77] There was one terrorist attack in February 2016 with an extremist right wing bias in which fire bombs were thrown at a Mosque in the Dutch city of Enschede.[78] During their trial the perpetrators of this attack confessed that with this violent action they wanted to stop the city council building a new asylum seekers center. It also mentioned the fact that the number of protests, demonstrations and violent actions by extremist right wing groups decreased due to the reduction of the influx of refugees in 2016. Vigilant organisations, such as the Soldiers of Odin, were established in order to protect the members of public against the, in their eyes, asylum threat. This led to one incident in which members of the Soldiers of Odin tried to apprehend a refugee who supposedly molested a woman in a Dutch city.[79] The activities of these vigilant groups were limited in size and number. This increase in extremist activities does not necessarily has to be related to the influx of refugees but could also be related to an increase in polarisation in Dutch society due to conflicting sentiments within various organisations.

*Inter-migrant crimes with a political and/or ideological bias*
The threat assessments of the NCTV nor the annual reports of the AIVD mention inter-migrant crimes with a political and/or ideological bias. This does not mean these were not present; they were simply not mentioned in these reports. Therefore, information regarding this topic is limited. We consequently used data gathered from information sent to the House of Representatives by the Minister of Migration. However, these numbers are only available for the time period between January 2015 and December 2016. Figure 4.1 below represents these numbers.

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[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 43, November 2016

Figure 4.1: Incidents Asylum reception centres in the Netherlands 2015-2016.[80]
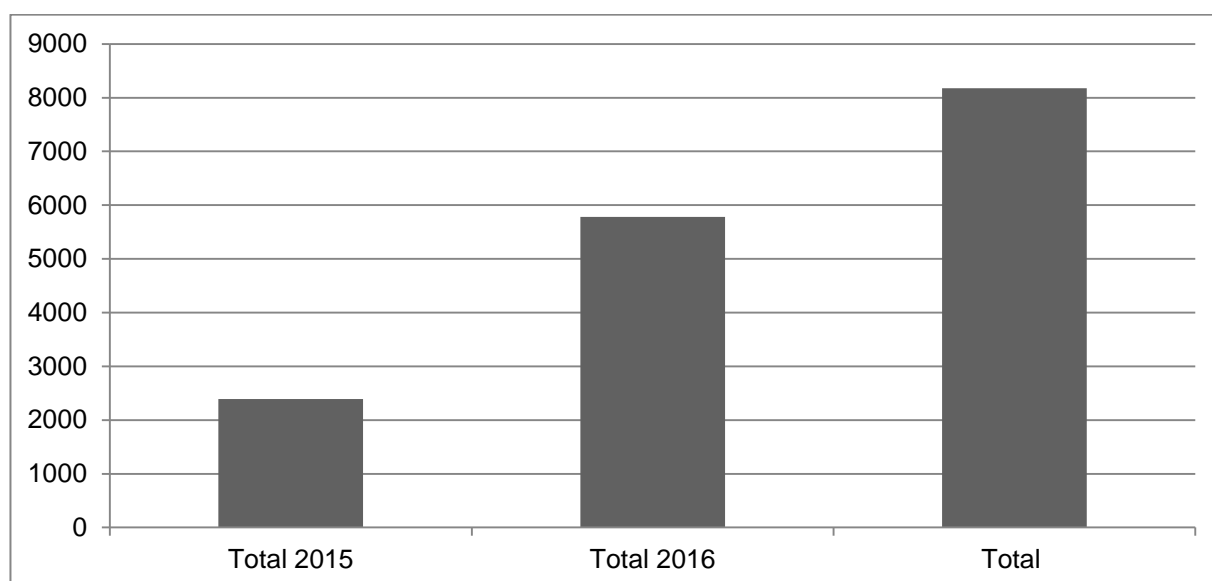
Clearly represented in Figure 4.1 is the fact that the incidents in asylum reception centres increased in 2016. The COA did not differentiate between inter-migrant incidents and incidents between migrants and employees or volunteers of the asylum reception centres, which meant that the provided data included these incidents as well. However, as represented in Figure 4.1, these incidents increased in 2016. The increase of these incidents was related to the increase of refugees in 2015 and the backlash of this influx in 2016. In addition, the registration of incidents improved which meant that more incidents were registered. The impact of the high influx and the increased occupancy of the asylum reception centres all contributed to an increase in these incidents in 2016.[81] It is important to note that for the registration of data, the COA differentiated between verbal, non-verbal and physical incidents. The bulk of incidents were physical incidents, whereas the non-verbal incidents contributed a small amount of incidents to the total amount of incidents. We do not know the nature of the incidents; thus it is difficult to draw any conclusions.

Confrontation crimes between extremists of different political convictions
Confrontation crimes between extremists of different political convictions in the Netherlands did not occur as it did in many other European countries such as Germany or the United Kingdom. The 2012 annual Dutch intelligence report noted that the No Border network was established in

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[80] COA.nl, Meldingen COA tweede helft 2016
https://www.coa.nl/sites/www.coa.nl/files/nieuws/media/bestanden/20170413_meldingen_coa_0.pdf
And Ministery of Security and Justice, Geregistreerde meldingen en incidenten op- en rondom COA-opvanglocaties, periode januari – juni 2016, 3 oktober 2016 and Ministery of Security and Justice, Geregistreerde COA en politie meldingen op en rondom COA-opvanglocaties, 30 January 2016.
[81] Ministry of Security and Justice, Kamerbrief over het aantal geregistreerde meldingen en incidenten op- en rondom COA-opvanglocaties, 3 October 2016, p.2

that year.[82] The network was a broad umbrella group of various radical asylum right groups. Opponents of immigration policies in the Netherlands besmirched the residence of the former Minister of Migration in 2012. [83] However, the threat assessment published in February 2014 emphasised that there was an increase in polarisation in the first half of 2014 and there could be a higher likelihood of so-called confrontation crimes.[84]

In 2014, there was a fear that the increased activity of extremist right-wing organisations lead to increased activity of extremist left-wing organisations.[85] The radical asylum-rights organisations increased their activities as well; including carrying out 'home-visits' in which they besmirched the house of people involved with migration policies.[86] The NCTV identified an increase in demonstrations by extremist right-wing groups in the first three months of 2015. These groups used the jihadist terrorist attacks in Europe to gain support for their movement.[87] The far right group, *Identitair Verzet* (ID) and *Pro-Patria,* were very active. Pro-Patria clashed with ISIS-supporters in The Hague.[88] However, these groups were not violent but caused unrest and a feeling of unease within the Muslim population.[89] Left- and right-wing extremist organisations were mainly focused on asylum policies; they were either opponents of the current policies, or were in favour of stricter policies. In this time frame, *Pegida*, an far right-wing organisation, tried to organise demonstration against the, in their eyes, increase of Muslims in the Netherlands. The first Pegida demonstration in the Netherlands (Utrecht, October 2015) attracted an extreme left wing counter demonstration. The result was a violent confrontation between the two groups which was curtailed by massive police force.

Extreme left organisations tried to counter protests organised by Pegida.[90] There were some protests and actions against the developers of asylum reception centres by extremist left-wing groups, who showed their disapproval for the strict asylum policies in the Netherlands. The threat assessment of March 2016 mentioned the fact that the number of protests, demonstrations and violent actions by extremist right wing groups decreased due to the reduction of the influx of refugees in 2016.[91] Thus, it stands to reason that extremist right responded to the influx. Left wing organisations already opposed asylum policies, even before

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[82] AIVD, Annual report 2012, 23 April 2013, p.30

[83] Ibid.

[84] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 35, February 2014, p. 5 and NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 36, June 2014, p. 6-7

[85] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 37, November 2014, p. 4

[86] Ibid.

[87] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 38, March 2015, pp. 3-4

[88] AIVD, Annual report 2014, 22 April 2014, p.33

[89] NCTV, Samenvatting Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland, 38, March 2015, pp. 3-4

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

the influx in 2015. However, we did see that the left wing organisations responded to the anti-immigrant sentiments of the, mainly, right wing organisations.

4.3 Conclusions

Various threat assessments in the period 2012 and 2016 showed an increased attention towards extremism in every form. Due to the growing jihadist threat the NCTV raised the threat level in march 2013. Tension and polarisation in the Netherlands saw a considerable increase due to the growing jihadist threat and - during 2015 - the growing number of asylum seekers. The incidents that occurred in the timeframe of this study are difficult to directly connect to the influx of refugees. However, it stands to reason that the developments in society caused polarisation. Terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels showed that ISIS sent operatives to Europe disguised as refugees to carry out attacks. Far right groups tried to use this momentum and organised various demonstrations. An terroristic attack against a mosque In February 2016 was motivated by aversion to a planned new asylum seeker centre. The activities of far right groups diminished again in the second half of 2016 when the number of asylum seekers decreased. Traditionally left-wing extremism in the Netherlands focused on illegal actions against the perceived inhumane asylum system (such as the besmirching of houses and buildings). However, after 2015 various extreme left wing organisations focused their actions against the growing number of right wing demonstrations. This led to an increased threat of confrontational violence, particularly initiated by extreme left. Thus, it stands to reason that the influx of refugees in 2015 constituted a viable background in which various extremist groups (right-wing directly and extreme left wing indirectly) were able to gain more ground for their organisation and ideas.

5. Newspaper Analysis

This chapter reflects the nature and incidence of media reporting on extremist related violence and the nexus with migration in the period 2012-2016 in the Netherlands. Following, we will present the findings according to the type of extremist violence, distinguishing, first, violence related to Salafism and Islamism, second, violence committed against migrants and asylum seekers, third, socio-political violence between extremists of opposite ends of the spectrum (so-called confrontation crime) and fourth, violence within the refugee population.

In order to provide an overview of the manner in which the incidents that occurred in the Netherlands were portrayed, we gathered newspaper article for the period between 1 January 2012 and 31 December 2016. In doing so, we relied on two major Dutch newspapers: *De Telegraaf* (readership: 382.089) and the *NRC* (readership: 135.764). [92] Using previously described search terms (see chapter 2), this search yielded 448 articles; 147 of these articles were gathered from *De Telegraaf,* while 301 of these articles were gathered from the *NRC.* We selected these newspapers because these newspapers portray both ends of the spectrum; the *NRC* is considered to be a liberal newspaper, whereas *De Telegraaf* is regarded to be a right-wing newspaper. We believe these newspapers provide a clear overview of the portrayal of the four phenomena in the Dutch media due to their placement at opposite ends of the political spectrum. The methods used to gather the data are displayed in chapter two.

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[92] NOS.nl, Telegraaf verliest meeste lezers, March 30, 2017, last accessed on 4/5/2017
http://nos.nl/artikel/2165673-telegraaf-verliest-meeste-lezers.html

5.1 Terrorist and extremist violence related to Salafist-jihadists and Islamism

The tags developed for this topic yielded a total of 106 newspaper articles from *De Telegraaf.* It yielded 243 newspaper articles from the *NRC.* Figure 5.1 shows terrorist and extremist related violence as displayed in *De Telegraaf* and the *NRC.*

Figure 5.1: Terrorist and extremist violence related to Salafism and Islamism in *De Telegraaf* and the *NRC.*
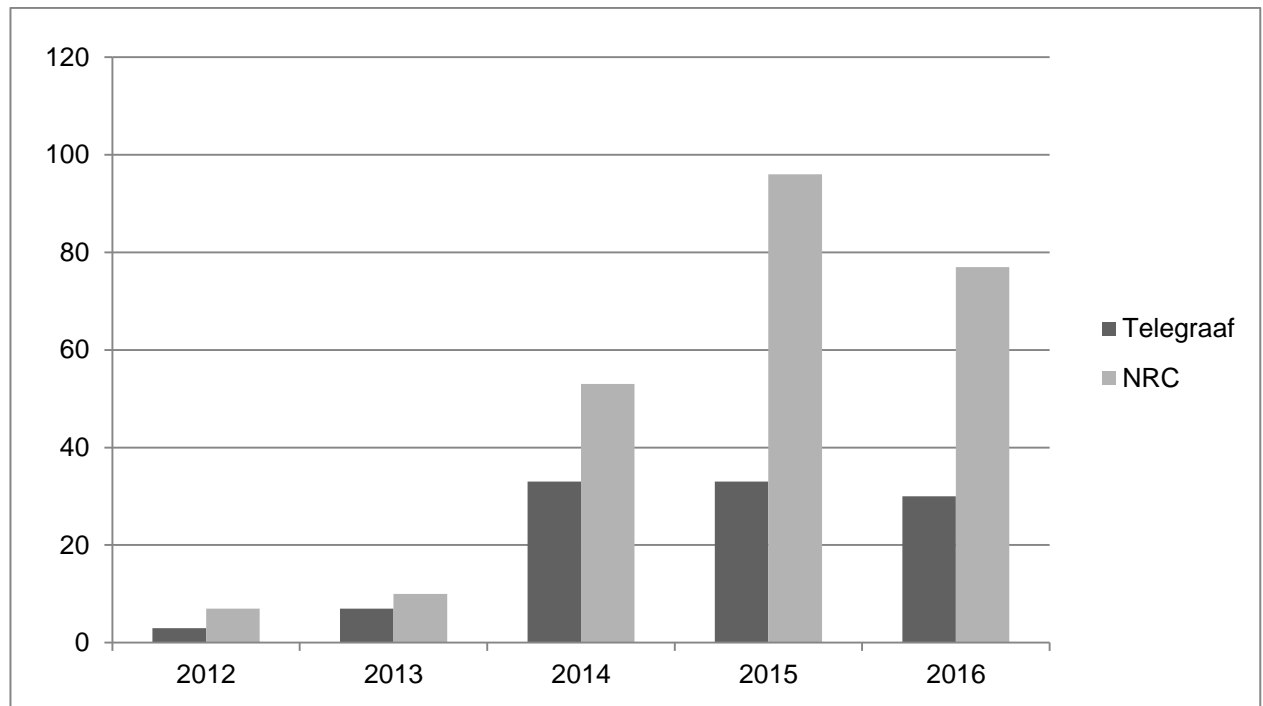
As reflected in Figure 5.1, newspaper articles from *De Telegraaf* related to criminal activities and Salafism and Islamism yielded more results in 2015 and 2016 than in the previous years. The rise of reporting on terrorist and extremist violence relating to Salafist-jihadists and Islamism started in 2012, but saw a significant increase in 2014. This year, 2014, marked the year in which the Islamic State was established and the Netherlands polarised on topics such as Islamism as presented in chapter four. *De Telegraaf* reported on Dutch foreign fighters and the difficulties the families that stayed behind faced. They claimed that one particular foreign fighter, Achraf, "is sent to his death" and that the Muslim community watched how Muslim kids are stolen to fight for ISIS.[93] The manner in which this is portrayed in *De Telegraaf* shows the feeling of unease and unrest; even the Muslim community cannot prevent foreign fighters from moving to the Islamic State.

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[93] De Telegraaf, 'Achraf wordt dood ingestuurd': Vader kansloos tegen ronselaars die van zijn zoon (16) jihadstrijder maakten, June 28, 2014, p.9

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The subsequent year, 2015, marked the influx of refugees to the Netherlands. As presented in chapter four, this influx caused for concern within various groups of the Dutch public, especially extremist right-wing groups and asylum-right groups. This does, however, not mean that there was a direct connection to the influx of refugees in 2015 and the presence of criminal activities relating to Salafism and Islamism. It is interesting to note that in 2016, reporting on this topic for *De Telegraaf* continued, while reporting on this topic declined for the *NRC.* It stands to reason that the *NRC* focused more on the influx and incidents surrounding this, whereas *De Telegraaf* showed more of an interest in the incidents after the influx of refugees in 2015. However, we need to take into account that this is an exploratory research and no conclusions can be drawn from this.

As displayed in Figure 5.1, the topic of terrorist and extremist violence related to Salafism and Islamism yielded more results within the *NRC* than it did within *De Telegraaf*. One explanation could be the tags we used; certain words were more likely to yield results in a newspaper similar to the *NRC* than a newspaper similar to *De Telegraaf* due to the specific demographic they aim at. Nonetheless, Figure 5.1 shows that there was an increase in newspaper articles about this phenomenon for the *NRC* as well, specifically in the years leading up to 2014, which coincided with establishment of the Islamic State. Many articles in 2015 and 2016 provided background information on the different types of the Islamic religion and the difference between terrorist attacks and the Islamic religion.[94] Thus, it seemed as if the newspaper articles from the *NRC* emphasised the importance of various perspectives relating to the debate, while *De Telegraaf* focused on the portrayal of some of the issues related to terrorist and extremist related violence regarding Salafist-jihadism and Islamism.

After 2015, when the number of refugees migrating to the Netherlands dwindled, the number of newspaper articles relating to this phenomenon in the *NRC* declined as well. This is an interesting development, as the threat assessment of July 2016 saw a rise in Salafist and radical Islamist movements in the Netherlands. It stands to reason that incidents relating to Salafist and radical Islamist movements were not mentioned in the newspapers; this could be related to the fact that there were no significant incidents and that these organisations had a difficult time gaining support for their cause. When comparing the two newspapers, it is interesting to note that the peak of newspaper articles related to this phenomenon for *De Telegraaf* was quite stable leading up to 2015 and declined somewhat after the influx of

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[94] For example: NRC Handelsblad, 'Het problem is niet de Islam, maar Wahabisme', January 27, 2015, p. 9, or NRC Handelsblad, 'Kijk eens anders naar het Salafisme' December 7, 2015, or NRC Handelsblad, 'Salafisme is de oplossing tegen radicalisering; Polarisatie of Participatie', January 23, 2016.

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refugees in October 2015. The peak for the *NRC,* on the other hand*,* was in 2015. It stands to reason that the *NRC* focused more on the influx and incidents surrounding this, whereas *De Telegraaf* has shown more of an interest for the incidents after the influx of refugees in 2014 and 2015.

When focusing on the content of the articles relating to this phenomenon for the first and last quarter of 2015, right before and during and after the 2015 influx of refugees. Figure 5.2 represents the content analysis of the two newspaper articles for the first and last quarter of 2015. The content analysis is carried out focusing on five criteria, which are represented in paragraph 2.2.5.

Figure 5.2: Positive and Negative news articles in *De Telegraaf* and the *NRC* in the first quarter and last quarter of 2015.
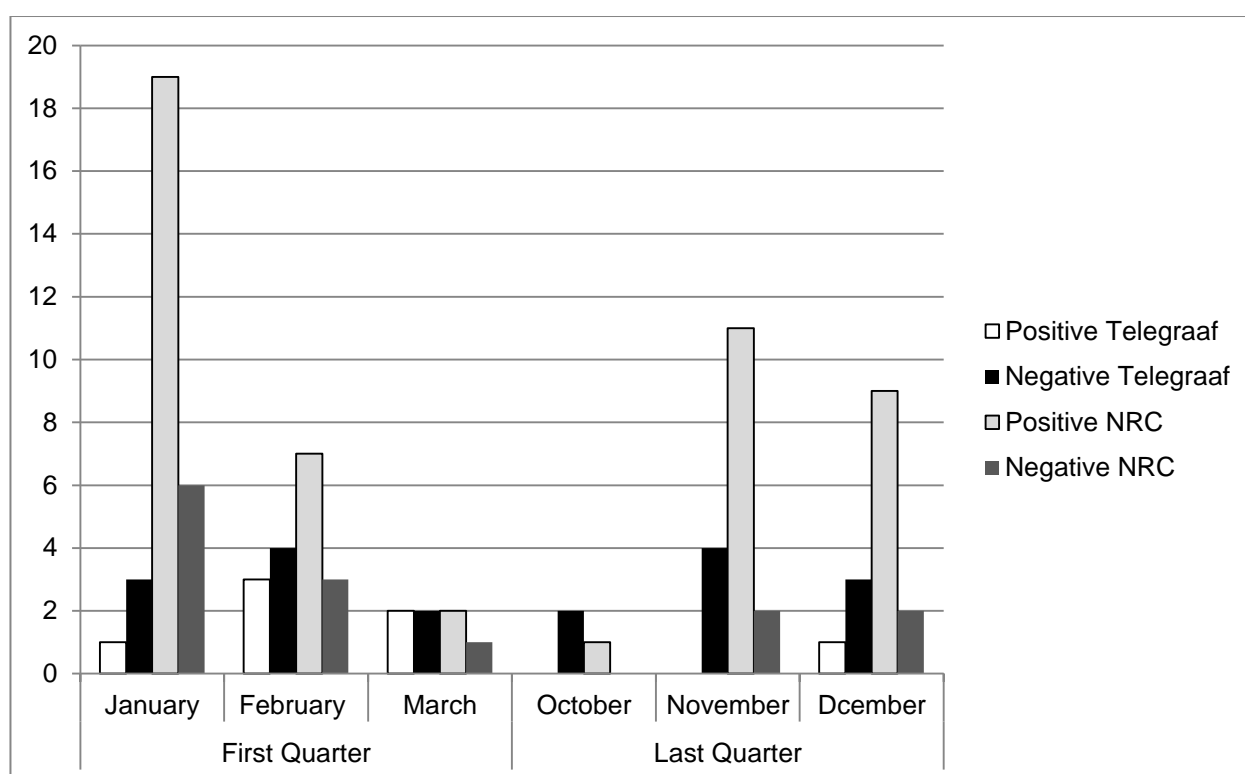

Figure 5.2 demonstrates that the influx in October 2015 did not cause a significant increase in negative articles on the issue at hand. It is interesting to see that the *NRC* increased its positive news articles on the issue, whereas the negative reporting did not increase in the last quarter of 2015 for the *NRC*; it also decreased for *De Telegraaf.* It is worth mentioning that the total amount of newspaper articles in the first quarter of 2015 was 53 articles (for *De Telegraaf* and the *NRC* combined) and 33 articles for the last quarter of 2015. The NRC wrote on this topic in a positive manner, whereas the majority of *De Telegraaf* articles were negative; although the *NRC* published more articles than the *De Telegraaf.* It is important to note that some of these

articles portrayed the issue in a neutral manner and for the purpose of this research these articles were classified as positive. Furthermore, we noticed that the *NRC* provided more background information on religion and the various forms of the Islam, whereas *De Telegraaf* reported on incidents and issues related to this phenomenon. De *Telegraaf*, for example, published an article on the Salafist movement threatening Dutch state-security in February 2015[95], whereas in the same month the *NRC* published an article on the different varieties of the Islamic religion and stated that not all Salafists are terrorists. [96] Thus, this example demonstrated the fact that even though the number of published articles is not similar, the *NRC* provided background information and a little nuance, whereas *De Telegraaf* provided the information as it is, without any nuance.

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[95] De Telegraaf, Salafisme bedreigt staatsveiligheid, 17 February 2015.
[96] NRC, Oorlog voer je niet voor de islam alleen, 21 February 2015.

5.2 Violence committed against migrants and asylum seekers

The tags developed for this topic yielded 31 articles from *De Telegraaf* and 39 articles from the *NRC.* The difference, albeit a small difference could be related to the developed tags; the *NRC* wrote about these incidents in a different manner and with different wording than *De Telegraaf*. Figure 5.3 shows the results for *De Telegraaf* and the *NRC.*

Figure 5.3: Violence committed against migrants and asylum seekers in De Telegraaf and the NRC.
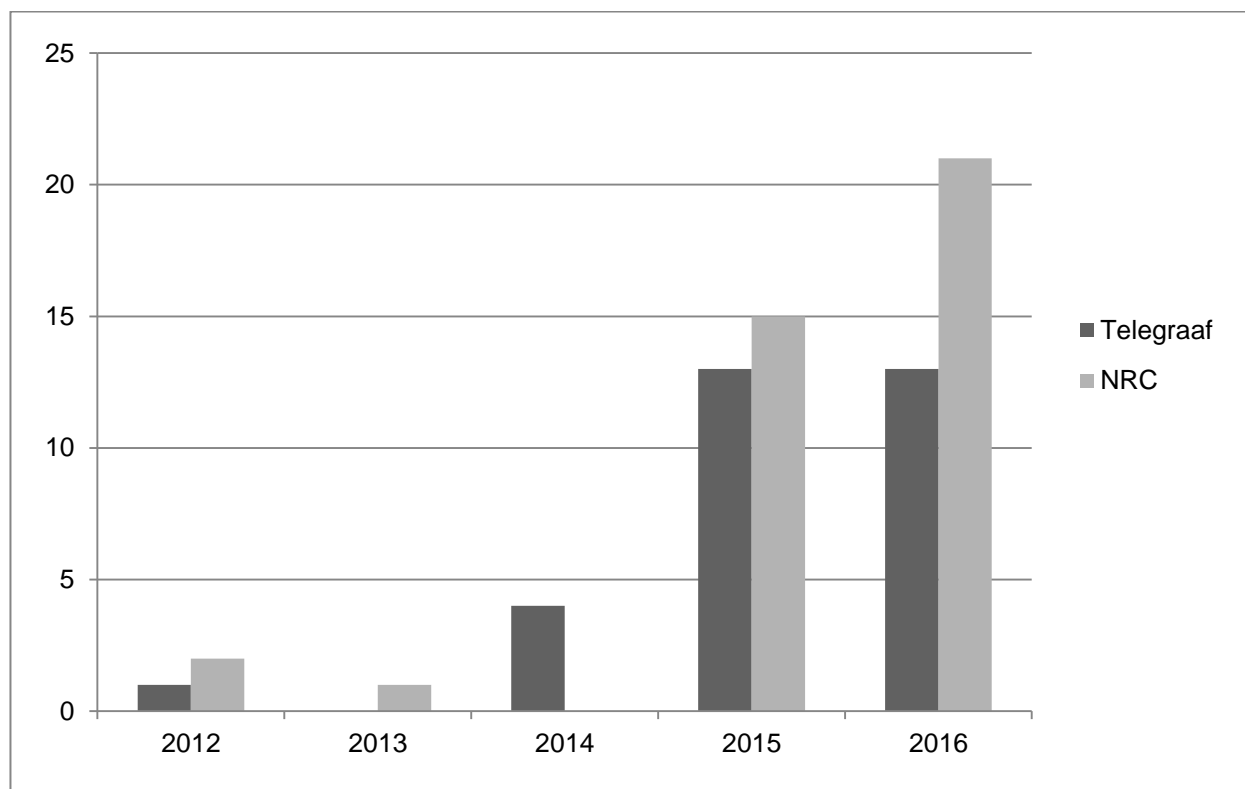
As displayed in Figure 5.3, there were a similar number of results for *De Telegraaf* and the *NRC.* This did not mean that there were no incidents related to this phenomenon. *De Telegraaf* reported on the establishment of the Soldiers of Odin, the anti-immigrant vigilant organisation, in 2016, and the assault of an asylum seeker who supposedly molested a woman.[97] This incident, as well as the establishment of Soldiers of Odin, was mentioned in the threat assessment of November 2016.

As mentioned in the previous chapter there was an increase in extremist right organizations and their response to the influx of refugees, but this increase was not portrayed in the newspaper

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[97] De Telegraaf, Malloten, July 20, 2016, p. 2.

articles from *De Telegraaf* when we used the developed tags. As represented in Figure 5.3, it is interesting to see that here too; there was an increase in newspaper articles in 2016. The years leading up to 2015 yielded no results from *De Telegraaf*, whereas 2015 and 2016 both showed 13 results. It stands to reason that this was related to the influx of refugees; since before 2015 there were not many refugees and the public debate surrounding this topic gained more attention in 2015 and 2016. As displayed in Figure 5.3, the *NRC* yielded slightly more results compared to *De Telegraaf.*

Figure 5.3 represents the newspaper articles that were gathered from the *NRC*. The years leading up to 2015 and 2016 saw a slight increase each year, but in 2015 it saw a larger increase; however, the peak of newspaper articles related to this phenomenon was in 2016. The *NRC* mentioned the fears for violence against asylum seekers and the solutions local politicians tried develop and implement to prevent violence against asylum seekers.[98] This sentiment was similar to the incidents mentioned in the threat assessments in the previous chapter, in which the NCTV saw an increase in right-wing extremism.

Drawing a parallel between the results of the *NRC* and *De Telegraaf* related to violence committed against refugees and asylum seekers, it seemed as if reporting on violence against migrants and asylum seekers remained the same or increased in 2016, even though the influx of refugees decreased in 2016. Thus, it stands to reason that there was a growing concern related to migration to the Netherlands and the public debate polarised in 2016; the amount of incidents against migrants and asylum seekers increased. When comparing this to the threat assessments of 2016 it is clear that this is the case; there were more incidents related to political and ideological violence and extreme right and extreme left organisations have gained more attention and were undertaking more protests and actions to show their disapproval of the current situation. The fact that there were more newspaper articles in 2016 relating to this phenomenon could possibly be due to the fact that in 2015 the influx of refugees was new and the public debate surrounding this topic gained more attention throughout 2015, whereas in 2016 the public formed their opinions and wanted to take action; either against the asylum policies in the Netherlands or in favour of more lenient policies.

Figure 5.4 represents the content of the articles published in the first and last quarter of 2015. It is clearly visible that the first quarter of 2015 did not yield as many articles as the last quarter. It is interesting to note that both newspapers published predominantly positive newspaper articles on this issue. The increase in published articles on this topic represents the fact that the issue of

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[98] NRC, 'Aanval op AZC Woerden, Incident of begin trend?' October, 12, 2015

crimes against migrants and asylum seekers increasingly gained more attention during and after the influx of refugees in October 2015.

Figure 5.4: Positive and negative news articles in De Telegraaf and the NRC in the first quarter and last quarter of 2015.
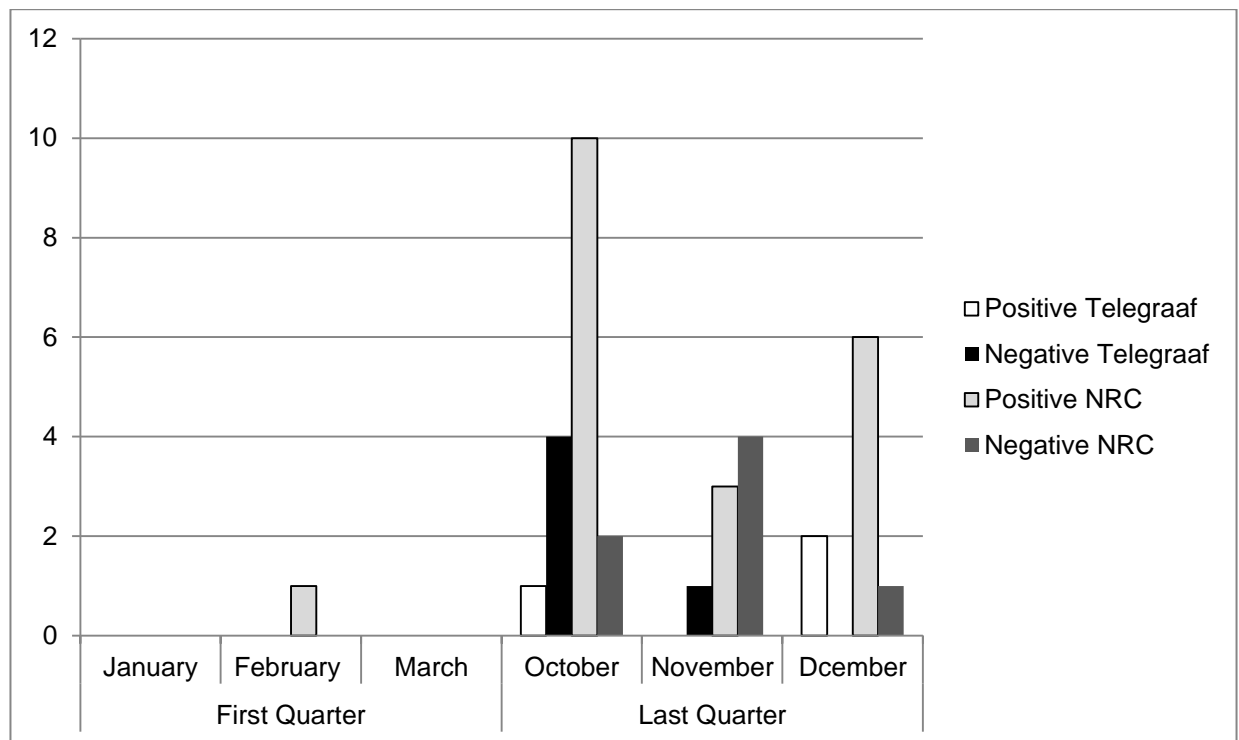

When specifically focusing on the content of the published articles, here, too, the *NRC* published more background information on the issue, whereas *De Telegraaf* published articles on incidents that occurred. There has only been one result for the first quarter of 2015 which was an article from the *NRC*. The last quarter of 2015 yielded more results; eight articles from *De Telegraaf* and 27 articles from the *NRC*. The majority of the *NRC* articles were positive (20 articles out of 27 articles for both quarters) whereas the majority of *De Telegraaf* were negative (five articles out of eight articles for both quarters). Even though it is difficult to compare the two newspapers due to the difference in the number of articles, it is clear that *De Telegraaf* published articles on this topic that were negative, whereas the *NRC* published positive articles. It is worth mentioning that this topic was not covered by *De Telegraaf* before the 2015 influx and only limited by the *NRC,* but after the 2015 influx the topic gained more attention.

5.3 Socio-political violence between extremists of opposite ends of the spectrum

The results relating to this phenomenon differ per newspaper as well; the agreed upon tags yielded one article from *De Telegraaf*, and 11 articles from the *NRC*. This discrepancy between the two newspapers was, in all likelihood, related to the developed tags; it was an interesting development that there are more results from the *NRC* than from *De Telegraaf*. Figure 5.4 displays the results from *De Telegraaf* and the *NRC.*

Figure 5.4: Socio-political violence between extremists of opposite ends of the spectrum in De Telegraaf and the NRC.
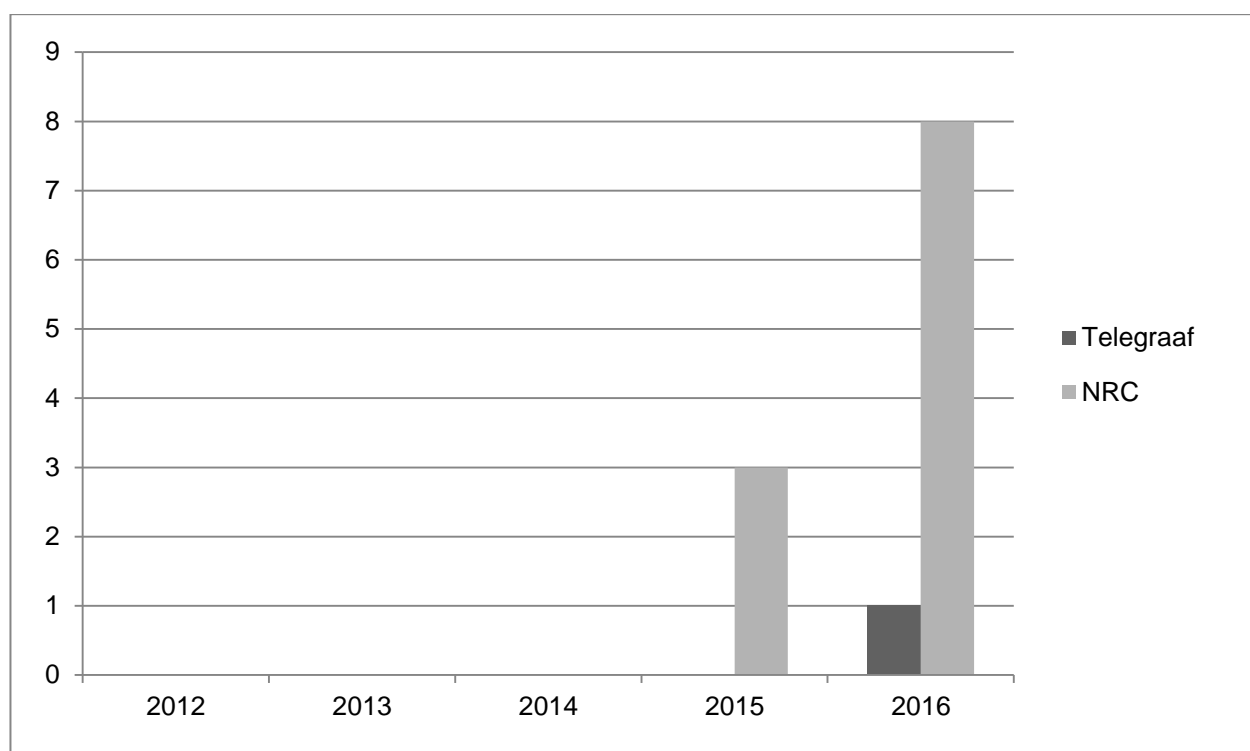
Drawing from Figure 5.4, it is easy to see that De Telegraaf only yielded one result. This article reported the fact that two people were apprehended who were suspected of abuse at a demonstration against asylum seekers.[99] Connecting this to the threat assessments it only stands to reason that this result was related to the increase in political and ideological violence related to the influx of refugees. It is interesting to see that there was such a discrepancy between the two newspaper articles, and it stands to reason that this was related to the tags and not to the lack of incidents; there was an increase in socio-political violence and socio-political sentiments in 2016.

There were more results from the *NRC* with a peak of eight articles in 2016 and an increase in attention towards this phenomenon in 2015 and 2016. Most results related to the tags

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[99] De Telegraaf, 'Duo opgepakt voor AZC-rellen', February 2, 2016.

concerned confrontation crimes and extremist right, and to a lesser extent confrontation crimes and extreme left, both in 2016. Drawing a parallel between the threat assessments in the previous chapter and the results yielded from the NRC, it stands to reason that there was an increase and there were more incidents relating to this phenomenon. The NRC reported about the terrorist attack against a Mosque in the Dutch city of Enschede,[100] while newspaper articles about this incident did not come up when searching the database for articles from De Telegraaf. The NRC also mentioned the fact that the elections of 2017 could be the target of extremist violence and confrontation crimes between extremist left- and right-wing organisations. This was supported by the threat assessment of November 2016.[101]

Due to the fact that we were unable to find any court documents, it is difficult to draw any conclusions from the limited data we have. Thus, further research is required. There have not been many results relating to confrontation crimes between extremist right and extremist left organisations; this is supported by the threat assessments of 2015 and 2016 in which there was no mention of certain incidents.

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[100] NRC, 'Brandbom tegen moskee Enschede is terreurdaad', October 28, 2016, p.8
[101] NRC, 'Dreigingsanalyse: Deze verkiezingstijd meer kans op radicaal geweld', November 14, 2016, p. 3

5.4 Violence within the refugee population

This phenomenon, violence within the refugee population, yielded a total amount of nine articles from *De Telegraaf*, and eight articles from the *NRC*. The discrepancy between the two newspapers is not as big as with the previous phenomena. What is interesting to see however, is that for both newspapers there were no results for ideologically motivated crimes at reception centres; all results were related to inter-migrant crimes at reception centres. However, ideology was not involved, according to the newspapers. Figure 5.5 displays the results from *De Telegraaf* and the *NRC.*

Figure 5.5: Violence within the refugee population in De Telegraaf and the NRC.
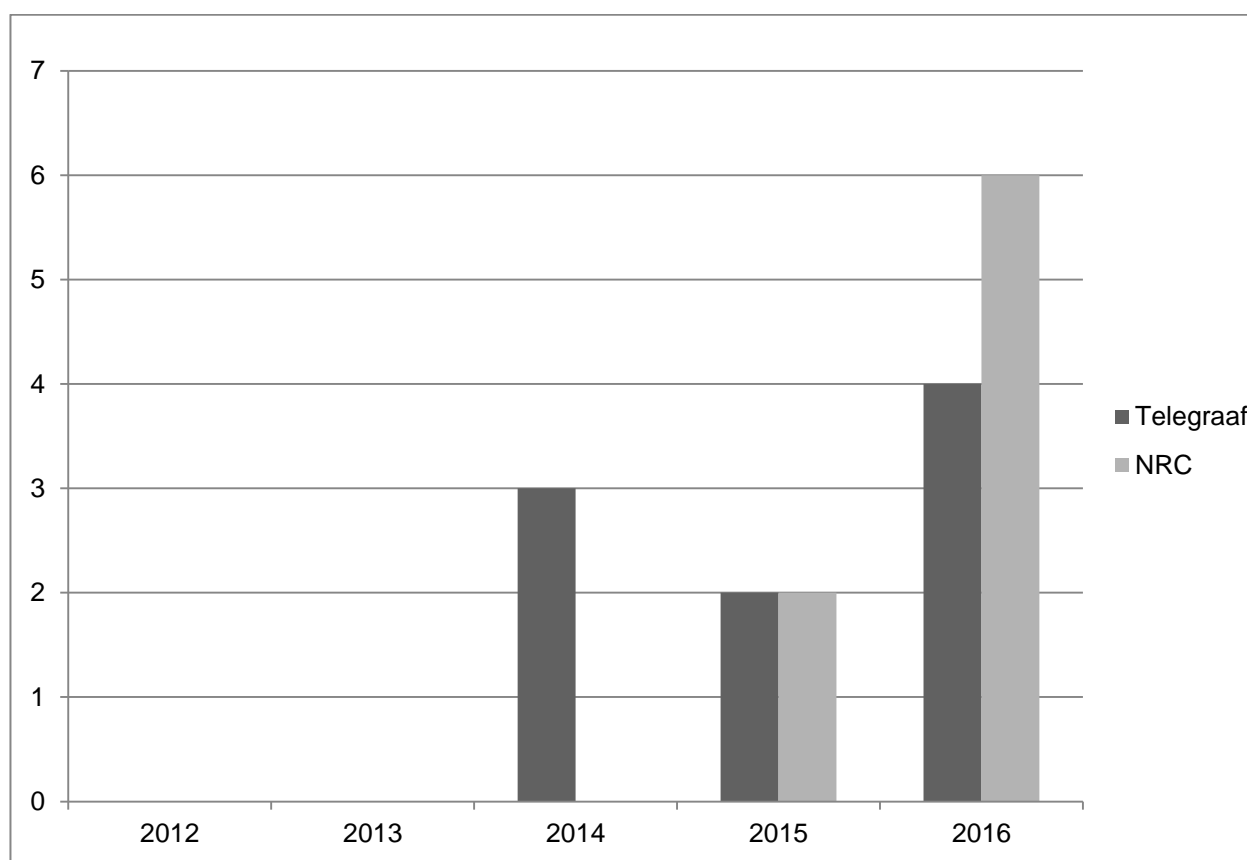

Figure 5.5 displays the results from the search relating to violence within the refugee population. Since the establishment of the Islamic State in Syria in 2014 and the influx of refugees in 2015 there was an increase in reporting on violence within the refugee population. In November 2014 *De Telegraaf* reported that in the future, the likelihood of great unrest within the asylum reception centres increased, due to the many nationalities living there.[102] A little over a year

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[102] De Telegraaf, 'Asielopvang Tikkende Tijdbom: Massale knokpartij in Overloon lijk meer dan incident', November 21, 2014, p.6

later, in January 2016, it mentioned the doubling of violence and aggression in asylum reception centres.[103]

As displayed in Figure 5.5, the *NRC* and *De Telegraaf* yielded similar results. However, the news articles from the *NRC* served more as background information and portrayed various perspectives in the debate, instead of reproducing incidents.[104] The years leading up to the influx of refugees (i.e. 2012 and 2013) yielded no results relating to this phenomenon. However, there was a peak of published newspaper articles in 2014 for *De Telegraaf*, with a slight decline in 2015 and 2016. The *NRC*, however, saw an increase in 2015 and 2016. It stands to reason that this is related to the October 2015 influx of refugees; since there was an increase in the number of refugees, the likelihood of incidents within the refugee population increases as well. Thus, it stands to reason that inter-migrant violence occurred and is likely to continue to occur if the population in asylum reception centres increased.

The threat assessments of 2016 did not provide any data on inter-migrant crimes or violence within the refugee population. Thus, it is impossible to draw conclusions from the limited data we possess here. The lack of data could be related to the manner in which we have developed the tags and the type of tags we are using, but it could also be related to the fact that there have not been many incidents relating to this phenomenon. Even though both newspapers yielded similar results, it is still a small number of results relating to this phenomenon.

5.5 Conclusion

This media analysis showed that there were many results related to crimes against migrants or asylum seekers and crimes committed by Salafists-jihadists or Islamists. It also showed that only certain tags showed a response and only in certain newspapers. However, both newspapers saw an increase in articles on the four phenomena leading up to the influx of migrants in 2015. Compared to the data on migration in chapter three, the increase in newspaper articles on the four phenomena rises simultaneously with the number of refugees migrating to the Netherlands.

Words like radicalisation and Salafism yielded many results for the *NRC*, compared to only a few results for *De Telegraaf*. *De Telegraaf* does not typically report on this phenomenon using terms such as Salafism and Islamism, but it stands to reason that *De Telegraaf* will use other

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[103] De Telegraaf, 'Agressie, geweld en diefstal: Verdubbeling van aantal incidenten in opvangcentra voor vluchtelingen', January 30, 2016, p.2
[104] NRC, 'De flanken beheersen het debat', May 28, 2016, pp. 10-11 or NRC, 'Boze Burger toont haar zachte kant', December, 16 2016, p.10

words to describe this phenomenon. The discrepancy in the number of articles we found and the content of the newspaper articles relating to terrorist and extremist violence relating to Salafism-Jihadism and Islamism and violence committed against asylum seekers was, in all likelihood, related to the type of newspapers we used for this research. As *De Telegraaf* is a more right-wing newspaper, it publishes more articles that are short, and fast to read; it is a type of fast-paced reporting. The *NRC*, on the other hand, is more focused on background stories and long-reads, which therefore explicitly mentioned the tags we used in our research.

As this is only an exploratory research, further research into this topic is necessary in order to see if this statement is valid.

6. Facebook analysis

For the purpose of this research we have selected two Facebook groups. We have selected "*Socialisme.nu*" (Socialism.now) and "*Eigen volk eerst*" (Own people first). Both groups are the largest groups on their own side of the political spectrum; at the time of writing, *Socialisme.nu* had 4.421 likes whereas *Eigen volk eerst* had 43.485 likes. *Socialisme.nu* mainly focused on spreading information about the upcoming G20 top in Hamburg;[105] it is not so much focused on the issue of migration and refugees. The right-wing Facebook group, on the other hand, frequently posted on suspects of terrorism and described itself with the following words "*own people first! The name itself says everything! We are fed up with the wave of asylum seekers we want healthcare for the Dutch people in trouble #PVVsupporters. [Sic]*"[106]

We carried out a content analysis for both of these groups in order to assess to what extent, and how, they paid attention to the notion of migration and violence. We searched for three keywords: migration, refugees and asylum seekers.

6.1 Various Facebook groups

We chose two Facebook groups on spectrums, *Eigen volk eerst* and *Socialisme.nu*. Previously, other Facebook pages such as "*Nederland Mijn Vaderland*" (the Netherland: My motherland)*, "Liefde voor Holland"* (Love for Holland)*, "Steun de PVV*" (Support the PVV) en *"Ik doe GEEN aangifte tegen Wilders"* (I will not file an official complaint against Wilders) were online and publically accessible*. However, these right-wing Facebook pages violated Facebook's rules and regulations and were the topic of many complaints and criticism by other Facebook users, who reported these pages, which eventually led Facebook to delete these pages.[107] These pages were removed in spring 2016. These groups posted about themes that dealt with migration, the Islamic religion, national identity, globalisation, the elderly and the European Union. Several of these pages, including *Nederland Mijn vaderland* were run by the same person and these two pages alone gained more than 300.000 likes.

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[105] Socialisme.nu Facebook group, last accessed on 21/06/2017
https://www.facebook.com/InternationaleSocialisten/
[106] Eigen Volk eerst Facebook group, last accessed on 21/06/2017
https://www.facebook.com/Eigenvolkeerstnederland/?hc_ref=SEARCH&fref=nf
The quote is a direct translation from the following Dutch quote: "Eigen volk eerst! de naam zegt het al! we hebben genoeg van de golf asielzoekers wij willen eerst de zorg voor de Nederlanders in problemen! #pvvaanhangers"
[107] NRC.nl, Facebook haalt drie populaire rechtse pagina's offline, 26/05/2016, last accessed on 28/06/2017
https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2016/05/26/facebook-haalt-drie-populaire-rechtse-paginas-offline-a1407005

While numerous Facebook groups were clustered around the far right side of the political spectrum, on the far left side of the spectrum, however, there were considerably less groups. We specifically chose *Socialisme.nu*, given the large number of their political posts. Even though there were pages with more likes on the left of the political spectrum, these pages were social initiatives or action groups. The left-wing Facebook groups did not amass the same amount of likes as the right-wing groups but we believed it was important to provide an overview of both sides of the spectrum. All left-wing Facebook groups we found individually had less than 5000 likes.

The nexus between extremist violence and the refugee influx: The Netherlands 2012-2016.

6.2 Socialisme.nu

This Facebook group has the largest number of followers when compared to other left-wing oriented pages. *Socialisme.nu* had 4.421 likes at the time of writing and this page was active from 2012 through 2016. It has been quite an active page throughout the years, with 25 posts in 2012, 52 posts in 2013, 15 posts in 2014, 60 posts in 2015 and 78 posts in 2016, constituting to a total number of posts of 230. All these posts constituted posts on refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. Figure 6.1 represents the Facebook posts regarding these topics per month, for each of the years relevant to this research.
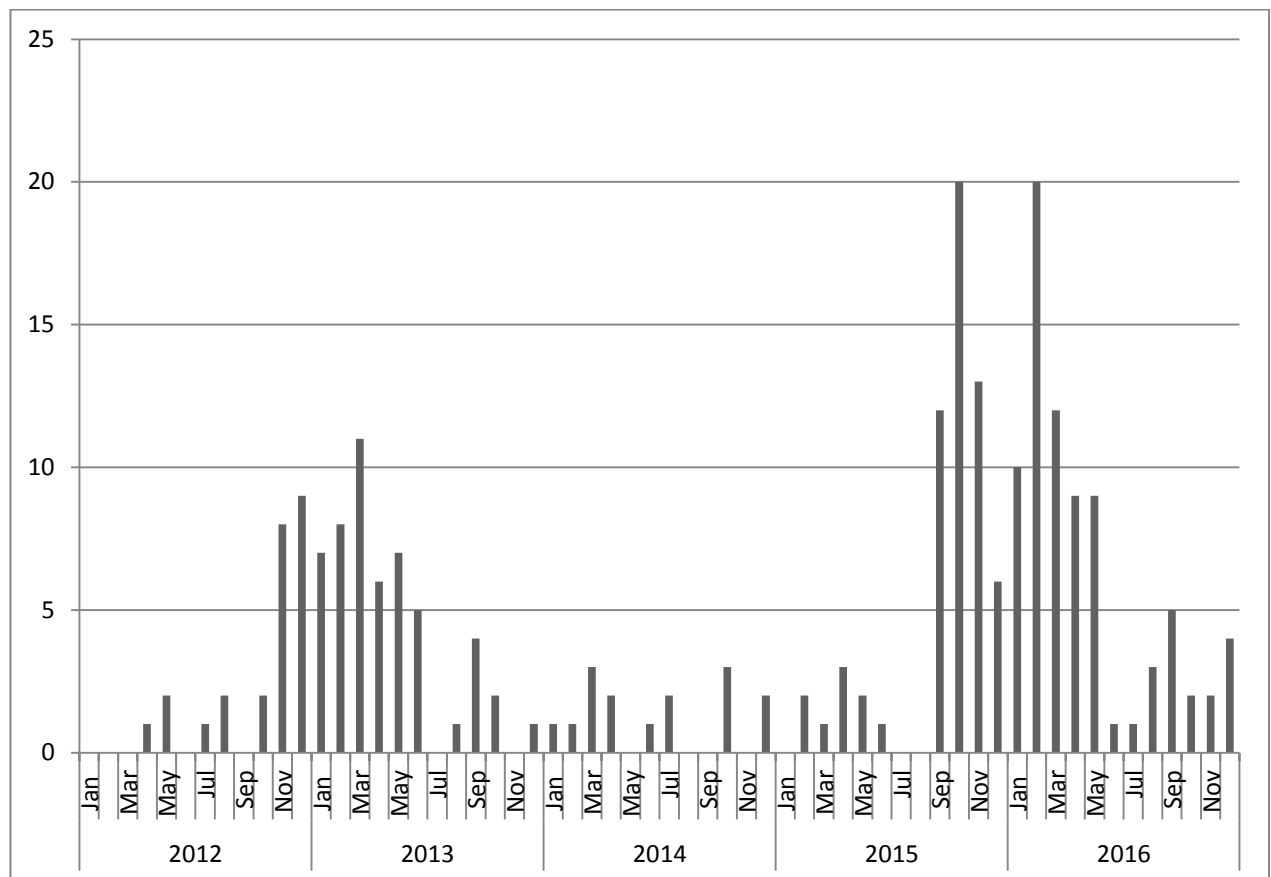
Figure 6.1: *Socialisme.nu* Facebook posts.

Figure 6.1 reveals that there were quite a few posts over the years; there was a constant stream of posts each month. When focused on October 2015 we noticed that there was an increase in posts on the topics of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, but this decreased after October 2015, with a slight increase in the first months of 2016. The increased group activity in October 2015 corresponded with the influx of refugees in that very same month. When focused on the content of the Facebook posts, we see that all of these Facebook posts are neutral/or positive: they do not provide a negative association to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Figure 6.2 represents the findings of the content analysis.

Figure 6.2: *Socialisme.nu* content analysis.
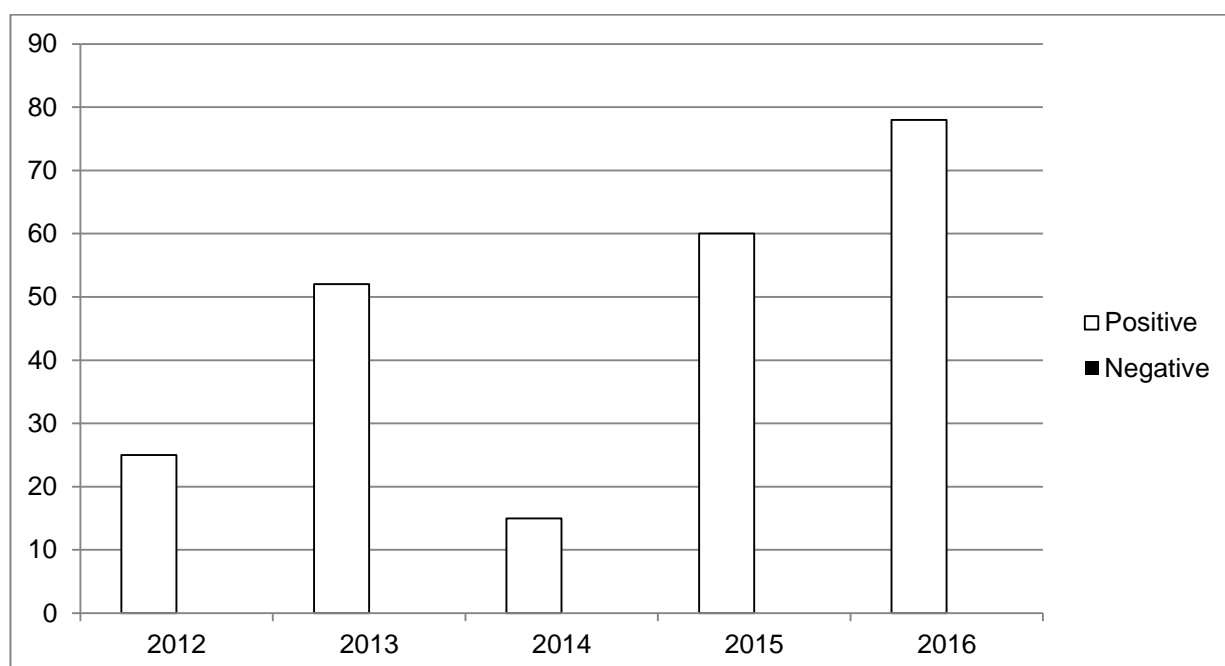
As represented in Figure 6.2, there were only positive or neutral Facebook posts regarding the topic of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Posts on this Facebook page reflected posts to welcome refugees, as they did in the following post in which they introduced an event to welcome refugees to the area:

"*Refugees are welcome in Utrecht!*
Since the start of the current refugee crisis thousands of people in the Netherlands have been actively helping refugees. Many have been involved in collecting and delivering aid while others have been working as volunteers. All these inspiring examples of support for people fleeing war and poverty are heart-warming.
But at the same time people trying to help refugees are often intimidated and threatened. Neo-Nazis are publicly spreading their extremist views at city council meetings. In October a refugee shelter in Woerden was even stormed by masked men.
We passionately oppose those people who continue scapegoating refugees for our problems. All refugees are welcome here!"[108]

This is one quote among the many positive quotes in which refuges were welcomed and supported, and in which the refugees were seen as enrichment to Dutch society by the people who liked this Facebook page. It should be noted, however, that the Facebook posts of this page were also focused on many other topics such as gender equality and climate changes, whereas the *Eigen volk eerst* had a stronger focus on migration and asylum seekers.

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[108]Public Facebook event hosted by Socialisme.nu on the 7th of November in 2015.
https://www.facebook.com/events/167835266894720/

6.3 Eigen volk eerst

This Facebook group, which, at the time of writing, had the largest number of likes and followers, compared to other right-wing Facebook groups. Even though this page was only accessible for a limited time-frame (Augustus 2015 through December 2016), it is still relevant to this research. The website had been available before, but was removed by Facebook due to violations of Facebooks' terms. In the period before and during 2015-2016, the group had been removed, but the initiators of the groups simple re-established the page following removal. As Figure 6.3 reflects, the *Eigen volk eerst* page demonstrates an increase in Facebook posts over time on topics concerning refugees, migrants and asylum seekers.

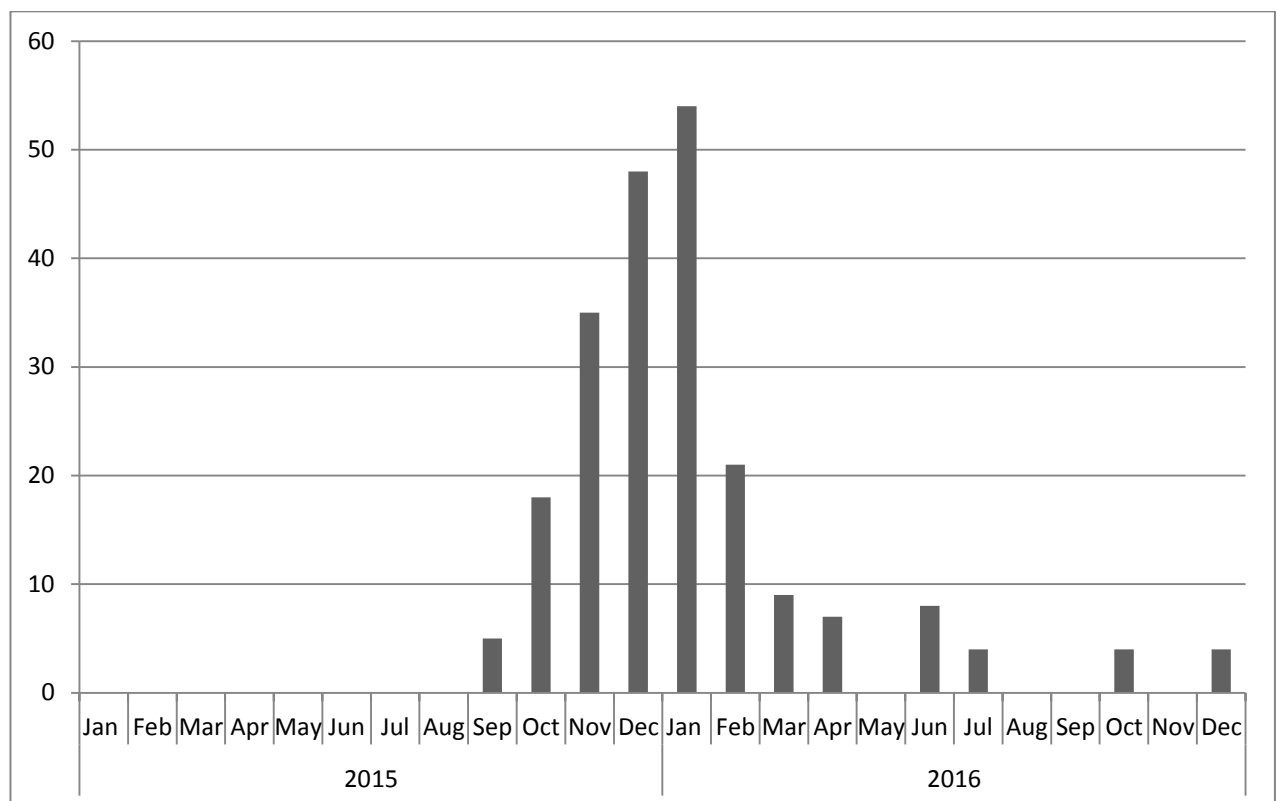Figure 6.3: *Eigen volk eerst* Facebook posts.

Figure 6.3 shows that Facebook posts on the topic of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers slightly increased in September 2015, with a larger increase in October, November and December 2015 with a peak in January 2016. This corresponds with the influx of refugees in October 2015. When examining the content of the Facebook posts, we noticed that there were no positive Facebook posts about refugees, migrants or asylum seekers.

Figure 6.4: *Eigen volk eerst* content analysis.
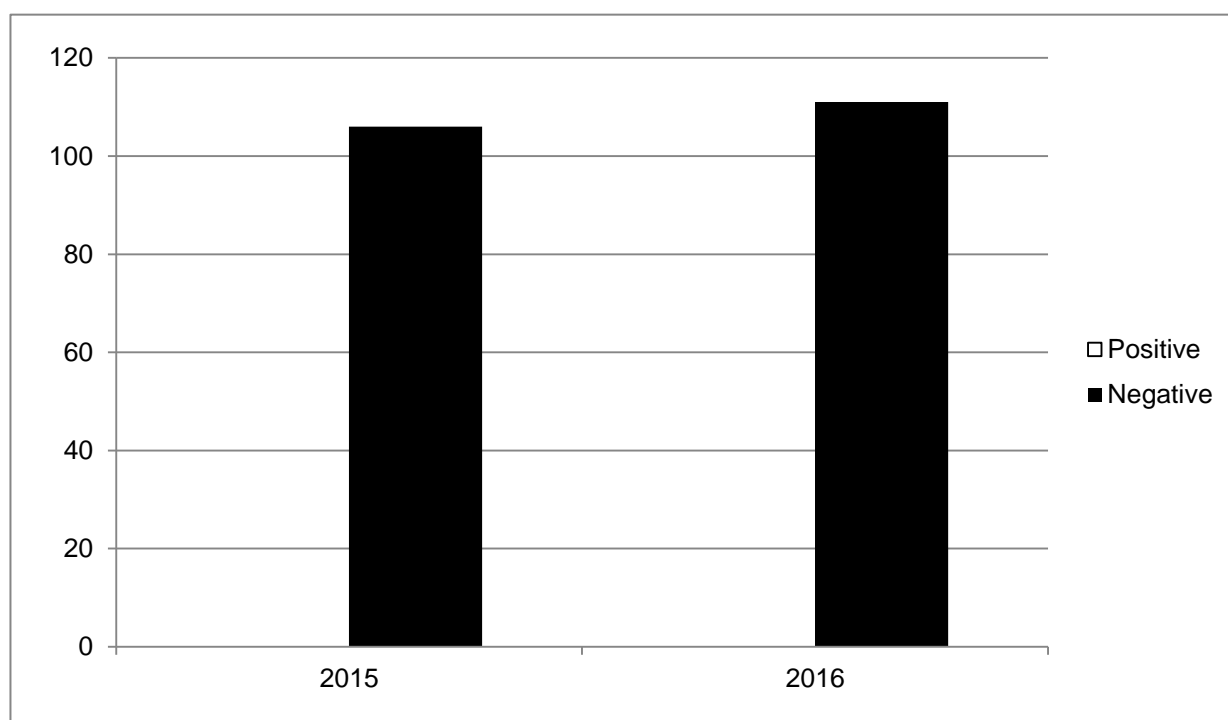
None of the posts mentioned a positive aspect on refugees, migrants or asylum seekers, as represented in Figure 6.4. Of the total number of Facebook posts on all these topics (refugees, migrants and asylum seekers), 106 posts were posted in 2015 (from August onwards) and 111 posts were posted in 2016. Of all these Facebook posts, none were positive. Most Facebook posts emphasised the negative effects refugees and asylum seekers would have on Dutch society, including scenarios in which refugees would take over Dutch culture. It stands to reason that these activities show a development towards the alt-right movement. Similar to other European countries, we found that the alt-right movement, a right-wing ideological based movement, mainly active on the internet via memes [109] (a picture with a message, not necessarily related to the alt-right movement but actively used by this movement), has been gaining support. This is an interesting development in terms of the political and societal landscape. Additionally, the *Eigen volk eerst* group organized an event in which they called upon the people of the Netherlands to resist the influx of refugees because the influx of refugees harms the safety of children.[110]

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[109] Altright.com, about us, last accessed on 23/06/2017
https://altright.com/about-altright-com/
[110] Facebook call to resistance o the Eigen volk eerst Facebook page on October 8, 2015.
https://www.facebook.com/Eigenvolkeerstnederland/photos/a.1501600093496104.1073741829.1501202
810202499/1505403493115764/?type=3

6.4 Conclusion

The two Facebook groups we studied showed both ends of the ideological spectrum; not only were they left and right-wing focused, but they also only posted either negative Facebook posts or positive/neutral Facebook posts. There were no negative posts regarding migrants, refugees and asylum seekers on the *Socialisme.nu* Facebook page, while there were no positive/neutral Facebook posts on the *Eigen volk eerst* Facebook page. Both Facebook pages saw an increase in posts in October 2015 and in subsequent months, corresponding to the influx of refugees. This observation, connected to the content analysis, showed that the right-wing Facebook page is predominantly negative towards the influx and refugees in general, whereas the left-wing Facebook page is predominantly positive or neutral towards the influx of refugees and asylum seekers in general. Since we only studied two Facebook pages, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions, but drawing from these two pages, it is clear that the sentiments on the left-side of the political/ideological spectrum were mostly positive, whereas on the right-wing side of the political spectrum, negative sentiments prevail.

7. Political parties in the Netherlands

Eleven political parties were represented in the House of Representatives after the September 2012 national election. The two largest parties formed the coalition; the PvdA (the labour party) with 38 seats, and the VVD (the right liberal party) with 41 seats. Consequently, the other nine parties formed the opposition. In March 2017 there were new, national, elections in which two new parties won enough votes to be represented in the House of Representatives. DENK (think) won three seats and the Forum voor Democratie (Forum for Democracy, FvD) won two seats. The election programmes of all of these parties are included in the study at hand.

Figure 7.1: House of Representatives seats in 2012 and 2017.[111]
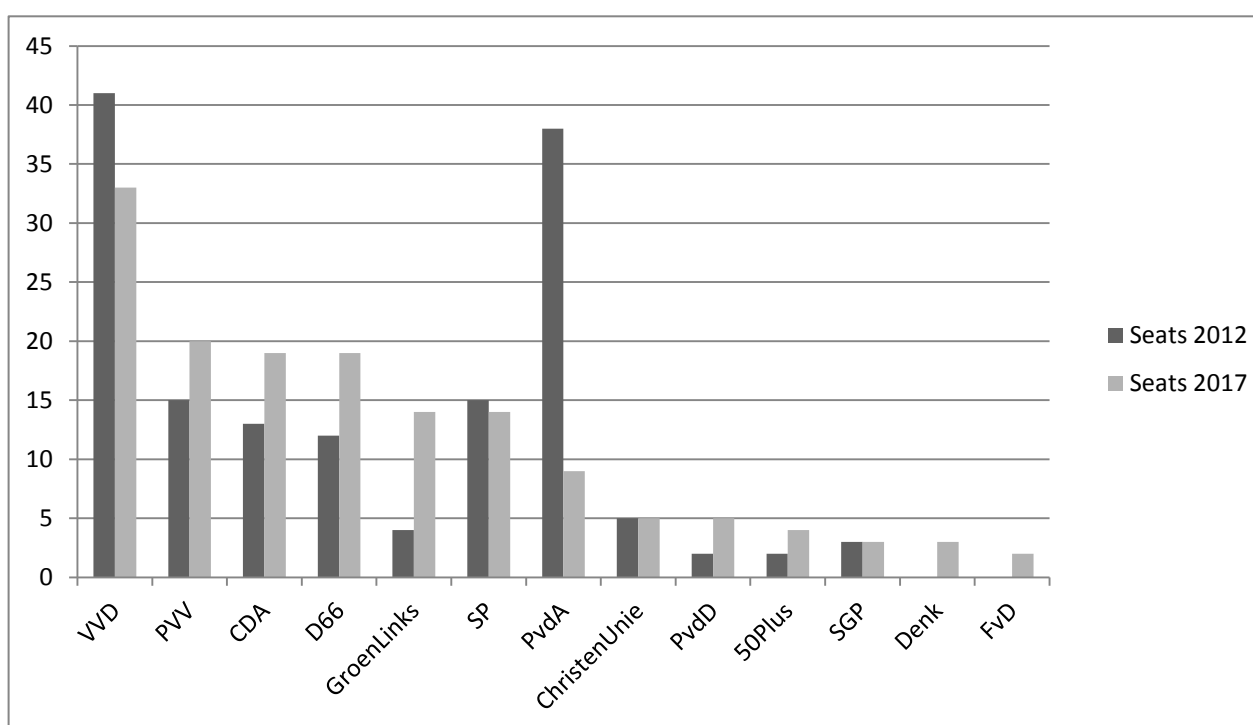
The results from the March 2017 elections marked a fragmented political landscape; a total of 28 political parties were participating in the elections of which thirteen parties eventually won enough votes to be represented in the House of Representatives. Figure 7.1 represents the division of seats after the 2012 and 2017 elections. It is clear that one party lost many seats; the Labour party lost 29 seats and went from 38 seats tot nine seats. Other parties won seats; such as the Green Left party, Democrats 66 (D66), the Christian democratic party (CDA), and the

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[111] Kiesraad, Uitslag van de verkiezingen voor de Tweede Kamer van 12 september 2012 en Kiesraad, Officiële uitslag Tweede Kamerverkiezing 15 maart 2017, last accessed on 08/06/2017 https://www.kiesraad.nl/actueel/nieuws/2017/03/20/officiele-uitslag-tweede-kamerverkiezing-15-maart-2017

right wing party PVV. In the year 2017, there were two newcomers who won enough votes for seats in the House of Representatives: *DENK*, a left party focused on minorities and multi-culturalism, and the *Forum voor Democratie* (FvD), a right, conservative party, with respectively three and two seats. These two parties, DENK and FvD will also be part of this research; however, since they only participated in the 2017 elections, we are unable to compare their election results with previous election programmes.

Currently, negotiations continue: there is no new cabinet yet. There are two factors that are important to mention here. First, as mentioned before, two new parties won enough votes to gain seats in the House of Representatives; *DENK*, who won three seats, and the Forum voor Democratie, (Forum for Democracy, or FvD) won two seats. *DENK* is a party established by two individuals coming from an immigrant background. The fact that they won three seats is important in this context; it shows that immigrant issues and the refugee crisis were important topics in the March 2017 elections. The second important point worth mentioning here is that the initial coalition negotiations, which were between the VVD, the CDA, D66 and the Green Left collapsed on the issue of migration.

The following part of this chapter provides an overview of the parties and the content of their election programs.

7.1 Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD)

The VVD, the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, was established in 1948 and is currently the biggest party in the House of Representatives, which is similar to the previous national election results in 2012. The Prime-Minister of the Netherlands, Mark Rutte, is the current leader of the VVD; this party is currently part of the demissionary cabinet formed together with the PvdA. In their 2012 election program, asylum seekers and refugees were low on their political agenda; this issue was addressed later on in the VVD's election programme.[112] Asylum seekers were explicitly mentioned and the VVD emphasised the importance of clear and fast asylum procedures. The programme further mentioned the fact that the migration of the past decennia led to problems in neighbourhoods, schools, job market and increased criminality.[113] In 2012 migration was positioned as a security risk relating to criminality and as an issue that caused problems in various areas of Dutch society. In 2017 the issue of migration was higher on the agenda; the VVD framed it as part of security and freedom in their election

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[112] VVD, Niet doorschuiven maar aanpakken, Verkiezingsprogramma 2012-2017, p.49
[113] VVD, 2012-2017, pp.47-48

programme.[114] It is worth noting that the immigration issue was considerably higher on the agenda of the election programme in 2017 than it was in 2012. The 2017 election programme further positioned migration as a security risk and mentioned consequences relating to the migration issue such as human trafficking and pressure on Dutch social services.[115] There was a slight increase in mentioning migration, asylum, asylum seekers and refugees in 2017, as presented in figures 7.2 through 7.5. It stands to reason that the influx of refugees in 2015 placed the topic higher on the VVD-agenda and thus had a more prominent place in their party program.

7.2 Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)

The PVV, the Party for Freedom, was founded in 2006 by Geert Wilders. Today, he is still the leader of that party. The party obtained twenty seats in the House of Representatives during the March 2017 elections, which was an increase when compared to 2012; they won 15 seats in that year. This party is known as a right-wing, populist party, criticizing topics such as the Islam, multicultural society and the European Union. Their election programme in 2012 and 2017 differ greatly; mainly in size. While the election programme for 2012 consisted of a little over 9500 words, the election programme for 2017 consisted of 230 words. In 2012, the immigration issue was low on the PVV's political agenda but they framed the issue as a danger for Dutch culture and the PVV wanted to close the borders. The PVV pleaded for an immigration stop from Islamic countries.[116] They fought a hard battle against the so-called 'Islamization' of the Netherlands. The PVV's 2017 election programme is a lot shorter than the 2012 election program; it consists of just one A4-page. The 2017 election programme mentioned the fact that a large majority ("millions of Dutch people") were fed up with Islamization. The PVV has set up eleven goals in which they tried to "take back the Netherlands" and the first two goals are to not take in any asylum seekers and to close all asylum reception centres.[117] It is interesting to note that in both election programmes, that of 2012 and 2017 the terms we searched for were mentioned three times. However, we need to take into account the fact that the 2012 programme was much longer and extensive than the 2017 programme.

7.3 Christen Democratisch Appèl (CDA)

The CDA, the Christian Democratic Appeal was founded in its current form in 1980. It was the result of a merger between three parties. In 2017 they were able to obtain nineteen seats in the House of Representatives after the recent elections, an increase of six seats. In their 2012 election program, they mentioned they were open to refugees fleeing from crisis situations and

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[114] VVD, Zeker Nederland, Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021, pp.18-24
[115] VVD, 2017-2021, p.18
[116] PVV, Hún Brussel, óns Nederland, Verkiezingsprogramma 2012-2017, p. 37
[117] PVV, Nederland weer van ons! Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021

war zones. They have emphasised the importance of churches and mosques and see the arrival of refugees as an enrichment of Dutch society.[118] The 2017 election programme emphasised the opportunities the influx of refugees brings to Dutch society.[119] However, they also mentioned the possible threat the Netherlands faced due to the refugee crisis.[120] The refugee crisis and subsequent influx remained an important point in their program, in which they focused on the advantages and possibilities of the influx of refugees for the Netherlands in which the potential of refugees should be utilized for Dutch society. However, they also mentioned the disadvantages of the influx of refugees for the Netherlands.

7.4 Democraten '66 (D66)

D66, or Democraten 66, referring to the year they were founded (1966), is a progressive liberal party. Currently, they hold nineteen seats in the House of Representatives, which is an increase of seven seats compared to the previous elections. Comparing the two election programmes of 2012 and 2017, the key words migration, asylum seekers, asylum reception centre and refugee were mentioned a total number of twelve times in 2012, whereas these terms were mentioned 44 times in 2017, as presented in Figures 7.2 through 7.5. In their 2012 election programme they did not mention refugees at all, but ask for a just and humane treatment of asylum seekers and clear procedures. The issue is framed as an opportunity for the Netherlands in which the asylum seekers can contribute valuable skills to Dutch society.[121] In 2017 they did mention refugees and the refugee crisis. They, as they do in their 2012 programme, mentioned the importance of a just and humane treatment and the importance of equal chances for refugees in terms of work and schooling.[122] The programme also mentioned the importance of European cooperation and framed the issue as a shared issue and not as a Dutch issue.[123] D66 viewed the influx of refugees as enrichment for the Netherlands and emphasised the importance of equal chances. They did not specifically mention the influx of refugees in 2015, but they mentioned refugees twenty-five times in their programme in 2017. It stands to argue that this issue gained more importance since the 2015 influx.

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[118] CDA, Iedereen, Verkiezingsprogramma 2012-2017, p.17
[119] CDA, Keuzes voor een beter Nederland, Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021, p.26
[120] CDA, 2017-2012, p.34
[121] D66, En nu vooruit, Verkiezingsprogramma, 2012-2017, p. 53
[122] D66, Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021, p.9
[123] D66, 2017-2021,p. 138

7.5 GroenLinks

GroenLinks, a green, progressive party, was formed in 1989 out of a merger between four parties; the Communist Party, the Pacific Socialist Party, the Political Party of Radicals and the Evangelical People's Party. They were negotiating a possible place in the new cabinet, but the negotiations collapsed over issues of migration, climate and the levelling of income.[124] The 2017 elections marked a large win for this party, in which they won ten seats, bringing their total number of seats to fourteen. In their 2012 election programme they emphasised the importance of a just treatment of refugees and an open-border policy. In this election programme they devoted a full page to the issue of refugees and the facilitation of current policies.[125] In their 2017 election program, GroenLinks particularly mentioned the fact that incoming refugees are an opportunity and enrichment to Dutch society and not a security risk. They emphasised the importance of equal opportunities for everyone and the significance of an inclusive society.[126] As can be seen from Figure 7.4 there was a decrease in the amount of times asylum seekers were mentioned. There was an increase in the number of times refugees are mentioned; although refugees were mentioned in a positive manner; as an opportunity for the Netherlands to learn from refugees and their cultures.

7.6 Socialistische Partij (SP)

The Socialist Party (SP) is a party with Marxist/Leninist roots. This party was founded in 1971 as the Communist Party of the Netherlands/Marxist-Leninist. At the time of writing, it holds fourteen seats; after the September 2012 elections they were able to obtain fifteen seats which meant they lost one seat in the March 2017 election. In their 2012 election programme, the SP mentioned the importance of a humane treatment of refugees.[127] The programme asked for lenient treatment in terms of healthcare, even for rejected asylum seekers. However, they also emphasised the fact that victims of war and conflict should be sheltered in the region the refugees originate from and not seek refuge in European countries, if possible.[128] The 2017 election programme was mainly focused on policies in which they asked for finding shelter for the refugees in the region and preventing conflicts and war; but when necessary, the Netherlands should take in refugees fleeing wars and conflicts.[129] It is worth noting that this issue is one of the very last points in their election programme in 2017, whereas it was a higher on their political agenda in their election programme of September 2012. In addition to this, as is

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[124] BBC.co.uk, Dutch four-way coalition talks collapse over migration, 16/5/2017, last accessed on 16/5/2017
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39930986
[125] GroenLinks, Groene Kansen voor NL, Verkiezingsprogramma 2012-2017, pp.33-34
[126] GroenLinks, Tijd voor Verandering, Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021 pp.42-44
[127] SP, Nieuw Vertrouwen, Verkiezingsprogramma 2013-2017, p.14
[128] Ibid.
[129] SP, Pak de Macht, Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021, p.57

shown in Figures 7.2 through 7.5, the election programme mentioned migration, asylum and asylum seekers in 2012, but these topics were not mentioned in 2017. The only increase concerned a slight increase in the number of times refugees were mentioned in their election programme, which could possibly be related to the influx of refugees in 2015. However, it seems as if the Socialist Party did not significantly increase the number of times it mentioned the issue of migration in their election program. This could be related to the fact that they did not view the refugees as a problem, but rather as an opportunity for the Netherlands in terms of culture and enrichment to Dutch society.

7.7 Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA)

The Labour Party (PvdA) is a social-democratic party and currently holds nine seats in the House of Representatives. The party was founded in 1946, after a merger between de Social Democratic Workers Party, the Free-Thinking Democratic League and the Christian Democratic Union. After the 2012 elections, they were the second largest party in the Netherlands with 38 seats and were the junior party in the government, forming the coalition with the Liberal VVD. They suffered a big loss in the 2017 election; losing 29 seats. In their 2012 election program, they emphasised the importance of a humane treatment for refugees but payed particular attention to the rights for children who are fleeing from conflict and from war-zones.[130] They mentioned the fact that rejected asylum seekers needed to return to their country of origin as soon as possible and that the produces need simplification.[131] Comparing 2012 and 2017 showed that the issue of refugees was placed higher on the agenda in 2017 than it was in 2012. In 2017, the programme mentioned solidarity with refugees as an important point but also acknowledged the tensions and polarization the influx of refugees brought in 2015. The programme emphasised the importance of a fitting shelter for refugees; refugees should never be relocated or located in detention centres.[132] The programme emphasised the importance of shelter in the region and European cooperation.[133] All in all, there was an increase in the number of times migration, asylum, asylum seekers and refugees were mentioned. It is worth mentioning that the amount of times refugees were mentioned increased, as shown in Figure 7.5. Thus, the issue of migration gained more attention within the Labour Party.

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[130] PvdA, Nederland Sterker & Socialer, Verkiezingsprogramma 2012-2017, p. 34
[131] Ibid.
[132] PvdA, 2012-2017, pp. 16-17
[133] Ibid.

7.8 ChristenUnie

The Christian Union (CU) is a Christian Democratic party which was founded in 2000 when the Reformed Political Alliance and the Reformatory Political Federation merged. Currently, the party holds five seats, which is consistent with previous election results. All the points mentioned in their party programme were grounded in a Christian ideology. Thus, the protection of refugees was based on Christianity and refusal to do so would be wrong. [134] They emphasised the importance of rights for children who seek asylum and rejected asylum seekers needed to return as soon as possible. They also emphasised the importance of an open policy, especially related to religious minorities.[135] The 2017 election programme used quotes from the Bible to justify the sheltering of refugees. They acknowledged that the influx of refugees lead to polarization in the Netherlands; which is why their first point is shelter in the region of origin.[136] It is interesting to note that this point, shelter in the region was not mentioned in their 2012 program. In their 2017 election program, migration is mentioned multiple times, whereas in the 2012 program, it was only mentioned once. Asylum, asylum seekers and refugees became increasingly important and the manner in which they write about the issue shows that it was a progressively bigger issue on their agenda.

7.9 Partij voor de Dieren (PvdD)

The Party for the Animals (PvdD) was founded in 2002 as a party solely focused on animal welfare and animal rights but it specifically stated that it was not a single issue party. In the 2012 elections it obtained two seats, and in the 2017 it obtained five seats. In their 2012 election program, they asked for a just and balanced policy regarding migration and emphasised shelter for everyone; even for rejected asylum seekers.[137] The issues of migration and refugees were placed higher on their electoral agenda in 2012 than it was in 2017. They focused on the causes of these conflicts, such as repression, poverty, climate change, water- and food shortages, geopolitical conflict and aggressive trade policies from western countries.[138] Similar to their 2012 election program, they emphasised the importance of a just and humane shelter for refugees.[139] In their 2017 election program, refugees were mentioned more often than in 2012, as is shown in Figure 7.5. The topics on their agenda before they addressed migration are centred around climate change and animal rights, but also focused on housing and education. When the programme addressed migration it emphasised the importance of de-

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[134] ChristenUnie, Voor de Verandering: 7 Christelijk-Sociale hervormingen, verkiezingsprogramma 2013-2017, p.16
[135] Ibid.
[136] ChristenUnie, Hoopvol Realistisch: Voorstellen voor een samenleving met een toekomst, verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021, p. 28
[137] PvdD, Hou je vast aan je idealen: Laat ze niet wegcijferen, Verkiezingsprogramma 2012-2017, p. 27
[138] PvdD, Hou je vast aan je idealen: Plan B, Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021, p. 25
[139] Ibid, p. 36

escalating conflicts which cause refugees to flee.[140] The other issues, migration, asylum and asylum seekers, were mentioned almost as frequently in 2012 as in 2017.

7.10 50Plus

The 50Plus party is a party particularly focused on elderly people in the Netherlands. It is the 10th biggest party with four seats as of the March 2017 election. They hold two seats in the Senate. It is a relatively new party; it has been incumbent since the September 2012 elections where they won two seats. In their election programme for the 2012 elections, the 50Plus party did not mention migration, asylum seekers or refugees. This changed in 2017 when this issue was represented in their 2017 election programme as their 29th point, of the total number of 50 points. In addition, they mentioned asylum seekers and refugees in their 2017 program. It argues for a strict, but just policy for refugees and for economic refugees and rejected asylum seekers to be sent back as soon as possible. They emphasised the importance of integration of the newcomers and a division of incoming refugees per ratio of each European country.

7.11 Staatskundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP)

The Reformed Political Party (SGP) is an orthodox, protestant party and has obtained three seats in the 2017 elections; the same number of seats they were able to obtain in 2012. It is the oldest party of the Netherlands, founded in 1918 by some members from the Anti-Revolutionary Party who were against female suffrage. According to their 2012 election program, Christian mercifulness meant that the Netherlands is obliged to take in refugees, particularly refugees fleeing their own countries in fear of prosecution because of their religion. They emphasised the importance of European cooperation in terms of sheltering refugees and shelter in the region of origin is favourable to shelter in the European Union.[141] Whereas the 2012 election programme dedicated a paragraph to migration, the 2017 programme dedicated a whole chapter to the issue of migration. They emphasised the importance of shelter in the region but made an exception for Christian refugees, they needed to be able to come to the Netherlands.[142] The number of times migration, asylum, asylum seekers and refugees have been mentioned in 2012 compared to 2017 has increased for all of these words, albeit a small increase. The main issue for the SGP is the shelter of (prosecuted) Christians; according to the SGP, they need particular attention.

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[140]PvdD, 2017-2021, p. 36
[141] SGP, Daad bij het Woord: de SGP stáát ervoor! Verkiezingsprogramma 2012-2017, p.20
[142] SGP, Stem vóór het leven, Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021, p.41

7.12 Denk

Denk was officially established after the two founders of this party left the Labour party in 2014 and formed their own party in February 2015. They were elected with three seats in the House of Representatives in the 2017 elections. The party stressed the importance of an inclusive, social and accepting society; not only for Dutch citizens but also for refugees and asylum seekers but with an emphasis on a fast process of integration.[143] The programme framed the issue of refugees as a big international challenge, similar to the challenge of the cold war and mentioned the fact that this issue is caused by aggressive, military behaviour of Western countries.[144] The programme emphasised the difficulties and challenges refugees face in the regions surrounding the conflict where they are first taken in; the solution DENK poses to this problem is taking in more refugees in Europe while providing more means to the regions surrounding the conflict and war-zones.[145] The refugee crisis is a problem for everyone in the sense that each individual should be concerned and focused on the problems faced by refugees. This means that the Netherlands should be lenient towards refugees and accepting refugees in the Netherlands without any reserves. Evidently, DENK addressed the origin of the refugee crisis and sees a two-tiered solution to this. The other parties mainly focus on one solution; either providing help to set up and improve regional reception centres, or taking in refugees in Europe.

7.13 Forum voor Democratie (FvD)

Another new party in the March 2017 elections was the Forum for Democracy. Originally founded as a think tank by the current party's leader, Mr. Thierry Baudet, the think tank was converted into a political party in September 2016. The party won two seats in the 2017 elections and it is a party with national-conservative ideological tendencies. As this party was newly elected in the House of Representatives, there is no comparison possible to previous election-programmes. The issues related to migration and asylum seekers were mentioned quite late in their election programme. They favour accommodation in the region of origin of the refugees over sheltering refugees in Europe.[146] The election programme further stated that the influx of refugees needed to stop. They viewed the refugee crisis as a problem for the Netherlands in terms of economy but also dictate the waning of Dutch culture to the refugee

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[143] Denk, Denkend aan Nederland, Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021, p. 55
[144] Denk, Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021, p. 51
[145] Denk, Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021, p. 52
[146] Forum voor Democratie, Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021, p.18

crisis.[147] The FvD emphasised the importance of remigration in general and specifically after a rejected asylum procedure.[148]

7.14 The 2012 and 2017 election programmes

Next, let us take a closer look at differences in election programmes between 2012 and 2017 in terms of devoting attention to migration in their election programmes.

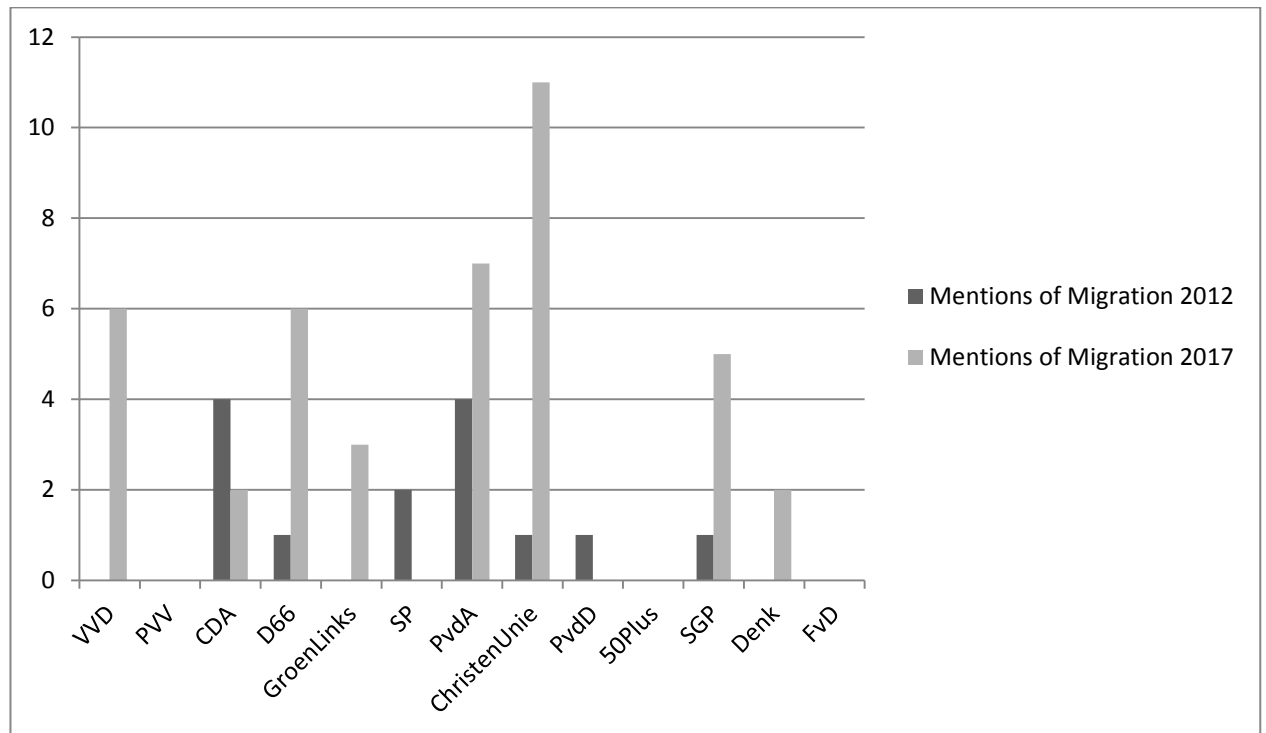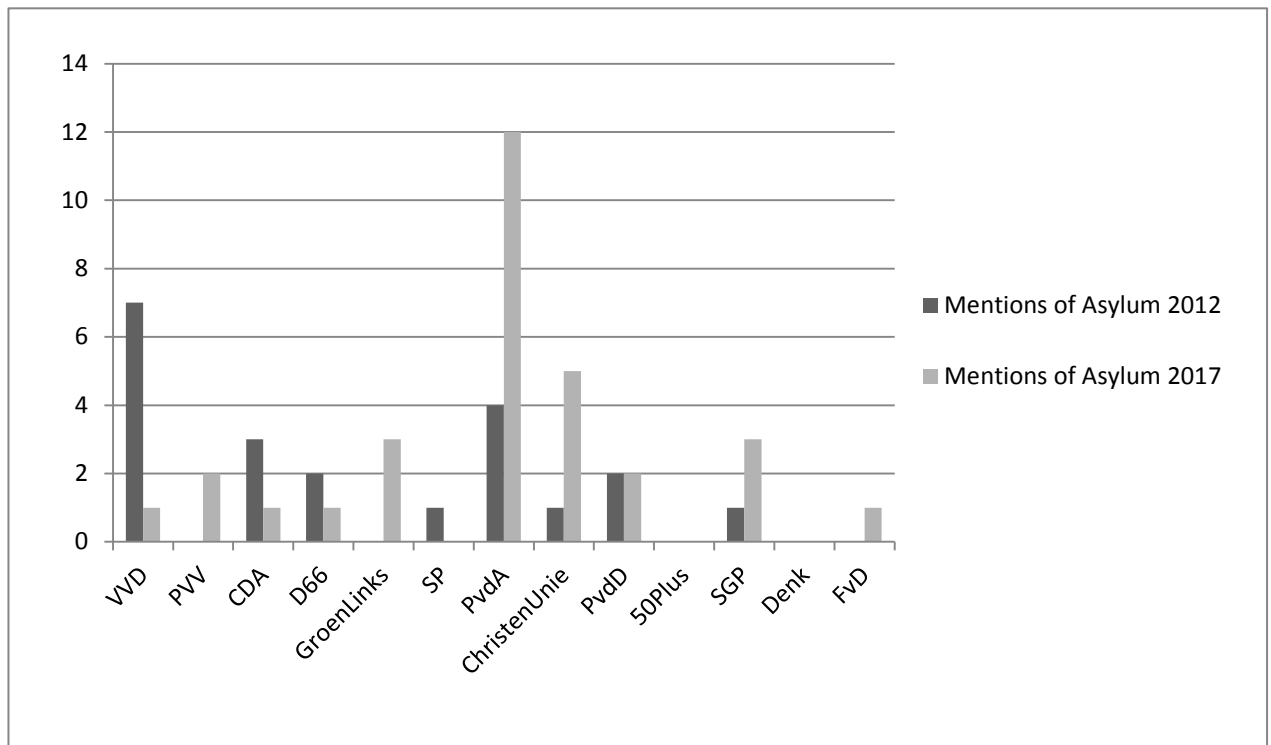Figure 7.2: Mentions of the word Migration in 2012 and 2017.

Figure 7.2 represents the number of times the word migration has been mentioned in the election programmes of 2012 and 2017. It is clear to see that the number of times migration was mentioned increased for the majority of the parties, but the biggest increase is visible for the ChristenUnie. It is worth noting that the PvdD and CDA both decreased the number of times they referred to migration; these parties are at opposite ends of the spectrum which could suggest that ideology does not play a part in terms of the attention to migration.

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[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.

The nexus between extremist violence and the refugee influx: The Netherlands 2012-2016.

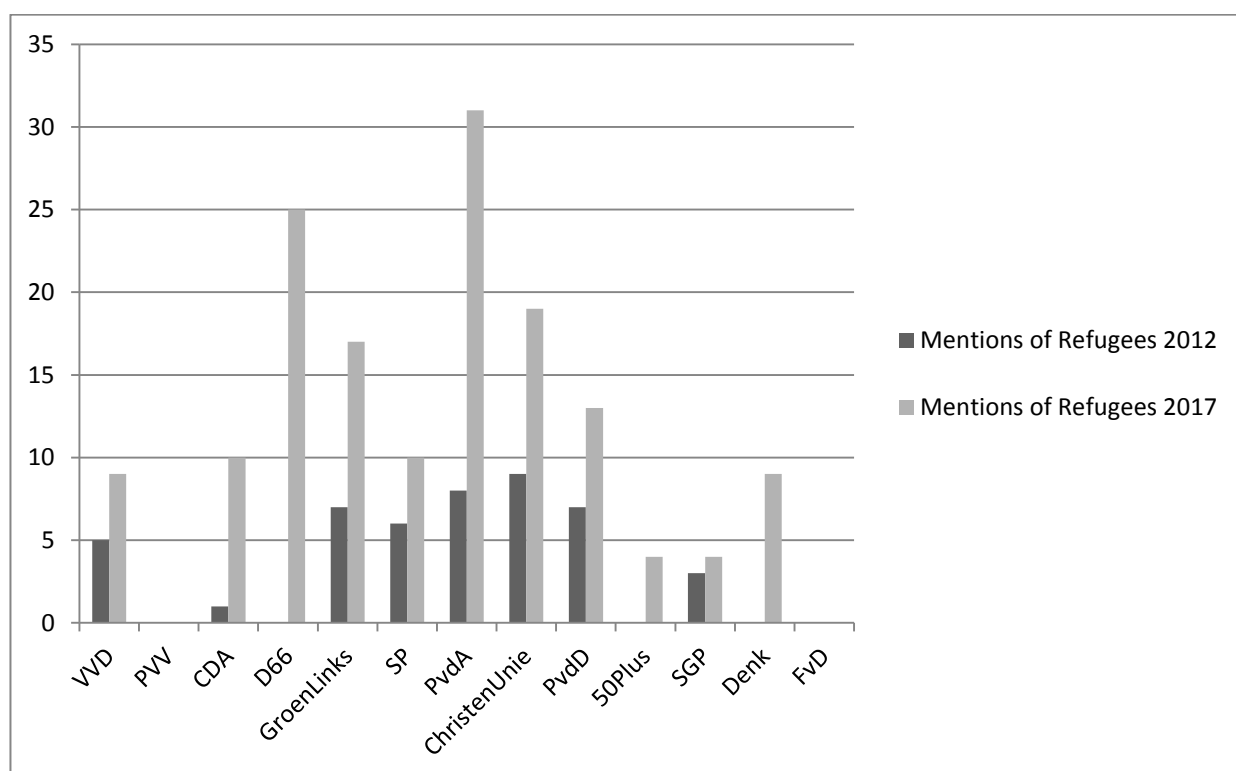Figure 7.3: Mentions of the word Asylum in 2012 and 2017.

The word asylum yielded similar results as migration in terms of the number of times the word was mentioned; there is no clear differentiation visible between left- and right-wing parties. The left-wing parties referred to asylum as a duty for the Netherlands and consequently supported migration to the Netherlands, whereas right-wing parties referred to asylum as pressuring the welfare state and were not in favour of migration. There was a decrease within some left- and right-wing parties (the VVD, CDA and D66 on the centre-right side, and the SP on the left side) and an increase within some left- and right-wing parties (the PVV, SGP and CU on the right side and the PvdA and GroenLinks on the left side). This was an interesting development; we expected to see an increase in the number of times the issue of asylum was addressed.

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Figure 7.4: Mentions of the word Asylum seekers in 2012 and 2017.
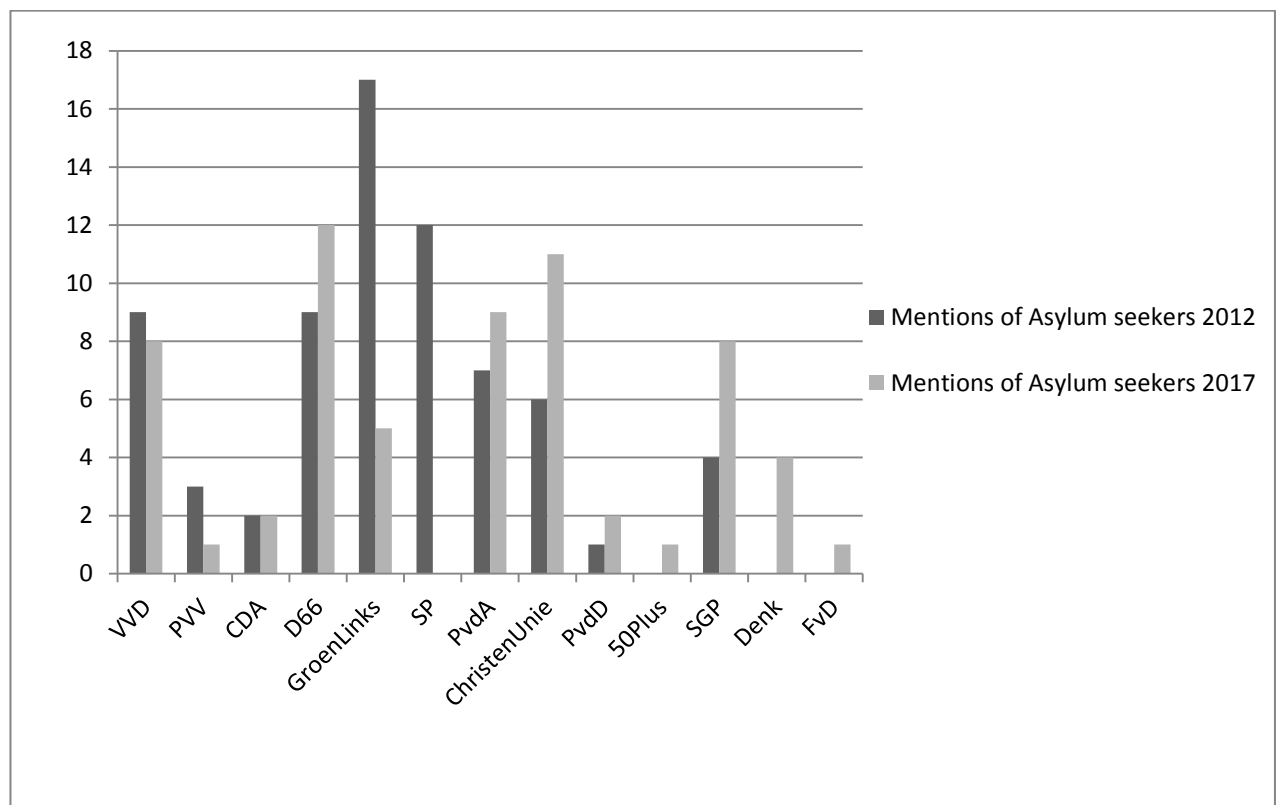
The word asylum seekers was mentioned in all election programmes; even the 50 Plus party, which did not mention asylum and migration in the 2012 and 2017 election programmes, does address the issue of asylum seekers in 2017. Here too, it is difficult to differentiate between left- and right-wing parties since there was no clear distinction in the number of times asylum seekers were addressed when focusing on the ideology of the parties. We expected to see a clear increase in the number of times asylum seekers were mentioned in the election programmes, particularly since most of the parties wrote their election programmes during the period in which migration and asylum applications increased.

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Figure 7.5: Mentions of the word Refugees in 2012 and 2017.

The number of times refugees were mentioned in political party programmes increased for all but one party: the right-wing PVV. This does not mean, however, that the PVV did not address this issue; their 2017 programme only consisted of one A4-page, and the PVV called for the closing of borders and for the closure of all asylum reception centres. Thus, the issue of refugees was implicitly addressed through their call for the closure of asylum reception centres. Other election programmes all saw an increase in the number of times refugees were addressed in 2017 versus 2012.

7.15 Conclusion

Worth noting is that it seemed as if the issue of migration is slightly higher on the political agendas, but there was no considerable difference between left- and right-wing parties in terms of paying attention to migration in their election programmes. There was a slight increase in terms of positioning the topic on the agenda in the election programmes; for almost all parties the topic was placed a little higher in the 2017 election programmes. This does not mean, however, that the content of these election programmes were the same; the content differs greatly between both years of analysis. Right-wing parties framed the issue of migration an as problem and pleaded for closed borders and strict border-controls; with the right-wing PVV as the frontrunner on this topic. The PVV called for a "de-islamnization" of the Netherlands in their 2017 election program, and an important aspect of this movement was closing down asylum

reception centres and not accepting more refugees from Islamic countries.[149] The 2012 election programme of the PVV called for a decrease in refugees to the Netherlands, but not closing the border altogether. Furthermore, their 2017 election programme emphasised the issues of refugees and asylum seekers, whereas the 2012 election programme stressed the disadvantages of the Dutch membership of the European Union and the economy, issues that were playing a large role in the sentiment of the Dutch public in 2012.[150] The PVV is the only party that changed its policy ideas regarding this issue; the other parties repeated the policy ideas they mentioned in their 2012 election programmes. Another right-wing party, the VVD, used their 2012 policy ideas relating to asylum seekers in their 2017 election program; the ideas were very similar.[151] Left-wing parties framed the issue as enrichment to Dutch society and an addition to Dutch culture. GroenLinks, one of the parties that won seats in the 2017 elections specifically mentioned the importance of an inclusive society, in which refugees are included as well.[152] This is very similar to what they promoted in 2012; equal opportunities for everyone who is allowed to stay and work in the Netherlands. The far-left party, the SP, emphasised the importance of amnesty for children of rejected asylum seekers in their 2017 election program, as they did in their 2012 election program.[153]

In sum, the content of the election programmes differed greatly in terms of their positioning on the left-right spectrum. However, the content itself, except for the content of the election programme of the PVV, did not change much; in 2017, all parties repeated ideas similar to their 2012 election programmes. What changed for all parties, however, when comparing the 2012 and 2017 election programmes, was their shift from economy and education in their 2012 election programmes to migration and refugees in their 2017 election programmes. For all parties, the 2012 election programmes emphasised the state of the Dutch economy and the way in which they wanted to improve the economy, whereas the 2017 election programmes placed the refugee crisis higher on the agenda. Another aspect that all parties shared is the fact that they all believed the refugee crisis required attention; for each party, the root causes of the refugee crisis needed to be addressed. Noteworthy to mention here, too, is the fact that the political parties, deducing from their election programs, did not see the nexus between extremism and the influx of refugees. Summarizing, we have noticed that the refugee crisis was placed higher on the agenda. The left-wing parties were relatively lenient toward refugees and

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[149] PVV, Nederland weer van ons! Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021

[150] PVV, Hún Brussel, óns Nederland, Verkiezingsprogramma 2012-2017

[151] VVD, Zeker Nederland, Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021, pp.18-19 and VVD, Niet Doorschuiven maar aanpakken, verkiezingsprogramma 2012-2017, p.49

[152] GroenLinks, Tijd voor Verandering, Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021, Sp.49

[153] SP, Pak de Macht, Verkiezingsprogramma 2017-2021, pp.57-58 and SP, Nieuw Vertrouwen, Verkiezingsprogramma 2013-2017, p.14

rejected asylum seekers and asked for amnesty, whereas right-wing parties called for stricter rules and regulations concerning this issue.

8. Conclusion

This study sought to examine the scope and nature of the nexus between the increase of refugees to the Netherlands and the possible increase of politically or ideologically driven crime. It focused on four phenomena of said crime: (1) crimes committed by Salafists or Islamists; (2) crimes committed against migrants or asylum seekers; (3) inter-migrant crimes with a political and/or ideological bias; and (4) confrontation crimes between extremists of various political convictions. Since its explanatory nature, one should avoid drawing any hard causal conclusions from these data.

Immigration data

We started this research by mapping the scope of refugee migration; here, we aimed to assess the raw data in terms of the influx of refugees into the Netherlands. In order to do this, we used data from the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service as well as data from Statistics Netherlands which showed the influx of refugees reaching its highest point in 2015 when the amount of first-time applicants for asylum in the Netherlands doubled compared to the year before. This increase was not unique to the Netherlands, as other European countries experienced a considerable increase as well. Data showed a definite increase in refugees, with a peak in 2015. 2016 marked the year in which the decline set in.

Migration related crime

Further, this research focused on the threat assessments developed and published by the Dutch Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism. After analysing and assessing these documents, findings showed that in the timeframe of this study, some incidents occurred relating to extremism. However, since there is hardly any quantitative data available on the presence of the four phenomena of crime, it is difficult to draw any conclusions. We noticed a slight increase in the presence of extremism and protests; extremist groups opposing asylum policies (mostly left-wing) besmirched houses and buildings, whereas extremist groups opposing the influx of asylum seekers established vigilant organisations. In this time period, there was been one incident which was classified as a terrorist attack in the Netherlands, in which Molotov cocktails were thrown at a mosque in Enschede; however, this incident is not directly related to the influx of refugees. It is worth mentioning however, since it shows the increased polarisation in the Netherlands. In the period 2012-2016 polarisation in the Netherlands increased, as did confrontations between groups of various political convictions. It is difficult present a causal connection between the incidents regarding extremism and the influx of refugees. It stands to reason that the influx of refugees contributed to an increase in

polarisation. However, throughout the study period, the Netherlands has a fairly stable political and societal climate.

Newspaper analysis

Next, we compared data on the influx of refugees and the increase in support for extremist organisations (from extremist-left and right-wing organisations as well as Salafist and Islamist organisations) to the newspaper articles written in De Telegraaf and the NRC. Findings showed that the increase of refugees was accompanied with an overall increase in newspaper articles on the aforementioned four nexus-phenomena. Some of the incidents, such as the incident classified as a terrorist attack on a Mosque in Enschede have not been mentioned at all in newspaper articles when we used the developed tags to search for newspaper articles. This could be related to the manner in which the tags were developed. In the study period, reports on crimes committed by Salafists and Islamists yielded most results, whereas the other three phenomena were reported to a considerably lesser extent. Further, there was a clear discrepancy between the two newspapers: the NRC reported on the refugee-crime nexus more often than De Telegraaf. It should be noted however, that this finding is likely to be related to the key words and tags we developed; the words we used are words not typically used in De Telegraaf. Also, the fact that the NRC yielded more articles could also be related to the fact that the NRC publishes more background articles and long-reads.

Facebook analysis

Another data source to assess the refugee-crime nexus concerned an analysis of Facebook data. Data on Facebook groups showed that the Eigen volk eerst Facebook group could be regarded as touching upon the alt-right movement; in terms of posting racist memes and discussing the recent events on their Facebook page. This is an interesting development in the political and societal climate in the Netherlands. Data further showed that a key left-wing Facebook group, Socialisme.nu, was not as prone to start new discussions. The group mainly posted on upcoming events and demonstrations regarding a wide array of topics (the G20, climate change and gender inequality). Thus, it seems as if in the study period, assessing these two groups, the right-wing movement was primarily focused on a single issue (namely: the influx of refugees and Islam), whereas the studied left-wing group was seeking attention for a variety of topics.

Election programmes of incumbent political parties

Finally, we analysed election party programmes. Findings showed that the issue of migration was slightly higher on the agenda compared to the previous elections of 2012, but it was not the main issue. Other issues were mentioned more frequently, such as safety, justice and security.

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When examining each of the election programmes, it became clear that the attention to the issue of migration, refugees and asylum seekers did not vary greatly between parties, but the content however, did. While right-wing parties continued to frame the issue as a security risk, compared to the 2012 election programmes, left-wing parties plead for lenient policies and considered the issue of migration enrichment to the Netherlands. Interesting to note, however, is the fact that the current formation talks to form a new cabinet after the March 2017 elections, stranded on the issue of migration. The VVD, D66 and CDA wanted to sign a treaty with African countries on taking in refugees in that region but the Green Left party was vehemently against this.

With the increase of refugees to the Netherlands in the period of 2012-2016, there has also been growing attention in every aspect of society to this issue. Findings showed an increase in newspaper articles on the topic, and an increase in the positioning of the issue on the political agenda. There has been more activity on right-wing social media webpages than on left-wing social media webpages. However, we have not seen many violent incidents relating to the issue, these remained relatively insignificant and small. This poses a marked contrast to the manner in which this issue is portrayed, as various media outlets (social media as well as written articles) regard the influx of refugees as a negative development. The nexus between migration related crime, specifically the four phenomena, and the increase of refugees seems to be small, if present at all. There has been a rise in extremist sentiments in Dutch society, but these have not resulted in serious incidents. Even though there has been an increase in the influx of refugees, this influx has not resulted in a corresponding increase in violent incidents.