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THE REPRESENTATION OF IMMIGRANTS BY THE LOCAL PRESS

-

ANALYSING THE AMSTERDAM NEWSPAPER *HET PAROOL*

Dissertation submitted to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to
obtain a Master's Degree in Communication Studies,
Journalism

By

Nele van den Broek

Faculty of Human Sciences

July 2024



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Abstract

This research aims to understand how immigrants in Amsterdam are represented in *Het Parool*, a local newspaper in Amsterdam, in the context of the 2023 parliamentary elections where the anti-immigrant PVV party gained significant traction. The study focuses on news articles published in the three months leading up to the elections. This research analyses the discourse in news articles of the social-democratic newspaper *Het Parool*. The objective is identifying the frames and narratives regarding immigrants using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) on text and images. CDA is a method to analyse discourse critically, considering context and exposing hidden structures, power relations and inequalities based on text and other discourses. The results show that *Het Parool* mainly reports about refugees/asylum seekers and international students, rather than other types of immigrants. Immigrants are predominantly framed negatively, which is consistent with the results of previous research. The frames used within the discourse are ‘immigrants as a threat’, ‘immigrants as victims’ and ‘immigrants as heroes’, with the first two being the most common. The representation of immigrants by *Het Parool* reflects a social-democratic ideology by opposing harsh immigration policies and showing empathy towards refugees. However, elements of populist discourse are also present, creating a narrative of moral panic and emphasising the threat of immigrants.

Keywords: Journalism, Immigration, Press, Framing, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Resumo

Esta investigação visa compreender como os imigrantes em Amesterdão são representados no Het Parool, um jornal local de Amesterdão, no contexto das eleições parlamentares de 2023, onde o partido anti-imigração PVV ganhou uma força significativa. O estudo centra-se em notícias publicadas nos três meses que antecedem as eleições. Esta pesquisa analisa o discurso em reportagens do jornal social-democrata Het Parool. O objetivo é identificar os enquadramentos e as narrativas sobre os imigrantes através da Análise Crítica do Discurso (ACD) sobre textos e imagens. A ACD é um método para analisar criticamente o discurso, considerando o contexto e expondo estruturas ocultas, relações de poder e desigualdades baseadas em textos e outros discursos. Os resultados mostram que o Het Parool reporta principalmente sobre refugiados/requerentes de asilo e estudantes internacionais, em vez de outros tipos de imigrantes. Os imigrantes são predominantemente enquadrados de forma negativa, o que é consistente com os resultados de inquéritos anteriores. Os enquadramentos utilizados no discurso são “imigrantes como ameaça”, “imigrantes como vítimas” e “imigrantes como heróis”, sendo os dois primeiros os mais comuns. A representação dos imigrantes por Het Parool reflecte uma ideologia social-democrata, opondo-se às duras políticas de imigração e mostrando empatia para com os refugiados. No entanto, também estão presentes elementos do discurso populista, criando uma narrativa de pânico moral e enfatizando a ameaça dos imigrantes.

Palavras-chave: Jornalismo, Imigração, Imprensa, Enquadramento, Análise Crítica do Discurso (ACD)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Nelson Costa Ribeiro for their support during the research, the availability for questions and the extensive feedback provided while writing my thesis.

Furthermore, I want to thank my friends from the University Ana, Elisa and Jana for their support, working sessions together, and the relaxed time and fun things we did together to recharge from our work and be able to continue the thesis writing process with new energy.

I want to thank my friends and roommates in Lisbon outside the university, Marloes, Maria, Romina, Hanna, and Kristof, who made the process much more fun and motivating by studying breaks together and distracting during stressful times.

Then, I want to thank my friends back in the Netherlands, Liz, Annelies, Fleur, Lisanne and Jurre. Their availability to vent, share and hear their motivating words, helped me to maintain optimism.

Finally, I want to thank my family, my parents and my brother Jannes, for their support during the writing process, lending an ear to my complaints about the obstacles I faced and the motivation they gave me to proceed during these times.

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Introduction

The term ‘migrant’ is mainly used as a broad umbrella concept to indicate people moving to a foreign country, either voluntarily or involuntarily. This is also how this group, including refugees and asylum seekers, is often identified in newspapers (Berry et al., 2016; Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019). In this research, the term is also used to indicate this broad group of people moving to a foreign country. When in this research, a specific group is featured, a more specific term, such as refugee, will be used to make this explicit.

The coverage of migrants in newspapers in Europe has intensified over the past few decades (KhosraviNik et al., 2012), and has increased more since the refugee crisis in 2015 in Europe (O’Regan & Riordan, 2018; D’Haenens et al., 2019). Although the discourse of migration in the news in Western Europe is quite diverse, migrants are dominantly negatively represented in the news, focusing on threats to the host countries (Esses et al., 2013; Goodman et al., 2017; Eberl et al., 2018). Previous research identified different categories of frames for migrants. Using these frames, immigrants are selectively represented and portrayed with a specific emphasis that gives meaning to the event or situation in which immigrants are involved (Von Sikorski & Matthes, 2020).

This research will investigate the representation of immigrants in the press. The objective of the research is to analyse the discourse in news articles to identify the frames and narratives regarding immigrants. The research aims to understand how immigrants in Amsterdam are represented in *Het Parool*, a local newspaper in Amsterdam. The main research question that this research aims to answer is ‘How are immigrants in Amsterdam represented by the local newspaper *Het Parool*?’

Three subquestions support this main question. The first subquestion is: Is there populist discourse existing in the newspaper? The right-wing populist movement emphasises us versus them thinking and uses immigration as an object to create anxiety, by constructing a narrative of migrants being a threat regarding politics, economics and criminality (Krzyżanowski, 2020). News media function as a mediator between politics and the population and right-wing political parties

use the media to communicate their ideas and values (Ekman & Krzyżanowski, 2021). The populist discourse regarding migration is therefore represented in news media themselves when reporting on this topic (Wettstein et al., 2019). The dominant radical discourse created by right-wing populism could “gradually penetrate into the news media” (Ekman & Krzyżanowski, 2021, p. 1).

The second and third subquestions have to do with the differentiation of migrant groups. The second question is ‘What are the differences in news coverage between different types of migrants? A distinction is made between refugees/asylum seekers, family migrants, labour migrants, ex-pats and international students. Based on previous research, differences in media representation between these types exist. Research by Lawlor & Tolley (2017) focused on Canada but is also applicable to Western European democracies, showing that the tone of the coverage was more negative when reporting about ‘refugees’ than it was when reporting about ‘immigrants’.

But even when reporting about one of those migrant groups, differences occur based on the country of origin. News media tend to report more constructively and positively about refugees from within Europe than about refugees from outside of Europe (Sales, 2023). These differences in groups of migrants demonstrated in previous research, show that it is relevant to make a distinction in countries of origin. Therefore, the third subquestion of this research is: What are the differences in news coverage between migrants coming from countries within Europe and migrants coming from countries outside of Europe?

The way immigrants are portrayed in the news is an important research topic for several reasons. Firstly, because the representation of immigrants affects the audience. Research shows that representations of events by the media are very powerful (Tuchman, 1978). The media agenda and how a news story is framed impact the public and political debate (McCombs, 1997), and the way journalists frame an event can influence the perspective of the audience (Von Sikorski & Matthes, 2020).

Research by D’Haenens et al. (2019) shows that the news coverage of immigrants influences community building, the audience’s attitude and public opinion. “As anti-immigrant parties are on the rise throughout Europe, and given that the open border policies within Europe are increasingly challenged”, research on this topic is increasingly relevant in the political context

(Eberl et al., 2018, p. 13).

Second, previous research on the topic of immigration has mainly focused on national news media. However, traditional local media have a relevant gatekeeping function and their reporting can function as a gate for national media stories (Pogliano & Ponzio, 2020). Despite the dominant approach centred on national media, media scholars show “good reasons to expect that local newspapers might frame immigration and migrant communities differently from national papers” (Bleich et al., 2018, p. 14). Therefore, it is important to investigate specifically the portrayal of immigrants by the local media.

Finally, the research on this topic targeting the Netherlands is limited. The media is dependent on the context and operates interdependently with existing norms and culture (Lawlor & Tolley, 2017). This research can contribute to the understanding of this topic by looking at a specific media platform in a specific context. In addition, the topic of immigration has momentum in the Netherlands. Immigration is currently prominent in the public and political debate. The cabinet in 2023 resigned, based on an issue related to immigration the right-wing populist party, the PVV (Party of the Freedom), led by Geert Wilders, has been growing during the past years. During the parliament elections of November 2023, this anti-immigration party became by far the country's biggest party.

Part I: Literature Review

The literature review of this research will consist of three chapters, all related to the overall topic: media representation of immigrants. The main topics are illustrated in the concept map in Figure 1, shown below.

The first chapter will be about the framing of immigrants in the press, starting with the definition of immigrants and the trends in the representation of immigrants in the press. Followed by attention to the framing and agenda-setting theory, and elaborating on migration discourse in the news and discursive strategies. Concluding with an explanation of the power and impact of these media representations.

The second chapter will focus on the local press and their organisation structure and culture. The focus will be on different factors within and around news outlets that influence the news-making process, with special attention to policy networks and diversity within the media environment.

In the last chapter, attention will be paid to the Dutch context, elaborating on the different migrant groups in the Netherlands and Amsterdam, and the difference in representation between different types of immigrants and different origins of immigrants. Furthermore, the focus will be on the Dutch media landscape and Dutch migration policy related to journalism. Finishing with an outline of the political context of the Netherlands and Amsterdam.

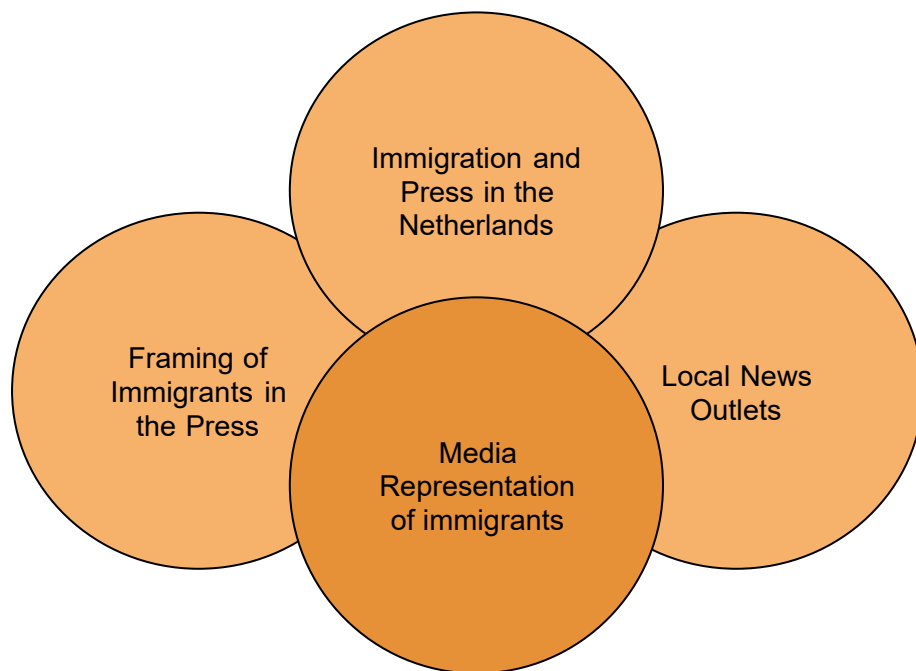


Figure 1: Concept Map

Chapter 1: Framing of immigrants in the press

1.1 Defining Immigrants

‘Immigrant’ is not an unambiguous term and requires some elaboration. A frequent uncertainty is the distinction between the use of the terms ‘migrant’, ‘refugee’ and asylum seeker’. “There are important differences between the terms ‘migrant’ and ‘refugee’, which cannot be used interchangeably.

Refugees are outside their own country because of a threat to their lives or their freedom. They are defined and protected by a specific international legal framework”. “The UN Refugee Agency defines a refugee as someone who:

Owing to a well-founded 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, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return (Handbook, U. E., 2019, Main Guidance)

Refugee and asylum seekers are often used interchangeably (Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019), however, an asylum seeker is someone who has requested asylum but does not have a refugee status yet (Handbook, U. E., 2019).

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) describes that the term ‘migrant’ is not clearly defined:

The term ‘migrant’, is not defined under international law, and is sometimes used differently by different stakeholders. Traditionally, the word ‘migrant’ has been used to designate people who move by choice rather than to escape conflict or persecution, usually across an international border, for instance, to join family members already abroad, to search for a livelihood or a range of other purposes (Handbook, U. E., 2019a, Overview)

The term ‘migrant’ is often used as a broad umbrella concept to indicate people moving to a foreign country, either voluntarily or involuntarily. This is also how this group, including refugees and asylum seekers, is often identified in newspapers (Berry et al., 2016; Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019). UNHCR recommends that:

People who are likely to be asylum-seekers or refugees are referred to as such and the word ‘migrant’ should not be used as a catchall term to refer to refugees or to people who are likely to need international protection. Doing so can risk undermining access to the specific legal protections that states are obliged to provide to refugees (Handbook, U. E., 2019a, Overview)

This research includes refugees, asylum seekers, and people who voluntarily move to another country and therefore concerns the term ‘immigrant’, indicating this broad group of people that move to a foreign country.

Finally, another term often used in the Netherlands in the context of migration is ‘people with a migration background’. At the end of 2016, this term was added to the discourse as a replacement for ‘allochtoon’, with the same meaning. This term got banned because of the negative connotation. According to the *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS)*, the governmental institution responsible for collecting, analysing, and publishing statistical information on various aspects of Dutch society, a person is described as someone with a migration background “if at least one of the parents was born abroad. A distinction can be made between people who were born abroad (the first generation) and people who were born in the Netherlands” (the second generation) (CBS, Methoden, 2024).

When in this research, a specific group of immigrants is featured, a specific term, such as refugee, asylum seeker, or someone with a migration background, will be used to specify the group that it concerns.

1.2 Trends in the Representation of Immigrants

The coverage of migrants in newspapers in Europe has intensified over the past few decades

(KhosraviNik et al., 2012), and increased more since the refugee crisis in 2015 in Europe (O'Regan & Riordan, 2018; D'Haenens et al., 2019). Although the discourse of migration in the news in Western Europe is quite diverse, migrants are dominantly negatively represented in the news, focusing on threats to the host countries (Esses et al., 2013; Goodman et al., 2017; Eberl et al., 2018).

According to previous research, the increase in attention to migration in the news and the negative portrayal of this group have two main causes. The first has to do with the rise of right-wing populism in Europe. Since right-wing populist parties are often anti-immigrant parties, migration got a more prominent position on the political agenda and therefore a more dominant focus within the news (Ekman & Krzyżanowski, 2021). Right-wing populism in Europe has not only a role in the increased attention on the topic of migration in the past decades but right-wing populism also increasingly owns this topic (Wettstein et al., 2019).

Populism is more a style of politics rather than a political ideology (Greven, 2016). The core of populism is the narrative of distinguishing between the 'elite establishment' including the 'mainstream political parties and media, and 'the people', whom the party represents (Greven, 2016; Stavrakakis et al., 2017). Right-wing populism adds the definition of 'the people'. The people are a culturally homogeneous group. 'The others' are a certain marginal group, such as migrants, presumably favoured by the elites (Greven, 2016; Aalberg et al., 2016; Stavrakakis et al., 2017).

Thereby, right-wing populist parties position the nation against cosmopolitan globalisation, the national and traditional values are important and they should be protected. This is also the case when it comes to extreme left-wing populism, but the left-wing variation is mostly focused on an elite on the economic dimension, rather than cultural homogeneity. While right-wing populism often goes together with 'anti-immigrant' statements (Stavrakakis et al., 2017).

The right-wing populist movement emphasises us versus them thinking and uses immigration as an object to create anxiety, by constructing a narrative of migrants being a threat regarding politics, economics and criminality (Krzyżanowski, 2020). News media function as a mediator between politics and the population and right-wing political parties use the media to communicate their ideas and values (Krzyżanowski & Ekström, 2022). The populist discourse

regarding migration is therefore represented in news media themselves when reporting on this topic (Wettstein et al., 2019). The narrative around immigration that is reinforced by the rise of right-wing populism is also adopted within the reporting about immigration by mainstream media outlets (Ekman & Krzyżanowski, 2021).

The other mechanism that occurs and explains the developments in the covering of migration has to do with the media market. It turns out that the dominant negative narrative regarding migrants is “a conflation to an increased salience of the commercial logics within news media affecting their content” (Ekman & Krzyżanowski, 2021, p. 16). Extreme and sensational content calls the attention of the audience and the radical discourse regarding immigrants can be used for commercial purposes and can be a tool to deal with the competition in the media landscape (Ekman & Krzyżanowski, 2021).

This is a phenomenon that occurs across all genres of newspapers but seems to be more prominent in tabloid newspapers, usually known for a more sensational style of discourse, than in quality newspapers (KhosraviNik et al., 2012; Wettstein et al., 2019). The study by Wettstein (2019) shows that tabloid newspapers “make more use of a populist communication style out of commercial goals” (p. 16).

Besides the difference in format (tabloid newspapers and quality newspapers), an ideological distinction between liberal and conservative newspapers is often made within the literature about news framing. Based on the findings of a recent textual and visual analysis of four European newspapers and their representation of migrants, there is no “completely different tendency in conservative and liberal newspapers when writing about migration and representing migrants” (Valente et al., 2021, p. 12).

However, there are more subtle differences identified. The study of Boeva (2016), a discursive analysis of newspapers in the UK and the US, shows that conservative newspapers tend to report more negatively about migrants than liberal newspapers. Furthermore, a study by Valente et al. (2023) that compares the representation of migrants between conservative and liberal newspapers in different European countries, shows that liberal newspapers tend to give a slightly more positive representation of migrants. However, none of these studies show a significant difference in the frames used. For both, conservative as well liberal newspapers, the negative tone

wasn't dominant when reporting about immigrants (Valente et al, 2023).

1.3 Framing

When narratives are constructed, framing plays an important role. Journalists adopt and construct frames and alter meaning (Von Sikorski & Matthes, 2020). In the book *Making News* by Tuchman (1978), the news is defined as a social construct. Tuchman describes the idea of 'news as a frame' in her book and uses Goffman's definition of a frame. Erving Goffman is a sociologist with a prominent influence on the application of the concept of framing in journalism (D'Angelo & Shaw, 2018). He defines a frame as "the principle of organisation which governs events - at least social ones - and our subjective involvement in them" (Tuchman, 1978, p. 101).

News is a product of social institutions and framing helps to describe and shape events. Therefore, the news is not a representation of society but a story, dependent on social and cultural resources, about societal events (Tuchman, 1978). Journalists make conscious and unconscious decisions about what information will be included and excluded and they use frames to give a perspective and interpret information.

Tuchman (1978) distinguishes reflexivity, the information itself, and indexicality, giving meaning to this information. News involves indexicality since it always gives meaning to an event. News is a representation of the event rather than the event itself; the reality is socially constructed by the news and never fully objective (Tuchman, 1978). The same has been argued by Zelizer (1993), in her study "Journalists as Interpretive Communities", Zelizer argues that journalists are not objective and neutral actors, but play an active role in interpreting events.

Previous research identified different categories of frames for migrants. Using these frames, immigrants are selectively represented and are portrayed with a specific emphasis that gives meaning to the event/situation in which immigrants are involved (Von Sikorski & Matthes, 2020). Some studies only distinguish between a positive framework and a negative framework of covering migrants, while some other studies make a more extensive categorisation.

The study of Valente et al. (2023) is based on two frames, one threatening/alarming frame

wherein immigrants are the invaders and a direct or indirect threat to the host countries, for example, because of economic difficulties or criminality (Valente et al., 2023). The other frame is based on the idea of immigrants as victims, who have good intentions and need to be tolerated and even protected. The practical distinction made in this article is between the threat frame (negative representation) and acceptance (positive representation) (Valente et al., 2023).

A comparable distinction has been made in research by Triandafyllidou (2017), whose work particularly focused on refugees during the refugee crisis in 2015. One frame mentioned is the threat/exclusion frame, focussing on the risk of immigrants in society and an ‘us versus them narrative’ regarding refugees and asylum seekers. The other frame is the responsibility/solidarity frame, in which immigrants are seen as victims emphasising the moral ground, humanity and their right to be protected (Triandafyllidou, 2017).

In the book *Shaping Immigration News: A French-American Comparison* by Benson (2013), a more extensive categorisation of three frames is made in which each frame includes some sub-categories. The first frame represents immigrants as a threat (Benson, 2013). The four subcategories are the job frame, which is based on the perceived threat that immigrants take the jobs of the native population, the public order frame, the fear of disturbance of the public spaces and environments, the fiscal frame, the fear of having to pay higher taxes to provide public services for migrants, and finally, the national cohesion frame, which emphasises the culture difference of the immigrants that can threaten the social cohesion and traditional culture in the host country (Benson, 2013).

The second, and the most positive framing category is the frame of immigrants as heroes, including three sub-frames. The first sub-frame is cultural diversity, which emphasises the positive aspect of having a broader cultural diversity in society. The integration frame shows the dynamic of immigrants integrating into society and fitting in on different aspects. Finally, the frame of the good worker pays attention to the contribution that immigrants make to society by working in the host country, mostly jobs that the native population doesn’t want to do (Benson, 2013).

The third and final frame is immigrants as victims, divided into three categories. The global economy frame pays attention to the broader problem of poverty and inequality around the globe, wherein migration from less developed countries to more developed countries is one dimension.

Another subcategory is the humanitarian frame, which pays attention to the disadvantage of migrants in their daily lives related to economic, social and political suffering. The final frame is racism/xenophobia, which shows the individual as well as structural discrimination that immigrants often have to deal with (Benson, 2013).

From the three main frames, the hero and victim frame seem to correlate with the pro-migration narrative or the acceptance narrative, while the threat frame is more related to the anti-immigration narrative (Valente et al., 2023). However, there are different perspectives regarding the victim frame; it could also contribute to a negative attitude towards immigrants. As it seems to create a gap between the messenger and the journalists.

Research by Smets et al., (2019) shows that the victim frame is becoming dominant in mainstream media. Reducing autonomous people into suffering actors is a one-dimensional portrayal without attention to the fact that migrants are people with autonomy, capabilities, dreams and plans (Smets et al., 2019). Journalists using the victim frame seem to not purposely promote anti-immigration perspectives. However, the victim frame could reinforce the boundaries between the native population and immigrants and could therefore be interpreted as an anti-immigration perspective by the audience (Valente et al., 2013).

In the research by Smets et al. (2019), asylum seekers and refugees participated in individual interviews and focus group interviews. The results of this study show that a realistic media narrative is important for migrants to feel recognised. This is most constructive when “the harsh realities of refugees’ different struggles ought to be shown, but they should not be all-encompassing. Participants expressed the hope that this will enable a shift from pity and victimization to empathy and recognition” (Smets et al., 2019, p. 15).

1.4 Migration Discourse

Within the media discourse, different tools are used, consciously or unconsciously, to represent and frame immigrants in one way or another. This could happen on three levels, on a lexical level, on the level of sentence construction or the narrative level (Richardson, 2007). The smallest level of analysis is the level of lexical choices the meaning that is given to words. A study by Van Leeuwen (1996) elaborates on what discursive strategies could be used to represent social actors. Some of these strategies are used in news reporting, mainly to negatively represent immigrants.

The first lexical choice is how immigrants are labelled, meaning what term is used to refer to this group. The Portuguese critical discourse analysis by Torkington & Ribeiro (2019) describes that:

The terms ‘immigrant’, ‘migrant worker’, ‘asylum seeker’, ‘refugee’ and other related terms such as ‘expat’ and ‘émigré’, are likely to be distinct and based on differing characteristics such as ethnic or national origin, social class, gender, age, profession or employment situation, and so on (Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019, p. 24).

The terms refugee and asylum seeker are often used interchangeably (Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019), while in fact, an asylum seeker is someone who doesn’t have a refugee status yet (Handbook, U. E., 2019). Furthermore, ‘asylum seeker’ and ‘refugee’ are also often simply indicated in newspapers with the term ‘migrants’ (Berry et al., 2016; Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019), which could imply that they came to Europe voluntarily, or at least lacks a clear distinction between different groups.

Besides the terminology for immigrants themselves, another discursive strategy used in migration discourse is association. Associating means referring to a group using labels or categories (Van Leeuwen, 1996).

Public discourse over immigration is shaped by the content and attitude conveyed in individual stories, but even more basically by the frequency with which certain issues are covered and the themes to which they are linked. The more often the press mentions a particular issue and links it to a social ill, the more likely that issue is to be considered a ‘crisis’ meriting political action and resolution (Caviedes, 2018, p. 3).

The study by KhosraviNik et al. (2012) focused on newspapers in Poland and the study by Krzyżanowski (2020), focused on newspapers in the UK. In the two, different categories of negative association are identified. The first one is the topos of numbers, using numerical elements as a reference to migrants, mostly used “along with the relevant metaphors such as the metaphors of ‘floods’ or ‘disease’” (KhosraviNik et al., 2012, p. 4).

Other categorisations are the topos of economic burden, related to the labour market, the topos of threat, related to cultural diversity, and the topos of danger and law, wherein immigrants are mostly associated with disturbance of the social order and crime (KhosraviNik et al., 2012). According to Caviedes (2018), immigrants are mostly associated with economic themes such as the labour market and fiscal costs, but also the association with security themes such as threat and crime is increasingly present. However, this domination of narratives is not fixed and can change over time (Caviedes, 2018).

Specific associations, related to one or more of the mentioned topos, can be mostly reduced to specific keywords. A study by Allen & Blinder (2013), researching UK newspapers, shows that the most common modifier of ‘immigrants’ is ‘illegal’ and the most common modifier of ‘asylum seeker’ is ‘failed’. The study of KhosraviNik et al. (2012) shows that the word ‘immigrant’ is mainly associated with negative topics such as ‘crime’, ‘illegality’, ‘problems’ and ‘the burden of society’. In Dutch newspapers, the most common modifier of unauthorised migrants is ‘illegal’ (Brouwer et al., 2017). Illegal is used as a noun or as an adjective followed by ‘migrants’ or ‘immigrant’, or even ‘alien’. Also ‘illegal asylum seekers’ and ‘illegal refugees’ are often used in newspapers (Brouwer et al., 2017).

Another strategy used is the reduction of the varied group of migrants into one object (KhosraviNik et al., 2012; Van Leeuwen, 1996). This can be done by using constructions such as aggregation, collectivisation and functionalisation. In the case of aggregation, immigrants are described by using statistics. In a lot of news articles, numbers are used to indicate immigrants, mostly implying that they are a threat. Collectivisation means that immigrants are indicated as one anonymous group. This evokes objectification, dehumanisation and depersonalisation of immigrants (KhosraviNik et al., 2012; Van Leeuwen, 1996). Functionalisation is one form of collectivisation in which immigrants are referred to a certain task or something they do, for

example when a group of migrants is indicated as ‘the arrivals’ (KhosraviNik et al., 2012; Van Leeuwen, 1996). The opponents of aggregation and collectivisation are humanisation and individualisation, meaning that immigrants are represented as individual actors and the news coverage includes specific characteristics and detailed information about the actors (KhosraviNik, et al., 2012).

Besides using specific terminology, actors can be represented using strategies in sentence construction, described by Richardson (2007) as the second level. Transitivity plays an important role in this process. “Transitivity describes the relationship between participants and the roles they play in the processes described in reporting” (Richardson, 2007, p. 5). Actors can be represented as active or passive, the latter creates a focus on the action rather than the actor itself (Richardson, 2007). In practice, migrants are often portrayed in passive roles and rarely get a voice in news articles (Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019).

The allocation of the active role, which doesn’t often happen to represent migrants, requires some power (Van Leeuwen, 1996). This shows that migrants are usually portrayed in a powerless role. The study by Torkington & Ribeiro (2019) mentions examples of the passive roles of migrants as “being a process of migration such as arriving, reaching or ‘entering a given territory’, or as being in a transitional state: ‘passing through’, ‘making their way’, ‘crossing’ (the sea), or ‘drifting’ (in boats in the sea)” (p. 29).

Lams (2019) underscores the lack of voice of refugees in the news, mentioning the passiveness of their role in the news. This research about Dutch-language news coverage during the refugee crisis in Europe in 2015 also shows that “whenever there is agency allocated to the refugees, it is associated with neutral material action verbs, thus giving an overall impression of a neutral tenor and objective reporting” (Lams, 2019, p. 13). Another result of this research is that when it comes to material action verbs concerning refugees, negative actions are found twice as much as positive actions, but are still negligible in comparison with the passiveness and the neutral frames, which could insinuate a high level of objectivity (Lams, 2019). In conclusion, refugee allocation of positive actions is very rare, they are mostly portrayed as, if not negative, neutral passive actors (Lams, 2019).

The study by Richardson (2007) identifies concrete strategies applied to sentence

construction that are used to represent and frame actors or events. One of these strategies is modality, meaning that a certain statement shows possibility or probability rather than unnegotiable facts. Modality is often recognisable by the use of words such as could, may, might, should and will. Identifying modality can expose something about the perspective of the writer as it often implicitly weakens a statement (Richardson, 2007). Another strategy used in sentence constructions is presupposition, which means that something is implied in a phrase without explicit mention; there is an (invisible) assumption behind a statement (Richardson, 2007).

Finally, rhetorical tropes could be applied to the level of sentences. Important examples are hyperbole, an exaggeration of the real situation, metaphor, a comparison to something else with the same characteristics, or metonym, where a subject is replaced by another word that is related and that in a sentence represents the subject (Richardson, 2007).

The last level that is mentioned by (Richardson, (2007) is the focus on the narrative. While the strategies described before are focused on specific lexical choices or sentence construction, the broader storyline can also expose certain patterns (Richardson, 2007). A well-known phenomenon when it comes to the representation of immigrants in the news is related to what in the literature is called ‘moral panic’ (Brouwer et al., 2017; Krzyżanowski, 2020). This refers to a widely spread discourse in the media that is constructing a perceived crisis, mostly with an ideological motive (Krzyżanowski, 2020).

The characteristic of such a narrative is the focus on one target group wherein a negative threatening image of this group is constructed (Krzyżanowski, 2020). This discourse is at least disproportionate and an exaggeration of reality, but can sometimes even be based on misinformation (Brouwer, 2017; Krzyżanowski, 2020). Constructing ‘moral panic’ when reporting about immigrants has been increasingly normalised (Krzyżanowski, 2020).

1.5 Impact of Media Representation

Research shows that representations of events by the media are very powerful (Tuchman, 1978). The media agenda and how a news story is framed impact the public and political debate (McCombs, 1997) and the way journalists frame an event could influence the perspective of the audience (Von Sikorski & Matthes, 2020).

A relevant theory for understanding the influence of the presence and framing of the coverage of immigrants in the press is agenda-setting. The main idea of agenda-setting is that the presence and frequency of news items influence the audience's perceived importance of issues (McCombs, 1997; Coleman et al., 2009). As Coleman et al. (2009) argue: "The more coverage an issue receives, the more important it is to people" (p. 147). This means that the process of selecting is important for the view of the public (McCombs, 1997). As described before, immigration is increasingly covered by the press (KhosraviNik et al., 2012; O'Regan & Riordan, 2018), which makes it more likely that the audience perceives this topic as important. This process is known as 'the first level of agenda setting' (Coleman et al., 2009).

The second level of agenda-setting "focuses on how people understand the things that have captured their attention" (Coleman et al., 2009, p. 150). This is also called 'attribute agenda setting' and focuses on how issues, people or other topics are framed. The mechanism here is that the perspective of the media used to cover news issues influences the attitude and perspective of the audience (Coleman et al., 2009). This is related to the framing theory and can also be called a 'framing effect' meaning: "the notion that how an issue is described or labelled shapes public opinion" (Bleich et al., 2018, p. 7).

According to McCombs (1997), agenda-setting influences public opinion and could contribute to community consensus in different ways. First, agenda-setting sets a community's agenda, second, it makes different groups come together since they focus on the same issues, and third, attribute agenda setting could build consensus in how a community thinks about an issue (McCombs, 1997). The fact that the covering of migration is increasingly dominated by the populist narrative (Wettstein et al., 2019) could push the audience into that perspective on the topic of immigration.

Journalists' power comes together with responsibility. Their choices of inclusion and exclusion of information and frames influence public opinion and therefore indirectly the political landscape and policies (Habermas, 2006). News organisations and journalists must take responsibility for their agenda-setting role because it could have "significant consequences for the building of community" (McCombs, 1997, p. 10). A nuance here is that the power of media is always limited. For example, the research of De Coninck et al. (2019), focussed on Sweden and Belgian news media, finds only limited evidence for the effect of the agenda-setting theory when it comes to the coverage of immigrants.

The coverage of immigration in the news only marginally affects public opinion on this issue (De Coninck et al., 2019). Gavin (2018), focused on the impact of newspaper coverage in the UK on public opinion focusing on migration among other topics. His research shows that the media can have importance and an impact on attitudes, but that "the media is, not in any sense, all-powerful" (Gavin, 2018, p. 12). The media does not only influence public attitudes, but the media themselves also reflect society and reinforce pre-existing attitudes (Wood & King, 2013; Gavin, 2018; Bleich et al., 2018).

However, when it comes to covering migration, there is eminently an important role for the media. Given the general lack of face-to-face contact with immigrants in the host countries, the media have a responsibility to provide accurate representations (Mertens et al., 2021). Previous research shows that the unfavourable news portrayal of migrants impacts public opinion and could reinforce stereotypes and stigma (Eberl et al., 2018; Gavin, 2018; Krzyżanowski, 2020). The normalisation of a 'moral panic discourse' regarding immigration influences public opinion not only short-term but can influence social structures embedded in society (Cohen 2011, in Krzyżanowski, 2020). Extreme negative frames can lead, next to internalised stereotypes and prejudices, to violent behaviour against migrants (Allen & Blinder, 2013).

Furthermore, the media's influence on the audience's attitudes means that people consuming news from different outlets can be influenced in different ways. The research of De Coninck et al. (2019) shows for example that in Belgium the attitude towards immigrants is more negative for people consuming popular commercial media than for people consuming quality media. However, it is not clear if this is the influence of the media since there could also be a

selection effect at play. People with more negative attitudes towards immigrants tend to consume more commercial news and people with more positive attitudes more quality news (De Coninck et al., 2019).

Journalism facilitates public debate and provides unambiguous, reliable, and independent information which is crucial in a liberal democracy (Van Aelst et al., 2017; Van Dalen, 2021) for people to be able to make a considered, informed voting choice (McNair, 2009). The salience of migration in news coverage as well as the narrative of migrants as a threat, can effectively influence people's political attitudes, create a deeper change in relations and attitudes in society and even influence voting choices (Eberl et al., 2018; Krzyżanowski; 2020).

Furthermore, repeated exposure to these negative frames can also influence public opinion and voting choices in the long term and can influence (migration) policy (King & Wood, 2013; Eberl et al., 2018; Sales, 2023). A practical example is given by the study of Gavin (2018) concerning the intense negative attitudes of British people towards the EU (before Brexit). One of the conclusions is that the dominant narrative in British newspapers of immigrants as a threat has potentially its role in the emotional reaction of UK citizens towards the EU and has therefore probably a role in the pro-Brexit vote (Gavin, 2018).

Chapter 2: Local News Outlets

2.1 Role of Local Media

Even though most research in the media field is focused on national media and national journalism, the local media has an important role in news coverage (Pogliano & Ponzio, 2020). Traditional local media have a relevant gatekeeping function and their reporting can function as a gate for national media stories (Pogliano & Ponzio, 2020). “Local journalism can be understood broadly as both a practice and a product that is related to a specific geographic area and the events and people connected to it” (Hess & Waller, 2017, p. 5).

Local journalism provides local information which is defined as “the journalistic area that collects the events produced in a certain area and affects its politics, urbanism, ecology, customs and sociocultural reality” (Esteve Ramírez, 2002, as cited in Rivas-de-Roca et al., 2020, p. 5). However, local media do not exclusively report about local events, but also about national and international issues using a local interpretation or reporting from a local angle. All in all, “local news media refers to media organisations and outlets that serve people and institutions that have interests in the distinct geography zone, from audiences to advertisers, public authorities and businesses” (Hess & Waller, 2017, p. 5). Local media have a lot of diversity when it comes to media style, media agenda and media forms. The way local media operates is strongly dependent on the context, country and media system in a country (Hess & Waller, 2017).

A characteristic of local news media is their proximity-based approach (Guimerà et al., 2018; Rivas-de-Roca et al., 2020). This means that the ties between the journalists, the sources and the consumers are close. Journalists inform the people with whom they share the citizen space. As a result, the audience of local news media can strongly identify with the content. “The content of the local press is the one that best meets the classic thesis of journalism: to build community in its dissemination area” (Novy et al., 2012, as cited in Rivas-de-Roca et al., 2020, p. 5). In the literature, this is called ‘nearness to the people’ (Guimerà et al., 2018; Rivas-de-Roca et al., 2020). Nearness to the people means two things in practice. First, it demands more expertise from the journalists and awareness of what their fellow citizens are interested in. Second, it also means that

journalists are more directly accountable for their reporting (Rivas-de-Roca et al., 2020).

The study by López García and Maciá Mercadé (2007) identifies four main functions of local media, namely: “exposing recipients to what happens in their nearest environment, delving into issues of the local area, establishing close contact with the user and promoting democratic participation” (López García & Maciá Mercadé, 2007, as cited in Rivas-de-Roca et al., 2020, p. 7). The function of promoting democratic participation is most valuable considering the crucial role of journalism in democracy, in this case by instigating interest in local events and local issues (McNair, 2009; Rivas-de-Roca et al., 2020).

As a result of digitalisation and the development of social media, local journalism has been dealing with challenges worldwide (Guimerà et al., 2018; Napoli et al., 2017, Napoli et al., 2018; Rivas-de-Roca et al., 2020). “Both of the revenue streams that local news organizations have traditionally relied upon (subscriptions and advertising) have been dramatically undermined as journalism production, distribution, and consumption have migrated online” (Napoli et al., 2018, p. 3). This resulted in local media expanding their business from strictly local to a broader perspective. However, local media have kept their local approach, which can also be a benefit since it distinguishes them from the rest of the media landscape (Rivas-de-Roca et al., 2020).

2.2 Influential Factors on News Coverage

Journalism is never entirely objective but influences public and political opinion. This means that it matters by whom a news article is written, how a journalist interprets a news event and in what context news is constructed (Tuchman, 1978; Zelizer, 1993). As mentioned before, Zelizer (1993) talks about journalists as an interpretative community. “Journalists, in this view, come together by creating stories about their past that they routinely and informally circulate to each other - stories that contain certain constructions of reality, certain kinds of narrative, and certain definitions of appropriate practice” (Zelizer, 1993, p. 6).

Since news is a social construct and journalists play an interpretative role in creating the news, information can never be seen independently of the perspective of the journalist, which makes it impossible to be completely objective (Tuchman, 1978; Zelizer, 1993). Supplementing

on the idea of Tuchman that news is a social construct, she also claims that the process of interpretation happens within a certain environment and existing rules and processes (Tuchman, 1978).

This is also confirmed by the study by Zelizer (1993), who discusses interpretative communities in her research. The main idea is that journalists operate in a certain social and political context with corresponding norms and values and the context in which journalists work influences their interpretation of events. These interpretations will be shared as ‘news’ with the audience (Zelizer, 1993). The emphasis on the role of the journalistic environment by researchers shows that it is valuable to consider the context when indicating the news coverage of immigrants.

The way immigrants are represented in the news depends on the context of the news story itself and the typology of the news article. Research by Mancini et al. (2021) shows that different characteristics of news stories and their focus influence the way immigrants are covered. Three distinct representations of immigration related to the media coverage of immigration can be distinguished (Mancini et al., 2021). The first one is focused on the journalistic genre. A distinction is made between human interest stories, centred around a personal story or specific event, and news analyses focused on the issue of immigration more generally (Mancini et al., 2021). Human interest stories are often focussed on refugees, mainly from African countries, and in this kind of story, the victim frame is used predominantly. While news analyses are mostly “characterized by a general, problematic, and mostly negative approach towards immigration and its recent evolution” (Mancini et al., 2021, p. 8).

The second factor is related to different stories in the news. A distinction is made between two different types of stories. The first type is focused on the local situation, mostly news analysis, wherein issues and problems with refugees are described using a neutral tone (Mancini et al., 2021). The other story type is more focused on international relations and the role of international institutions and politics in the migration issue. These are mostly focused on immigrants from within Europe, for example, labour migrants from the East of Europe (Mancini et al., 2021).

The last factor has to do with the approach to migration. A distinction is made between a parochialist approach and a cosmopolitan approach (Mancini et al., 2021). The parochialist approach places immigration in a national frame, mainly negative and focused on the national

problems related to immigration. The cosmopolitan approach uses a global frame to report about immigration and has a more positive tone, focusing mainly on immigrants from Africa, rather than immigration within Europe (Mancini et al., 2021).

The study by Mancini et al. (2021) looked into how these “three observed representations of immigration fit with media ownership, the country, single media outlets, political orientation of the newspaper, and newspaper type” using a multiple correspondence analysis (p. 9). Firstly, contradictory to the expectations, the findings of this research show that media property isn’t a relevant influential factor in media coverage of immigration. This hypothesis was set because one of the biggest perceived problems regarding news media nowadays is the concentration of the news media wherein many outlets are owned by the same party, which means a lack of plurality. The findings by Mancini et al. (2021) show that newspapers with the same ownership have different perspectives on immigrants. It turns out that the differences in framing between newspapers are more dependent on other factors than on ownership (Mancini et al., 2021).

The research by Lawlor (2018), focused on newspapers in Canada and the UK, shows that the coverage of immigrants, specifically the topos and association with immigrants, differs between countries. The research by Mancini et al. (2021) shows that national belonging seems to be the most important factor in influencing the coverage of immigrants. “National belonging shapes national journalistic routines and procedures that apply to immigration” and is related to domestication, which entails that “journalists report foreign events linking the story to the local, domestic situation and statements by national politicians, making this more proximate to the interests of the local population” (Mancini et al., 2021, p. 4).

The research particularly illustrates the influence of national belonging on the news coverage of immigrants by the comparison between the Italian and the British news media. The Italian press has a more cosmopolitan attitude, wherein they emphasize that they can’t deal with the immigration streams and the related problems as an individual country. The newspapers from the UK are more focused on national politics and the economic and employment issues in the UK related to immigration (Mancini et al., 2021).

The political orientation of a newspaper also influences the way immigrants are covered. Eminently, immigration is a very political topic nowadays playing an important role in dividing

political left and right (Mancini et al., 2021). However, the studies that make a distinction between conservative and liberal newspapers give variable outcomes.

A study focused on the UK and the US by Boeva (2016) shows that conservative newspapers tend to report more negatively about immigrants than liberal newspapers. A discourse analysis on the representation of immigrants in UK newspapers done by KhosraviNik, Krzyżanowski & Wodak (2012) shows that conservative tabloid newspapers promote and reinforce common stereotypes and labels, simplifying complex issues. It exploits and amplifies negative attitudes already present in society.

Based on the findings of a more recent textual and visual analysis of four European newspapers and their representation of migrants, there is no “completely different tendency in conservative and liberal newspapers when writing about migration and representing migrants” (Valente et al., 2021, p. 12). Overall, liberal newspapers tend to use more variety in their reporting and a more positive representation of migrants, but this is no significant difference from the reporting in conservative newspapers (Mancini et al., 2021; Valente et al., 2021).

The difference between tabloid and quality newspapers seems to be more clear (KhosraviNik, Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2012; Mancini et al., 2021). The results of the study by Mancini et al. (2021) show a clear difference between the popular and quality press. The popular press turns out to be more likely to have a closed attitude regarding migration focusing mainly on the related economic problems than quality newspapers (Mancini et al., 2021).

2.3 Local Journalism and Policy Networks

It has been shown that the context and characteristics of a news outlet can be relevant in the way immigration is covered. Another characteristic of a news outlet that could influence how the coverage of immigrants is the level at which the news outlet operates. Even though most research is about national news media, local media also have an essential role in democracy (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020).

Lawlor (2018) researched the difference between national and local newspapers, focusing on Canadian and British newspapers between 2001 and 2012. She made a comparison of newspapers within and between countries. Her research shows that, in contrast with the hypothesis, there is little evidence that national and local news outlets significantly differ in the way they report about immigrants. Thereby, local media does not exclusively pay attention to the local consequences of immigration but reports about it more broadly, while national media reporting goes beyond national concerns (Lawlor, 2018). However, within countries, the media discourse is predominantly nationalised and attention to the local context is often limited (Lawlor, 2018).

When focussing on local journalism, the local context in which a news outlet operates should be taken into consideration. One outcome of the research by Caviedes (2018) related to the local journalistic context is that there seems to be no “connection between media framing and local contextual indicators, such as the unemployment rate and the percentage of foreign-born in the population” (p. 18). More influential factors in the coverage of immigrants, however, are the role of the policy networks and the organisation of the local newsroom (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020).

Local journalists are dependent on local news sources such as local institutions and other stakeholders of a local issue or event. These actors are referred to as ‘policy networks’ (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020). Policy networks are crucial for directly providing information for local journalists and are therefore called ‘primary definers’ (Ekström et al., 2012; Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020). Based on the case study by Pogliano & Ponzo (2020), “more cohesive local policy networks appear to be more capable of developing their narratives on migration and self-representations of the local community, and of influencing the media narratives” (p. 1). The cohesiveness of local policy networks means their capability to create “shared frameworks and operational cooperation” (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020, p. 19).

The cohesiveness in a policy network turns out to be dependent on actors within policy networks, mainly the role played by local institutions and the actors' expertise and commitment (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020). When a policy network constructs a clear frame and creates a consistent narrative, local media are very likely to take over this dominant frame (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020). In a case study comparing reporting in Milan and Turin, the local policy network of Milan succeeded in creating this cohesion by developing "close relations with the local media, almost daily, and completely centralised the communication flows within the policy network" (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020, p. 17).

In the opposite situation where a local institution is not able to create a cohesive network and operate as a primary definer, the media often tends to lean on a conflictive frame and search for sensation (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020). Local media will look for any information available and will tend to use the narrative of a minority or protest group as the dominant frame. This was exactly what happened in the case of Turin, the local policy network had "a limited outward communication and relation with the local media" (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020, p. 18), which resulted in limited information and allowed alternative narratives from the dominant authoritarian narrative to be spread (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020).

In conclusion, this means that local media are more likely to be influenced by cohesive local policy networks than by a local network that fails to create narrative autonomy (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020).

2.4 Organisation of Local Newsrooms

Besides the cohesive policy networks, the cohesiveness of the local media community itself is an important indicator in creating consistent, dominant narratives concerning migrants (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020). How a local newspaper is organised and what focus the local journalists have, influences the way local news is reported (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020). To create this cohesiveness, journalists should self-evidently share a basis when it comes to journalistic routines. But next to this, they also should work based on a common framework and should have the capacity to share knowledge and networks (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020).

Furthermore, to have a cohesive local media community, it is necessary to have enough expertise on the issue of asylum and migration. Expertise mainly means experience with reporting about this matter and an engagement with the migration issue (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020). Within local journalism, there could be a difference in the specialisation of journalists: journalists can be engaged in local events, focusing on these specific local issues, while other journalists are more part of a national newspaper and only report to local offices (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020). These journalists are usually aware of the context and can frame the local events in a broader frame related to general migration issues and migration policies (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020).

In short, the more expertise and commitment within the local media community, the more cohesiveness and the more positive the framing of immigrants is (Pogliano & Ponzo, 2020).

2.5 Participation of Immigrants

Journalism influences the news agenda and the way news is framed, therefore, the backgrounds of journalists and inequalities in media participation are relevant (Bleich et al., 2018). A lack of diversity in the newsroom could lead to a lack of journalism quality and can cause stereotyping (Bleich et al., 2018; Sales, 2023). Diversity is important when it comes to the process of news production as well as participation in the public sphere (Bleich et al., 2018).

In terms of news production, it is important to take the “demographic backgrounds of journalists and the relative democracy (or inequality) in social media participation and creation” (Bleich et al., 2018, p. 9). Bleich et al. (2018) cite some research that illustrates the problem newsrooms have when it comes to diversity. Different scholars show that the existence of minorities or immigrants in the newsroom influences the news coverage, for example, because minority journalists can manage to bring different issues into the light (Bleich et al., 2018).

In the policy brief of EuroMeSCo by Sales (2023) is described that Philip Seib, professor and author of the book *Information at War: Journalism, Disinformation, and Modern Warfare*, explained in an interview for The Washington Post that biases and stereotypes of certain groups of immigrants could be diminished by more diversity in the newsroom. He mentions that journalism should be represented by people from different backgrounds, origins, cultures, and

religions.

Professor Serena Parekh pointed out in an interview for Al-Jazeera that today's mainstream Western media and newsrooms are mostly represented by white people, lacking diversity and perspective. As a result, stereotypes are perpetuated and reproduced in negative narratives that foster xenophobia and double standards of differentiated treatment" (Sales, 2023, p. 4).

This is a threat to democratic societies, in which independent journalism is crucial (Van Aalst et al., 2017).

Research by Vandenberghe et al. (2020), focused on Flamisch news media, found that the main explanation for the lack of diversity in the newsroom is that there is a lack of awareness of this issue among journalists. The news-making process happens in a certain context with already existing culture and internalised processes Vandenberghe et al. (2020). Tuchman considers that this brings the risk of a feedback loop, since journalists work in a comparable work environment, the status quo is likely to be maintained and there is limited space for alternative ideas (Tuchman, 1978). Vandenberghe et al. (2020) mention that there is a vicious circle going on: "The lack of diverse sources creates a lack of diverse representation. More visibility of minorities in the newsroom would help them gain social status and power, which in turn would bring forth more non-mainstream sources" (p. 2).

This vicious cycle can be broken by journalists actively creating more diversity. "Journalism should be more open to newsroom diversity, including different voices from different cultural backgrounds, and the professional ideology of journalists will always encompass the perceptions of public service, objectivity, autonomy, respect, ethics and transparency on new wires production" (Sales, 2023, p. 4). They need to take responsibility and put effort into actively looking for different voices in the newsroom. For this to happen, knowledge and awareness about diversity have to be increased among journalists (Vandenberghe et al., 2020).

Apart from news production, the media can also serve as a platform for, in this case, immigrants to let themselves be heard in the mediatised public sphere. The media can operate as a space for "the participation of migrants and minorities in a public sphere where they can advance

their interests and identities” (Bleich et al., 2018, p. 6). However, a lack of power of this group in the media can have the opposite effect (Bleich et al., 2018).

Research by Yi & Yung (2018), conducted in the context of South Korea, illustrates that in the case of a “small, ideologically homogenous group of media producers” the discourse is likely to be focused on immigrants as victims (p. 21). In contrast, a bigger heterogeneous community with much diversity will result in a more nuanced and mixed discourse (Yi & Yung, 2018). Even though foreigners are less likely to communicate actively in the media, when they do, they contribute to diversity in discourse (Yi & Yung, 2018).

Research by Vandenberghe et al. (2020), mentions that ethnic minorities are consistently underrepresented in news media in Europe. The question asked in this study is when minorities are represented enough. One perspective on this is that representation is achieved when the prevalence of a minority group is in proportion to how it is in societal reality, and therefore is a reflection of society (Vandenberghe et al., 2020). Another perspective is that there is “giving equal access in the news content to all perspectives of all demographic groups in society regardless of their actual weight” (Vandenberghe et al., 2020, p. 2).

Chapter 3: Immigration and Press in the Netherlands

3.1 Different Migrant Groups

The way of reporting about immigration depends on the immigrants it concerns. The distinction can be made between refugees/asylum seekers and people immigrating for study or work. Previous research shows that news media tend to portray refugees more negatively than immigrants. For example, research by Lawlor & Tolley (2017) focused on Canada but is also applicable to Western European democracies, showing that the tone of the coverage was more negative when reporting about refugees than when reporting about immigrants. Furthermore, “the analysis uncovered a discursive hierarchy, with immigrants associated more frequently (and positively) with economic considerations and refugees associated more frequently (and negatively) with validity considerations” (Lawlor & Tolley, 2017, p. 18).

However, the distinction between reporting about ‘migrants’ or ‘refugees’ doesn’t cover the entire difference. Even when reporting about one of those groups, differences occur based on the country of origin. In the literature, the distinction between immigrants from within the EU and immigrants coming from outside the EU is often made (Lawlor & Tolley, 2017; Mancini et al., 2021). The research by Mancini et al. (2021) found that the types of stories in the news differ depending on where immigrants are from. For example, human interest stories and stories told with a cosmopolitan approach are mostly about immigrants from Africa rather than immigrants from countries in Europe, while stories focused on international relations and the role of international institutions and politics are mostly focused on immigrants from within Europe, such as labour migrants from Eastern Europe (Mancini et al., 2021).

Besides the type of stories, differences in the way a refugee group is framed occur based on the country of origin. Sales (2023) mentions a double standard regarding receiving refugees from inside and outside Europe. The study shows a difference in portrayal by journalists and reporters between the Syrian and other non-European asylum seekers back in 2015-2016, and Ukrainian refugees in 2022 (Sales, 2023). European governments and the media created a positive frame regarding the Ukrainian refugees, emphasising that we should protect them, and pointing

out their similarities and the common, democratic values among Europeans (Sales, 2023). It seems that geographical and cultural proximity play an important role in people's perception towards refugees.

On the other hand, Syrian refugees were dominantly reported in the European press from a security frame wherein the refugees are portrayed as a threat, contributed by the frame of economic burden. The way these refugees were represented created polarisation and negative stereotyping and attitudes towards them. The difference between the reporting about European refugees and non-Europe refugees exposed the discriminatory attitude of the media (Sales, 2023). Different research links this double standard to The Orientalist philosophy, meaning the colonial discourse that was present in the 20th century (Sales, 2023). "These kinds of narratives implicitly suggest that war is a natural phenomenon in places outside the Western world and portrays a lack of civilisation" (Sales, 2023, p. 4). This philosophy makes use of a narrative that portrays Europeans as 'civilised' while reporting about non-European refugees is often linked to terms such as 'terrorists' and 'problematic' (Sales, 2023).

The *Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek (CBS)* presented data about immigrants in the Netherlands. In 2022, many more immigrants came to the Netherlands than in previous years, mostly people from Ukraine. In 2022, 403,108 people immigrated, which is 150,580 more than in 2021. The vast majority of immigrants are coming from European countries. As a result of the war that year, most immigrants came from Ukraine (108,252 immigrants). They left their country after the invasion of Russia in February 2022 (CBS, 2023, September 8).

The immigration to the Netherlands from some other countries also increased, such as from Turkey, Poland and India. In recent years before 2022, Poland has been the country where most immigrants came from (CBS, 2023, September 8). In 2022, Poland was the second country with 27,749 immigrants. The third country was Turkey (20,112), then Germany (17,495), Spain (13,138) and Romania (12,983) (CBS, 2023, September 8).

Before 2008, the emigration from the Netherlands was higher than the immigration to the Netherlands. From 2008 onwards, the immigration stream is higher than the emigration streams outside the country (CBS, 2023, September 8). However, many of these people stay temporarily, such as immigrants who come to study or to work. But also some people from Ukraine left the

Netherlands and labour migrants from Poland often come to the Netherlands to work temporarily and return after a while (CBS, 2023, September 8).

People have different reasons to immigrate to the Netherlands. Reasons could be work, study, or asylum. Migrants from inside and outside the European Union (EU) are immigrating out of different motives. For immigrants within the EU, the most common reason in 2022 was work (46,700 thousand immigrants) (CBS, 2023, January 3). According to European law, all citizens within the European Union and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) can work in an EU country without a work permit. For Poland and the other countries that joined the EU in 2004, this applies since 2007, and for Bulgaria and Romania since 2014 (CBS, 2023, January 3). Then, 31,630 thousand people came in 2022 for marriage or family reunion. For 31,855 thousand EU citizens, the reason for immigration is not known. Finally, 18,680 thousand EU-EFTA citizens, moved to the Netherlands to study (CBS, 2023, January 3).

For people from outside the EU/EFTA, the motive for immigrating is more influenced by policy measures taken by the Dutch government and the EU and the political situation in the country of origin (CBS, 2023, January 3). Among non-EU/EFTA citizens, family was the most common reason in 2022 for migration (40,105 thousand people) (CBS, 2023, January 3). The second reason was work (28,745 thousand people). Closely followed up by asylum (27,725 thousand people). 20,780 thousand people came in 2022 to the Netherlands to study. And for 4,615 thousand citizens, the reason for immigration is not known (CBS, 2023, January 3).

CBS also gathered data about the situation of immigrants in the Netherlands in the long term. In the period 2008 to 2013, 386,490 citizens emigrated from the EU and EFTA to the Netherlands. Of this group, 52.2 % had left the country within three years. After ten years, 72.8% of these immigrants no longer lived in the Netherlands (CBS, 2023, January 3). A different situation is observed regarding citizens who immigrated to the Netherlands from countries outside the EU (CBS, 2023, January 3). People who come from outside the EU/EFTA emigrate relatively less often after 3 years than citizens from the EU and EFTA: 38.1%. After ten years, 58.0% of migrants from outside the EU/EFTA no longer lived in the Netherlands (CBS, 2023, January 3).

This research is focused on a local Amsterdam newspaper, therefore some specifically about immigrants in Amsterdam need to be presented. In 2022, Amsterdam had 308.312

inhabitants with a migration background (first-generation immigrants) (AlleCijfers.nl, 2024, January 16). 124.811 of the immigrants in Amsterdam come from a country within Europe and 73.827 people from countries within the EU. Furthermore, a considerable group is coming from Morocco (33.871 inhabitants) and Suriname (33.410 inhabitants) (AlleCijfers.nl, 2024, January 16).

3.2 The Media Landscape

The media landscape differs strongly from country to country. In the book *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics (2004)*, by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, a theoretical model is created based on a comparative study of the media landscapes in different countries. According to the model by Hallin & Mancini (2004), the countries are divided into three systems: the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model, the North/Central Europe or Democratic Corporatist Model and the North Atlantic or Liberal Model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

Different factors determine in what system a country is classified, namely the structure of media markets, professionalisation of journalism, role of the state and political parallelism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Political parallelism refers to the extent of the link between the media and political ideology in a country. It is considered high in countries where news media have a strong political ideology, whereas political parallelism is considered low in countries where news media are independent of political orientations (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Political parallelism will be featured here because this factor is most relevant when it comes to the framing of actors in the news. After all, the ideology behind the news-making process, influences the way actors, in this case immigrants, are framed.

Media parallelism in a country is determined by different factors. The media content is the main factor, meaning whether the media content reflects a certain political ideology (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Another factor is the organisational connections, referring to the direct ties between political parties (or other organisations) and media outlets. A third factor is the role of the journalists themselves. Determined by whether journalists are active in politics and to what extent the career path of journalists is influenced by their political preference, meaning that journalists

can choose the organisation they work for based on political orientation (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Furthermore, political parallelism has to do with the audience and to what extent they are divided regarding the media they consume based on political orientation. Finally, the journalistic practices in a system play a role when it comes to political parallelism; referring to whether a journalist is seen as a neutral observer or as being involved in shaping public opinion (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

Based on the model by Hallin & Mancini (2004), The Netherlands can be categorised in the North/Central Europe or Democratic Corporatist Model, which means that there would be a high level of political parallelism. This could be explained historically; Dutch society was divided into pillars during most of the 20th century. The different pillars were the catholic pillar, the protestant pillar, the socialist pillar and the liberal pillar. Every pillar had its own societal organisations, schools, media and other social institutions, reflecting the specific pillar's interests. This polarised society lasted until the 70s of the 20th century. Even though the connection between political ideology (and religion) is historically strong, it has been weakened during the past decades. However, this parallelism is still visible in the current media system and journalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

When it comes to the press, the most known newspapers in the Netherlands can be divided based on political ideology. Pew Research Center researched in 2017 the news media and its relation to politics in different Western European countries, including the Netherlands (Rosenberg, 2024). In the research, people were asked about their political orientation and the news media they consume, using a survey. The results of this survey show a political division of the most popular news media. Concretely, *De Telegraaf* and *GeenStijl* have the most right-wing consumers, *RTL* has on average consumers that are a little right from the centre, the average of the *NOS*, *NU.nl* and *AD* are more or less placed in the centre, and *de Volkskrant* is positioned a little left from the centre (Rosenberg, 2024). However, these differences were subtle and not very extreme. It turns out that people's estimation of political orientation, which is also asked within the survey, is more extreme than reality. This means that people place the ideology of news media more to the right or more to the left than they factually are positioned, based on the audience (Rosenberg, 2024).

Het Parool is not part of this research, however, on the website *Het Parool* is mentioned that they are launched as a social-democratic newspaper, and generally, this newspaper is

perceived as a progressive newspaper, positioned a little left from the centre (Historisch-Archief, n.d.).

3.3 Migration Policy and the Media

Previous research shows that journalism and media frames influence (migration) policy and European policy decisions (Eberl et al., 2018, Gavin, 2018, King & Wood, 2013; Sales, 2023). The policy brief by Sales (2023) shows that this is also the case for the frames and discourse concerning immigrants. When the security frame is used consequently, it is more likely that policymakers justify their decisions based on security-related reasoning. On the other hand, when the humanitarian frame is dominant, the policymaking process will be more likely based on compassion and solidarity values (Eberl et al., 2018, Sales, 2023). However, it is unclear how big the role of media portrayal of immigrants is in this process since many factors play a role in the EU policymaking process (Sales, 2023).

The media narrative on immigrants influences the policymaking process to some extent, but the relationship between journalism and migration policy also works in the other direction; policy influences the way journalism operates. This is illustrated by the book *Images of Immigrants and Refugees in Western Europe: Media Representations, Public Opinion and Refugees' Experiences*. In Chapter 6 'A Diverse View on the Promotion of Tolerance and Cultural Diversity through the Eyes of Journalists: Focus on Belgium and Sweden' is shown, using an extensive data set of 24 countries, that policies regarding migration and integration influence the way journalism is practised (Mertens et al., 2019).

Mertens et al. (2019) divide countries based on different contextual factors: (1) the Migrant Policy Index (MIPEX), a tool that measures integration policies in different countries (the higher the MIPEX the more the integration into society for immigrants is facilitated), (2) the extent to which there is an emphasis on tolerance and promotion of diversity within journalism, and (3) interventionism, referring to the extent to which journalism takes an active role within the political or social debate.

In contrast with the expectations, in countries with a lower MIPEX, journalists tend to

emphasize tolerance and promote diversity. This could mean that journalists take a more intentionalist role in countries where there is a lack of clear migrant integration policy to counterbalance the lack of clear policy. At the same time, in countries with a higher MIPEX, journalists also tend to emphasize tolerance and promote diversity. Promoting tolerance is emphasised in countries where the interventionism of journalists is high, and therefore in contrast with the policy values (Mertens et al., 2019). In conclusion, journalists predominantly encourage tolerance and diversity, but for different reasons in countries with different migration policies (Merterns et al., 2019).

Based on the three factors, the results of the research by Mertens et al. (2019) show different clusters of European countries. Firstly, Sweden is an exception and a cluster in itself. Sweden has a high MIPEX, tolerance-orientated journalism and low interventionism. Another cluster includes Southern countries, including Turkey, characterised by a low MIPEX, high promotion of tolerance among journalists and high interventionism. Other country clusters could be more straightforward. Eastern Europe sometimes joins the Southern Europe cluster but has a lower promotion of tolerance among journalists. Spain and Portugal are exceptional because they are similar to Western European countries with their high MIPEX, but have more interventionist journalism than the other Western European countries (Mertens et al., 2019). Sometimes Western European countries join Sweden, namely also characterised by a high MIPEX and low interventionism, but their journalism culture is less emphasized by tolerance and diversity (Mertens et al., 2019).

3.4 The Dutch Context

According to the study by Mertens *et al.* (2019), The Netherlands is characterised by high MIPEX and high interventionism, but a low tolerance and promotion of diversity within the journalism culture. During the past decades, the immigration and integration policy in the Netherlands has been changing fundamentally. The policy on this subject became stricter and shifted from a policy focused on the inclusivity of ethnic minorities to a predominant focus on assimilation (Swinkels & Van Meijl, 2020). This seems to be caused mainly by the politicisation of subjects of immigration and integration (Swinkels & Van Meijl, 2020).

The politicisation of the topic of immigration led to a dominant so-called ‘new realist’ political discourse in which the ordinary Dutch people regain their national values and speak up against multiculturalism that is supported by the left wing, and the increase of cultural diversity starting in the 80s and 90s of the previous century (Swinkels & Van Meijl, 2020). This sentiment was increasingly enforced by politicians proclaiming the harmful cultural change within the Dutch society. Politicians propagate a solution for this issue by advocating for social-cultural assimilation wherein migrants should adjust entirely to the Dutch existing culture. This political tendency focuses on the non-Western migrants, specifically Muslims, who have fundamentally different norms and values than the Dutch. This sentiment was reflected in the migrant integration policy (Swinkels & Van Meijl, 2020).

An important moment in time concerning the development of increasingly strict policy was around 2003-2006. During this time, Rita Verdonk, a member of the VVD (Liberal Party) was Minister of Alien Affairs and Integration. “She became well-known for her stern language, tough stance and the introduction of very strict measures of assimilation” (Swinkels & Van Meijl, 2020, p. 5). Then in 2006 and 2007, new laws were applied regarding civic integration, in which migrants themselves became responsible for signing up for mandatory integration courses and exams, both having to be paid by the migrants too. Furthermore, it became harder to pass the exams and the consequences for not passing became harsher. In case of failing the integration exams, people had to pay a fee and the residence permit was dependent on the exam result (Swinkels & Van Meijl, 2020).

A few years later in 2010, a coalition was created by the VVD (Liberal Party) and the CDA (Christian-Democrat Party) with Mark Rutte (VVD) as prime minister. This government was in the parliament supported by the PVV (Party of Freedom) led by Geert Wilders. This is a right-wing populist party with a strong anti-immigration sentiment, especially targeting Muslims (Swinkels & Van Meijl, 2020). Muslims in the Netherlands are regularly subject to negative stereotypes, often related to the social security frame. In these cases, Muslims are most often associated with Turks and Moroccans, the two first Muslim groups in the country (Wiemers et al., 2024). Later on, more Muslim groups came to the Netherlands, such as Somalis and Syrians. The ideology of the PVV aligns with the stereotypes around Muslims, specifically Moroccans and Turks, in the Netherlands (Wiemers et al., 2024).

A remarkable event happened in 2014, when Geert Wilders, explicitly evoked an anti-Moroccan reaction of his supporters during an election meeting by chanting the question: ‘Do we want more or fewer Moroccans’, after which the crowd started screaming ‘Less, less, less...’, followed up by Geert Wilders, saying, ‘then we are going to arrange that’. A long-lasting lawsuit against Wilders, accusing him of discrimination, followed (NOS, 2020, September 4). This event is a clear example of the use of populist discourse, polarizing two groups against each other and marginalising and generalising a minority group, in this case, Moroccans (Jansen & van Leeuwen, 2020).

During the times of the coalition formed in 2010, the already restricted migration policy was reinforced, and it became even harder for immigrants to pass the integration exams. The sanctions for not passing became stricter as well, and it became possible to repeal a temporary residence permit in case of failing the exams within the first three years of their stay in the Netherlands (Swinkels & Van Meijl, 2020). This policy was in effect from 2013 until 2022.

A new integration policy was launched on the 1st of January 2022 (SZW, 2024, February 1), wherein the government takes back more responsibility for the integration process of immigrants. This policy became more focused on customization and creating a suitable process for each case. There is a responsibility for the municipality to support immigrants during the integration process and the costs of the integration process are covered by the government, as long as the immigrant invests in the integration (SZW, 2024, February 1).

Currently, the 2022 integration policy is still functioning. At the same time, many political developments occurred in 2023, which also influenced the debate around migration. At the beginning of 2023, the coalition existed out of four political parties, namely VVD (Liberal Party), D66 (Liberal-Democratic Party), CDA (Christian-Democratic Party) and ChristenUnie (Social-Christian Party). The leader of this coalition and premier of the Netherlands was Mark Rutte from the VVD, who has been in power since 2010. This coalition was created after a long coalition formation based on the national elections in March 2021 but only took office on the 10th of January 2022 (NOS, 2023, July 8).

At the beginning of June 2023, the Dutch government resigned based on an issue regarding immigration. The issue had to do with family reunification of refugees. The VVD wanted to have

a stricter policy on this matter. D66 and ChristenUnie countered this policy proposal, and the four coalition parties weren't able to come to an agreement, which led to the resignation of the cabinet Rutte IV (NOS, 2023, July 8).

In November 2023 new elections were held. Migration was a very dominant issue during the campaign and a prominent topic in every political debate, focusing especially on refugees and asylum seekers. This is remarkable since this group is a small minority of the immigrants who are coming to the Netherlands (CBS, 2023, January 3). The PVV (Party of Freedom) takes a very radical stand on this matter and propagates strongly against migration and in favour of a strict migration policy, mentioning that the Dutch border should be closed for immigrants. The slogan of the PVV during the campaign was: 'Give the Netherlands back to the Dutch people again' (Bajja, 2023, November 7).

With the parliament election in November 2023, the PVV became the country's biggest party with 23.5% of the votes (NOS, n.d), followed up by GroenLinks-PVDA (A fusion of the Green Party and the Social-Democratic Party), the VVD, and NSC (a new party derived from a division of the CDA). According to the Dutch tradition, the negotiations for a new coalition started, led by the biggest party (NOS, 2024, March 11). In the meantime, the previous coalition still governs but has limited rights to make fundamental decisions.

Since this research is focused on local news in Amsterdam, some context of the political situation within the municipality will be provided. Generally, the Amsterdam population votes more left-wing than the rest of the country (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023). De PvdA (Social-Democratic Party) had been the biggest party in Amsterdam for a long time. The municipal elections in 2014 were the first time that the PvdA wasn't the biggest in the city. In 2014, D66 (Liberal-Democratic Party) won the municipal elections in Amsterdam, and in 2018, this was Groen-Links (Green Party) (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023). Finally, during the municipal elections in 2022, the PvdA became again the biggest party in Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023). The current municipal executive board exists out of aldermen from the PvdA, GroenLinks and D66. These three political parties made a coalition agreement in 2022. This local government is supposed to remain in place until 2026 (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024).

Part II: Empirical Study

Chapter 4: Method

4.1 Research Design

This research will be conducted using a qualitative research design. The empirical methodology that will be used to research the representation of immigrants in *Het Parool* is Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). "Discourse is understood as a complex multimodal event of interaction and communication" (Van Dijk, 2009, p. 2). Van Leeuwen (1996) describes in his research focused on the representing of social actors, that the framing of actors happens textual as well as visual. This research will be a multimodal analysis of news articles' text, headlines and images.

The purpose of CDA is to critically analyse discourse, consider context, and expose hidden structures, power relations and inequalities based on text and other discourse (Fairclough, 2013; Wodak, 2002). This means that CDA is strongly related to ideology and power (Wodak, 2002). Van Dijk (2006) defines ideology as "a system of ideas that are sociocognitive defined as shared representations of social groups, and more specifically as the 'axiomatic' principles of such representations" (p. 1). Ideologies serve as the foundation for group attitudes and beliefs and affect how individuals think and communicate about these ideas (Van Dijk, 2006). In the research by Van Dijk (2009), this principle of ideological discourse is applied to news in particular. News-making processes such as interviewing, reporting, and gathering information happen in a certain context and are constantly influenced by ideology and related lexical choices. A journalist continuously makes choices about content, gives meaning to events and chooses to emphasise or de-emphasise information (Van Dijk, 2009).

Power is related to discourse because discursive choices are influenced by the dominant ideology (Van Dijk, 2009). The study by Van Dijk (2009) points out that dominant ideologies:

are associated with the very position and power of white, male, middle-class journalists working within a corporate environment. Women, poor people, workers, black people, immigrants, and all those who have no access to, and control over public discourse are thus largely ignored or represented negatively when seen as a problem or a threat to the social mainstream (Van Dijk, 2009, p. 12).

Journalists often, consciously or unconsciously, highlight the negative traits of out-groups and the positive ones of ingroups. Polarising is necessary to maintain the established power and the existing power relations in society, expressed in for example race, social class or gender (Van Dijk, 2009). CDA can be a means to expose these structures behind the news, particularly the representation of immigrants in the news. Immigrants are one of the groups that often lack power within the public discourse and therefore have the risk of being portrayed negatively in the news (Van Dijk, 2009). CDA will be used in this research to be able to look behind the text and images and reveal possible power structures concerning immigrants behind the news articles.

4.2 Het Parool

A CDA of the representation of immigrants in a Dutch local newspaper involves examining the language, rhetoric and images used in news articles about immigrants, as well as the underlying assumptions and ideologies that shape the way immigrants are portrayed. The analysis will be applied to articles about immigration from the local Amsterdam newspaper *Het Parool*. *Het Parool* is owned by the Belgian media group DPG Media. A private company that owns more than 90 news brands, magazines, television programs, radio stations and online services in the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark.

Het Parool was launched in 1940, as a resistance newspaper during the Second World War and originally had a social-democratic character (Pen, 2024, February 10). The newspaper is nowadays known as a left-wing progressive newspaper (Historisch-Archief, n.d.). Furthermore, *Het Parool* is considered a qualitative newspaper mainly focused on Amsterdam, but looks beyond the local issues of the city. *Het Parool* is a newspaper that is generally read by people with a connection with Amsterdam, known as a more left-wing municipality in comparison to the rest of

the country (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023), which is in line with the ideological background of the newspaper.

Amsterdam is a metropolis and connected to the rest of the country and the world, which is integrated into the character of the newspaper. *Het Parool* is a daily newspaper with an online and print version. Next to the daily newspaper, they also have a weekly magazine, podcasts, a newsletter and social media accounts on different platforms. In this research, the focus will be only on the daily newspaper and the online news articles (Historisch-Archief, n.d.).

Het Parool presents itself as free, independent and non-conformist, but also cheerful, open-minded, curious and without prejudice (DPG Media Group, n.d.). This is also shown in the slogan of the newspaper. The slogan is *Het Parool vrij, overveerd*, translated: ‘free, unfeathered’. According to De BSR Quality Planner of MarketResponse, a research institution using the Brand Strategy Research (BSR) model to evaluate and position brands based on psychological, sociological and behavioural dimensions, the most prominent values of *Het Parool* are trusted (31%), traditional (29%), solid (28%) and social involvement (28%) (DPG Media Group, n.d.).

The monthly reach of *Het Parool* is 2.7 million people. The data is based on the first quarter of 2023 and this is the number is the reach of all different channels of *Het Parool*, not only the newspaper itself (DPG Media Group, n.d.). There is some overlap in the online and print readers, namely, 22% of readers also visit the website and 8% of online visitors also read the print version. This data of 2023-I shows that the print readers of the daily newspaper are 51% male and 49% female. 9% of all readers are 18–24 years old, 10% are 25–34 years old, 13% are 34–49 years old, 26% are 50–64 years old and 38% are 65 or older. Then, 33% of the readers are singles, 35% of the readers are couples or households and 32% are families. Finally, the data about social status: 63% of the readers have a middle to high income, 59% are part of the high social class and 93% are highly educated (DPG Media Group, n.d.).

There is also data in the DPG documents of the online visitors of the website of *Het Parool*. 10% of the online visitors visit the website with a PC/laptop, 30% with a tablet and 60% with their smartphone. 61% of the online visitors are male and 49% are female. 19% of them are 18–34 years old, 39% are 35–54 years old, and 41% are 55 or older. 24% of the visitors are singles, 40% are couples or households and 30% are families. Finally, 50% of the readers have a high income, 58%

are part of the high social class and 54% are highly educated (DPG Media Group, n.d.).

A notable characteristic of these statistics is that the majority of the readers of *Het Parool* online and offline are highly educated. This is something the newspaper profiles itself with. On the recruitment page for brands to advertise in *Het Parool* is mentioned: “If your highly educated target group is in the Amsterdam region, then *Het Parool* is the perfect place to promote your brand.” (DPG Recruitment, n.d.). Another characteristic they present on this page is their tone, which would be more cheeky and more humoristic than other newspapers (DPG Recruitment, n.d.)

4.3 Article Selection

For the Critical Discourse Analysis, online articles from *Het Parool* have been selected based on different criteria. These articles are selected using the archive of *Het Parool*, where past articles are accessible to subscribers. The selection of articles that will be used for the analysis had to comply with some conditions. The selection of the articles started by selecting the time frame and searching keywords to find articles with the migration theme.

The research was conducted during the parliamentary election campaign in the Netherlands in 2023. Considering the political context in the Netherlands around the elections in November 2023 and the dominance within the political and public debate of the topic of immigration, it is likely that a significant number of articles concern this topic. Since the coverage of immigration in the news and framing around immigrants influences public opinion, and political attitude and could influence the voting choice (Eberl et al., 2018; Krzyżanowski; 2020), the representation of immigrants in the news during the campaign could be relevant concerning the elections and the election results.

The time range of the selected article is the 28th of August 2023 up to and including the 22nd of November 2023. In the Netherlands, there is no official date for the start of the campaign period. For the November 2023 Parliamentary elections in the Netherlands, political parties had to register by the 28th of August at the latest (Kiesraad, 2023, July 14). Therefore, this date is taken as the date of the beginning of the political campaign. The time range is until the 22nd of November, the date of the parliamentary elections and therefore the end of the campaign.

Regarding the keywords of the news article, for an article to be selected the headline and/or leading paragraph of an article needs to contain the terms ‘immigrant’, ‘migrant’, ‘vluchteling’ (refugee), ‘asielzoeker’ (asylum seeker), ‘asiel (asylum)’, ‘statushouder’ (refugee with legal status), ‘nieuwkomer’ (newcomer), ‘internationale student’ (international student) or ‘expat’. There have been selected one article that doesn’t include one of the terms in the headline or leading paragraph but includes ‘derdelander’ (third-country national), which refers to a migrant group as well. Overall, it will be checked if immigration of immigrants is (one of) the main topics of the news article, if not, the article will not be selected for the analysis.

Furthermore, only articles with a local character were selected. *Het Parool* makes a distinction between news outside the country (world), national news and regional news (Amsterdam), only the articles categorised with ‘Amsterdam’ will be included in the analysis, to guarantee the genre of local news. Finally, the articles had to be official news articles, opinion articles, columns and interviews were excluded from the analysis.

Based on these criteria, 12 online news articles from *Het Parool* were selected. An oversight of the 12 selected news articles is shown in Table 1 below, including the keywords on which the article is selected and a short description of the article's topic.

Table 1

Selection of News Articles

Publication date	Keyword(s)	Main topic news article
30-8-2023	Third-country nationals	The shelter for third-country nationals from Ukraine is going to fall away, which causes a risk for this group to end up on the street.
1-9-2023	International students	Universities take measures to regulate the influx of international students.
2-9-2023	Newcomers	Sociologist Maurice Crul analyses the increase of diversity and people with an immigration background in Amsterdam from the perspective of the ‘white Dutch’.
7-9-2023	Asylum seekers	The asylum centre ‘MS Galaxy’ (a ship) is going to be extended for 6 months. The asylum centre has positive sides, but problems also occur.
19-9-2023	Asylum seekers	A temporary location for asylum seekers will be opened in Amsterdam for 4 weeks.
5-10-2023	Refugees	The municipality of Amsterdam opens an extra location for shelter for Ukrainian refugees for at least 3 years.
20-10-2023	Refugees	The register centre for Ukrainians that arrive in Amsterdam will be closed

		because the shelters are overcrowded.
2-11-2023	Refugees + Asylum seekers	Refugees with a residence permit are working for the airline KLM, mainly in the technical department.
5-11-2023	Refugees	A memorial vigil is held in a church in Amsterdam to memorialise the refugees who died at the European border last year.
10-11-2023	International students	The quota set at the University of Amsterdam for international students seems to affect the influx of these students.
16-11-2023	Asylum seekers, refugees with legal status, undocumented + international students	An alternative polling station is opened in Amsterdam to let people vote who don't have the right to vote.
22-11-2023	Refugees with legal status	Flat blocks where asylum seekers live together with Dutch young people face many safety issues, mainly due to poor policy.

4.4 Data Analysis

The CDA uses the qualitative data analysis program Maxqda. The data analysis has been done according to different steps. All of these steps have been applied to both the textual discourse and the images. For the images, memos are used to describe the photo or specific parts of the photo to provide context and background information.

The first step was coding and categorisation, meaning that the relevant topics were identified with codes based on the theoretical framework, followed by categorising the codes into different broader themes and identifying the relations between the different segments.

In the next step, the focus was on the language and syntax. Attention was paid to the language used that refers to immigrants and/or their actions. In this phase, specific discursive strategies that contribute to the framing of immigrants and the way they are represented were identified. This is done based on the three levels of analysis described in the first chapter of Richardson (2007), namely level 1: lexical choices: the words used to indicate immigrants & the associated words with this group, level 2: sentence constructions: checking for tools to send an implicit message using certain sentence constructions and grammar, and level 3: recognizing certain tendencies in the narrative.

In the next step, the frames of the immigrants were allocated, differentiating the threat frame, victim frame and hero frame. Thereby, the focus was on the framing of the immigration-related issues, the causes and the solutions. Then, the stakeholders and sources that are cited or paraphrased within the articles were identified and their variety of perspectives and influence on the discourse were allocated. Finally, the context was taken into consideration. It has been analysed how the ideology and social-political context of the newspaper and the articles influence the way immigrants are represented.

The results of the analysis are presented in the next Chapter. When referring to a specific news article, the publication date indicates which article is described. Finally, when quotes from the news articles were used to clarify a finding, the researcher translated the text fragments from Dutch to English.

Chapter 5: Data Presentation and Analysis

The critical discourse analysis generated three main themes. The results will be presented based on these themes, with a particular focus on the research questions. The three main frames of the news articles are immigrants as a threat, including intervention to limit immigration, immigrants as victims, including support for immigrants in trouble, and immigrants as heroes. These categories are in line with the framework by Benson (2013), however, the subframes differ fundamentally from the ones in this study. Before elaborating on these frames, one subchapter will be dedicated to the format and structure of the news articles and how the articles are related to each other. Another subchapter will be focused on defining the actors in the news articles; the different migrant groups.

5.1 Structure of the News Articles

The 12 selected news stories have a strong overlap regarding the subjects. Therefore, the chronology of the news articles must be considered. Some news articles are following up on each other. For example, the two articles about international students have a chronological line. The news article published on 1-9-2023 introduces a quota for international students at the UvA, followed by the news article published on 10-2-2023 describing the result of this quota (see Table 1).

Overall, the specific themes of the articles are related, and certain stakeholders are mentioned structurally throughout the data. It also occurs several times that a news article refers to another news article by *Het Parool* using a hyperlink for a statement so that readers can click on the statement and read more about it in a previous article by *Het Parool*.

The news stories vary in length, with the shortest being 2 pages and the longest 5 pages, varying from 3 to 23 paragraphs (see Table 2). All articles start with a headline that summarizes the main message of the article. Often, the headline contains a quote by a stakeholder, the same quote is mentioned somewhere else in the article and is used in the headline to transfer the main

message. Some headlines evoke curiosity, by giving away part of the message but at the same time hiding some essential information about the subject. An example of such a headline is:

“At this alternative polling station in East, people who do not have the right to vote in the Netherlands can vote” (16-11-2023)

It is not defined yet what ‘this polling station is’, and refers indirectly to the body text of the news article to discover the information. This is a way to make the reader curious and encourage them to read the entire article.

The headlines of the news articles are followed by a lead and an image. The leading paragraph is a logical continuation of the headline, elaborating a bit more on the statement in the headline and providing a summary of the article. Sometimes, the lead also evokes curiosity by giving away part of the information but not some other essential information. Finally, in some articles, there is no lead and the headline is directly followed by the image.

The rest of the text of the articles is structured by using subheadings. Most news articles are written in a storytelling format, only one article (1-9-2023) is structured in a question-answer format, wherein the questions are asked and answered by the journalist. For most of the articles, the image at the beginning is the only image within the article, however, some articles have some other images throughout the article. An oversight of the structure of the different news stories is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Structure of News Articles

Publication date	Keyword(s)	Number Paragraphs	Number Subheads	Headline	Lead	Number Images
30-8-2023	Third-country nationals	10	3	Summary + quote stakeholder	Summarising lead	1
1-9-2023	International students	11	4 (questions & answers)	Summary in the format of question-answer	Summarising lead	1
2-9-2023	Newcomers	15	5	Quote that summarises the main message of the main stakeholder	Summary in the format of question-answer	3 (+ choropleth map + bar graph)
7-9-2023	Asylum seekers	10	3	Summary	Summary + indirect reference to the article for more information	1

19-9-2023	Asylum seekers	5	1	Summary	Summary	1
5-10-2023	Refugees	4	2	Summary	Summary	1
20-10-2023	Refugees	11	2	Summary	Summary	1
2-11-2023	Refugees + Asylum seekers	23	4	Summary + quote stakeholder	No lead	2
5-11-2023	Refugees	3	0	Summary	Summary	1
10-11-2023	International students	10	3	Summary	No lead	1
16-11-2023	Asylum seekers, refugees with legal status, undocumented + international students	10	3	Summary + indirect reference to the article for more information	No lead	1
22-11-2023	Refugees with legal status	21	4	Summary + indirect reference to the article for more information	No lead	1

5.2 Defining Actors

The first results presented are about the overall themes and actors within the news articles. Notably, the articles are all about immigrants, but the word ‘immigrant’ (or migrant) is not used a single time within the articles to identify this group. The journalists use more specific terms that indicate the kind of migrants it concerns, such as refugees, Ukrainian refugees, third-country nationals or international students.

Broadly two groups of immigrants are mentioned in the news articles by *Het Parool*, namely refugees/asylum seekers and international students. The terms refugee and asylum seekers are used regularly. The term ‘statushouder’ (refugee with legal status) indicates, according to the definition; refugees who already have asylum status. However, in the news articles, this term is used interchangeably with ‘refugee’. Two of the articles are mainly about international students, which is referred to with this term.

The stories of the selected news articles are limited to these two groups; other migrant groups such as labour migrants, family migrants and expats are not written about in these news articles. According to the data on immigration to the Netherlands in 2022, most immigrants from within the EU come as labour migrants and most immigrants from outside the EU come for family reasons, these two groups are not represented in the news articles (CBS, 2023, September 8).

In one article (2-9-2023), the actors are identified as ‘people with a migration background’, meaning that they are either immigrants themselves, or that at least one of the parents was born abroad (CBS, 2024). In this context, the term ‘allochtoon’ is also used to refer to people with a migration background. As mentioned in the first chapter, this is a term that was banned in the Netherlands at the end of 2016, because of its negative connotation. The journalist used this term in this article by *Het Parool*, not heeding this development. The group of people with a migration background has been opposed to ‘autochtonen’, meaning people with no migration background. In the article, this group is repeatedly called ‘white Dutch people’, which implies that Dutch people can be distinguished from immigrants by the colour of their skin.

The country of origin of the immigrants is explicitly mentioned in some cases, but in many this is not mentioned. Three articles (30-8-2023, 5-10-2023, 20-10-2023), are specifically about

refugees from Ukraine which is mentioned in the headline as well as in the body text of the article. When talking about other refugees and asylum seekers, the country of origin is rarely mentioned. Sometimes different countries where most refugees are coming are listed to give an idea. When specific cases are described or individuals are paraphrased or cited, the country of origin is explicitly mentioned. The countries mentioned are Syria, Eritrea, Iran, Yemen and Turkey.

In the articles about international students, the country of origin is never mentioned except once, when talking about the increase of international students, specifically from China (10-11-2023). Finally, the main topic of one of the articles (2-9-2023) is diversity in Amsterdam, where the Moroccan, Turkish and Afro-Surinamese are specifically highlighted.

5.3 Frames

5.3.1. Immigrants as a Threat

The first main theme reflected in the news articles is ‘immigrants as a threat’ which is analysed with the subcategories described in the literature review based on the study by Benson (2013), namely the job frame, the public order frame, the fiscal frame and the national cohesion frame. However, from these subframes, only the public order frame and the national cohesion frame were identified in this research.

The first subframe that is recognised in the data is the public order frame. This frame is mostly identified in the context of non-European refugees or asylum seekers and the risk of incidents or nuisance, mainly within the asylum centres. This is described as a possibility, rather than an incident or incidents that have already happened. An example is shown in an article about a temporary asylum centre in Amsterdam:

“There will also be regular safety meetings take place between the police and the Zuidoost district to monitor any incidents.” (19-9-2023)

It is solely an assumption that incidents could happen in this context. It turns out that this frame is not used a single time for Ukrainian refugees, which is in line with the claim about the double standard when reporting about immigrants from within or outside of Europe, as described by Sales (2023).

When reported from the public order frame and not specifically about refugees, but about people with a migration background in general, the country of origin is explicitly mentioned. An example is the following quote from sociologist Maurice Crul:

“One group sees that loitering youth to be annoying. The other group sees Moroccan youth hanging around and keeps the whole group responsible for the nuisance” (2-9-2023)

This is a hypothetical situation, wherein an existing stereotype of Moroccan as a disturbing group that threatens safety, is enforced. As described by Wiemers et al. (2024) and shown in the history of the PVV and Wilder’s anti-Moroccan speech, this group is already subjected to prejudice in the Netherlands, specifically from a security frame (Wiemers et al., 2024).

Another subframe mentioned by Benson (2013) identified in the news articles, is the national cohesion frame. This frame is used in the context of polarisation regarding diversity within the city, wherein one group supports diversity, while another group sees diversity as a threat to the city. In this context, it is about ‘people with a migration background’, rather than immigrants. In this context, the terms ‘allochtoon’ and ‘autochtoon’ are also used to indicate both these groups and the group without migration background is multiple times referred to as ‘white Dutch’. Sociologist Maurice Crul is central in this article about diversity and the national cohesion frame is dominant in his statements. The headline of the article is:

“Sociologist Maurice Crul: 'Only in Amsterdam South do white Dutch still form a clear

majority” (2-9-2023)

The overall narrative of this article is that the ‘white Dutch’ is an underexposed group in a time when Amsterdam is becoming a more and more diverse city. This mechanism is described using hyperboles such as Amsterdam as a ‘super-diverse city’, the people without a migration as ‘the forgotten group’ or the ‘dwindling group of city dwellers without a migration background’ (2-9-2023). Besides framing people with a migration background as a threat, the native Dutch population is portrayed as victims of diversity.

The polarised thinking and sensational language indicate the use of populist discourse in this case. This seems to be against the social-democratic ideology of *Het Parool*, representing equality and left-wing policy that combats stereotyping and generalisation of population groups. An explanation could be that the mainstream media, since the rise of right-wing populism, tends to take over populist discourse regarding migration, as stated by Ekman & Krzyżanowski (2021).

Besides the subframes described in Benson (2013), another frame is often used within the news articles, namely ‘the pressure on the system’ by immigrants coming to the Netherlands. This frame is identified when reporting about different migrant groups and in different contexts. Concretely, the pressure on the shelter for Ukrainian refugees, asylum centres that are full and the struggle of universities not being able to handle the increase of international students. The tendency of the overall narrative within this frame is to represent an emergency.

The frame of the pressure on the system has a parallel with the idea of moral panic, described in the literature as constructing a perceived crisis, mostly with an ideological motive and the focus on one target group wherein a negative threatening image of this group is constructed (Brouwer et al., 2017; Krzyżanowski, 2020). The difference with the description of moral panic by previous research is that the immigration group is not portrayed as a threat based on the characteristics of the group and a political or economic threat for society, but rather as a threat based on the perceived high numbers coming to the Netherlands.

The news articles state the problem of this pressured situation repeatedly, but the information and background on how and why the situations occurred are not provided. The only

mentioned reason is simply that ‘too many’ immigrants are coming to the Netherlands. It is not clear whether this is the only explanation and no further information is given about why this is a problem at the moment. Only when it comes to international students, it is explained that this number grew extremely in the past year.

The results of the analysis show that, when the ‘the pressure on the system’ frame is used, aggregation is often applied as a discursive strategy. The main narrative is that there is a high influx of immigrants, while there is only limited space. The emphasis is on the high numbers of people that are coming to the Netherlands, wherein these groups of people are often reduced to statistics. An example where the aggregation is applied to international students is:

“This week hundreds of international students queued for hours to register with the municipality.” (1-9-2023)

The phrase ‘hundreds of students’ is used to imply the large number of students that are coming to Amsterdam.

Aggregation is also applied repeatedly to refugees and asylum seekers. It appears that in different articles about this group, the number of immigrants is repeatedly mentioned. For example, in the article about a ship in Amsterdam that operates as an asylum centre, published on 7-9-2023, the number of refugees that stay at this location is mentioned five times in an article of only two pages. The focus of the narrative on this abstract threat, lacking context and background information, has an effect of creating sensation and moral panic, which shows a parallel with populist discourse.

A final subcategory of the threats frame is the threat for ‘the housing market’. This frame is used in the articles about refugees/asylum seekers as well as the articles about international students. The main idea of the frame is that the high number of immigrants would need housing, while the country is already dealing with a housing crisis. An additional tendency within this frame is creating the perspective that immigrants take the houses at the expense of the Dutch people.

Differently stated, the main narrative concerns that immigrants are privileged when it comes to housing.

An example of this frame is shown in the article about refugees with legal status working for KLM:

“KLM supervisor Van den Berge understands that working refugees are not embraced everywhere in the Netherlands. My children are also affected by the tightness of the housing market. Some refugees with legal status have a home within six months” (2-11-2023)

This statement underlines that the threat frame is specifically related to the housing market. This polarising narrative has some characteristics of populist discourse since it pits the Dutch inhabitants against the refugees with legal status (who are also legally Dutch citizens in this phase).

The threat frame, and specifically the subframe of the pressure on the system, is often brought into relation to (possible) solutions or policy measures to limit the influx. This varies from introducing quotas for international students by universities, sending third-country nationals back to their country of origin, to deterrence policy for refugees. An example of this last policy is the following:

“Earlier this week, Security Council Chairman Wouter Kolff said that he is receiving signals that Ukrainians are travelling from other EU countries to the Netherlands. Our country is said to be 'too attractive' for refugees. In response, Van der Burg [the Secretary of State of Justice and Safety] will look at the 'increasing self-reliance' of Ukrainians in the near future.” (20-10-2023)

The phrase ‘too attractive’ could be considered an inadequate phrase to use in this context, since

refugees come to the Netherlands out of need, wherein attractiveness is ambivalent. It has to be noted that the journalist put ‘too attractive’ within quotation marks, which implies those are words of Security Council Chairman Wouter Kolff, not necessarily in line with the journalist’s perspective.

It turns out that the policy measures or interventions are often presented in the news articles using ‘modality’. The policies could be perceived as harsh when stating directly how they are implied. Therefore, journalists seem to attempt to weaken certain measures to make them look more reasonable and soft, this is specifically done when it comes to the measures towards international students. This is shown in the following example:

“The university wanted to see what the most effective way is to increase the share of Dutch students - and therefore welcome fewer international students” (10-11-2023)

The first words that weaken the statement are ‘wanted to see’, rather than stating that the universities did take measures, which is the case. Secondly, the statement ‘welcoming fewer international students’ is a euphemism for saying that the universities rejected more international students.

When it comes to measures for refugees or asylum seekers, journalists of *Het Parool* seem to do the opposite: they emphasize the harshness of certain policies by using direct, concrete statements. An example is identified in the context of a policy that is implied for third-country nationals from Ukraine:

“The group of third-country nationals has until October 2 to leave. Anyone who registers before September 16 will receive a one-off departure bonus of 5,000 euros and a one-way ticket to the country of origin” (30-8-2023)

‘A one-way ticket’ is a direct statement showing that they have to leave the country without ever coming back.

Altogether, the differences in statements about policy between international students and refugees show that *Het Parool*, as a progressive left-wing newspaper, doesn’t favour strict or harsh policies regarding refugees and asylum seekers. However, when it comes to international students, the reporting is aligned with the perspective of the university and their wish for fewer international students. The newspaper emblemizes with their measures to limit international students, even when they are against the law.

The threat frame is rarely identified when focussing on the images within the news articles. Only the article about the residence where refugees with legal status live together with Dutch students, the image shows a possible threatening situation within that building. The building is bright yellow, corresponding with the description of the residence in the text of the article (22-11-2023). The picture shows a man in the building at the front of the image, he has his hand in his hair, which could indicate desperateness. He is facing a young man with a hat and a supermarket bag that looks at him, in the background of the image. In the context of the article, where incidents and threats are described in the residence, this image is likely to represent this threatening vibe.

Furthermore, the choropleth map in the article about diversity and people with a migration background (2-9-2023), shows the percentage of residents per district with a migration background, which reinforces the distinction made in the article between autochtonen and allochtonen and could instigate polarisation. Especially since the map is placed in the context of the people with a migration background becoming the majority in almost all districts and the ‘white Dutch’ being portrayed as ‘the forgotten group’.

5.3.2 Immigrants as Victims

Another frame regularly used is the frame of immigrants as victims. This frame is mostly used for refugees and asylum seekers. Benson (2013) describes the global economy frame, the humanitarian frame and racism/xenophobia as the three subframes within this category. The humanitarian frame is the only subcategory described by Benson (2013) that has been identified

in the news articles by *Het Parool*.

The frame has been recognized in various contexts, for example in the article about third-country nationals. In this article, the risk of this group becoming homeless and undocumented is discussed:

“Het Leger Des Heils [A Dutch charity organisation] is also very concerned that ‘this group of vulnerable people’ will wander around on the streets. ‘We find this inhumane’, says a spokesperson.” (30-8-2023)

The sympathy and the involvement of the charity organisation with the third-country nationals and their risks come out clearly in this statement.

Another example from the humanitarian frame is shown when the problematic circumstances, regarding privacy, facilities and safety in the asylum centres, are described. When written about these circumstances, individualisation is often applied as a discursive strategy. This is done by describing specific characteristics and details of the actors or reporting from the perspective of individuals. An example is shown in the context of the ship in Amsterdam that operates as an asylum centre:

“There are stories known about residents who are having a hard time. Mouath Al Haji Youssef told this newspaper that he is becoming more depressed by the day. For example, the daycare centre is always full and he shares a small cabin with his brother. “It feels like we have no breathing room,” he said to *Het Parool*.” (7-9-2023)

This strategy has the opposite effect of collectivisation, dehumanisation and aggregation, as mentioned in the previous subchapter. Individualisation and humanisation are applied by the individual approach and the detailed description of the situation, which makes it easier for the reader to identify with the people talked about (KhosraviNik, et al., 2012).

The humanitarian frame and the emphasis on empathy with refugees are aligned with the social-democratic background of *Het Parool*, wherein the ideological base is to diminish the political and economic disadvantages for certain groups in society and support (from the government) is a necessity to achieve this. However, on the other hand, the humanitarian frame can be interpreted as the reduction of autonomous people into suffering actors in a one-dimensional portrayal (Smets et al., 2019).

International students are overall portrayed as a burden because of the growth of this group in Universities, and they are not predominantly portrayed as victims. At the same time, the vulnerable position of international students is not denied, especially when it comes to housing. For example in the following statement about the risk of abuse of international students on the housing market:

“Landlords abuse their [international students’] vulnerable position, the chairman of the National Student Union (LSVb) said earlier. The Housing Hotline of the LSVb, where students can go with complaints, noticed that international students were remarkably often victims of fraud, discrimination or lived in a neglected place.” (1-9-2023)

Another subframe identified within the news articles by *Het Parool* is the frame of traumatic experiences that many refugees and asylum seekers have had. The mental health issues and vulnerability of refugees due to these experiences have been described repeatedly in the news articles. This theme is often discussed in the context of their ‘new life’ in the Netherlands, for example, the circumstances in asylum centres, the search for a job or the incidents that occur in the residence where asylum seekers live. An example appears in the context of the refugees working for KLM:

“They [the refugees working for KLM] have something to overcome. These are people who have experienced war. But there is also a couple from Iran who fled here because of their sexual orientation. And we have someone on the evening shift who has been without his family for

four years.” (2-11-2023)

Furthermore, one article is about a memorial in Amsterdam where refugees who died at the European border last year were memorised. In this context, the victim frame is applied by describing the death of many refugees during their journey to Europe, mainly at sea. The article is dominated by compassion as well as frustration and anger. Transitivity is often applied in this article, in this case, meaning that the sentence construction is passive. An example is the following fragment:

“We commemorate them, like all previous years, with pain and sadness and perhaps also with anger and indignation: so many lives lost, unnecessarily lost,” said Ineke Bakker, chairman of the Refugee Working Group of the Council of Churches in the Netherlands. “We do this in these days that are themselves charged with great concern about the amount of violence, hatred and dehumanization, concerns about the violations of the most basic human rights and the threat of even more and widespread violence. These are dark times and that is why it is good that we are gathered here.” (5-11-2023)

The passive sentence construction does emphasize the victims, rather than the responsible actor(s). In this case, the actor is not even mentioned and it is not clear from the article who caused the violence, hatred and dehumanisation. Overall, this article does not elaborate on the broader context that would explain the reason for the death of many refugees. Instead of delving into this matter, the journalist sticks to the focus on the local memorial in Amsterdam of that day and the refugees as a victim of an abstract form of violence.

The victim frame is closely related to the support of institutions for immigrants. Different actors are described in the news articles as supporters of immigrants who face problems in Amsterdam. The city and the local government are portrayed as supportive institutions. A central and even ‘superior’ role of Amsterdam is stressed in many of the news articles. Amsterdam is portrayed as a diverse city where inhabitants have a positive attitude towards people with a

migration background, also compared with other big cities in the country. Furthermore, Amsterdam has been portrayed as a pioneer in different aspects, such as the new interventions of the University of Amsterdam and a new form of mixed residency in the city.

Another aspect is that Amsterdam is described as welcoming to refugees. The high amount of refugees that the city shelters and the high effort of the city to welcome refugees are repeatedly mentioned. This matter is related to the local government's frustration that other regions in the Netherlands don't take that same responsibility and do not welcome enough refugees, which causes problems in Amsterdam. The debate on the distribution of refugees throughout the country has a political dimension since there is a distribution law on the table, that says that refugees should be equally divided across the country.

The Amsterdam municipal executive board is a supporter of the implementation of this law, but this division has to be made on a national level:

“Despite the resignation of the cabinet, the dispersal law is still being discussed by the House of Representatives. The right-wing parties did manage on Thursday to put the law aside until after the elections. Volt [progressive-liberal political party] wants the law being discussed already next week” (7-9-2023)

This implies that ‘the right parties’, not specifying which parties it concerns, are against this law and want to postpone the implication of the distribution law. The newspaper implicitly takes the stand of Amsterdam here, and therefore against the national government (and specifically the right-wing parties) by describing the welcoming attitude of the city and by presenting the distribution law as a solution for this problem. This is again in line with social-democratic ideology, supporting the political parties with this ideology and stating against the lack of government interference.

A central stakeholder in this debate is the Aldermen of Asylum in the municipality of Amsterdam ‘Rutger Groot Wassink’. The statements by Groot Wassink within this context are consistently related to sympathy and concern, and argumentation in favour of the distribution law.

In this context, Groot-Wassink is often an active actor, while national politics are passive actors within this context. An example, wherein Van Der Burg, the Secretary of State of Justice and Safety, shows this transitivity:

“According to Groot Wassink, Van der Burg's request once again shows 'that the organization of refugee reception needs to be improved'. He writes: 'As Amsterdam, we believe it is important to contribute to the humane reception of refugees. Some municipalities currently make little or no contribution to the reception of refugees. That is an untenable situation.’ (20-10-2023)

Apart from the municipality of Amsterdam and their role in supporting immigrants, some institutions, charities and foundations are described as supporters of refugees. The news articles mention several different organisations that support refugees with actions and initiatives. One article is all about the initiative of an alternative polling station, where people who don't have the right to vote, can make themselves heard. An initiative from the organisation 'Here to Support':

“We often talk about the Mediterranean Sea or Ter Apel,” says Savannah Koolen of Here to Support. “But people who have actually been there or who have gone through the IND process are not in the Chamber.” Her colleague Malou Lintmeijer agrees. “We want to know what this group finds important in the elections,” she says. “This way we can express their ideas.” (16-11-2023)

When reporting about support for refugees, the concern of these organisations is often mentioned. The journalists make use of individualisation and an active voice for the immigrants to concretize the situation, making it easier to sympathise with the refugees.

The images of refugees and asylum seekers show a pattern of representation as victims who are accommodated in and supported by Amsterdam. Many images in the articles show the

arrival of refugees in Amsterdam. The images depict for example the arrival at the train station, the registration point for refugees, the waiting room or queues for registration, or refugees on the quay arriving at the ship MS Galaxy. When the arrival of refugees is portrayed, children are often prominent in the picture. An example is an image shown in an article about a new shelter for Ukrainian refugees in Amsterdam (5-10-2023). The image shows the arrival of Ukrainian refugees at the train station in Amsterdam with children in the front, one with a huge teddy bear. This contributes to the victim frame and creates sympathy and possibly even pity for ‘the victims’.

5.3.3 *Immigrants as Heroes*

The final frame that is identified is the frame of immigrants as heroes. Meaning that immigrants would contribute to the Dutch society. This frame is used less than the threat frame and the victim frame. The subframes of the hero frame defined by Benson (2023) are cultural diversity, the integration frame and the frame of the good worker. The subframe of diversity and the subframe of the good worker are identified in the analysed news articles by *Het Parool*.

When it comes to the diversity of Amsterdam, it is described that many inhabitants see diversity as an enrichment of society. In this context, the comparison is made with other European big cities. This is described as follows:

“Compared to other major European cities, Amsterdam has a predominantly positive outlook. While in a city like Vienna, there is much more gloom about the consequences of immigration, Amsterdam residents say they are generally positive about living in a diverse neighbourhood. Crul: “There is a striking difference with Rotterdam, where respondents are more often very negative about diversity. This also translates into voting behaviour. An anti-immigration party like ‘Leefbaar Rotterdam’ has been doing very well in that city for a long time.” (2-9-2023)

Overall, Amsterdam is portrayed as a city that is proud of its diversity and of its positive attitude towards diversity. This shows the strong anchorage of the newspaper in Amsterdam, proclaiming

pride of Amsterdam as a progressive city and the newspaper's open-mindedness, as described as one of the characteristics of *Het Parool* (DPG Media Group, n.d.).

However, when the article goes more into detail, it is also mentioned that highly educated inhabitants generally have a more positive attitude towards diversity, while this is at the same time the group that is at least in contact with people with a migration background. The overall image in the article shows a positive attitude, while in practice, this is more nuanced. Finally, the heroes frame is only limitedly applied to international students. There is only one phrase identified where international students are described as an enrichment for the inclusivity of the university. This is mentioned in an article about a quota for international students at the university in Amsterdam (10-11-2023), not even in the body text, but in an additional note below the article.

The other theme that is often used regarding the frame of immigrants as heroes is the frame of the good worker. Firstly, a large group of immigrants in the Netherlands are labour migrants (CBS, 2023, September 8), but, as mentioned before, none of the articles is about this type of migrant. That *Het Parool* doesn't write about this type of immigrant during the selected three months, implies more of a focus on the immigrants that, in the first place, need something from the country, rather than the group that comes to contribute to society.

Despite the absence of reporting about labour migrants, labour is still a topic within the news articles. Refugees and asylum seekers are described as motivated to work and useful for certain labour that Dutch people are not wanting to do. An example is an article about refugees with legal status working for the airline KLM, with the following headline:

“Refugees help KLM to keep planes in the air: 'The Netherlands can't manage without working asylum seekers'” (2-11-2023)

This headline shows explicitly the value that refugees and asylum seekers have for this sector of the labour market.

Many stakeholders are mentioned when it comes to working refugees with legal status.

Employment mediators help these people in their search for work, employees of KLM supervise the group stakeholders and the top executive of KLM recognised the value of refugees in times of labour shortage. The individual refugees are getting a voice in this context. Their expressions show that they not only contribute to Dutch society but also experience the benefits of their participation in the labour market. An example of individualisation and refugees with an active voice represented in a news article is the following statement that concerns Latte from Syria, who works for KLM:

“He never expected that he would one day tinker with aircraft parts. Nor that he would go back to school at 32. “I'm glad I can do something. I also want to keep getting better. After secondary vocational education, I want to go to higher professional education.” (2-11-2023)

The Employment mediator ‘Randstad’ mentioned that way more refugees with legal status should participate in the labour market, but that this is difficult due to obstacles regarding access of this group to the labour market. This issue should be addressed politically, but there is political unwillingness, mentioned *Het Parool*. It is stated that, especially during campaign time, political parties are not willing to speak out about this topic. In this matter, the newspaper implicitly takes a stand in the debate. In line with the original left-wing ideology, *Het Parool* shows the value of refugees for the labour market and that the government should interfere to guarantee equal access to the labour market for this group.

Finally, the images in the news articles show the frame of immigrants as heroes regularly, This is the case even for images in articles where the hero frame is not dominant in the text. The two same subframes are indicated in the images as well. Diversity is shown in different contexts, explicitly by a colourful drawing where a black woman is interacting with a white man (2-9-2023). The colours, hearts and speech bubbles in the image represent diversity and inclusion. The image showing dogs, a Dutch landscape, a coffee and a cigarette, could imply that the two people who meet each other could be neighbours that walk into each other. It seems a representation of diversity in the neighbourhood.

Another image aligned with the diversity frame is the bar graph later in the same article (2-9-2023). The graph shows the attitudes towards interethnic interactions on the streets of Amsterdam compared with other cities in Europe. The graph shows the percentage of pleasant and unpleasant interactions on the street in percentages. The graph shows that Amsterdam has the highest rate (68%) of pleasant interethnic interactions and the lowest rate (16%) of unpleasant interethnic interactions, compared to the cities Antwerp, Hamburg, Malmo, Rotterdam and Vienna.

Besides the limited use of the ‘immigrants as heroes’ frame concerning international students, an image shown by one of the articles (1-9-2023) about international students shows an expressive positive situation, wherein students are chatting and laughing in a park together, showing students with characteristics of different cultural backgrounds. This is contradictory to the article itself, describing the issues universities face due to the high influx of international students.

The labour contribution of immigrants is also shown in different images. Images show refugees with KLM t-shirts next to a supervisor while doing their work. Furthermore, specifically, the individual employees that are described and quoted within the articles are shown in the images, which characterize the individualisation and humanisation of refugees (KhosraviNik, et al., 2012).

Conclusion

This research focused on the representation of immigrants in the local press. Since the coverage of immigrants has increased recently (KhosraviNik et al., 2012; O'Regan & Riordan, 2018; D'Haenens et al., 2019), the framing of immigrants has become more and more relevant for research. The overall dominance of the negative framing of immigrants (Esses et al., 2013; Goodman et al., 2017; Eberl et al., 2018) has its influence on the audience and public opinion (D'Haenens et al., 2019; Von Sikorski & Matthes, 2020). The topic is particularly relevant now that the popularity of anti-immigrant populist parties in Europe rises (Eberl et al., 2018).

This research was done in the context of the Netherlands, specifically targeting the local Amsterdam newspaper *Het Parool*. A quality newspaper with historically a social-democratic character (Historisch-Archief, n.d.; Pen, 2024, February 10). On the 22nd of November 2023, parliamentary elections were held in the Netherlands and an anti-immigrant party, the PVV, became the biggest party in the country. The research focused on news articles in the three months before these elections, integrating the political context into the research.

The 12 selected articles start with a headline summarizing the main message, often using a stakeholder quote to evoke curiosity and encourage further reading. The headline is followed by the lead and an image, or only an image. The articles are written in a storytelling format and subheadings are used. Usually, the first image is the only one in the article, but some articles include additional images. The themes of the news articles are overlapping and have a chronological order.

The main actors identified in the news articles are refugees/asylum seekers and international students, often using the term 'statushouder' for refugees with legal status. The term "people with a migration background" is used, indicating either immigrants or those with at least one parent born abroad. The country of origin is often explicitly mentioned when written about refugees or people with a migration background, while for international students the country of origin is rarely mentioned.

Other types of migrants are not subject in the news articles, while labour migrants and family migrants are the biggest groups of immigrants moving to the Netherlands. The choice not to report about the other types of migrants implies more of a focus on the immigrants coming to the Netherlands because they need something rather than the immigrants that come to the country to contribute to society.

The research by Benson (2013) showed a framework of the possible frames used to represent immigrants. The main frames are immigrants as a threat, immigrants as victims, and immigrants as heroes and have all been identified in the news articles, wherein the first two frames are used most. The subframes used within these main frames partly correspond with the subframes identified by Benson (2013) and are partly different from his framework.

Firstly, within the threat frame, two different subframes correspond with the theoretical framework. The public order frame is identified, but rather than reporting actual accidents or violence, the possibility of the disturbance of public order is described. This is different from the public order frame described by Benson (2013) since this is described as the focus on real disturbance and violence by immigrants. The other corresponding frame is the national cohesion frame. When *Het Parool* reports from this frame, characteristics of populist discourse are recognised, mainly by strong polarised language and the use of sensational expressions.

A subframe identified that is not part of the theoretical framework by Benson (2013) is the focus on the number of immigrants coming to the Netherlands. The focus here lies on the pressure of the system and the limited space for immigrants in the country. This frame is used for asylum seekers and the lack of space in asylum centres. Including Ukrainian refugees and the lack of space in the shelter provided for this group. But also for international students at the University of Amsterdam who are a threat to the system due to the high influx. Additionally, the threat to the housing market is another element that pressures the system. This frame is focused on immigrants as a part of the cause of the existing housing crisis in the Netherlands.

Within the pressure on the system frame, a narrative of moral panic is created. This shows a parallel with populist discourse, focusing on an abstract threat, polarising and the lack of context and background information. Often using collectivisation and aggregation to dehumanise this group and emphasize the threat. In contrast, policy measures regarding refugees and asylum

seekers are framed as harsh by the newspaper, emphasizing these immigrants. Policy measures regarding international students are described as obvious, meaning no or limited empathy for the consequences for this group.

Second, the victim's frame is mainly used to report about refugees and asylum seekers. The subframes identified by Benson (2013), the global economy frame, the humanitarian frame and racism/xenophobia. The humanitarian frame is the only one of these subframes that is identified in this research. When reported from this frame, the focus lies on the risk of refugees becoming homeless and undocumented and on the bad life circumstances of refugees in asylum centres.

Another frame used, that is not identified by Benson (2013) is the focus on the traumatic experiences of refugees and their vulnerability and mental health issues as a consequence. This is often associated with the new life of refugees in the Netherlands. In continuation of this frame, the commemoration of deadly refugee victims is paid attention to. The cause of these deaths is not evident from the article, using passive sentence constructions focussing solely on the victims.

The victim frame is expressed by describing personal stories of immigrants, quoting or paraphrasing individuals and showing images of the arrival of refugees in the Netherlands with a notable focus on the children, to evoke empathy. The municipality of Amsterdam is portrayed as a supporter of immigrants, while other municipalities lack responsibility when it comes to welcoming refugees. *Het Parool* supports the stance of Amsterdam and is critical regarding the national government, and specifically, the right-wing parties, that postpone the implementation of the distribution law.

Third, the immigrants as heroes frame is used the least of the three main frames. The subframes in Benson's framework are the cultural diversity frame, the integration frame and the frame of the good worker. The cultural diversity frame and the frame of the good worker are identified in this research. In both frames, the focus lies mostly on non-European immigrants. The frame is rarely applied to international students, but when this occurs, this is done by images representing the diversity at the university positively.

The diversity frame stresses that Amsterdam residents generally view diversity as an enrichment. However, the diversity frame differs from Benson's conclusion in the sense that not

only the contribution of diversity is described, but this is also contrasted with people who are not in favour of diversity.

The same applies to the frame of the good worker. Refugees are portrayed as motivated to work and valuable for the labour market. However, when this frame occurs, the other side of the story is also structurally mentioned; the participation of refugees in the labour market has also its limitations and downsides. A notable finding regarding this frame is the absence of labour immigrants throughout the articles by *Het Parool*. Finally, the news articles point out the lack of political support for integrating refugees into the labour market, especially during election periods.

The main research question answered was: ‘How are immigrants in Amsterdam represented by the local newspaper *Het Parool*? Firstly, immigrants are represented as a threat to society because of the pressure on the system they cause. This is expressed by the use of elements of populist discourse. Secondly, immigrants are portrayed as victims of disadvantages in the host society and their traumatic experiences, particularly focused on refugees/asylum seekers. The main conclusion when it comes to the difference between different groups of migrants is that *Het Parool* reports more negatively about non-European migrants than about European migrants, using the threat frame, even when it concerns the same migrant group.

The ideology behind the news articles varies. On the one hand, the social-democratic ideology is carried out by expressing resistance towards harsh immigration policy, which is in line with the dominant ideology in Amsterdam. And the supportive attitude of the newspaper towards supportive policies for immigrants, such as the distribution law and integration policy. Empathy with refugees and asylum seekers is explicitly and implicitly shown in the news articles and the value of this group to the Dutch society is recognised. The same value is not recognised for international students, who are predominantly generalised and solely described as a group that should be prevented from coming to Dutch universities.

On another note, populist discourse is identified between the lines using polarising language, creating a narrative of moral panic, emphasizing the thread of immigration and evoking fear. This is in line with what was found in the study by Ekman & Krzyżanowski (2021), which stated that the discourse regarding migration created by right-wing populism is reflected in regular news media. The discourse goes against the social-democratic background of the newspaper and

is often used implicitly.

This research has some limitations. Firstly, the method used is vulnerable to subjective interpretation. The critical discourse analysis is done by one individual researcher, which brings the risk of unconscious bias. For future research, it could be valuable to use a quantitative method, such as content analysis, to research the framing of immigrants more systematically.

Second, the findings of the research are dependent on the context and cannot be generalised. The findings apply to a specific country, city and circumstances. And the results are limited to a specific newspaper, and cannot be generalised to other (local) newspapers. Future research could expand on different newspapers in Amsterdam or even local newspapers in the rest of the country, to be able to make a comparison in the representation in local newspapers in the Netherlands.

Third, this research is done in the context of national parliamentary elections, but the context is not further taken into consideration. The context of the newspaper isn't directly aligned with the elections, since the level is different: the newspaper is local while the elections were taking place on a national level. In the research, there was no focus on the impact of the media frames of immigrants on people's voting choices. Future research could follow up on this research by focussing on the impact of news frames of immigrants on the audience's political orientation and voting choice. Since the focus is on a local newspaper, it could be valuable to focus on a local political campaign period, rather than a national parliamentary election.

Fourth, the first two subquestions about the differences between different types of migrants and the difference between migrants with a different country of origin could only be partly answered because the newspaper only reported about specific migrant groups, and not at all about others. For future research, it could be useful to use a bigger scope of articles, making the chance bigger that all different types of migrants are represented, and more profound conclusions can be drawn regarding the differences between the representation of migrant groups.

Finally, since this research is focused on the discourse, rather than the journalists themselves, the intention of the journalist behind the story is not researched. It could be the case that journalists' intentions are different from the interpretation of the content. To understand the

perspective of the journalists and their awareness of the use of populist discourse, future research could focus on the journalists rather than the content of news stories.

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