

***A Thematic Analysis of Facebook Users' Engagement with News about undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba
analyzed through the traditional law enforcement and human interest media frames***

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Abstract

The recent Venezuelan Exodus has had significant consequences for many of its neighboring countries. The close proximity of the island of Aruba makes it an attractive destination for many fleeing Venezuelans. This thesis will uncover Aruban news' representations of undocumented Venezuelans through the law enforcement and the human interest frame, and explore the audience reception through an analysis of the comment section. The theoretical framework expounds the traditional law enforcement and human interest media frames in relation to migrants and refugees in media scholarship. Furthermore, the role of social media was explored through the reception theory in order to compare and contrast audience responses. Through a thematic analysis of the comment section in relation to themes present in news media videos on Facebook, the following research question was answered: *How does 24Ora's Facebook audience engage with news about undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba and do the video representations portray the traditional law enforcement or human interest media frames?* The thematic analysis was guided by a codebook that was created based on the theoretical framework. The main findings from both video and comment sections corroborated previous research in which undocumented individuals are predominantly framed through the law enforcement frame in news media. Notably, the human interest frame was also present in one particular video in which the undocumented Venezuelan shed light on his personal circumstance. The comment section underneath this particular video was significantly more empathetic towards the refugee as a result of this representation. Together, this accentuates the previous literature that demands that refugee and immigrants' representation tends to focus on negative connotations in which these groups are depicted as a threat to society, and are therefore unwelcomed as a whole. Moreover, the videos also highlight the impact that an authentic refugee voice has on the comment section response and shows that this might attenuate discrimination and increase compassion. Future research in adjacent countries should be conducted in order to investigate the representation of Venezuelan refugees, undocumented Venezuelans and migrants due to its significant implications presented in this thesis.

Keywords: Representation - Audience Engagement - SNS News Consumption - Reception Theory

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Venezuelan Exodus that is currently taking place under president Nicolas Maduro has resulted in a rather dire situation, as approximately 5 million individuals have left Venezuela (Otis, 2020). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM), Venezuelans have become one of the single largest population groups displaced from their country (“Venezuela crisis”, 2019). Constant illegal sailings are taking place from the coast of Venezuela to Trinidad, Tobago and to the Dutch Antilles (Bejarano Delgado, 2020; Mohan, 2019; Tufani, 2020). Despite recent border closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 500 Venezuelans leave their country daily through irregular emigration networks, which include land, river, or sea (Corresponsal de IPS, 2020). Refugees who embark on this journey risk themselves to severe conditions and lose their lives in the process (Bejarano Delgado, 2020). Both the UNHCR and IOM noted that urgent efforts are needed to prevent smugglers and trafficking networks from sending people on these dangerous journeys in order to protect refugees and migrants from exploitation and abuse (Corresponsal de IPS, 2020). As the current Humanitarian Crisis deepens, it has been estimated that asylum seekers tend to travel to geographically nearby places in Latin America and the Caribbean (Díaz-Sánchez et al., 2020; Jones, 2020). Aruba is a mere 24km from the Venezuelan coast. In fact, one can see Venezuela on extremely clear days while standing on the south-eastern coast of Aruba. This makes it a feasible option for refugees to take that risk and travel to Aruba. Figuera (2020) noted that millions of Venezuelans have left in improvised boats and face discrimination in neighboring countries like the Dutch Antilles or Trinidad and Tobago.

An extensive amount of literature demonstrates that mainstream media and dominant discourse tend to portray immigrants through a law enforcement frame (Clark- Ibáñez & Swan, 2019; Dunaway et al., 2011; Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015; Horsti, 2016; Jaramillo-Dent & Pérez-Rodríguez, 2019, p. 4). Furthermore, scholars have conducted research on the role the media coverage of migration plays on audiences and has found it tends to have a detrimental impact on audience opinion about migrants (e.g. Domalewska, 2016; Geschke et al., 2010; Ramírez-Plascencia, 2020). Studies have shown that migrants and refugees are overrepresented in the media as perpetrators of crime (Geschke et al., 2010). This tends to increase xenophobic sentiments and invective language towards them (Ramírez-Plascencia, 2020). Generally, the consensus is that portraying others in a negative light increases prejudice and discrimination between minority and majority groups in society (Domalewska, 2016; Jacobs & Meeusen, 2017). More specifically in relation to this thesis’ topic, studies have focused on the impact the Venezuelan Exodus has had on neighboring countries of Venezuela, and more recently on other countries across the American continent (Alencar, 2020; Freier & Parent, 2019; Ramírez-Plascencia, 2020). Even though differences between fleeing Venezuelans and locals in neighboring countries such as Mexico cannot be based on religion or ethnicity, undocumented Venezuelans do tend to be blamed for social problems such as criminality, prostitution, and the spreading of infectious diseases (Ramírez-Plascencia, 2020). Notably,

Refugee and Forced Migration Studies have delved into the label of “refugee” and found that its use is highly audience- and context dependent (Cole, 2018; Zetter, 1991).

Conversely, Sajir & Aouragh (2019) studied the impact of media representations of victims Alan Kurdi who drowned in the Aegean Sea in 2015 and Omran Daqneesh, a shell-shocked boy during the civil war in Syria in 2016 and found that such images engendered movements of solidarity on one hand, and “ineffective forms of pity” on the other (p. 550). Accordingly, this thesis will uncover contemporary public opinion through two media frameworks, i.e. the law enforcement frame and a human interest frame. In this thesis I will analyze the media representations of undocumented Venezuelans in Aruban news video segments and the audience response to this in the pertaining comment sections. As discussed by Jaramillo-Dent & Pérez-Rodríguez (2019) the social media landscape provides a “permanent record of public sentiment” (p. 4), thus shedding light on the current socio-political tensions between Aruban locals and Venezuelan immigrants in Aruba.

1.1 SOCIAL AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE AND RESEARCH QUESTION

There are several motivations behind the focus of this thesis. First and foremost, no research has been conducted on Aruban news media’s representation of undocumented Venezuelans in light of the recent Venezuelan Exodus. Notably, recent research has focused on the impact the Venezuelan Exodus has had on neighboring countries in Latin America and in Caribbean islands (Alencar, 2020; Jones, 2020; van Marwijk, 2019; Mohan, 2019; Ramírez-Plascencia, 2020). Nevertheless, this literature has tended to focus on either state responses (Jones, 2020; Mohan, 2019) and/or on immigrant representation in Latin America. It has not, however, focused on Aruba’s media representation of undocumented Venezuelans on Aruban soil, nor on the audience reaction to this media representation. What is more, Jones (2020) expects that the influx of Venezuelan migrants to Aruba is very likely to increase in the upcoming years due to its proximity. The international Organization for Migration, UNHCR concluded the total amount of refugees and migrants in June 2019 on Aruba to be 16 000 Venezuelans (Labrador, 2019); this number is significant in light of Aruba’s population of 107 128 people (as of April 2020) (RTS Algorithm, Worldometer). Together, this has the potential of exacerbating the current tension between minority (i.e. undocumented Venezuelans) and majority groups (Aruban locals) on the island, which might partly be mediated through local news media. Therefore, it is deemed significant to further focus on the Venezuelan Exodus’ impact on public opinion in Aruba in order to inform local authorities and the scientific community at large what the implications of this might signify through research findings.

Accordingly, the thesis research question is as follows: *“How does 24Ora’s Facebook audience engage with news about undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba, and do the video representations portray the traditional law enforcement and human interest media frames?”* The law enforcement frame has been found to create narratives of *threat* to various degrees (Esses et al., 2013; Jacobs et al., 2017; Jaramillo-Dent & Pérez-Rodríguez, 2019; Leurs & Smets, 2018), whereas the human interest frame focuses on framing the refugee as a victim in order

to foster solidarity (Sajir & Aouragh, 2019). Based on the theoretical framework (see Chapter 2), the following two sub-questions arose: 1) *How are Venezuelans represented in local Aruban video news media ?*; and 2) *How does the audience react to this representation in the comment section?*

Through a thematic analysis, I will analyze Facebook comments from a popular Aruban Facebook news page in order to grasp how the community generally reacts to news about a bureaucratically unwelcomed group in society (i.e., undocumented Venezuelans). Through this analysis, this thesis contributes to scholarship on how the comment section of social media platforms might be reflective of the audience reception of media representations of refugees and migrants on mainstream media.

The next chapter contains an elucidation of the theoretical framework (see Chapter 2). First, a brief background of the current socio-political context surrounding the topic of Venezuelan migrants in the Caribbean and neighboring countries is particularized. The theoretical research on representation of minorities and migrants is discussed and how it affects public opinion. Furthermore, new media platforms (e.g., Facebook) are seen as a tool through which access is gathered to public opinion, which tend to reflect the media narratives as discussed by the reception theory. The third chapter consists of the research design and operationalization in which the deductive thematic analysis will be exemplified. It describes the data corpus, data set, positionality and ethics involved in conducting the analysis on a public media platform. Chapter four presents the results and their interpretation through a discussion. The thesis concludes with chapter five that places the results in a larger context, specifies this thesis' limitations, and provides suggestions for future research. Based on the theoretical framework, it is expected that the news comments will reflect the law enforcement frame through which refugees and migrants tend to be represented in mainstream media.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I will elaborate on the current socio-political background in relation to undocumented Venezuelans, and their vulnerable status in neighboring societies. Furthermore, this chapter further elucidates the theoretical framework in relation to immigrants and refugees' representation in news media, and several common frames are discussed. Lastly, attention will be paid to the role of contemporary SNS and their relation to traditional media frames and audience participation.

The influx of Venezuelan refugees has a significant impact on other countries' ill equipped facilities, with the consequence of affecting citizens' spaces and their ordinary lives (Alencar, 2020; Díaz-Sánchez et al., 2020). Furthermore, the Venezuelan crisis and migration flow draws attention to the Caribbean islands' issues of sovereignty and refugee protection obligations (Jones, 2020). Even though Aruba operates as an independent body within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, refugee affairs - which fall under international affairs - are governed by the Kingdom. This makes it a difficult context problem for organizations like the UNHCR, as they have to navigate between human rights and states' sovereignty in providing aid to stateless individuals. For instance, Aruba's Prime Minister Evelyn Wever-Croes announced in October 2018 that the UNHCR had overstepped their boundaries by providing asylum certificates to refugees on Aruba ("UNHCR lo no atende", 2018). The UNHCR offered their apologies and Aruba's Prime Minister announced that the UNHCR certificate did not provide any rights to the undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba ("UNHCR lo no atende", 2018). Asylum seekers are by definition individuals who are *forced* to leave their country and have to ask for asylum. However, states are not required to grant asylum to them (Díaz-Sánchez et al., 2020). Ultimately, small island developing states (SIDS) in the Southern Caribbean - including Aruba - have expressed a feeling of panic due to a sudden increase of arrivals. They have declared themselves as ill-equipped to provide adequate protection to vulnerable refugees and migrants from Venezuela (Jones, 2020). Thus, it is acknowledged that the undocumented refugees are indeed in need of humanitarian help, but this 'declaration' pardons the island's shortcomings.

Many officials and representatives of international organizations agree that the forced displacement of Venezuelans meets the refugee status requirements (Freier & Parent, 2019). However, countries fear that acknowledging this status in public increases the influx of Venezuelans to their country, thus increasing the pressure on *"already underperforming public services"* and awakening xenophobic sentiments (Freier & Parent, 2019, p. 59). In accordance with this sentiment and pragmatic response, Latin American governments have undertaken different methods to manage the migration flow. For instance, several countries have opted to introduce visas, temporary visas, and temporary residence permits which offer varying degrees of protection and work privileges (Freier & Parent, 2019; Jubilut & Silva, 2018). On the other hand, Trinidad and Tobago - an island nation on which many Venezuelan migrants reside - has opted to label the Venezuelan refugees as economic migrants in order to simplify the complexities of this migration flow and likewise evade humanitarian obligations (Mohan, 2019). In addition, Aruba announced on October 2, 2019 the introduction of a Visa for Venezuelan

passport holder visitors who want to travel to Aruba, which should take place at the Dutch embassy in Venezuela (Schenk & Henriquez, 2019). Despite all these efforts, a Visa requirement has no implications for Venezuelans who already reside on Aruba or those who enter the island in irregular ways. In fact, a Visa does not seem to protect Venezuelan refugees at all, instead, it enhances the bureaucratic obstacles Venezuelans need to navigate in order to leave their country and arrive in Aruba. Simultaneously, this Visa implementation grants more power to Aruban institutions to deport undocumented Venezuelans on legal grounds. The refugee status, which is *not* being granted, provides legal protection and would prohibit countries from deporting Venezuelans back to their country until the situation in that country has drastically improved. These measurements have left many fleeing Venezuelans without legitimate protection (Freier & Parent, 2019). Remarkably, Venezuelan migrants are more susceptible to sexual and labor exploitation, as well as violence and discrimination (Díaz-Sánchez et al., 2020; Corresponsal de IPS, 2020, par. 18). Recently, there has been an increase in xenophobic sentiments towards Venezuelans in Colombia (Otis, 2020). Lastly, it is rather common for undocumented Latin Americans to be arrested and deported on Aruba due to insufficient paperwork, such as staying or working permits. As established by Ramírez-Plascencia (2020), xenophobia against Venezuelans tends to lie behind economic and labor justifications or security issues.

2.1 MEDIA NARRATIVES ON REFUGEES & MIGRANTS

Public communication has been considered an important tool within communication studies. Particularly because it is through representations that both interpretations and events within the environment are proposed to a community. Accordingly, the media is seen as an intervening tool through which socialization between various groups takes place, while simultaneously being the culmination of social change (Castellanos-Díaz & Prada-Penagos, 2020). In other words, representation can be seen as an instrumental tool, as it connects meaning and language to a culture (Hall, 1997). Most significantly, Pop (2016) argues that media discourses (i.e., language selection) foster specific meanings that are deemed relevant for political understanding. Journalists tend to highlight certain elements within a news story, and this in turn has an effect on how the audience interprets the message. Accordingly the audience is fed a particular interpretation of “the problem, its cause, its treatment, and how it should be morally evaluated” according to Entman’s (1993) framing theory (as cited in Parrott et al., 2019, p. 680). Much research has been conducted on the negative bias towards migrants within the media and how it affects public opinion. Various studies have shown that migration representation has the power to exacerbate feelings of xenophobia and discrimination (Domalewska, 2016; Geschke et al., 2010; Ramírez-Plascencia, 2020). More specifically, news media representation of immigrants tend to be depicted through a conflict frame, which has been found to signify the social “problem” and create narratives of threat to various degrees (Cisneros, 2008; Jacobs et al., 2017; Jaramillo-Dent & Pérez-Rodríguez, 2019; Leurs & Smets, 2018). Additionally, researchers have noted that images elicit stronger physiological reactions in comparison to text, and that the message is encoded

more “easily, quickly, and deeply into memory” (as cited in Parrott et al., 2019, p. 682). Furthermore, images have also been found to elicit greater framing effects in comparison to text (as cited in Parrott et al., 2019). Due to these findings, this thesis will also elaborate on what the audience sees on video images before being motivated to comment.

This chapter aims to highlight the most common media frames found in research literature about the representation of immigrants and refugees in traditional media. One can find overlapping frames, and differing concepts that are used in order to operationalize the dichotomy between the representation of immigrants and refugees as threats or as victims in research analysis. On the one hand there are: the threat frame (Jacobs et al., 2017), the conflict frame (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015), the law-and-order frame (Thorbjørnsrud, 2015), the illegality frame (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015); and on the other hand: the human interest frame (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015), the victim frame (Horsti, 2016), the humanitarian frame, and the “rights” frame (Thorbjørnsrud, 2015), to name a few. Conversely, the more humane frames that focus on depictions of victimhood have been analyzed as instances in which solidarity is increased, but also elicited ineffective forms of pity (Sajir & Aouragh, 2019). Throughout the immersion process of the various frames present, it became apparent that there is a spectrum in relation to the media frames in which the immigrants and refugees can fall on, depending on the country they are in and the news outlet. The spectrum is as follows, they can be depicted as: dirty/polluting – aliens – threats - human beings - victim heroes - victims. However, the central depiction of refugees and migrants as human beings is close to non-existent. This depiction does not elicit feelings of rejection, solidarity, or pity, and is thus perhaps deemed as ‘not news’ worthy. Furthermore, a combination of these depictions is also possible, for example irregular immigrants can be seen as dirty and as a threat to the host society, or as victims heroes. What remains consistent however, is the notion that the immigrants or refugees are not part of the (host)society they have moved to, and true immersion and autonomous or political agency is never granted. The following segments in this chapter shed light on this thesis selected frames, and provides a justification for these choices in order to conduct the thematic analysis.

2.2 THE LAW ENFORCEMENT FRAME

Parrott et al. (2019), shed light on the media’s tendency to portray immigrants through a ‘conflict frame’, which signifies the following: a form of disagreement between two or more entities, and includes physical, or political forms of division. Due to this thesis’ omittance of politician’s utterances, the chosen frame will deliberately be on the physical which is further specified as a law enforcement frame. Within this narrative the focus lies on arresting immigrants and further evokes connotations of criminality. Likewise, negative attitudes towards refugees revolve around stereotypes connected to diseases, pollutant, terrorism, and illegal forms of arrival accompanied by bogus claims of refugee status (Cisneros, 2008; Esses et al., 2013). This thesis will focus on the law enforcement frame that is most commonly present in news about refugees and migrants in traditional news media (Thorbjørnsrud,

2015). Within this framework this thesis will also focus on the media's emphasis on paperwork, laws, and permits in the procedures surrounding refugees and immigrants' complex (il)legality status in hosting countries. Thus, an important term to keep in mind during the Venezuelan Crisis is the term illegal, as it is both a political category as well as a legal status (Jones-Correa & de Graauw, 2013). Studies have found that the label of 'illegal' carries with it connotations that can have significant consequences for each country's laws and policies towards migrants as well as treatment towards them (Cisneros, 2008; Jacobs & Meeusen, 2017). The illegality frame has been found to emphasize the threats and dangers related to all immigrant groups, regardless of their actual status (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015). Furthermore, individuals who carry the illegality label have oftentimes been persecuted as criminals, thereby justifying and solidifying the negative bias in mainstream media even further (Jones-Correa & Graauw, 2013).

As previously mentioned, refugees and migrants have also been found to be portrayed as threats to the host country. This sole focus on refugees and migrants posing as a security issue through a 'threat frame' is accompanied by economic and cultural forms of threat (Esses et al, 2013; Jacobs et al., 2017; Ramirez- Plasencia, 2020; Sajir & Aouragh, 2019). The economic threat is manifold and depending on the host country is justified in various forms by the media, and the local taxpaying citizens. The illegality label is used by employers in order to decrease their business costs and increase both the availability and productivity of their workforce (Nelson et. al, 2015). Due to the fact that illegals are not registered, this is seen by local citizens as an unfair system that has an economic drain on locals as authorized workers and 'taxpayers' (De Genova, 2002). In terms of undocumented Venezuelan's potential cultural threat is the nature of the clash between notable cultural differences between the two groups (i.e . legal Arubans vs. illegal Venezuelans), thus creating an in-group and out-group structure dynamic. Furthermore, Papiamentu and Spanish is the most logical and pronounced difference with regards to cultural linguistic differences between these two groups that dates back to pre-colonial relations (Choghari, 2015). Papiamentu is a creole language which is often times spoken as a first language on Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao; it is regarded as the islands' most treasured and native symbol. The clash between Spanish and Papiamentu dates back to colonial times, statements have been found dating back to the 18th century in which Papiamentu is described as "un español chuperreado" (a corrupt Spanish) (Grant, 2008, p. 6). (Furthermore, Razak (1995) has shown that Spanish- speaking immigrants pose a cultural threat towards the native Papiamentu. Thus, this cultural threat frame can be used to exclude the unwelcomed groups such as refugees and migrants into the reluctant 'host' society (i.e. Aruba). However, even this difference is wobbly due to the intertwined relationship between Aruban locals and their ancestral lineage back to indigenous Americans. There are slight differences between the Papiamentu/o that is spoken on Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao which also highlights their diverse ancestry. The ancestry lineages in the ABC islands are significantly different from one another, namely, Aruban's ancestors are mainly of indigenous American descent, Bonairean's ancestors are mostly of Arawak descent, and most Curaçaoan ancestors are of African and European descent (Grant, 2008). Potentially the current and ancestral population differences provide significant social and contextual differences in how (un)welcoming locals would react towards

undocumented Venezuelans. Notably, Grant (2008) noted that Aruban Papiamentu is the most strongly influenced by Spanish, even though its origins can undoubtedly be traced back to Curaçaoan Papiamentu. This leaves the cultural threat frame up for research exploration as one part of this thesis' deductive themes during the analysis.

Furthermore, Esses et al. (2013) have found that common media portrayals increase audience's dehumanizing treatment and opinions about migrants. In their research they used Alexander et al.'s (1999) enemy/barbarian image, Schwartz's (1990) value attributions to assessing dehumanization, and Louis et al.'s (2007) measure to assess refugees' being seen as bogus claimants of their status. Ultimately they found that these three measures were interrelated and that they revealed a deeper perception in which refugees and migrants are seen as immoral and lacking sensibility. However, they also found that the overall negative response to refugees was not based on mere negative feelings towards the out-group, the reasons were in fact more complex. They entailed the following: 1) to maintain a privileged position in society, 2) a belief that only the strong survive in society, and 3) contempt and pity (Esses et al., 2013). Likewise undocumented Venezuelans have been found to be blamed for social problems (Ramirez-Plascencia, 2020). In this manner the unwelcomed group is blamed for social problems which further solidifies them as the 'problem' thus justifying inhumane treatment towards them while simultaneously sanctifying the host society by eliminating all blame and responsibility.

2.2.1 OTHERING AND BORDERS

Several studies have found that media narratives tend to focus on 'us' and 'them' dichotomies during reporting of migration issues, which can further entrench the outsider position of migrants by both "delegitimizing and stigmatizing" their status (Arcimaviciene & Baglama, 2018, p. 1; Horsti, 2016). More specifically, Jaramillo-Dent & Pérez-Rodríguez (2019) noted that the historic role of this dominant media narrative dichotomy is used to: "exert power and minimize the group to a unit that is inferior, threatening and easily (mis)represented" (p. 4). This process is described as an exercise in 'cultural violence', which is a representation that denies a person's human rights and dignity (Horsti, 2016). More specifically, Ramírez-Plascencia (2020) argues that the attitudes and behaviors towards Venezuelans reflect to what extent they are granted access to their human rights, and the level of discrimination towards that group. Furthermore, Jacobs & Meeusen (2017) argue that 'us' and 'them' dichotomies are reflective of symbolic groups in society and foster negative associations and feelings of threat. For instance, the in-group (us) is typically characterized by innocuous labels such as locals, locals, and citizens, whereas the outgroup (them) is marked by detrimental labels as illegals, foreigners, and undocumented.

Additionally, border representations in mainstream media have tended to focus on narratives that establish the dichotomy between legal versus illegal, which further entrenches the position of the in- versus out-group (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015; Holzberg et al., 2018; Jaramillo-Dent & Pérez-Rodríguez, 2019). Subsequently, the Dutch Kingdom's islands pose an interesting environment in which to analyze the Caribbean sea as a symbolic

border. Aruba's political agency has tended to rely on emphasizing the island's 'smallness' and the concerns this migration influx raises with regards to border management, and Aruba's already densely populated territory (Jones, 2020). Dominant theorizations have concluded that borders are used as symbols of power, which justify exclusion, violence, and even death (Chouliaraki & Georgiou, 2017; Hozberg et al., 2018). The border marks the place where a person's status changes from insider to that of an outsider (Jaramillo-Dent & Pérez-Rodríguez, 2019). In addition, borders are used to soothe public anxieties about migrant threats to national 'security' (Harrison & Lloyd, 2012, p. 371). For instance, Bruno (2016) has focused on the emotional and mental dimension provided by the narrative of maritime borders in Italy and found that depicting the other as a threat provided a more reassuring framework than engaging with the possibility of integration.

Lastly, the conditionality of humanity that accompanies narratives of borders has also been explored by scholars in the field. For instance, Hozberg et al. (2018) have explored the conditionality provided by border narratives as a determinant of who deserves to be part of the nation and who becomes 'relegated to zones of non-intelligibility at border points, refugee camps, and deportation centers' (535). Additionally, De Genova (2013) has shown how the 'border spectacle' renders illegality visible and makes deportation a constant possibility. Furthermore, Rowe & O'Brien (2014) found that refugees are also labeled as 'boat people' in the Australian migration context which might be relevant for the representation of refugees in Aruba. The elaboration on borders narratives exemplifies how in this manner borders become a symbol of power held by the in-group, and a symbol of fear for the out-group.

2.3 THE HUMAN INTEREST FRAME

Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud (2015) have found that even though extensive literature has been written on how news tends to reduce immigrants to dangerous and anonymous threats, half of the stories about irregular migration in the United States, France, and Norway entailed the human interest frame. Additionally, the human interest frame has been found to be a common practice in contemporary news journalism (as cited in Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015). Opposed to the conflict frame, this frame focuses on people, and provides a space for the immigrant or refugee to recount his/her story (Parrott et al., 2019). Furthermore, this frame is more likely to enhance feelings of empathy due to the light that is shed on the perspective of the refugee or immigrant. Furthermore, Thorbjørnsrud (2015) mentioned the presence of a humanitarian frame in contrast to the conflict frame (consisting of the law and order and the political frame) in the media when reporting about immigrants. In this frame individuals are portrayed as "victims of an unfair system", and further focuses on "right" frames by focusing on human suffering and their rights (p. 774). More specifically, Parrott et al. (2019) postulate that the presence of humanistic characteristics should in essence activate feelings of closeness to the individuals who are being depicted in the news. As argued by Ramírez-Plascencia (2020), this depiction enhances the 'us and them' narrative which in turn reduces the negative bias towards minorities and migrants. Notably, adjacent countries to Venezuela have previously launched campaigns in order to reach this goal (UNHCR, par. 12).

Furthermore, Sajir & Aouragh (2019) analyzed the manner in which sensitive photographs in the media might raise feelings of compassion and attenuate the negative bias towards migrants. More specifically, the authors analyzed the effect on audience perception in relation to the images of the three year old Alan Kurdi, who had drowned in the Aegean Sea in 2015, and the shell shocked five year old Omran Daqneesh, who was covered in blood and dust. Generally, these images awakened feelings of compassion towards the oppressed. The image of Alan Kurdi for example has been recognized as iconic and resulted in a shift of public interest with European chants of “Refugees Welcome.” This ultimately led to a more humanitarian refugee policy (Sajir & Aouragh, 2019). Alan Kurdi has been compared to other iconic images, such as the “Struggling Girl” and the “Napalm Girl” (as cited in Sajir & Aouragh, 2019). Despite the international praise these pictures have acquired, framing victims through this lens in the media has also sparked criticism and debates about ethics in relation to photojournalism and mainstream media (Georgiou, 2018). Additionally, in the case of Omran Daqneesh elucidated that not all images of vulnerable victims lead to an increase in compassion, and instead lead to ineffective forms of pity.

Another element that was taken into consideration was a term that was coined by Harrison & Lloyd (2012), compliant workaholics, this term contextualizes the action of a refugee, or undocumented migrant. This term is specified because it potentially demonstrates the overall socio-economic understanding of the Aruban locals in relation to the undocumented Venezuelans. Here, undocumented individuals are not framed as an economic threat to locals. Instead, there is more focus on the already existing structures that contribute to inhumane treatment and ‘violations of their human rights’ (Harrison & Lloyd, 2012, p. 380). This frame elaborates further, and provides more nuance on the intricate position that minorities, refugees, and forced migrants are in. Refugees and undocumented migrants have been exploited in order to increase business profits and productivity in hosting countries. This is achieved by taking advantage of the vulnerable position fleeing individuals find themselves in. Local employers take advantage of their position by increasing the immigrant workforce that consists of solely ideal workers who work long hours, take no days off, and do monotonous work for low wages. As such, the negative connotations are placed on local and legal institutions and actors, such as employers and the state’s policing practices instead of on the refugees and migrants (Harrison & Lloyd, 2012). Refugees’ actions are then understood as forms of exploitation and self-exploitation in an effort to survive their personal circumstances.

2.3.1 OTHERING, SOLIDARITY AND PITY

Notably, while refugees and migrants are often a topic of interest in the media, it is quite rarely that they are the narrators of their own stories (Georgiou, 2018; Horsti, 2016). Additionally, when refugees’ voices are brought to the forefront in the media, research has shown that this voice does not equal recognition (Chouliaraki, 2017; Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Georgiou, 2018; Risam, 2018). This further highlights the complexities of this phenomenon in digital media representation. The human interest frame is created within dominant political frames in which their recognition relies on portraying them as wounded powerless subjects of suffering with no political voice (Georgiou, 2018). Furthermore, the media has often entrenched gendered and age definitions in relation to the depiction of the victim/threat dichotomy. For instance the existence of threatening men, female

“victim heroes”, and the depiction of innocent children (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015, p. 787).

Horsti (2016) posits that it is only through powerless and victim framing that refugees and migrants become deserving of our protection. Specifically, this representation seems to only be present in institutional and grassroots initiatives, and in humanitarian news media (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Georgiou, 2018; Horsti, 2016; Risam, 2018). As argued by Parekh (2017), containing migrant and refugee voices within this humanitarian narrative relinquishes refugees’ and migrants’ rights to become “limited to humanitarian aid, instead of the acquisition of political or legal rights” (as cited in Georgiou, 2018, p. 52). However, refugees and immigrants seek recognition and to be seen as autonomous subjects and political actors as well (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015). The solidarity frame would provide opportunities for connection between ‘us’ and ‘them’, i.e. Aruban locals and undocumented Venezuelans. However, according to the presented literature, a full immersion of the refugees as part of ‘our’ community is never granted. Thus, various levels of social and political hierarchies remain. This sheds light on the act of ‘othering’ that remains through the solidarity frame.

Likewise, a form of ‘othering’ takes place during instances in which undocumented individuals and refugees are seen as individuals who should be pitied. Sajir & Aouragh (2019) have found that not all human interest frames awaken compassion or a form of solidarity. Arendt (1973) (as cited in Sajir & Aouragh, 2019) distinguishes between solidarity (principle) and compassion (passion). While images like the one of Alan Kurdi do manage to generate a public reaction, they “may also breed feelings of pity towards the oppressed”, which can be considered a perversion of compassion. Interestingly, pity is also described by Esses et al. (2013) as a lack of admiration towards the group that is seen as inferior. Furthermore, the complex relationship that exists between solidarity, compassion, and pity note this as a reason to remain skeptical about mediated solidarity (Sajir & Aouragh, 2019). These distinctions elucidate the complexity of social relations between in- and out-group and accompanying feelings that may motivate actions, and or opinions.

Lastly, recent studies have focused on the impact ‘refugee selfies’ and ‘migrant-related selfies’ have had on the Global North, which contradict the mainstream representation of refugees as solely powerless victims in need of rescue (Chouliaraki, 2017; Risam, 2018). These depictions have found that in these instances refugees are seen as unworthy of sympathy (Sajir & Aouragh, 2019). This thesis will solely focus on the representation present in contemporary popular Aruban video news media. This thesis aims to fill the gap that is present in current literature in relation to undocumented Venezuelans’ representation in the Caribbean, particularly in the neighboring island Aruba. Furthermore Thorbjørnsrud (2015) notes that despite the wide agreement on the importance of frames for people’s perceptions and opinions on immigration, few studies have focused on the actual impact of news discourse on public opinion. Some findings however, have found that stories and visuals that are based on positive clichés such as suffering and survival activate acceptance; and frames such as anger and “illegality” promoted rejection (Bleiker et al., 2013). These findings and gaps in literature form a solid basis with which to move forward and analyze the impact of a social networking site news discourse (i.e. Facebook news videos) on public opinion through the gathering of audience comments.

2.4 ENCODING, DECODING, AND SNS AFFORDANCES

SNS have fundamentally changed the manner in which news is generally produced, consumed, and disseminated. Horsti (2016) argues that this may also have an impact on news framing. Users have more access to the distribution process and more freedom to share their opinions online. The nature of news on SNS that is accompanied by likes and comments is a convergence of interpersonal and mass communication that has been studied by many scholars in communication research (KhosraviNik & Zia, 2014; Lee & Jang, 2010; Lee & Tandoc, 2017; Neubaum & Krämer, 2017; Winter et al., 2015). There are various ways in which a newsreader can decode a news text. According to Hall's (2001) reception theory, these can be classified into three categories. The first one is the dominant or preferred reading in which the reader decodes the text with the same meaning as was intended by the producer of the media text. The second is resistant reading where the decoded meaning reflects the opposite that was intended by the producer. Finally, the third is a negotiated reading, which entails a mixture of the preferred and the resistant reading.

Correspondingly, technology and communication scholars have used the term *affordance* as a fruitful tool to describe how people use technology in society (Shaw, 2017). This term allows scholars to describe the overlapping of culture and technology (Shaw, 2017). This approach provides a framework with which social or technologically deterministic conclusions are avoided. Furthermore, Al-Rawi (2019) discussed how technological affordances can provide a place for members of a community to gather and negotiate what the members think of their current and future country, and has delved deeper into the process of virtual nationhood. Notwithstanding the fact that the audience is not an official producer of public news content, when a Facebook user comments underneath a public news story their comment's visibility is enhanced. Thus, Palmer (2020) suggests that it is more adequate to refer to the moment in which a user comes into contact with content online as a "prosumption-decoding/encoding moment" (p. 37). Furthermore, readers tend to adjust their opinions to what has been said in the comment section, even if these comments contradict the main message that is being told by the news source (Neubaum & Krämer, 2017). In this manner, all comments have the potential of becoming worthy influential journalistic material for others to read and comment on.

Furthermore, Facebook's design generally encourages the audience to engage with the platform, and thus creates a visual representation of bottom-up discourse. Participatory media has made it possible for non-elites to have a space in which they can counter the discourses of established institutions (KhosraviNik & Zia, 2014). Much research has been conducted on the power of social media as a democratic tool that empowers social and political movements (Duncombe, 2019; KhosraviNik & Zia, 2014). Through social media, the audience becomes an active participant in the creation and distribution process. Moreover, Gillespie (2010) argues that even the term platform, especially in relation to politics, draws attention to it being a "raised level surface" (p. 350). In the realm of communication technology, it implies a progressive and egalitarian arrangement that encourages solidarity

between groups in society (Gillespie, 2010). The comment section can be analyzed as a platform on which individuals feel the need to speak up for those who are socially and politically unable to do so. Despite social media playing a significant role in recent revolutions, it cannot be seen as the culprit of socio-political change. Scholars have found that it is the interplay between audiences, politics, and social media technologies that result in revolutions and social movements (KhosraviNik & Zia, 2014).

Furthermore, Bruno (2016) argues that media representations alongside the audience process of negotiation can build social representations of otherness. SNS provide an important arena in today's society where various socio-political discussions are taking place (Al-Rawi, 2019). The comment sections and discussion therein can be seen as the visible process of negotiation between the audience and media representations of undocumented Venezuelans as the 'other'. Furthermore, as argued by Stuart Hall, cultural representations should be seen as part of a complex structure of meanings, and not solely dependent on the media (Pop, 2016). Hall (1997) argued that correlations between the material, the conceptual, and the signifying levels are: "governed by our cultural and linguistic codes and it is this set of interconnections which produces meaning" (p. 20). The comment section therefore, provides insight into how an active, commenting segment of the audience can further entrench, or contradict social representations of undocumented Venezuelans shown on SNS news media.

This chapter has set forth the literature that was used in order to conduct the analysis as will be described in the following chapter in the research design. Firstly, the political climate surrounding fleeing Venezuelan's status, or lack thereof, was established. Moreover, recent research has established that discrimination and xenophobia of Venezuelans is founded on negative inferences made on economic, labor, and security issues. Furthermore, the media's traditional frames were elaborated on, with a particular focus on the selected law enforcement frame, and the human interest frame which are the guiding narratives for the data analysis. Consequently, the concepts of 'othering', 'us', and 'them' were also specified as significant terms with which the representation of undocumented Venezuelans can be analyzed in news media in relation to in- and out-groups and the sentiments pertaining to these were further elaborated on (i.e. exclusion, solidarity, compassion and pity). Likewise, the contextual elements of news on SNS were also specified, as these might impact news framing. Finally, the reception theory was noted as a relevant tool that can be revisited in light of the affordances provided by current social media platforms, and the audiences' prosumption-encoding/decoding moments.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND OPERALIZATION

This chapter presents the research design. This includes an explanation of how the data was approached, the sampling process, and the operationalization. The research object will be explained, and the method of thematic analysis will be justified for this thesis.

The topic of irregular immigration is a rather complex one that is accompanied by various perspectives, histories, and political implications. This is why throughout the preliminary research process it became apparent that a sharpened focus was necessary in order to approach the data in a systematic and consistent manner. Moreover, due to the interdisciplinary nature of the topic at hand, it was deemed necessary to narrow the focus of the research method after reading literature from journals ranging from cultural anthropology, to political science and management studies (Jones, 2020; Mohan, 2019; Razak, 1995; Zetter, 1991). Deductive thematic analysis was considered most suitable for this study because it enables the researcher to analyze the data sample through a sharpened theoretical lens. The theoretical framework elaborates on how the media portrays undocumented individuals as either threats or victims. It must be noted that the media frames surrounding undocumented individuals, and migrants can be categorized into a vast amount of frames with various subcategorizations. Some common frames are: the human interest frame, and the political frame (Parrott et al. (2019), the rights frame, the illegality frame, and the victim frame (Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud, 2015). However, in light of the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, and the recent influx of undocumented Venezuelans to Aruba, this thesis aims to contribute to theoretical debates related to irregular immigration based on the most commonly perceived frames in previous literature that seemed to best fit the current situation in Aruba, namely, news depicted through the law enforcement frame due to the news' focus on detention and deportation, and the human interest frame which focuses on personal storytelling. Furthermore, the political frame was not deemed important or even possible as a case study due to the fact that insufficient videos and comments can be found about utterances made by Aruban politicians. Additionally, as established earlier, politicians are uneasy about making public statements that acknowledge Venezuelan refugee status. Therefore, it was conceived most logical to focus on how journalists framed the undocumented Venezuelans on local news outlets instead. Additionally, Figenschou & Thorbjørnsrud (2015) have found that even though most research has focused on the presence of the threat frame, half of the articles they analyzed in the United States, France, and Norway contained the human interest frame. This is why this thesis has not only taken the law enforcement frame but also the human interest frame into consideration as a tool for analysis. Lastly, these two frames would operationalize the possibility of finding themes that would depict the undocumented Venezuelans as threats of victims which is what previous research has concluded.

Furthermore, through focusing on these two frames, a thematic analysis is selected in order to conduct the analysis. Thematic analysis provides a hermeneutic tool with which patterns within the media text are recognized (Roberts et al., 2019). The expectation was that the analyzed media would portray the undocumented Venezuelans through the law enforcement frame as the selected data formed part of news media, and that the comment section would generally reflect this narrative through elements of persuasion especially through visual

media on a SNS. However, previous literature has also found an inclination towards the human interest frame in the United States, France and Norway in differing ratio's. It would be interesting to see the proportion of these two frames in relation to undocumented Venezuelans in Aruba in light of the Venezuelan Exodus.

In addition, previous research has also suggested that the new media landscape might also impact traditional media framing (Horsti, 2016). The aim of conducting thorough thematic analysis of the comment section was to explore the audience response to traditional frames more in depth on a newer and more dynamic platform like Facebook, and thus revisit Hall's (2001) reception theory. In order to conduct the analysis, the following research question was posed: *How does 24Ora's Facebook audience engage with news about undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba and do the video representations portray the traditional law enforcement or human interest media frames?*

Furthermore, the following sub-questions helped as guiding tools to remain close to the data set and research aim of this thesis:

- 1) How are Venezuelans represented in local Aruban video news media?
- 2) How does the audience react to this representation in the comment section?

3.1 UNITS OF ANALYSIS

Firstly, the selection of 24Ora was done as follows: a list comparison was made of local Aruban Facebook news pages in order to select a Facebook news page with the greatest traction, with the expectation that this page would also have the most engagement underneath their news posts. With a total of 124 494 followers (on January 30, 2021) it was found to have significantly more followers compared to other local Facebook news pages. News pages such as Bon Dia Aruba, Diario Aruba, Amigoe Aruba, E Arubiano News, Boletin extra "Noticia Directo", Bolentinextra.com, and MasNoticia.com to name a few.

Consequently key terms were inserted on 24Ora's Facebook search bar in order to find news content for the data set. The following key terms in Papiamento were used: Venezolano (49 posts), Venezolano na Aruba (43 posts), indocumenta (50 posts), Venezolano indocumenta (30 posts), refugiado (44 posts), refugiado Venezolano (29 posts), deportado (27 posts), Guarda Nos Costa (46 posts), Warda Nos Costa (47 posts). It became apparent that video news segments attracted more Facebook engagement through the comment section compared to posts with news articles. This is reasonable as links to news articles would direct Facebook users to 24Ora's website, away from the comment section.

Purposeful sampling was selected as the method of operation, as this was the most useful to answer the research question. This method is used when a researcher identifies and selects information cases related to the phenomenon of interest at hand (Tongco, 2007). Based on the theoretical framework, the research question and the relevance of the topic it was deemed appropriate to select videos with the following criteria: 1) Topicality: undocumented Venezuelans being captured on Aruba; and 2) The time frame: between October 2, 2019, and

March 1, 2020. This timeframe was selected as it marks the date of announcement of the Visa requirement for Venezuelan passport holders (Schenk & Henriquez, 2019) and the start of the Coronavirus crisis in Aruba. The global pandemic would add another layer to news stories about irregular migrants with significant consequences for their representation on news media (Grattan, 2020). Ultimately three videos were selected which fulfilled the preset requirements. Additionally all videos fell within the 5 minute time frame, and included at least 170 comment responses each. Thus, the selected videos were found to have an explicit and deliberate rationale and criteria for selection.

3.2 OPERATIONALIZATION

The data corpus consisted of 3 videos and 515 comments in total. Firstly, a brief visual analysis was made of the short news videos in order to analyze and elaborate on the media texts that the audience responded to in the comment section. I watched the videos in their entirety in order to grasp the overall message, then without audio in order to highlight the visual elements of the news segment. Consequently I watched the videos and took notes during the scenes that stood out and made screenshots of those segments. During entirety of the process of analysis of the visual elements of the video's I also kept in mind the theoretical frameworks which formed the basis of the codebook and its respective law enforcement and human interest categories. Consequently, the textual element of the videos were transcribed such as running headlines, and each video's main titles. Lastly, all the utterances made in the video's made by undocumented Venezuelans, police officers, and reporters were also transcribed in order to analyze 24Ora's videos more in-depth.

3.2.1 LAW ENFORCEMENT AND HUMAN INTEREST CODEBOOK

Deductive categories were developed prior to the coding process as is suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analyst driven method of deductive thematic analysis inspires a focused and thorough operationalization throughout the analysis process. Moreover, a main codebook with two main frames was used as a guiding tool with which the theoretical framework was further sharpened in order to maintain a rigorous approach towards the data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Roberts et al., 2019). Additionally, the *modus operandi* provided by the use of a codebook provides a high level of reliability (Roberts et al., 2019). The main categories that were preselected were guided by main themes established in the theoretical framework through concepts such as 'bordering', and 'othering' as part of the law enforcement frame; and 'human rights' and 'othering' as part of human interest frame.

After conducting the initial analysis and ensuring that a rigorous approach was in place, it became apparent that several comments did not fit well under the preselected categories in order to answer the research question. Therefore, it was necessary to create additional categories, both under the law enforcement frame, and under the human interest frame sections of the codebook which elucidate on the social media aspect of the analysis. These last two categories were produced inductively, namely: 'illegality view enforcement', and 'humanitarian judgement' (See codebook). Comments in which the commenter applauds others pragmatic opinion

and tends to be pro-deportation was analyzed as instances of 'illegality view enforcement'. Instances in which comments expressed judgement towards other comments lack of empathy and/or pity towards the undocumented individuals on Aruba was classified as 'humanitarian judgement'. Previous research did not highlight the nature of the comments underneath SNS news in which audiences explicitly applauded or judged one another. The informal setting provided by the infrastructure of a platform such as Facebook contributes to the ease with which the audience comments on each other's opinions. This last step also exemplifies the novelty of the current study which seeks to uncover the audience response on a SNS which by definition takes place in a more complex environment compared to traditional media, and traditional formats.

Furthermore, deeper analysis of the subcategories of pity and sympathy revealed that a distinction had to be made explicit in order to categorize them accordingly in light of this thesis' theoretical framework. Therefore it was deemed necessary to elaborate and establish how these two emotions were understood, and were selected as guiding tools for data analysis. These two emotions could easily be grouped together during the analysis. However, after looking at several dictionary definitions, Psychology Today's definitions were found the most accurate and useful for the purpose and aim of this thesis. The concept of sympathy was categorized as one in which Aruban locals, and undocumented Venezuelans can be seen as groups who sympathize out of solidarity with one another and common mutuality and understanding for each other's circumstances. On the other hand, even though pity appears to have altruistic intentions, it was categorized as instances in which a social hierarchy is at play, and just like Esses et al. (2013)'s research, they have defined pity as a lack of admiration. The definitions of Psychology Today are used to clarify the definitions of pity and sympathy as they form part of the codebook. The definitions are as follows:

Pity: "Pity is a feeling of discomfort at the distress of one or more sentient beings, and often has paternalistic or condescending overtones. Implicit in the notion of pity is that its object does not deserve its plight, and, moreover, is unable to prevent, reverse, or overturn it. Pity is less engaged than empathy, sympathy, or compassion, amounting to little more than a conscious acknowledgement of the plight of its object" (Burton, 2015, par. 5).

Sympathy: "Sympathy ('fellow feeling', 'community of feeling') is a feeling of care and concern for someone, often someone close, accompanied by a wish to see him better off or happier. Compared to pity, sympathy implies a greater sense of shared similarities together with a more profound personal engagement" (Burton, 2015, par. 4).

As such, a clear distinction was made between the two sentiments that fall under the human interest frame. Instances of sympathy were categorized under the 'us AND them' category (see codebook 2.2.c.i); and instances of 'pity' in which the undocumented Venezuelans are looked at with paternalistic feelings while expressing feelings of sorrow were categorized under the category 'them' (see codebook 2.2.a.i). Table I and II showcases the codebook that was used in order to operationalize the analysis of the law enforcement and the human interest frames that were selected for this dataset in order to answer this thesis research question.

Table I: Law Enforcement Frame codebook

| Category: | Description |
|---|--|
| <i>Main category 1:</i> <i>Law enforcement</i> | This has to do with any notions shared that relate to Aruban laws on residency and border patrol. Paperwork such as staying and work permits, passports, local IDs, visas. The law enforcement frame is used to reprimand the presence or action of refugees and (undocumented) migrants. |
| Sub-categories | |
| 1.1. Borders | Instances in which the existence of a border is emphasized; an emphasis on an inside and an outside. Maritime border: This can be done by mentioning the boats on which the undocumented Venezuelans arrive on, the ocean, reefs for example. |
| a) Pro-deportation | Merriam Webster Dictionary definition: “The removal from a country of an alien whose presence is unlawful or prejudicial” |
| b) Limited/Lack of Resources | Venezuelan discrimination is justified by focusing on Aruba’s limited amount of money, space (capacity), and resources in general. Also the lack of resources to guard the borders. |
| c) Language Border | Emphasizing that Venezuelans’ mother tongue is Spanish (not Papiamentu). |
| 1.2. Othering | The act of constructing the “other” in order to “exert power and minimize the group to a unit that is inferior, threatening and easily (mis)represented” (Jaramillo-Dent & Pérez-Rodríguez, 2019, p. 2). |
| a) Them | Undocumented Venezuelans |
| i) Dirty/Polluting | Instances in which undocumented Venezuelans are described as a pollution, or as dirty. |
| b) Us | Locals/ Arubans |
| c) Us vs. Them (threat theory) | Instances in which a clear division is made between the undocumented Venezuelans and Arubans/local; and moments in which undocumented Venezuelans are portrayed as a safety/economic/cultural/political threat. |
| i) Safety Threat | |
| ii) Economic Threat | |
| iii) Cultural Threat | |
| SNS Law Enforcement | |
| 1.3. Pragmatism: | Applauding other comments or opinions who express approval of the law enforcement frame, for example through deportation wishes, or a focus on Aruba’s lack of resources. Intolerance towards the undocumented Venezuelans is encouraged and applauded. Urge for others to understand the pragmatic view: |
| 1.4. Other | Instances that can be categorized in the illegality lens category but do not fall into any of the aforementioned categories. Instances in which the context describes an unwelcoming nature towards the undocumented individuals. |

Table II: Human interest codebook

| <i>Code categories:</i> | Description |
|--|--|
| Main category 2: Human interest Frame | Instances in which sympathy is expressed towards the undocumented Venezuelans from the perspective of them being part of a group that is being wronged in society. Through this frame (life) stories of the refugee is told to the audience. |
| Sub-categories | |
| 2.1 Human Rights | Undocumented Venezuelans in relation to their human rights; mostly in relation to their refugee status and asylum rights. |
| a) “Compliant Workaholics” | The oppressive structure created by current institutions in which undocumented immigrant workers live in fear of deportation and therefore give in to exploitation or self-exploit themselves in which they don’t demand basic rights (Harrison & Lloyd, 2012; Nelson et al., 2015, 2015). Instances in which employees are seen as responsible for upholding an illegal and exploitative structure in Aruban society. |
| 2.2 Othering | |
| a) Them | Refugees are seen as victims of war, economic, and political collapse who are in need of help. |
| i) pity | Instances in which the undocumented Venezuelans are pitied |
| b) Us | Us seen as the ones who must help the undocumented Venezuelans. |
| c) Us AND them | Instances in which sympathy and commonality is expressed between the commenter (mostly as Arubans/locals) and the undocumented Venezuelan. |
| i) Sympathy | |
| SNS human interest: | |
| 2.3 Humanitarian judgement | Instances in which other’s comments are judged for not having sympathy towards the undocumented Venezuelans. Urging for others to have more understanding, sympathy and/or pity towards the undocumented Venezuelan’s circumstances Us as the locals should be compassionate. |
| 2.4 Other | Instances that can be categorized in the humanitarian lens category but do not fall into any of the aforementioned categories. Instances in which the context describes sympathy and understanding towards the undocumented individuals. |

3.3 VIDEOS

Parrott et al. (2019) mention that researchers have tended to focus more on text-based frames instead of visual or multimodal frames. For this reason it was deemed fruitful to also elaborate on the images and messaging of the news. Moreover, by specifying and elaborating on the representation of undocumented Venezuelans in Aruban news, it becomes clearer what the audience is responding to. In order to contextualize themes present in 24Ora’s news coverage of undocumented Venezuelans it was necessary to firstly analyze the video’s and conduct a

thematic analysis of the 3 selected videos. This was a brief analysis and description of the video's that entailed details about the images that could be found in the news segments that also highlighted the frame(s) with which the news reported about undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba. Furthermore, it was also decided to transcribe the text present in the videos in order to capture any overlapping rhetoric between the videos and the comments underneath them. The analysis was conducted with the aid of the codebook that was created in light of the theoretical framework with a focus on the law enforcement and human interest frames in mind that are most commonly present in media texts about refugees and migrants.

3.4 COMMENTS

Initial notes were taken during the manual transferring of comments underneath the three news video segments to Google tables in order to familiarize myself with the raw data for immersion purposes. Notes were taken about the language the comments were written in, whether the commenter was a "Top fan" or not. Facebook grants a "Top fan" badge status to any active commenters of followers of Facebook pages with more than 10 000 followers. Furthermore, I noted the commenter's place of origin and/or current location in case these information details were available. Lastly, I also noted whether the comment was a reaction to another comment thus forming a sub-threat or whether the comment was a standalone comment underneath the news video. However, all these variables except for the first one - the language of the comment - were deemed irrelevant for the purposes of this thesis. The "Top fan" badge did not reveal any peculiar opinions or behaviors. Furthermore, the sub-threats were limited in amount, and the stand-alone comments were written as reactions to previous commenters in some instances as well. Additionally, some commenters responded to previous commenters by tagging them in the comment section instead of replying and forming a threat. Consequently all comments were manually transferred to a Google Excel file. This is due to the nature of Facebook as a platform and to ensure that all comments would remain accessible during the entirety of the analysis process. Additionally, Google Excel was deemed adequate as a tool on which a visual analysis would be possible. The comments were color coded depending on the language they were written in, and the media frame they mainly expressed. This step also functioned as the moment in which all names were omitted for ethical purposes, even though the data is publicly available. It should also be noted that these strategies for anonymization are rather sensitive, and true anonymization is never truly achieved on the internet and social networking research (Zimmer, 2010).

For the purposes of this thesis, the raw data corpus was further narrowed through a process of elimination. Firstly all comments that did not contain opinions or reactions to the news were eliminated. Subsequently, all comments in which individuals simply tagged another person in the comment section were also omitted, as this was not deemed relevant for the purposes of the research question. After this, all comments that consisted solely of gifs, emoticons or any other visual reactions were also omitted as the interpretation was deemed too broad in the social media context. For instance, at the beginning of the coding process some sad face emoticons were analyzed as sympathy for the refugee – leaning to the human interest frame. However in other instances they were interpreted as sadness for the situation in Aruba – leaning more to the law enforcement

frame. These various interpretations of the same emoticon were the result of the comments before and/or after that placed the meaning of these images in a broader context. These gifs and emoticons would possibly not be categorized in the same way by another researcher and presented obvious obstacles in terms of validity. Consequently, all comments were manually categorized with the help of a rigorous method through a codebook that was further sharpened by categorizing each category with a numerical code for consistency purposes. Atlast.ti would have served as a perfect tool with which to conduct a similar analysis, however due to time constraint and monetary reasons it was not possible to utilize this tool. Lastly, comments that expressed an ‘us’ as Venezuelans (opposed to ‘us’ as Arubans), ‘them’ as Arubans (opposed to ‘them’ as Venezuelans), an ‘us vs. them’ as Venezuelans vs. Arubans (opposed to Arubans vs. Venezuelans) were omitted. These could not be classified under the preselected categories that can be found in the codebook. Moreover, comments in which Arubans were made fun of as being robbers were also omitted as they did not directly shed light on undocumented Venezuelans representation in Aruba, but on Venezuelans defensive opinions about Arubans as a result of colloquial Venezuelan stereotypes of criminality. Notably, all of these comments were written in Spanish which further established the notion that these comments were made by Venezuelans and not by Arubans.

The following table shows how the data corpus of 515 comments was ultimately narrowed to a data set of 306 comments which was then used as the main corpus of analysis for this thesis. For transparency purposes, each comment’s reason for omission can also be found in column D of the unfiltered data corpus set (see App. D.1).

Table III: Narrowing process comment sections

| Sample | Criteria |
|--------|---|
| 515 | Comments underneath the three selected video news segments on 24Ora |
| 395 | Remaining posts after manually excluding all comments that did not contain opinions, or reactions to the news about undocumented Venezuelan immigrants |
| 376 | Remaining posts after manually excluding all comments that consist of simply tagging another person. Amount of comments in which the news was shared on Facebook by simply tagging another person(s) |
| 342 | Remaining comments after manually excluding all comments that consist of solely gifs, memes or any other visual, rather than textual responses |
| 318 | Remaining comments after analyzing the dataset with the help of a numeral code, respective to each selected code. For instance 1.1) Borders or 2.3) Humanitarian Judgement |
| 306 | Remaining comments after removing comments that portrayed an “us as Venezuelans”; a “them as Venezuelans” or an “us vs. them” perspective. This narrative is difficult to categorize within the codebook without complicating the categories of us and them even further. |

3.5 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

During the analysis, it became apparent that a system had to be put in place with which to improve the comparison potentiality within the data set findings, other than the visual element of color coding that was already part of the operationalization process. Therefore, I have chosen to also use descriptive statistics as an operationalization tool in this research (Fisher & Marshall, 2009). The languages, and thematic lenses were organized with the use of nominal categories. This entails that the categories were mutually exclusive. Furthermore, a frequency distribution of the frames present in the videos and comment sections. Through this, it becomes easier, and more rigorous to contrast and compare the themes present in the video segments and their respective comment sections. This is often referred to as “quantitative analysis of qualitative data” (Morgan, 1993 as quoted in Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). The comment’s languages were categorized, and color coded as follows: 1) Papiamentu in yellow; 2) Spanish in gray; 3) Papiamentu and Spanish in dark yellow; 4) English in green; and 5) Dutch in orange. These categorizations and color coordinations facilitated the visualization of the data and the calculation of percentages. The following table showcases the languages present in the comment section:

Table IV: Languages present in comment sections

| Nr. | Language | Amount of comments | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Papiamentu | 181 | 59.2% |
| 2 | Spanish | 114 | 37.3% |
| 3 | Papiamentu and Spanish | 5 | 1.6% |
| 4 | English | 4 | 1.3% |
| 5 | Dutch | 2 | 0.7% |
| Total comments | | 306 | 100% |

Lastly, after the comments were thoroughly analyzed using the codebook it was deemed important to further simplify the results in order to answer the research question more dutifully. This was done by color coding, and labeling each comment with a number in the final process of analysis as follows: 1) law enforcement frame (light green); 2) human interest frame (light red); and 3) both (light purple) (See App. F). This enabled a visual and statistical elaboration of the frames present in the data set. Moving forward however, comments containing both lenses were recorded separately in order to maintain the two frame categorization.

3.6 POSITIONALITY AND ETHICS

The positionality of the individual conducting the research must also be noted especially while conducting any type of qualitative analysis. One of the aspects that drew me to this topic is the fact that I have always had an intricate relationship with nationalities, borders, belonging (culture), and the privileges that come with it. I was born in Colombia, and moved to Aruba at an early age due to the socio-political tension in the late 90s in my native country. I became extremely aware of the privileges I held while holding a Dutch nationality as a non-native on a Caribbean island that still formed part of the Dutch Kingdom. Even though I was not deemed “Aruban”, this

otherness was not accompanied with terms of conditionality in relation to my residency on the island. This was not the case for many others who were also born in Colombia and lived in Aruba, simply because they did not inherit the Dutch nationality. Moreover, there reside about 90 nationalities on the island, which confused, and intrigued my curiosity on this subject matter even more. It was apparent to me that not all foreigners were treated or understood equally. As such, at an early age I became aware of the socio-political hierarchies at play in Aruban society.

ETHICS

In order to respect the participants privacy and protect their identity it was deemed important to remove their original and/or Facebook names in the comment section of the gathered data (Zimmer, 2010). Furthermore, several names mentioned by other commenters were also removed, this seemed to be local knowledge of the current location of several undocumented individuals on the island. Even though the data is public, it was deemed important to remove this telling data, especially due to the ease with which people can be found on the internet nowadays, and in a small island like Aruba.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will elaborate on the representation of undocumented Venezuelans on 24Ora's news videos. I provide basic elements of the selected videos, elaborate on the storyline presented, the setting and the duration of each video. Furthermore, this chapter will provide the themes found in the comment sections underneath each video. Additionally, a comparison will be drawn between the various comment sections which will be contextualized as a result of the differing representations in the selected videos. This chapter will also provide an academic discussion in light of the results.

4.1 VIDEO REPRESENTATION OF UNDOCUMENTED VENEZUELAN

The law enforcement frame was more prominent in the selected video segments in comparison to the human interest frame. Particularly through utterances made by reporters and through the news' broadcast's titles and headlines. The human interest frame was most prominent in the second video where the undocumented Venezuelan got the opportunity to elaborate on his personal circumstance and expressed the label of 'asylum seeker' instead of 'illegal' for himself and his wife. This was distributed on Facebook, and as such both contributed and challenged traditional human interest frames (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Georgiou, 2018; Ramirez-Plasencia, 2020; Sajir & Aouragh, 2019). Furthermore, the current findings corroborate previous literature that highlights mainstream, news' bias against immigrants and refugees (Cisneros, 2008; Jacobs et al., 2017; Jaramillo-Dent & Pérez-Rodríguez, 2019; Leurs & Smets, 2018). For instance: 24Ora's adamant stance on the label of 'illegal', and how this is used to 'other' undocumented Venezuelans. This frames undocumented Venezuelans as an unwelcomed group in Aruban society, encourages intolerance, promotes detention and deportation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. The representation of undocumented Venezuelans is particularly aligned with research that shows that the phenomena of irregular immigration is framed through the conflict frame. The following segment in this chapter will elaborate and provide an interpretation on the representation of undocumented Venezuelans in the selected news videos for this thesis.

4.1.1 VIDEO 1: 'MASS DEPORTATION TODAY TO VENEZUELA'

First of all, the first video is 1 minute and 15 seconds long. Despite it being short, much is conveyed to the audience through various visuals and auditory elements. This video sets an alarming tone due to the dramatic music that is played throughout the segment. The music that can be heard throughout the entirety of the video is traditionally played during "extra bulletin" or breaking news segments; this conveys dramatization and news exclusivity. The location of this video is in front of Aruba's Queen Beatrix International Airport. The presentation of this occurrence conveys a message in which the deportation of the undocumented Venezuelans is framed as alarming.

Additionally, the news was told through various images that conveyed the current situation in Aruba, and short textual headlines. No interviewing of undocumented Venezuelans or voice reporting by local reporters was present during this short news segment. Furthermore, all the news headlines present in this video convey the law

enforcement frame. For instance: 'The coast guard has deported +/- 60 illegals today'; '46 Venezuelans from Aruba, and the rest from Curaçao'; and 'The actions are providing good results'. The first headline showcases the dramatization and hyperbolic language that is at play in the news headline with regards to the selected words, i.e. "mass deportation". One can argue that the deportation of 60 undocumented Venezuelans cannot be categorized as a "mass deportation" event. Furthermore, the last headline equated deportation to "good results". This connotation and delivery is communicated to 24Ora's audience by equating the capturing of undocumented Venezuelans to a morally good act by local Aruban authorities.

Interestingly, the video's images conveyed more nuanced messaging in relation to the representation of undocumented Venezuelans in comparison to 24Ora's law enforcement frame that was communicated through the textual, and musical elements. The opening scene showcases three coast guard workers (Guarda Nos Costa) dressed in black uniform attire. They are moving the various suitcases and giving directions to the undocumented Venezuelans who are seen in regular 'every day' clothing. Notably, there is one man who is wearing a Venezuelan flag jacket and is fearlessly looking straight into 24Ora's camera at the beginning of this news segment (see fig. 1). It is apparent that this individual is probably not an undocumented Venezuelan, he is highly likely an Aruban local because he is not asking for directions or picking up any suitcases. He was noticeable on camera due to his confident stance, and his fearless look into 24Ora's camera. He was seen talking to a (probably) undocumented Venezuelan man who was asking for directions to the local coast guard workers. This gave the impression that these two men (the undocumented Venezuelan and the one wearing a Venezuelan flag jacket) are either related or are at least acquainted with one another.

Consequently, an image can be seen of two women embracing one another (see fig. 2). It can be assumed that they will be separating soon due to the deportation that is taking place. A third woman is seen on camera who is probably sympathizing with these two women but who also knows that the coast guard officers have to complete their job and have to usher all undocumented Venezuelans into the airport very soon.



Fig. 1: Fearless local Venezuelan looking straight into 24Ora's news camera



Fig. 2: Women embracing before the departure of undocumented Venezuelans

Furthermore, the moment in which the undocumented Venezuelans walk into the airport is also captured on video and communicated to 24Ora's public as a successful incident. This is done by pairing the images of the

departure with the headline: “Actions are providing good results” (see fig. 3). This conveys to the public, both through the headline and through the images of undocumented Venezuelans being ushered into the airport as an “us vs. them” narrative that is maintained through deportation, thus making ‘us’ victorious.

Lastly, an image is shown of late arrival undocumented young men who are ushered into the airport by local coast guard officers. Interestingly, the two men blow kisses at 24Ora’s camera, and this playful reaction to the news camera contradicts the seriousness that is conveyed through the use of alarming music and the news headlines (see fig. 4). This image gives an impression of rebellious young men who are being reprimanded, instead of it being a serious situation that needs to be policed by local authorities. Additionally, these images also contradict the traditional threat/victim dichotomy frames that previous research has found in the analysis of news media in relationship to refugees and migrants. All the translations in this chapter from Papiamentu to English will be followed by a star sign (*), and all translations from Spanish to English will be indicated with the pound (#) sign.



Fig. 3: Undocumented Venezuelans being ushered into the airport.

* Actions are providing good results



Fig. 4: Two undocumented Venezuelan young men blowing kisses to 24Ora’s news camera.

4.1.2 VIDEO 2: ‘FEAR OF BEING DEPORTED: ILLEGAL VENEZUELAN TRIED TO RUN FROM POLICE OFFICERS’

This video was 2 minutes and 59 seconds long. The setting is not immediately recognizable like in the previous video. There is a decaying trailer, a few trees and random pieces of wood in the background. The undocumented Venezuelan is sitting on the sand floor. Perhaps the location is a neighborhood area, however I was unable to gather which one in particular. From the beginning of this news video segment there are various visual elements at play that portray the hierarchy between the captured undocumented Venezuelan, the police officers seen on camera, and the interrogating voice of the reporter who is filming and not seen on camera. This immediately draws attention to the hierarchies of voice and recognition present in the video. The strongest voice is that of the reporter who is asking questions in an unfriendly manner, the police officers have more of a mediating voice which can be heard from their more neutral tone towards the undocumented Venezuelan, and they only ask two questions. Lastly, the undocumented Venezuelan’s voice is unrecognized in relation to his power in Aruban society.

This occurrence is rather unique, as refugees are rarely the narrators of their own story, and this incident provided the undocumented a 'voice narrative' with a personhood (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 629). However, the power dynamic does corroborate previous research (Georgiou, 2018) in which the status quo of 'visibility without voice', 'voice without recognition', or 'recognition without power' was maintained to a certain extent. In this particular video segment, the occurrence of refugees not being recognized was explicitly manifested through the conversation between the reporter and the refugee shown on camera. This striking juxtaposition between visibility and recognition (or lack thereof) highlighted the incongruence of the humanitarian treatment towards the undocumented individual on camera.

Furthermore, the opening image is one that shows the refugee on the floor with a blue eye, and his hands tied behind his back; this framing communicates images of guilt and capturing to the audience. While the refugee is sitting on the floor, two police officers are standing on either sides of the undocumented Venezuelan (see fig. 5). This visual may also communicate the hierarchy between two groups in Aruban society, that of undocumented Venezuelans in contrast to local police officers. Furthermore, the opening headline is "Illegal Venezuelan ran to avoid deportation". In this statement the label of illegal is already being used (just like in the title) from the moment the reporting starts, evidently the news is told through the law enforcement frame.

Moreover, the two frames clashed rather quickly while the refugee was being interrogated about his personal circumstance. Through this the audience learns that he is a family man with a wife and a newborn baby (see fig. 6). The scolding tone of the reporter contrasted the refugee's adamant stance on his "asylum seeker" label, and refusal of the news broadcaster's label of "illegal". However, 24Ora remained labeling him an "illegal" and mixed their law enforcement frame with headlines such as: 'He justified that he ran due to fear of being deported', and 'he has been an illegal in Aruba for over a year'. Throughout the interrogation the reporter maintained a scolding tone, which is incongruous with the depiction of a bruised victim on camera. Scholars have found that immigrants and refugees are depicted as either threats or victims, and in this particular segment there is incoherent and incomplete messaging of the two frames to 24Ora's audience.



Fig. 5: Captured undocumented Venezuelan on the floor.
* Illegal Venezuelan ran to avoid deportation



Fig. 6: Refugee telling his personal story to 24Ora.
* He is with his partner and two months ago he got a baby

Furthermore, there are various elements at play in this video which send contradicting messages to the audience, and challenge previous research findings. For instance the gendered bias of traditional media that tends to portray men as threatening, and women and children as innocent victims (Figenschou & Thorbjonsrud, 2015). During this reporting we see a fragile man on camera who ran due to survival motivations. This further contradicts the scolding tone of the reporter towards the undocumented Venezuelan on camera. Reprimanding a victim, or a vulnerable individual is difficult to maintain as part of the law enforcement frame.

An even more noticeable contradiction between the reporter and the refugee's understanding of current procedures came to the forefront during the interviewing/interrogation. It appears as though both parties (the reporter and the undocumented Venezuelan) were aware of the unfair system surrounding residency and asylum in Aruba. However, the reporter seems to have accepted the unwillingness or inability of Aruba to provide protection, while the undocumented Venezuelan seems to be aware of his powerlessness within this structure, yet is willing to persevere. Understandably, these two frames could not coexist and no deeper elaboration on this matter was provided on camera. The following are a few transcribed lines of this occurrence:

Reporter: "And is your wife also here illegally on Aruba?"

Undocumented Venezuelan: "She's also here for asylum."

Reporter: "But don't you guys know that they don't provide asylum? It's only a false process."

Notably, the traditional victim lens in which the individual is portrayed as a powerless victim did not appear in the foreground of this video segment, probably because it was not part of a predetermined strategy plan of the producers, as is the case in humanitarian news and grassroots movements. Furthermore, due to the undocumented individual's insistence on the words 'asylum seeker', it also brought forth certain intricacies between the word 'illegal', 'refugee', and 'asylum seeker', thus the focus is placed on his human rights instead of on his 'weaknesses' or unmet needs. To clarify, an asylum seeker is someone who "is seeking protection and their refugee status is yet to be determined" (Phillips 2011, 2)" (as cited in Rowe & O'Brien, 2014, p. 174). This narrative does not fall in line within the dichotomous labels that were preselected beforehand. What is more, the label of 'asylum seeker' manages to assert the undocumented Venezuelans' position within the difficult frame of his current circumstance. This places Aruba in an intricate position with regards to their current political stance, one where they acknowledged the refugees' needs, but simultaneously declared themselves ill-equipped to provide humanitarian aid. Asylum seekers may enter states without a visa, and states are prohibited to penalize and criminalize fleeing individuals (Rowe & O'Brien, 2014).

The final images of this news video are the detainment of the undocumented Venezuelan followed by a visual in which the captured individual is put in the back of local authorities' white van, either a police officer van, or that of the coast guards. The final headline is also one that embodies the law enforcement frame, namely: 'He was brought to the coast guard office for further investigation'. The final scenes showcase the undocumented Venezuelan being taken to the local authorities' vehicle in handcuffs and being locked away in the back of the white vehicle (see fig. 9). The image that is captured is one that conveys a 'justice has been served' message

through the deliberate closing of the back of the van at the end of the video segment.



Fig. 7: Refugee telling his story and 24Ora's law enforcement frame.

*He has been an illegal in Aruba for over a year



Fig. 8: Undocumented Venezuelan being captured



Fig. 9: Final scene, locking the undocumented Venezuelan in the back of local authorities' vehicle

* He was brought to Warda nos Costa (coast guard) for further investigation

4.1.3 VIDEO 3: 'ACTIONS AGAINST ILLEGALITY CONTINUE ON OUR ISLAND'

This video is 5 minutes long. The setting of this video is one that conveys the capturing of an undocumented Venezuelan while he was at work. The analysis of the third video's transcript revealed a significantly high tendency to portray the news through the law enforcement frame, just like in the first video. This video segment was conducted by a reporter who described the current situation in Aruba while standing in front the coast guard detention center. In this segment, the influx of undocumented Venezuelans is described as a severe problem that Aruban authorities were combating successfully.

The message of this video was a combination of a general reporting by Nelson "Speed" Andrade (a local reporter), with various images of one particular incident in which the focus lay on one undocumented man who was resisting the coast guards' law enforcement actions. He is reporting on the current situation on the island, particularly because the coast guard detention center is full, as the officials "scrape the Aruban streets". Emphasis

is placed on the movement of non-natives and undocumented individuals on the island. Furthermore, the reporter mentions that the coast guards are mostly detaining people at work, and that they were able to capture individuals at almost every commercial stop because they weren't able to show the necessary legality documents, or working permits. Most detained individuals are undocumented Venezuelans.

It appears as though the detention is taking place during work hours. Several coast guards, and a security officer are seen on camera in the detention process (see fig. 10). Various faces are also seen on camera of men and women workers who seem concerned and want to attenuate the frustration that the undocumented young man is feeling (see fig. 11). Through the storytelling and framing of the undocumented individual being captured during work hours there is emphasis on the economic threat undocumented Venezuelans pose to Aruban locals. Jacobs & Meeusen (2017) argue that socioeconomic threat refers to a competition between groups due to scarcity of goods (e.g., welfare, jobs, and housing). Upholding local laws and procedures presents protection to the Aruban locals.



Fig. 10: Undocumented Venezuelan being captured during work hours



Fig. 11: Concerned colleagues

This video also showcases 24Ora's insistence on labeling the undocumented individuals as "illegals" (see fig. 12). This can be seen in the following headline: "Every day there are many illegals at the coast guard in line for a signature". The reporter elaborates on the process surrounding this signature a bit further, however the message that is conveyed is negatively biased towards the undocumented, and a preference for deportation is expressed as the preferred outcome. The following quote shows a fragment of the reporting:

** Reporter: We also took note that there are big quantities here at the coast guard waiting in line on their turn to sign. Because they are waiting for a pending... some sort of asylum or permit etc. And they didn't detain and deport them. If it's the case that they have to come here every day, sign up at the coast guard to inform that they're here. And perhaps there will come a day that they don't have to come anymore, or perhaps there will come a day in which they will stay inside and be deported. (Video 3, min 2:40-3:10).*

Furthermore, during this particular segment the reporter shares with the public that Aruba's Coast Guards have been on a "rampant rage" lately capturing illegals on the island. Notably, the reporter's words and the emphasis on them through the headline: "GNC is scraping the streets" was an explicit depiction that conveys the law enforcement frame. More specifically, one in which the undocumented Venezuelans are described as 'other' and 'inferior'; the act of them being "scraped off the streets" conveys a description in which the undocumented are

seen as polluting or dirty. Moreover, this degrading depiction is also conveyed through the reporter's emphasis on the logic behind closed borders in order to sustain the structure that deports undocumented Venezuelans. Throughout the reporting there is also constant use of the words 'take these people out', this conveys an 'othering' effect and unwelcomes this group to Aruban society. This representation supports Cisneros (2008) exploration of immigrants as pollutant. The act of dehumanizing 'them' might be used in order to solidify an impersonal relationship with migrants in order to maintain pragmatic local political procedures (Arcimavicien & Baglama, 2018). Quickly after the documents are shown on screen, the reporter states that the following words that clearly communicate a social hierarchy, and justifications for the use of force against undocumented individuals:

*Reporter: *Undocumented Venezuelans are plenty, and the coast guard's work is also plenty. To finally put hands on those who do not have the right to be on our island, and are also working. And those who are also culpable are those who provide work for them*



Fig. 12: *Every day there are many illegals in line for a signature at the coast guard



Fig. 13: *GNC is scraping the streets

Furthermore, the visuals in this video deliberately focused on the Dutch passport, and the Aruban ID as an example of the needed documents in order to reside on Aruba. These are the papers that the undocumented Venezuelans fail to present to the authorities, and thus allows local authorities to practice their law enforcement actions, such as detention. Figures 14 & 15 show the depiction of these documents on camera:



Fig. 14: Dutch Kingdom passport



Fig. 15: Aruban ID

Lastly, once more, the undocumented Venezuelan was being brought to a white van by local coast guards (see fig. 16). We briefly see the face of an undocumented woman who is already sitting in the van, but the focus is mostly placed on the man who is resisting the local authorities' law enforcement actions. In this manner a

criminalizing connotation and a power dynamic is drawn between the individual's resistance to enter the white van, and the coast guard's guiding force towards it. This framing corroborates previous research that delineates the gendered bias in traditional news media in which men are seen as violent or threatening (Figenschou & Thorbjonsrud, 2015).



Fig. 16: Undocumented Venezuelan resisting deportation by Aruban coast guards

4.2 RECEPTION THEORY AND AFFORDANCES

Now that the representation of undocumented Venezuelans on local Aruban news videos has been elaborated on, this section will further expand on how the audience responded to this depiction in the comment section. Facebook is an interesting platform on which to test the reception theory, or decoding/encoding model, that was originally described by Hall (2001). The following tables show a brief overview of the frames present in the selected videos and in their pertaining comment sections. In order to maintain a clear visual, these frames were quantified during the analysis process as well (see App. B). In this manner I was able to use the reception theory and compare and contrast the representation of undocumented Venezuelans' on 24Ora's videos, and the audience response to this in the comment sections. The following section will further elaborate on the themes found in the comment sections.

Table V. Overview results law enforcement and human interest frames in video and comment sections

| Video | Frame | Frequency | |
|-------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | | Video content | Comment section |
| 1 | Law enforcement | 4 (100 %) | 111 (83 %) |
| | Human interest | 0 (0 %) | 24 (17 %) |
| 2 | Law enforcement | 16 (48.5 %) | 34 (24 %) |
| | Human interest | 17 (51.5 %) | 110 (76 %) |
| 3 | Law enforcement | 24 (92.3 %) | 105 (70 %) |
| | Human interest | 2 (7.7 %) | 44 (30 %) |

4.2.1 'OTHERING' THY NEIGHBOR

The first, and third comment sections (CS) contained the majority of the preselected themes within the law enforcement frame. The main themes of pro-deportation, as an accepted and lawful act was exemplified by short comments but also through longer comments. Deportation in this video is used as a narrative with which to exclude undocumented Venezuelans from local Aruban society. Accordingly, the comment section in which this message is reported resulted in the most amount of comments that also support this message. Comments such as the following:

- * I want to have a job to stop illegals. Enter the minister's home too. They also have illegals working for them, the law applies to everyone (CS1, comment 42)
- * Why karma? Every country in the world deports you if you are an illegal. Why isn't Aruba allowed to do so? (CS1, comment 55)
- # The law is the law, and all countries have their laws, illegals out! (CS3, comment 9)
- * Get rid of all... to each their own place (CS3, comment 27)

Consequently, the theme of lack of resources was significantly present in the first comment section (CS1). Perhaps the emphasis on deportation in the first video gives weight to the argument in which the undocumented Venezuelans are 'tossed out' due to a lack of resources. Perhaps the audience sees these images as proof of Aruba not being able to provide, and take care of the undocumented individuals. Furthermore, the comments also voiced a level of understanding for threatening actions that the undocumented might turn to, however, this was not elaborated on as a justification but as an argument for exclusion. The following comment encompasses these sentiments:

Aruba is a small country and what does an illegal do if he cannot find a job, both men and women. The women come and sell their bodies in San Nicolas or Playa or over there, and the men who don't find work because they're illegals what else can they do than rob Aruba (...) (CS1, comment 78)

This comment highlights what Ramirez-Plasecia (2020) have already found in their research in which they state that exclusion of Venezuelans is based on socio-economic motivations. A lack of resources justifies the discrimination, and exclusion towards undocumented individuals. Many comments underneath this video in which images were shown of the undocumented Venezuelans being deported filmed in front of Aruba's Queen Beatrix International Airport also encourages a discussion in the comment section in which commenters were concerned about who was paying for the undocumented flight tickets. This elucidates the general concern of the locals in relation to their tax money, and the unawareness in relation to procedures of deportation. This discussion also delineates the economic threat theme that is used in order to justify exclusion and discrimination. The following example is a brief discussion that took place in the comments section in relation to plane tickets, and tax money:

- *They enter for free and leave on a second class airplane and who pays?? our tax money (CS1, comment 12)
- * (...) They have to pay their own ticket to go (CS1, comment 13)

lies (CS1, comment 14)

* Good evening did you pay for them? They stay incarcerated until they pay HIS TICKET to go (CS1, comment 15)

Furthermore, the theme of lack of resources was also present through the Spanish idiom “No hay cama pa’ tanta gente” or in Papiamentu “no tin cama pa tanto hende” in the comment sections. The literal translation means: there aren’t enough beds for so many people, meaning there is not enough room for everyone. Within this context it expresses that there is no space for undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba, this is further linked to socio-economic and support for pragmatism. In this manner the act of exclusion towards undocumented Venezuelans is substantiated due to a lack of means and ability to provide for them. One comment in particular stood out because the common phrase was combined with an economic scarcity of employment on the island, namely : *’There are no beds nor jobs for so many people’ (CS1, comment 38), and * (...) It’s not discrimination. We already helped plenty, there’s no more room (...) (CS2, comment 46).

Furthermore, a general form of ‘othering’ is present in the comment sections which is in alignment with the representation of undocumented Venezuelans shown in the respective video segments; they are portrayed as either threats or victims. Moreover, the comments used the term ‘illegal’ quite matter-of-factly to describe the undocumented Venezuelans on the island, which falls in line with the representation in the videos. An emphasis on how the Venezuelan political problem exists comes to the forefront in the comment sections. However, this is described as a problem that is not the responsibility of the Aruban government or Aruban citizens. This is also the stance of the Aruban government in relation to the undocumented Venezuelans’ status as refugees (Jones, 2020). Their human needs are acknowledged, and the Aruban population is cognizant of the dire situation in Venezuela, however their problem is not included as a collective human interest problem. It is understood as a ‘Venezuelan problem’ that they have exacerbated, and need to solve on their own. Lastly, another manner in which the undocumented Venezuelans are criticized and ‘othered’ in the comment section is by portraying them as cowards who instead of fighting their government are fleeing their country. The following comments encompass these various forms of othering:

You Venezuelans, instead of stopping and fighting your good fight to have a dignified and free Venezuela, but no, you want an easy way out, and so you are going to have to suck it, until eternity (...) (CS1, comment 3)

* *Get rid of all, to each their own country... too many problems, they come and want to live luxuriously and nothing about learning Papiamentu... here we speak Papiamentu, if you don’t want to learn it, go back to your country (...) they are many who come and rob as well ... well the best thing is for us to hold on and get rid of them so that Aruba can become like before again, without any of these people ... Aruba is small ... their place is big enough for them to stay there. Your government is bad that is not our problem... so to each their own house... THAT’S THAT!!* (CS1,

comment 69)

Go to Venezuela and fight, don't leave with your tail between your paws because you put that dictatorship in power not the Arubans' (CS1, comment 76)

(...) and you clown, go fight your president that you yourself have chosen' (CS1, comment 77)

Additionally, the comment section portrays an image of undocumented Venezuelans as robbers and killers who are scaring 'our' locals and the tourists. Through this the blame is placed on the undocumented Venezuelans for all the unsafety that is felt by both the locals and the (potential) tourists. The following two comments exemplify this sentiment:

* They come and rob, kill and even enter houses during daylight ... where are we going to take out all!!!! (CS1, comment 74)

Aruba is very tranquil and people who have fled Venezuela because their government doesn't support them any longer, and they enter a country illegally where they can't find work and so they rob and disturb the peace of the Arubans and those who visit it (...) (CS1, comment 76).

Furthermore, the law enforcement frame is maintained through the 'us vs. them' narrative in which the undocumented Venezuelans are 'othered' and established as different. Throughout the comment sections there is a narrative that pleads for the maintenance and cohesion of the 'Aruban group' through social, economic, or political exclusion of the other. Interestingly, the theme of safety threat was only present in the comments sections, and not in the videos. Comments that entailed this theme expressed representations of undocumented Venezuelans as robbers, killers, individuals that obstruct the peace on the island, and responsible for scaring Aruban natives. The following examples showcase this representation:

* Correct correct they need to leave the country because our yui di tera¹ are living in fear. For me they can get rid of all and not give any permits, perhaps he says karma because he is hiding one himself (CS1, comment 56)

*They should pass unexpectedly at all the construction houses, they'll find many!!! (CS3, nr. 68).

* Get all of them out who are spotted most are doing stupid things, shooting, robbing and prostitution sorry they cannot Amen (CS3, comment 96)

Notably, one particular comment highlighted the notion that the commenters did not judge the act of robbing as a morally bad act, but rather used the stereotype to justify the exclusion of undocumented Venezuelans. The commenter expressed a preference for being robbed by an Aruban than by an "illegal or deadbeat immigrant" (CS1, comment 44). As such, a social hierarchy between various groups is maintained in Aruban society.

**It's better for an Aruban to steal from his country than for an illegal or a deadbeat immigrant like you to come and steal from our country. The law says that those who do not abide – out. (...) And*

¹ Papiamentu for 'children of the earth', implying Aruban soil.

you yourself, what are you doing here still. What day are you going back to your country. (...) (CS1, comment 44)

Furthermore, the hierarchies between foreigners is also expressed in relation to tourists - who are one of Aruba's most cherished groups due to Aruba's economic dependency on them - and a preference for European migrants. Locals are afraid that 'illegals' (i.e. undocumented Venezuelans) form a threat to Aruban society and that the obstruction of the peace will scare tourists away. A solution to the problem of safety is presented by associating illegals with robbers, and crime; and as such justifying deportation. Moreover, the general openness expressed towards potential European migrants in contrast to the undocumented Venezuelans who "don't want to go back to their country" (Video 1, line 46) shows an insensitivity towards the position that forced migrants find themselves in.

Just like president Trump has said. We do not need you. There's many other people from other European countries who do want to work and respect the Aruban law. And when their day comes they self decide to go back to their country. Not like the ones who want to work illegally and don't want to go back to their country (CS1, comment 46)

** Deport them that is how we will return the tranquility to Aruba and the tourists can walk without fear (...) out go to Maduro your president* (CS1, comment 75)

Interestingly, the existence of a 'language border' (see codebook) or a cultural threat was virtually non-existent. The moments in which the cultural backgrounds were mentioned were not in a context that described them as threats, but as merely unwelcome. Perhaps the close lineage between the two groups and the fact that Aruba's Papiamentu is the most influenced by Spanish (Grant, 2008) clarifies this as a non-threatening element to Aruban culture.

Notably, the third comment section also contained a theme in which undocumented Venezuelans are portrayed as dirty or polluting which was minimal in the remaining comment sections. Perhaps this theme was exacerbated in this comment section through utterances made by the reporter in the third video in which he says that the coast guard are on a "rampant rage scraping the streets" i.e. getting rid of undocumented Venezuelans. The statements made in this category described the undocumented Venezuelans as objects to be mopped, cleared away, objects to be picked up, get rid of, pests like rats, alligators, filth, and whores. The following examples highlight the tone within this code even further:

** (...) "It is them who have ruined our dushi Aruba. It's time for a good clean up"* (CS3, comment 75).

** Slowly but surely they'll clean up, more control on the ocean is (...) Everywhere you go you need to pay to enter tsss rats is what you guys are acting like, entering like alligators"* (CS3, comment 93).

Relating and empathizing with the undocumented Venezuelan also allowed for critical opinions about the asylum seeker's life choices and current circumstance. This was done by acknowledging the difficult position of the refugee and criticizing him and his partner for having a baby under such dreadful circumstances. Through this the position of the undocumented Venezuelan is criticized as one that is undeserving of sympathy or pity due to the refugee's shortcomings of being an 'ideal victim' deserving of solidarity and/or pity.

* (...) Wow, one year as an illegal and you just get a baby. You are already an illegal and then you put yourself in an even more difficult circumstance (....) (CS2, comment 46).

* Sad indeed but let's be serious as well, they are going through a needy period and continue to have babies like crazy (CS2, comment 28).

*more control on the ocean is needed , Aruba's sea lacks control! (CS3, comment 93).

*Get them all out... To each their own place" (CS3, comment 27)

4.2.2 HELPING THY NEIGHBOR

Human interest themes were mostly present in the second comment section (CS2) which pertains to the video in which the undocumented Venezuelan was interrogated/interviewed by a reporter. It is significant how the utterances made by the undocumented Venezuelan conveyed strong human interest theme messages to the audience, even when it was packaged in a law enforcement frame through headlines and the news video title. Geogiou (2018) stated that voice does not equate recognition, however, the comment section did reveal that the audience recognized the voice of the undocumented Venezuelan. This corroborates previous research that highlight the potential of participatory media in which bottom-up discourse can counter institutions (KhrosriviNik & Zia, 2014). The most notable discussions in relation to the topics in the video were: 1) discussions on human rights in relation to asylum seekers, and 2) DIMAS (Department of Integration and Management of Migrants) negligence towards the undocumented in terms of their rights and/or protection. This was understood and accepted as a 'false process' by the undocumented Venezuelan and the reporter. The following comments show the confusion the audience was feeling in relation to these institutions, the reporter's acceptance of it, and the refugee's powerlessness:

#How is it a false process, is DIMAS a false institution? (CS2, comment 73)

#I want the police officer to explain that (CS.2, comment 74)

#But how is that? So DIMAS is giving away false petitions to be protected. This is what the one who is filming has said (CS2, comment 109)

Furthermore, the human interest frame is balanced in relation to notions of deportation. The act of deportation is supported by arguments of law enforcement, however the narrative in the comment section is slightly different to that in the law enforcement framing of threat in the video segments. Instead there is more understanding for the vulnerable position that the undocumented Venezuelans are in and their actions are seen as acts of survival or life improvement. Bleiker et al., (2013) found that positive clichés such as suffering and survival elicit acceptance in the

audience. The man that is filmed on camera, with his hands behind his back, on the floor with a blue eye communicates to audience several connotations of survival, and victimhood. Moreover, the calm demeanor of this man may have also persuaded the audience to listen to him, and accept his current circumstance as actions of survival, instead of actions and representations of threat. Additionally, there are comments that even criticize the reporter's tone towards the undocumented Venezuelan seen on camera. The following comments highlight the comments' phlegmatic stance towards deportation which is in strike contrast to 24Ora's dramatizing and criminalizing framing of this occurrence on Aruba. For instance in the following examples:

*In the Aruban civil code, there is no article that can criminalize this case. The only penalty is deportation. (CS.2, comment 45)

#(...) One thing is deporting because it is part of a job process another very different thing is punching and humiliating people. I cannot believe how you can make these video's, it is as if you gain satisfaction seeing people in poor conditions. That does make me very angry.... Oke he ran because he is afraid, that's logical. But there is no need to treat people in such a humiliating way, and so low class. Disgraceful! I love Aruba, but some people abuse their position to trample other people. That is not good (CS2, comment 60).

Furthermore, the comment section also contained many comments in which pity was expressed, through common utterances such as: "hopi pika", "pika", "Pikaaaaa" in Papiamentu and "Que Pecadito", "pobrecito", "pobre chamo" in Spanish, which all translate to pity or poor man. These comments were an acknowledgement of the difficult circumstance of the undocumented Venezuelan, however, contrary to sympathy, it reveals a less engaged sentiment, perhaps one of hopelessness. It corroborates Sajir & Aouragh (2019) research that emphasizes how certain media narratives can either increase solidarity, or like in this case lead to ineffective forms of pity. The difficult situation is acknowledged, however no real responsibility or chain of solidarity acts emerge as a result of this reporting and/or comment section. Conversely, sympathy was the most prominent category in this comment section. Comments in this category expressed notions of sadness, understanding, and frustrations for the current circumstance of the fleeing undocumented Venezuelan. Sympathy was expressed by both members of the Venezuelan community and those outside of it. This is evident in the following two examples:

#But I say, we can't treat them like this, they are people looking for a way to survive, I'm not Venezuelan but it makes me very sad to see how they treat him (CS2, comment 9)

#I know him, he's my neighbor in Venezuela, he is not a bad young man, I hope he succeeds in climbing out of his circumstance and that they allow him to support his family (CS2, comment 103).

Additionally, the theme of compliant workaholics was most significantly present in the third comment section. However, most comments in this comment section did not pardon the actions of the illegal workers, but condemned the employers for upholding the structure that provides labor to illegal foreigners. This reaction is

significant, and highlights the commenters' understanding of the various actors present in the structure that provides work to undocumented individuals on Aruba. Moreover, instead of seeing the undocumented as a cultural threat, the previously expressed anxieties surrounding the payment of flight tickets were solved by suggesting that the employers should pay for illegal workers' flight tickets instead. Despite this, this theme does not grant equal human rights, or belonging to the undocumented Venezuelans in Aruban society which further highlights the scarcity of resources that the audience is concerned about.

*The companies should be charged FL1000,- for every illegal they find. They are responsible for his crime" (CS3, comment 105)

*Let the companies pay for their deportation as well, and fine them FL5000,- (CS3, comment 110).

*Employers should also be fined for providing work, because let's be real, if you don't provide work, they wouldn't be working anyway (CS3, comment 102).

EXCEPTIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK

Previous research has established how walls (Jaramillo-Dent & Pérez-Rodríguez, 2019) and the representation of 'boat people' (Bruno, 2016; Rowe & O'Brien, 2014) have been used as establishers of 'otherness' in relation to refugees and undocumented individuals. Despite the ocean and boats being a physical description of the border points that needed to be guarded by Aruban coast guards, it was not a significant symbolic border. Notably, the depiction of 'boat people' was not established in the comment section or in the video reports as representations of undocumented Venezuelans. Perhaps this is due to the close proximity of Aruba and the touristic image on which the island thrives that relies on a welcoming ocean border representation. Moreover, the video segments emphasize the 'tossing out' or detention of undocumented Venezuelans as illegal workers instead of focusing on their entrance to the island. This is in stark contrast to research done on immigrants in Italy (Bruno, 2016), Australian refugees (Rowe & O'Brien, 2014), and refugee images in Europe during the Syrian refugee crisis (Sajir & Aouragh, 2019). Ultimately, borders exist as much in discourse as they do on geographical maps. One might think that these boundaries are more overtly present in relation to an island whose borders are obviously visible by the coming together of land with water. Yet, results showed that the Caribbean sea was not significantly present as an establisher of 'otherness'.

SNS have fundamentally changed the manner in which news is generally produced, consumed, and disseminated. Horsti (2016) argues that this may also have an impact on news framing. Users have more access to the distribution process and more freedom to share their opinions online. The nature of news on SNS that is accompanied by likes and comments is a convergence of interpersonal and mass communication that has been studied by many scholars in communication research (KhosraviNik & Zia, 2014; Lee & Jang, 2010; Lee & Tandoc, 2017; Neubaum & Krämer, 2017; Winter et al., 2015). There are various ways in which a newsreader can decode a news text. According to Hall's (2001) reception theory, these can be classified into three categories. The first one is the dominant or preferred reading in which the reader decodes the text with the same meaning as was intended

by the producer of the media text. The second is resistant reading where the decoded meaning reflects the opposite that was intended by the producer. Finally, the third is a negotiated reading, which entails a mixture of the preferred and the resistant reading.

The video representation of undocumented Venezuelans on 24Ora corroborates previous research in which refugees and migrants are 'othered' in the media. Notably, even though the immediacy that Facebook affords in relation to news production, the ultimate media product is mostly molded by the producers, this is evident in 24Ora's deliberate use of law enforcement language in their video segments, with their insistence on words such as 'illegal'. Ultimately, the encoded message appears to be one of law enforcement.

Furthermore, Horsti (2016) argued that SNS impacts news framing because users have more access to the distribution process, and can also share their opinions. Facebook provided a platform where the audience could voice their opinion and question the powerlessness of undocumented Venezuelans in the video in which the undocumented Venezuelan had a voice. However, even though the refugee's voice was dismissed by the reporter, and repackaged into a law enforcement frame through the title and headlines, I argue that the audience still responded to the refugee's voice, and the images of survival, and victimhood. Thus, the decoded reading that can be concluded from the comment section generally fell in line with what was depicted in the videos, i.e. a preferred reading; even underneath the second video in which the support for the undocumented Venezuelan might not have been anticipated by the producers because 24Ora posted these images and allowed the undocumented Venezuelan to speak.

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter offers a summary of the main research findings laid out in the previous chapter. Furthermore, in this chapter the sub-questions and the main research question of this thesis will be answered. Moreover this chapter will expound upon the exceptions and limitations of this thesis. To conclude, the implications of this research and suggestions for future studies related to undocumented individuals' representation and audience engagement will be provided.

5.1 Undocumented Venezuelans' Representation and Reception

The purpose of this thesis was to uncover in which ways undocumented Venezuelans are represented on an Aruban media news outlet (24Ora), and how the Facebook audience responded to this representation in the comment section in light of the recent Venezuelan Exodus. In order to answer the research question, I have divided the research question into two sub-questions: 1) How are Venezuelans represented in local Aruban video news media? and 2) How does the audience react to this representation in the comment section? The first sub-question investigates the themes that are present in 24Ora's reporting about undocumented Venezuelans in Aruba, the videos were transcribed and coded in light of the codebooks that pertained to the law enforcement and human interest media frames. Furthermore, there was also an analysis of the visual elements of the videos at play during the reporting. This was done in order to fully grasp the media text that the audience was responding to, as it is assumed that the audience is responding to the textual and visual elements of the videos as a whole. The law enforcement frame in relation to undocumented Venezuelans was maintained through the use of last bulletin music, hyperbolic language used in headlines (i.e. mass deportation to report on the deporting of 60 undocumented individuals) on the reporting of the deportation as an 'us vs. them' problem that the coast guard is battling successfully, through the insistence on the word "illegals", and through the visual representation of undocumented Venezuelans as individuals who were being reprimanded, handcuffed, and detained. The visual representation's focus on local authorities' use of force in order to detain the "illegals" contributed to the representation of undocumented Venezuelans as criminals and justifies Aruba's need for law enforcement. Furthermore, the language that is used to report, even when a different word such as 'asylum seeker' is used by the interrogated undocumented Venezuelan showcases 24Ora's insistence on maintaining the law enforcement frame that further solidifies an unwelcoming rhetoric towards fleeing Venezuelans. Overall, the law enforcement frame was the most prominent in each video, thus leading to the conclusion of this being 24Ora's overarching frame with which they choose to report on undocumented Venezuelans in Aruba. This thesis' findings corroborate previous research that states that the media tends to portray refugees and migrants through negative frames.

The second sub-question explored how the audience engaged with the representation of undocumented Venezuelans underneath news video segments of 24Ora, and investigated which sections of the media text they were responding to in particular. The manner in which the undocumented Venezuelans were represented during the video reporting seemed to have an effect on how sympathetic the audience responded to images and news about undocumented Venezuelans in Aruba. The analysis focused on how the comments responded with

sympathy, pity, or rejection. Notably, the presence of an undocumented Venezuelan's calm voice provided more insight into the personhood of this refugee, and perhaps on the phenomenon of fleeing Venezuelans. This particular video accentuated the distinction that Georgiou, 2018 has made between the following power tensions in relation to various groups in society: 'visibility without voice', 'voice without recognition', and recognition without power'. During the video reporting the voice of the undocumented Venezuelan had no power, in contrast to the scolding tone of the reporter who was interviewing him, i.e. 'recognition without power'. However, Facebook as a SNS, particularly the comment section did not accept this misuse of power. In this instant it became apparent how the law enforcement frame was difficult to maintain when a voice is given to an undocumented Venezuelan. The discussion underneath this video - in the comment section - was less one of pity or discrimination (unlike the other two comment sections) but one concerned with the undocumented Venezuelan's human rights. This shifted the frame of this video more towards the human interest frame as opposed to the law enforcement one; it appears as though the undocumented Venezuelan's voice is empowered on a SNS through the comments section. Additionally, the dichotomy of threat/victim was difficult to maintain in the discussion found within the comments underneath the video in which an undocumented Venezuelan's voice is present. Perhaps providing the undocumented Venezuelan with a personhood by allowing him to speak and answer questions allowed the audience to see him as neither a threat nor a victim, but as a human being who is allowed to be flawed.

These two sub-questions were used as tools to help answer this thesis' research question: How does 24Ora's Facebook audience engage with news about undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba, and do the video representations portray the traditional law enforcement and human interest media frames? In conclusion, 24ora's video reporting on undocumented Venezuelans could be described as one that pertains to the law enforcement frame with a focus on deportation, othering through themes that portray undocumented Venezuelans as 'the other', or 'them', and an insistence on the word 'illegal'. The video representations also focused on portraying the presence of undocumented Venezuelans as a phenomenon that is a battle between local authorities and illegal Venezuelans on the island, this further entrenches the 'us vs. them' theme that falls into the law enforcement frame. In general the portrayal of undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba showcased them being detained, interrogated, and deported. Their main crime was being caught (working) without the proper documentation such as working or staying permits.

Most of the journalistic framing labelled the undocumented Venezuelans as 'illegals' which supported the notion of deportation; this was also accepted by their audience. The comments underneath the analyzed videos seem to cohere to the main representation of undocumented Venezuelans in the selected videos. Two of the three videos were narrated by 24Ora, either by one reporter or through headlines shown on screen, and the majority of the comments underneath these videos could arguably fall into what Hall (2001) calls the dominant or preferred reading. The comments contained themes that were for example pro-deportation, expressed a fear of Aruba's lack of resources, othered the undocumented Venezuelans shown on camera, and even expressed the theme of othering as dirty/polluting. Notably, the comment section also revealed that just like in Ramirez-Placencia (2020)'s

research, xenophobia against Venezuelans seemed to be founded on economic, labor, and security issues.

Interestingly, the only video in which an undocumented Venezuelan's face and voice was present, was received through what Hall (2001) would call the negotiated reading, this reading was a mix of themes that were found in the headlines and the reporter's words, mixed with messages provided by the voice of the undocumented Venezuelan. The powerlessness that was shown on screen was not accepted in the comment section, and as such there was an increase in sympathy and pity for the undocumented Venezuelan's circumstance as well.

5.2 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The current Venezuelan Exodus is a sensitive phenomenon with significant consequences for millions of people who are fleeing their country. This is why it is necessary for contemporary researchers to focus on the impact the representation of undocumented Venezuelan refugees and migrants has on neighboring countries. SNS have the potential to increase understanding by recognizing, and giving power to unwelcomed or oppressed voices in societies. One of the limitations of this research was the inability to be able to ask follow-up questions to the commenters, and to the producers. Future studies can complement Facebook comments and video analysis by also conducting in-depth interviews with 24Ora's followers, and by interviewing the producers of the newspaper. This will provide an understanding of the undocumented Venezuelan's representation on Aruba, the societal understanding of these representations and the social hierarchies therein.

Despite the efforts made to further sharpen the methodology of this thesis with regards to the deductive thematic analysis tool with which the analysis was conducted, it is not free from limitations. The current study was conducted through a thematic analysis of theoretical media frames that were deemed relevant in news media research in relation to migrants, refugees, and undocumented individuals. The interdisciplinary character of this topic presented itself as a challenge due to the vast amount of literature that can be found in the realm of political science and refugee studies. In addition, the current study was conducted through a rigorous analysis of 515 comments that were narrowed through a process of elimination to a total of 306 comments. This sample size could be deemed a limitation. However, it serves as a good template to conduct future research with a greater data set. Future studies can use this ratio of relevant comments as an indication of the amount of comments needed in deductive thematic analysis.

Additionally, the social media sphere represents a relatively new landscape that can be used by researchers to delve deeper into how citizens make sense of mainstream media representations of undocumented individuals in a relatively connected Global South through SNS. As I'm writing these implications, the government of Colombia has announced temporary protection for all Venezuelan refugees currently in the country (Janetsky, 2021). This shifts the structural paradigm in which undocumented Venezuelans have had to maneuver in the past years in order to survive and their plight to be included in various neighboring societies. Their label 'illegal' might become more contentious in Aruba in light of Colombia's humanitarian gesture. On the other hand, the temporary protection of undocumented Venezuelans in Colombia might increase the flow of Venezuelan migrants, and with that the media's attention towards this 'out-group' in a negative light. This might also increase their discrimination due to the media's

tendency to portray them as a threat. Ultimately this might then signify to other countries, such as Aruba, that Colombia's acceptance attitude is not favorable towards Aruba's safety, and might increase discrimination and the negative stereotype of undocumented Venezuelans.

5.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIETY

The impact the presence of a calm undocumented Venezuelan's voice had on the audience is noteworthy. This highlights what Figenschou & Thorbornsrud (2015) have mentioned in their research, namely, that refugees and migrants also seek to be recognized as autonomous actors. This thesis showed that providing a voice does impact the manner in which complex subjects are decoded by an audience. These findings accentuate the potential of media as a socialization tool between various groups in society (Castellanos-Diaz & Prada-Penagos, 2020), and substantiates the suggestion of Ramírez-Plascencia (2020) that a humanitarian frame might foster feelings of compassion.

Moreover, this thesis raises important questions regarding the representation of undocumented Venezuelans in Aruba. First, the contrasting findings in the analyzed comment sections elucidate the significance of local media representation and the impact authentic refugee voices can have on an audience's understanding. Thus, it is paramount to hold the media responsible and accountable for the representations of migration issues. This has significant implications for how the 'other' is perceived and ultimately treated. Additionally, this thesis highlights how the media is not always the sole factor that predicts the audience's reaction to immigrant representations. Outside factors, for instance culture and politics also influence the manner in which news is received and how media representations are negotiated by an audience. This was exemplified by how several themes were rejected by the audience and how others were only visible in the comment section.

By addressing the representation of undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba, this thesis has aspired to shed light on the implications that a negative media bias might have on structurally powerless individuals who are fleeing a humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. Social media news representations influenced the comment section depending on the most prominent media frames, and voices showcased and omitted in each video. Discrimination, intolerance, and deportability was justified based on labels such as 'illegal' which pertained to the law enforcement frame. Furthermore, the striking contrast found within the comment sections was only made possible through the interrogated undocumented Venezuelan's ability to remain calm, as he retained the label of 'asylum seeker' and refuted the label of 'illegal' that was thrown at him by local news media. Perhaps the comment section underneath the second video would have contained more support for local law enforcement if the undocumented individual was less aware of these labels and less calm in answering the reporter's questions. Future studies should analyze the potential shifts in representation due to Colombia's recent welcoming gestures, as these will likely have an effect on the thematic frames of Aruban news about undocumented Venezuelans. It would be interesting to analyze the trajectory of undocumented Venezuelans' representation as the 'other' in relation to a shifting socio-political structure in neighboring countries. Finally, future studies can also focus on how the current pandemic might exacerbate refugees and migrants representation as threats, with the potential of

reinforcing the traditional negative bias towards immigrants, refugees and foreigners in the media.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: VIDEO REPORT TRANSCRIPTS

A.1: DEPORTACION MASAL AWE PA VENEZUELA

0: 07 - 0: 17: Warda nos costa a deporta +/- 60 ilegal awe
[translation: Warda nos costa (coast guard) deports +/- 60 illegals today]
0:31 - 0: 39: 46 Venezolano di Aruba y e resto di Corsou
[translation: 46 Venezuelans from Aruba, and the rest from Curacao]
0:54 - 1: 03: Accionan ta dunando bon resultado
[Translation: The actions are providing good results]

A.2 MIEDO PA DEPORTACION: VENEZOLANO ILEGAL A PURBA CORE PA POLIS:

Reporter: Que paso compadre? Cómo llegaste a Aruba?
V: huh?
R: Cómo llegaste a Aruba?
0:11 [Headline: Venezolano ilegal a core pa evita deportacion]
V: Por avion
R: Hace cuando?
V: Un año, vine por asilo
R: Esperando por asilo?
V: No yo...estaba... por asilo, ellos estaban por Warda Nos Costa, y firmo todos los días por ir ahi... *inaudible)
R: Y por qué corriste?
0:30 [Headline: E ta cu su pareha y dos luna pasa ela haya un baby]
V: Porque me da miedo que me envíen a Venezuela, porque tengo mi baby de, acaba de nacer un baby, va para dos luna, y la cosa en Venezuela no está nada fácil pa' mi
R: Y el baby nació en Aruba?
(0:38) V: *nods* ja
R: Y tu esposa es Venezolana también?
R: Y porque no fuiste a firmar? ¿Por qué te corres?
V: hah?
R: Si tu tienes asilo, ¿tú vas a firmar, porque corres?
V: Por eso, porque igual se llevan allá a la gente, y lo dejan allá castigado en Warda Nos Costa... Teniendo asilo lo dejan allá metido...
0:55 [Headline: Ell a hustifica: El a core pa miedo pa no deport'e]
R: Y tiene licencia pa' manejar?
V: 'ta en la casa
R: Y cómo sobrevives aquí en Aruba?
V: Yo soy mecanico, sobrevivo haciendo trabajitos de mecánica, no puedo trabajar en *inaudible
1:15 [Headline: E tin mas di 1 año ilegal na Aruba]
Police officer starts asking questions: Cuántas horas al día quedan cerrado alla en Warda Nos Costa?
V: Cuantas horas?
P: Si
V: Veinti.... Namas salen 3 horas al día, una hora en la mañana, una hora al mediodía, y una hora [audio cuts abruptly]
R: Y te tratan mal allá?
V: Cuando yo estaba, que estábamos en Dakota...(inaudible word). Si, trataban un poquito fuerte, si...
R: ¿Tienes contacto con la vieja? La....la...la jefa?
V: No (shakes head) no. Con ella no tengo contacto.

R: Y tu esposa también está ilegal en Aruba
V: Esta por asilo también
R: Pero ustedes no saben que no dan asilo? Solamente un proceso falso?
V: Si si si, pero nosotros estamos ahí, fuimos a DIMAS y nos dijeron que esperamos ahí.. Pues...
R: Y ella también viene en avión? Vino en avion, avion
[Two police officers pick him up from the ground, with his hands behind his back, and a black eye]
P: Y de qué parte de Venezuela viene?
V: Punto Fijo
R: ¿Qué mensaje quieres mandar hoy?
V: hmm?
R: ¿Qué mensaje quieres mandar hoy?
V: {confused} Mensaje?
R: Si
P: Un mensaje para tus compatriotas que están aquí, que están pasando igual que tu.
2:28 [Headline: A hib'e Warda nos Costa pa mas investigacion]
R: O las autoridades
V: No.... que se cuiden, que estén pendientes, que la cosa en Venezuela no está fácil
R: Tienes más hijos? V: Yo corrí en verdad...
V: por el miedo de ir a Venezuela. No quiero, porque esta mi bebe aqui, mi baby, faltan 4 dias pa dos luna.

A.3: ACCIONAN CONTRA ILEGALIDAD TA CONTINUA RIBA NOS ISLA

0:07 - : 24Ora.com ta para awe, un biaha mas na e entrada di Warda nos costa aki, caminda e tawata vol
Headline 0:19: Tur dia hopi ilegal den rij pa firma na GNC
0:19 - 0:49: E motibo cu nos ta para aki ta pa informa bo cu Guarda nos Costa ta den un racha di razia, tur e dianan aki, y practicamente tur dia ta keda haya cantidad grandi di ilegalnan ariba nos isla. Hopi ta esnan cu ta move riba nos isla, cu no ta naci aki, y cu no tin legalmente documentonan, sea pa estadia of pa tambe pa traha ariba nos isla. (video, individual resisting being taken away by the authorities)
0:49 - : Accionan di Guarda nos Costa ta netamente caminda cu tin trabounan andando, y anos tambe tawata presente na algun di e lugarnan aki na e momento cu Guarda nos Costa a tene accion.
(Video: individual being handcuffed next to vehicle)
1:00 - : Y den diferente of practicamente den tur luga cu nan a bishita nan a hasi detenshon di hendenan cu no por a prueba na e momento ey, documentonan pa prueba cu nan ta legal ariba Aruba of cu nan tin un permiso di trabou.
Headline 1:09: GNC ta raspando riba caya
1:19 - : Hendenan aki ta wordo tresi na Guarda nos costa. Hopi di nan, mayoria, ta Venezolano, y tin tambe nacionalidad Colombiano na cantidad chikito y otro nacionalidadnan den un cantidad hopi mas chikito. Pero e cantidad mas grandi, hopi mas grandi ta esun di nacionalidad Venezolano.
(Video: focus on a lady holding the Dutch passport towards the camera)
1:32: focus on same lady showing the camera her Aruban identity card
Headline 1:38: Accionan exitoso di Guarda Nos Costa
1:38 - : E accionan aki no ta bay termina pasobra e cantidad di hendenan cu tin den e momentonan aki (reporter looks to the left, a door opening) uhhh... ilegal riba nos isla, ta hoopi, y e trabou di Guarda Nos Costa tambe ta hopi. Pa finalmente pone man ariba tur esnan cu no tin derecho di ta riba nos isla y tambe ta trahando y esnan cu tambe ta culpabel di henter e asunto aki ta esnan cu ta duna trabou na esnan cu no tin permiso di trabou, y cu nan sa cu nan ta ilegal ariba nos isla.
(Video: women being guided to the white vehicle)
2:09 - : Con largo y con lo saca e hendenan aki, nos no sa. nos tin informashon si di paden cu nan ta wordo saca via vuelonan semanal di Aruba pa Venezuela, un vuelo special, otronan ta wordo saca via riwacha (2.28), esta Aruba riwacha eynan nan ta coi un biahe di auto of bus pa Venezuela.
2:34 - 2:37: Kermen esaki ta diferente forma cu ta wordo usa pa saca e hendenan aki.
(video: woman put in vehicle being lectured by the Guarda Nos Costa agent)
Headline 2:29: Hopi localidad a gara ilegalnan trahando

2: 38 - 2.56 : Loke tambe nos a tuma nota ta cu tin cantidad grandi di hende tur mainta para na Guarda Nos Costa, para den rij wardando nan beurt pa firma. Pasobra nan tin un of otro, nan ta pendiente pa un of otro asilo of permiso etc. y nan no a tene nan y deporta nan.

2.57 - : Si ta e caso cu nan mester bin tur dia, bin meld aki na Guarda Nos Costa, firma cu nan tey, y kisas yega un di acu nan no mester bin mas of kisas yega un dia cu nan ta keda paden dibiaha y pa nan wordo deporta.

3.11 - : Esey ta e situashoncu nos tin den e momentonan aki pero di otro banda mester bisa cu Guarda Nos Costa ta keda hasi tur esfuerzo pa finalmente pone un fin den e moveshonan di hendenan ilegal ariba nos isla. No ta solamente Guarda Nos Costa cu ta esun cu ta yega na pia di trabou, tin hende cu ta resisti hasta, ora cu Guarda Nos Costa bay den nan accionan pero nan ta sali domina nan, pero tambe diariamente a tuma nota

Headline 3.37: Venezolanonan ilegal gara ta resalta den accion di GNC

3.37 - 4.30 : cu polisna ta topa cu hendenan ilegal riba caya, den auto, involvi den accidente, of durante control, nan ta haya nan den auto, y esakinan tambe tur dia ta wordo traspasa pa e personal di Guarda Nos Costa cu ta sigui cu e trabou, e proceso pa deporta nan for di nos isla. Trabounan cu ta sigui, no ta trabou facil, pero, poco poco esnan di Guarda Nos Costa lo sa di controla e situashon di ilegalidad riba nos isla mientras cu e frontera ta sera, e ta bay ta mas facil pa nan por pone man ariba esnan cu ta ilegal. Pero, si habri frontera e ta bay bira un problema pasobra e orey bo ta haya atrobe un fluho di cantidad di hende cu ta dreña, y nan no ta bay, nan ta keda ilegal riba nos isla, y esaki ta bira un situashon hopi fastioso caminda cu na dado momento bo ta hibando awa lama.

4.30 - : esey ta loke ta pasando, bo ta hiba awa lama, pa motibo di e sierto cosnan cu por sosode. Asina mes nan ta dreñando via otro destinashonan cu no ta Venezuela, nan ta dreñando Aruba via otro vuelonan cu tambe ta sali for di, nan ta sali for di Venezuela bay otro pais y asina dreña Aruba.

4. 51 - : informashon cu nos ker a trese ariba e trabounan cu ta tumando luga. Accionan contra ilegalnan ta continua ariba nos isla y e ta sali cada biaha den un forma exitoso pa Guarda Nos Costa.

APPENDIX B: THEMATIC ANALYSIS COMMENT SECTIONS – QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

| Illegality | lens | CS1 | CS2 | CS3 | Humanitarian | lens | CS1 | CS2 | CS3 |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| code | | | | | code | | | | |
| Borders | | 6% | | 6% | Human rights | | 1.5% | 17% | 2% |
| Pro-deportation | | 15% | 5% | 17% | “Compliant | | 2.2% | 3% | 14% |
| Lack of resources | | 10% | 3% | 5% | Workaholics” | | | | |
| Language border | | 0.7% | 1% | 1% | Them | | 0.7% | 1% | |
| Othering | | | | 1% | Pity | | - | 18% | 1% |
| Them | | 10% | 3% | 5% | Us | | - | 1% | - |
| Dirty/Polluting | | 1% | 1% | 9% | Sympathy | | 3% | 20% | - |
| Us | | | | 1% | Humanitarian | | 8% | 14% | 9% |
| Us vs. them | | 1% | 2% | 3% | judgement | | | | |
| Safety Threat | | 9% | | 4% | Other | | 1.5% | - | 3% |
| Economic Threat | | 7% | 1% | 3% | Total | | 17% | 76% | 30% |
| Pragmatic | | 6% | 6% | | Table XXI: Humanitarian lens comment sections results | | | | |
| Other | | 14% | 2% | 15% | Notes. CS1 = comment section 1; CS2 = comment section 2; CS3 = comment section 3 | | | | |

| | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| Total | 83% | 24% | 70% |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|

Table XX: Illegality lens comment section results
Notes. CS 1 = comment section 1; CS2 = comment section 2; CS3 = comment section 3

APPENDIX C: OVERVIEW OF SELECTED ARTICLES, KEY TERMS, AND CORRESPONDING TOTAL COMMENTS

| Key Term | Date | Article | Comments | Duration |
|-----------------|------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Deportado | January 17, 2020 | Deportacion masal awe pa Venezuela | 179 (Total gathered 170) | 1:16 min |
| Venezolano | Dec 6, 2019 | Miedo pa deportacion: Venezolano ilegals a purba core pa polis. | 174 | 2: 59 min |
| Asilo Venezuela | January 15, 2020 | Accionan contra ilegalidad ta continua riba nos isla | 215 (Total gathered 195) | 5:00 min |

APPENDIX D: ALL COMMENTS

D.1: ALL UNFILTERED COMMENTS

See Excel sheet

D.2: ALL FILTERED COMMENTS

See Excel sheet

APPENDIX E: THEMATIC ANALYSIS COMMENT REACTION PER VIDEO

See Excel sheet