

The Powerful 'Truth' Producing a Refugee Crisis

A Regime of Truth and Discourses on Asylum Seekers and Refugees
in the Netherlands



Mirthe Hendriks
6866999

Utrecht University
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The image on the cover is a political cartoon titled *Asylum Seeker*, made by an artist with the pseudonym NEMØ, in December of 2018. The image is published on cartoonmovement.com, where NEMØ writes that cartoons allow “to extrapolate from that reality and take our thoughts to another level, sometimes lighter, some other times darker.”

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to take a critical look at the regime of truth on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees produced and sustained by systems of power in the Netherlands from 2014 to 2019. The dominant discourses on asylum seekers and refugees that are considered ‘acceptable’ and ‘normal’, are actually social constructs. For example, we perceive asylum seekers and refugees as a threat or as victims, and we regard the inflow of asylum seekers and refugees as a crisis. As such, it seems that systems of power allow for the discursive ‘truth’ of ‘crisis’ to be produced and sustained. Moreover, our perception of the refugee ‘crisis’ is used to legitimise how we treat asylum seekers and refugees. Do we want our current understanding of the inflow of asylum seekers and refugees to govern our (policy) approach?

This thesis adopts a Critical Discourse Analytic approach and operationalises Foucault’s ‘regime of truth’ as an analytical frame, to study the interaction between discourse, truth, and power. This research identifies three dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands from 2014 until 2019: the threat/securitisation discourse, humanitarian discourse, and human rights discourse. Powerful media and political apparatuses have status and are sanctioned to produce these dominant discourses, while asylum seekers and refugees are unheard. I argue that the regime of truth in Dutch society suspends asylum seekers and refugees between victimhood and malevolence. The systems of power that produce and sustain this regime of truth are inherently unequal and work to legitimise structural and symbolic violence against asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands. This thesis contributes by uncovering power relations and deconstructing established ways of knowing in discourses on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugee.

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INTRODUCTION

Does Aylan's death change anything about the refugee crisis? I am afraid not. If Europe opens its gates for all displaced people, the welfare state will eventually become unsustainable. Closing the borders for the legions who want nothing but a future, for themselves and their children, is however impossible and inhumane. A diabolical dilemma that no one will solve in the short term. But if Aylan's death results in the search for happiness no longer being seen as a parasitic activity, the poor boy has died for a reason. (Goossens, 2015, my translation)¹

On September 2nd 2015, the three-year-old Syrian boy Aylan Kurdi washed up on a beach in Turkey. As Aylan lost his life trying to reach a safe haven, the media spoke of a "human tragedy unfolding on the shores of Europe" and "an image that shakes the awareness of Europe" (Berry, Garcia-Blanco, & Moore, 2016, p. 6; Smith, 2015). Media coverage of the tragedy was significant, and many European outlets declared a 'turning point' for European immigration politics (Berry et al., 2016, p. 6). Both politicians and the media advocated the need for a more liberal and humane approach.

A few months later, this trend appeared to have been short-lived (Ensor, 2016). European states remain reluctant to host refugees, and in most cases, humanitarian concerns have not translated to more open and liberal asylum policy (Berry et al., 2016, p. 63, 158). Refugee flows continue to be perceived as a major 'crisis' to Europe and a threat to national security, welfare systems, or national identity (Berry et al., 2016, p. 8, 39; Wodak & KhosraviNik, 2013). While some political actors and citizens regard 'Fortress Europe' as a necessary solution to the refugee crisis, others are concerned about the humanitarian consequences and the protection of human rights (Baczynska, 2018; Jünemann, Fromm, & Scherer, 2019). Tinti (2019) declared that liberal democratic states are waging a 'War on Asylum'.

In the book *Refuge Beyond Reach: How Rich Democracies Repel Asylum Seekers*,

¹ The original text fragment: "Verandert Aylans dood iets aan de vluchtelingencrisis? Ik ben bang van niet. Als Europa de poorten openzet voor alle ontheemden, zal de verzorgingsstaat op termijn onhoudbaar zijn. De grenzen sluiten voor de legioenen die niets anders willen dan een toekomst, voor zichzelf en hun kinderen, is daarentegen onmogelijk en onmenselijk. Een duivels dilemma dat niemand op korte termijn zal oplossen. Maar als Aylans dood erin resulteert dat het zoeken naar geluk niet langer als een parasitaire bezigheid wordt gezien, dan is het arme jochie niet voor niets gestorven." (Goossens, 2015) in the newspaper article "Aylan kan niets anders meer worden dan een symbool" in *Het Algemeen Dagblad*.

FitzGerald (2019, p. 3) states that "since the 1980s, there has been a consistent trend toward making it more difficult for asylum seekers to reach territory where they can ask for asylum." He refers to this as political measures of 'remote control'. Similarly, in her book on *EU Asylum Policies: The Power of Strong Regulating States*, Natascha Zaun (2017) demonstrates that the influential states of North-Western Europe have employed their powerful bargaining positions to shape EU asylum policies decisively. It is clear that there are real and significant consequences to how asylum seekers and refugees are perceived in a particular societal context.

This empirical observation left me with several questions: How come asylum seekers and refugees are perceived in a certain way? How is it that asylum seekers and refugees are perceived both as victims and as a threat? Why are certain treatments of asylum seekers and refugees and policy approaches to the refugee crisis accepted? How is this legitimised? Wallace and Wolf (1999, p. 181) recognise "rules that are articulated in social interaction and tell people how to 'do' social life, and the resources on which people can call to achieve their objectives." Giddens (1979, p. 64) labelled these rules of social life 'structures', more abstractly defined as "rules and resources recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems". As such, there are particular rules of social life on how to perceive and how to deal with the European refugee crisis. It is common that these rules become so embedded in society in space and time that we have started to regard them as self-evident and natural.

How do we then study our rules of social life and our understanding of the refugee crisis? Jabri argued that the constructed social rules of everyday life "become manifest and visible – and hence researchable – to us in discourses and institutions" (Jabri, 1996, p. 134; Demmers, 2017, p. 128). We can study stories of signification, those that are about representation and that convey meaning. In addition, we can study stories of legitimation; stories about what is considered 'acceptable' and 'normal' (Jabri, 1996, p. 83). To understand how perceptions of asylum seekers and refugees are constructed in a social context, it is valuable to analyse media and political discourses.

In the academic world, discourse analysis is frequently used to research the European refugee crisis. Scholars find that dominant discourses on the European refugee crisis represent asylum seekers and refugees as a threat or as victims (Gale, 2004, p. 326-327; Gray & Franck, 2019, p. 276, Ibrahim, 2005, p. 163; Robinson, 2017). But is that all there is to know? Why are particular discourses on the refugee crisis considered 'normal' and 'true'? What social systems and sectional interests facilitate the dominance of these discourses on asylum seekers and refugees?

This thesis builds on a social constructivist understanding of social life. Communities produce their own 'narrative reconstruction of reality' (Bruner, 1991, p. 21). They construct their own discursive story: "their relationship to that which they are not or what threatens them; and the narratives which produce the founding past of a community, its identity, and its projections of the future" (Sayyid & Zac, 1998, p. 261). Hence, stories on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis are not neutral; they are constructed. As such, they are subject to systems of power and domination (Giddens, 1979, p. 64; Jabri, 1996, p. 96).

The dominant discourses on asylum seekers and refugees that are accepted as normal – that are considered 'true' – are actually political; produced inside systems of power (Carroll, Motha, & Price, 2008, p. 167; Foucault, 1980, p. 93; Ibrahim, 2005, p. 164). Remarkably, it seems that these systems of power thus allow for these dominant discourses of 'crisis' to be produced and sustained – an interesting complication. Moreover, as the discursive representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis can be used to legitimise violence and gain or sustain power, this becomes a relevant complication to research.

The aim of this thesis is to take a critical look at the discursive 'truths' on asylum seekers and the refugee crisis produced and sustained by systems of power that are taken-for-granted in our society. In doing this, I combine the empirical and theoretical literature in a way that remains noticeably under-explored and under-analysed. The focus of this thesis is the empirical case of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands. The discourses produced by media and political apparatuses in Dutch society constitute the data sources. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) presents the ideal methodological approach because it allows for the deconstruction of discourses, and the elucidation of the "power of words" (Fairclough, 1989; Demmers, 2017, p. 124; Wodak, 2011; van Dijk, 1993).

Moreover, Foucault's notion of 'regime of truth' presents an interesting and useful analytical frame for this thesis research. I will adopt this analytical frame because it recognises that the production of 'truth' – the "creation of knowledge through a discourse" – "isn't outside power" (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 386; Foucault, 1980, p. 131; Lorenzini, 2015; Ibrahim, 2005, p. 164; Reyna & Schiller, 1998). Foucault (1980) philosophised about the power/knowledge nexus (originally *le savoir-pouvoir*) to signify that power is exercised through accepted discourse and understandings of 'truth'. In a regime of truth, 'truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces, and which preserve it (Foucault, 1980, 133). Therefore, the 'regime of truth' analytical frame serves as a lens to interpret the finding of the CDA, and more concretely study the interaction between discourse, power, and 'truth' on the 'crisis' of

asylum seekers and refugees. The frame will allow me to uncover the systems of power and the discursive ‘truths’ that we take for granted in Dutch society. Hence, this thesis revolves around the following research puzzle:

How is a regime of truth produced and sustained by systems of power and their discursive ‘truths’ on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands from 2014 until 2019?

I unpack the research puzzle through the following three sub-questions:

- (1) What are the dominant media and political discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands from 2014 until 2019?
- (2) What systems of power [institutions and apparatuses] produce and sustain these dominant discourses?
- (3) What are the effects of power on the discursive construction of ‘truths’ about the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees, and does this reproduce social systems of domination in the Netherlands?²

Relevance

The relevance of this thesis research is three-fold. First of all, this thesis contributes to the empirical debate in a unique way by combining a discourse analysis on the topic of the refugee crisis in the Netherlands, with a critical analysis to uncover the power in ‘truth’. Second, this thesis is relevant because of its contribution to Foucauldian theory. I will operationalise ‘regime of truth’ as an analytical frame. Foucault’s philosophical concept has not yet been operationalised in a way that allows for it to concretely and systematically answer the question of ‘how to’ research a regime of truth in its context. Thus, this thesis provides new insights into how to harness this abstract theory for research practice.

Moreover, this thesis topic has an undeniable social relevance. The refugee crisis is a social issue with limited consensus on how to approach it. Meanwhile, asylum seekers and refugees continue to suffer the consequences. I contend that it is time for us to take a critical look at our perceptions of asylum seekers and refugees, and our understanding of the refugee crisis that has become self-evident. As Foss and Gill (1987, p. 397) said: “When we

² I formulated the sub-questions using (the definitions of) concepts that are relevant for the analytical frame. See the glossary in Appendix A (the colour highlights match the highlights in the sub-questions).

understand the rules of a discursive formation, we are more able to question why some statements are considered true in a discursive formation and whether we want such rules to govern the discourse that creates our knowledge." This thesis will help us do so, and hopefully anticipates alternative, more empowering discourses on asylum seekers and refugees.

Chapter Outline

I unpack the research puzzle in six subsequent chapters. The first chapter situates this thesis in the existing academic knowledge of the discursive representation of asylum seekers and refugees. The chapter introduces CDA as a broader theoretical background and reviews the empirical literature on asylum seekers and refugees in discourses. The purpose of this chapter is to accentuate the gap in the literature in which my research puzzle is positioned.

The second chapter introduces Foucault's concept of 'regime of truth' as an analytical frame. It is argued that 'regime of truth' is particularly valuable for uncovering power relations and deconstructing established ways of knowing in discourses on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees. Moreover, the analytical frame is operationalised to harness the abstract theory for research practice.

The third chapter presents the methodology and steps taken to comprehensively and systematically approach the research puzzle. The chapter introduces a qualitative research strategy, research design and method. Specifically, it describes and justifies methodological choices, including the data collection technique and the data analysis procedure taken.

The chapters that follow revolve around the findings of this research, reflecting on the sub-questions in answer to the research puzzle. I structured these chapters in line with the logic of analysis as modelled by Ragin and Amoroso (2018, p. 52-55): inducing and describing the images obtained from the evidence, interpreting the images with the ideas of the analytical frame, and understanding the representation of social life through a "dialogue of ideas and evidence". Chapter Four describes the findings of the empirical data analysis (i.e. the images obtained from my CDA), identifying the dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands.

Chapter Five deconstructs and contextualises the discourses and the systems of power in which these are produced. The chapter looks at who produces and who consumes which dominant discourses on the refugee crisis, and at how the context facilitates this. It interprets the images obtained from the data with the ideas of the analytical frame in mind, analysing the interaction between the dominant discourses and productive power.

Subsequently, Chapter Six presents a more conceptualised understanding of the regime of truth on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees and the systems of power in Dutch society. In a “dialogue of ideas and evidence," I analyse the constituent parts of the regime of truth, and form an argument on what this regime of truth looks like (Ragin & Amoroso, 2018, p. 52). Besides, I analyse the effects of power to uncover structures of domination and forms of symbolic and structural violence against asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands.

In a Critical Discussion and Final Reflection, I conclude my thesis with an answer to the research question. I scrutinise the systems of power and the discursive ‘truths’ in the regime of truth on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees. Moreover, I advocate for alternative discourses to represent asylum seekers and refugees. I reflect on the implications of my research and make a suggestion for further research.

Chapter 1. THE DISCURSIVE REPRESENTATION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

The aim of this chapter is to situate this thesis in the existing academic literature. As mentioned in the introduction, to understand how perceptions of asylum seekers and refugees are constructed in Dutch society, there is value in analysing media and political discourses. The first section will, thus, place this research in its broader theoretical background: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The critical and philosophical underpinnings of CDA present an interesting point of departure for this thesis.

The second section covers the empirical debate. I review the literature on the representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in discourses in liberal democratic states. Subsequently, I identify a gap in the existing academic knowledge. In the next chapter, I present Foucault's concept of 'regime of truth' as a particularly interesting analytical frame to research this.

1.1 The theoretical background - A critical approach to discourse

The CDA approach is commonly used to study control and power in a social setting through the analysis of discourse (Demmers, 2017, p. 124; Fairclough, 1989; Regmi, 2017, p. 13; Wodak, 2011; van Dijk, 1993). CDA will help us understand how discourses shape our perception of the refugee crisis and inform our decision making (Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 81).

In the critical discursive approach, Jabri (1996, p. 94-95) defines discourse as: social relations represented in texts where the language contained within these texts is used to construct meaning and representation... The underlying assumption of discourse analysis is that social texts do not merely *reflect* or *mirror* objects, events and categories pre-existing in the social and natural world. Rather, they actively *construct* a version of those things. They do not describe things, *they do things*. And being active they have social and political implications.

Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak (1997) laid down the fundamental principles of CDA: (1) CDA is a socially critical paradigm concerned with social and political issues, (2) "discourse constitutes society and culture", (3) discourses are situated and historical, (4) discourses are reflective of ideology, and (5) power relations influence and are negotiated through discourse (Regmi, 2017, p. 3). Thus, within the CDA field, there is a common

understanding that social issues can be researched through the study of language.

The CDA approach is founded on a social constructivist understanding of reality (Demmers, 2017, p. 125; Jabri, 1996, p. 93). From this understanding follows the premise that discourses do not reflect an objective, independent reality. In other words, discourses are produced within a societal context and in turn, reproduce meaning in this societal context. As Jabri (1996, p. 95) said: "they do things". More specifically, they tell people how to 'do' social life (Wallace & Wolf, 1999, p. 181). The constructed social rules of everyday life become visible and researchable through discourses and institutions (Jabri, 1996, p. 134; Demmers, 2017, p. 128; Wallace & Wolf, 1999, p. 181). Through stories of signification, discourses convey meaning and representation. Through stories of legitimation, they construe what is considered 'acceptable' and 'normal' (Jabri, 1996, p. 83). It is through structures and social rules that power is exercised and normalised (Giddens, 1979, p. 64; Wallace & Wolf, 1999, p. 181).

Three fundamental aspects shape a CDA: the linguistic, the critical and the philosophical aspect (Fairclough, 2008; Regmi, 2017, p. 2; Wodak, 2011). The linguistic aspect entails the study of written or spoken language in relation to its social context. For example, analysing word groups, grammar features, and literary figures. Discourse analysis, in its earlier years, has been critiqued for its narrow focus on the linguistic aspect (Breeze, 2011, p. 502-503).

The current understanding in the field is that CDA is oriented towards working within a 'critical' paradigm, which entails "critically analysing social issues embedded in language" (Breeze, 2011, p. 494; Regmi, 2017, p. 3). According to its founders Fairclough, Wodak, and van Dijk, the purpose of CDA is to analyse "opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of domination, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" which can only be understood in their social, cultural and political context (Blommaert & Bulcean, 2000; Wodak, 2004, p. 187).

So what is it that we should be critical of in a CDA? In so far as CDA studies discourse within the context of a social reality, it is intrinsic to this theoretical framework to recognise the relation between language and power (Fairclough, 1989; 1992; Jabri, 1996, p. 94; Wodak, 2011; van Dijk, 1993). The critical underpinnings of CDA are based in the works from philosophers Gramsci (1971), Bourdieu (1977, 1991), and most important for this thesis Foucault (1980).

Gramsci was critical about the social norms that function as oppressive rules, while the people are not aware of their oppressive nature and regard these norms as 'common

sense'. In his renowned *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci contends that dominant discourses embed the oppressive rules of the dominant group and, as such, sustain the power status quo. Bourdieu philosophised about language as an instrument of power. He argues that "the structure of the linguistic production relation depends on the symbolic power relation between the two speakers, i.e. on the size of their respective capitals of authority." (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 648). Therefore, he defined power as the "symbolic relation between the producer and the receiver of discourse, ... how the laws of production allow some form of discourse to be produced and some silenced or sometimes even misrepresented" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 66). Furthermore, Foucauldian theory has been influential in CDA and is particularly relevant in this thesis. Foucault (1980) philosophised about the systemic interaction between power, knowledge, and 'truth' in discursive practices in society, This will be further elaborated on in the theoretical framework.

Once embedded in society in space and time, dominant discourses start to become tacit; they start to be regarded as self-evident. Social systems and sectional interests facilitate the dominance of these discourses (Jabri, 1996, p. 96). How power is exercised, is related to two mechanisms. In the first place "rules of right" facilitate the power to produce dominant discourses (Foucault, 1980, p. 92-93). Secondly, power produces "effects of truth" which in turn sustain this power. In other words, dominant discourses are produced within systems of power. Hence, the "creation of knowledge through a discourse" – is an exercise of power (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 386; Ibrahim, 2005, p. 164). As a case of, the representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in discourses can be regarded as a way in which power relations are exercised (Foucault, 1980, p. 93; Ibrahim, 2005, p. 164; Lund, 2014).

1.2 The empirical debate - Discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis

Now that I have argued the relevance of studying discourses, I will first review previous research representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in discourses. Within the academic world, a variety of scholars have researched political and media discourses on asylum seekers and refugees in liberal democratic states. In this section, I will bring to light the different representations of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in such discourses. The empirical sources I included cover an extensive and wide-ranging background to get a comprehensive overview of the scholarly literature. Overall, scholars have identified two reoccurring and prominent discourses: (1) the securitisation discourse, and (2) the humanitarian crisis discourse, which seem to portray asylum seekers and refugees in almost contradictory ways.

1.2.1 The different discourses in liberal democratic states

Huysmans (2000), Gale (2004) and Ibrahim (2005) were among the first scholars to study media and political discourses on asylum seekers and refugees in liberal democratic states. In his article on *The Refugee Crisis and Fear*, Gale (2004) studied populist politics and media discourses on asylum seekers in Australian newspapers from 2001. He identified three “representational themes” on asylum seekers; (1) the humanitarian crisis theme, (2) the border protection theme, and (3) the human rights theme. Gale (2004, p. 327) found that the humanitarian crisis theme centred on the metaphor of the 'human face'. More specifically, the theme portrays asylum seekers and refugees as human beings who are suffering and driven by despair (Gale, 2004, p. 327). Also, Gale (2004, p. 333) identified the less-prominent human rights theme, which values the rights of asylum seekers and a ‘truthful’ representation of the migration crisis. This theme also critiques racist and xenophobic narratives.

Similarly, Ibrahim (2005) analysed newspaper coverage of the Chinese Boat People immigrating to Canada in 1999. She found what she labelled “humanitarianism” (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 163, 169). This discourse centred on compassion for asylum seekers and recognised the legitimacy of human rights principles. As such, Ibrahim’s (2005) “humanitarianism” was fairly similar to Gale’s humanitarian crisis and human rights themes. Is this how asylum seekers and refugees were generally represented in media and political discourses?

The second representational theme Gale (2004) identified, the border protection theme, opposes the humanitarian theme. The border protection theme represents asylum seekers and refugees as a threat to ‘our’ nation; as criminals, 'illegals' and potential terrorists (Gale, 2004, p. 329-331). Moreover, Ibrahim (2005, p. 168) argued that “humanitarianism” is a past trend, and that the “new security discourse” on asylum seekers has gained traction in Canada since the end of the Cold War. Ibrahim (2005, p. 163) found that this “new security discourse” links risks and threats to the liberal world to asylum seekers. Likewise, Huysmans (2000, p. 751) argued that immigration has developed into a security issue in Western Europe, where asylum seekers are portrayed as a threat to national security, national identity and welfare provision. Both scholars talk about the ‘securitization of migration’.

In addition, Ibrahim (2005, p. 167) analysed the conditions that shifted the representation of asylum seekers and refugees. She observed that immigration was not always associated with insecurity in Canada. The 1970s and 1980s were characterised by a humanitarian commitment to asylum seekers, and the perception of immigrants as beneficial for capitalist expansion (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 167-168). With the end of the Cold War, human security issues broadened, and the securitisation discourse became the dominant discourse.

Huysmans (2000, p. 753-754) observed a similar trend in Western Europe and indicated that European migration policy has become increasingly restrictive since the 1980s. These scholars recognised that how asylum seekers and refugees are represented in media and political discourses is dependent on socio-political context.

1.2.2 Recent dominant discourses

While the previous section provided a bit of a background on the representation of asylum seekers and refugees in discourse in liberal democratic states, I will now review more recent research. In recent years, scholars started to focus more on the securitisation discourse and its portrayal of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis.

In their chapter on *The Discursive Construction of "Migrants and Migration"* Pohl and Wodak (2012, p. 205) argued that throughout history, immigrants had been perceived as a threat. Moreover, Pohl and Wodak (2012, p. 208) and Wodak and KhosraviNik (2013, p. xx) recognised an ongoing trend in Europe with the rise of right-wing populism in Great Britain, Austria, Hungary, Denmark, and the Netherlands. These scholars used the term "politics of fear" to demonstrate that populist parties normalise nationalist and xenophobic narratives in their representation of asylum seekers (Wodak, 2015). Again, asylum seekers and refugees are portrayed as a security issue. Nevertheless, Pohl and Wodak (2012) only provided anecdotal evidence of these populist discourses.

It is, therefore, useful to look at a recent study by Robinson (2017, p. 505) on the securitisation of irregular migration, which adopts a more explicit methodological approach. The research focuses on the "crisis interpretation" of Sri Lankan asylum seekers reaching the Canadian border in August of 2010. Robinson (2017, p. 508) performed a document analysis of memos and reports in the security field, conducted interviews with public servants of border services and citizenship agencies, and examined facilitating socio-political conditions. In line with other scholars, he finds that the securitisation discourse on asylum seekers is the dominant discourse, which prevailed over a humanitarian interpretation. Robinson (2017, p. 514-515) argued that a conservative political environment and the ascribed legitimacy of security actors facilitated this discursive trend.

Similarly, Gray and Franck (2019, p. 275) aimed to understand the prominence of the securitisation discourse on the European 'refugee crisis' in British newspaper articles from 2015 to 2016. Besides, De Cleen, Zienkowski, Smets, Dekie, and Vandevordt (2017) researched discourses on asylum and migration in Flanders, Belgium. These scholars argued that culturalist, securitarian, and economic discourses were used to problematise the

contemporary influx of refugee. The refugee crisis is represented as a crisis for Great Britain, or Belgium caused by refugees, rather than lived by refugees.

Interestingly, De Cleen et al. (2017) and Gray and Franck (2019) observed that the humanitarian discourse continued to be influential as well. Gray and Franck (2019, p. 276) termed this the discursive dichotomy of refugees "as/at risk". They explain these two seemingly opposing discourses through a gendered and racialised understanding; female refugees are represented as vulnerable and male refugees are represented as a threat. De Cleen et al. (2017) recognised that humanitarian and charity discourses came to the forefront at certain moments in time, but that the securitisation discourse dominates the mainstream. In addition, Gray and Franck (2019, p. 282-284) identified different phases – 'refugees welcome', 'Paris changes everything', and 'sexual jihad' – which mark discursive trends.

Even though many scholars have researched the representation of asylum seekers and refugees in media and political discourses, this representation is inconsistent and undeniably context-dependent. Gray and Franck (2019), Pohl and Wodak (2012), and Robinson (2017) provided some insights into the impact of socio-political conditions on the discursive representation of asylum seekers and refugees in a variety of liberal democratic states. I, however, did not find studies that researched media and political discourses on asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands in recent years. While the research study by De Cleen et al. (2017) comes close (geographically at least), there is a gap in the literature.

Moreover, the reviewed literature contributes to our understanding of what discourses on asylum seekers and the refugee crisis have been dominant in liberal democratic states, but is that all there is to know? I asked myself the questions: who has the power to shape how asylum seekers and refugees are represented in dominant discourses? Who benefits from the representation of asylum seekers and refugees as a threat or as a humanitarian concern?

1.3 Power in Discourses on Asylum Seekers and the Refugees Crisis

Why are the securitisation discourse and humanitarian discourse so prominent in how asylum seekers and refugees are represented in a variety of liberal democratic states? Taking a closer look, the discourses might not actually represent significantly different positions, as they are based on similar premises (Bigo, 2002). While the humanitarian discourse contests the content of the securitisation discourse, scholars rarely question the systems of power that facilitate their production. While this remains noticeably under-theorised and under-analysed, Bigo (2002) and Chouliaraki and Zaborowski (2017) scrutinised the premises on which these

discourses are based. Bigo (2002, p. 72) uncovered that these discourses on the refugee crisis are grounded in the same presuppositions of state, sovereignty and body politics.

Inherent to the dominant discourses is that asylum seekers and refugees are always constructed as problematic (Bigo, 2002, p. 71). Asylum seekers and refugees present a problem, because they pose a threat, or because they need to be rescued. Chouliaraki and Zaborowski (2017, p. 616) argued that in media coverage of the refugee crisis, refugees are "suspended between victimhood and malevolence". In the liberal democratic states, the dominant approach becomes one of "policing the crisis" (Gale, 2004, p. 321).

Bigo (2002) argues that what seems to be disregarded is that the relationship between insecurity and immigration is political. Institutions and apparatuses tasked with regulating the crisis, benefit from this problematisation. The 'crisis' is discursively produced in a system that Bigo (2002, p. 74) refers to as the "management of unease". The management of unease is justified by the sovereignty myth, i.e. the presumed "need to monitor border to reassure the integrity of what is 'inside,' in the practice of territorial protection" (Bigo, 2002, p. 67).

The management of unease in relation to the refugee crisis is founded in an understanding of the state as a sovereign body and a regulative regime (Bigo, 2002, p. 67; Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 617). Bigo (2002, p. 65) argues that political actors want to preserve "their symbolic control over the territorial boundaries." Similarly, Chouliaraki and Zaborowski (2017, p. 615) argued that the state border "seeks to rhetorically identify and control the mobility of certain people ... that operate around its jurisdiction". These authors uncovered that the ability to manage the state border is grounded in symbolic power. This power includes the ability to shape perceptions of the refugee 'crisis' in society, and the ability to legitimate the regulation of the entry of asylum seekers and refugees (Bigo, 2002, p. 65).

To conclude, what remains under-researched is how institutions and apparatuses can produce a discursive representation of asylum seekers and refugees that legitimises their role in regulating the refugee 'crisis' in the Netherlands. While Bigo (2002) presents the argument that power resides with political actors that benefit from this symbolic control, his work remains theoretical. This accentuates the gap in the literature in which my research puzzle is positioned. This thesis contributes to the existing academic knowledge by adopting a critical perspective on power in the production of discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis, substantiated by empirical evidence from a systematic CDA.

1.4 Chapter summary

The purpose of this first chapter was to situate this thesis in the existing academic knowledge and accentuate the gap that the research puzzle aims to fill. A particularly relevant question to reflect on was: what does this thesis contribute? To answer this question, we first needed to regard the previous research.

In the academic world, CDA is commonly used to study the discursive representation of something in society because it recognises the role of power in the production of discourse. As a case of, the representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in discourses can be regarded as an exercise of power, and a means to facilitate sectional interests. Subsequently, this chapter reviewed the empirical literature. Scholars found that asylum seekers and refugees were commonly represented through a securitisation discourse or humanitarian crisis discourse in liberal democratic states. These discourses seem to portray asylum seekers and refugees in contradictory ways.

Nevertheless, it is argued that these discourses both problematise the inflow of asylum seekers and refugees, as they are grounded in similar premises of state, sovereignty, and body politics. The refugee 'crisis' is discursively produced in a system that benefits from the "management of unease", given a 'crisis' legitimises the symbolic control and regulative role of the state (Bigo, 2002, p. 74).

These claims, however, remain theoretical. This thesis contributes to the existing academic knowledge because it uncovers the role of power in the production of discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis and substantiates this with empirical evidence.

Chapter 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The previous chapter discussed the body of academic literature in which this thesis is situated. In order to contribute to the academic debate, this chapter introduces Foucault's concept of 'regime of truth' as an analytical frame. The first section describes the analytical frame, its value and its limitations. The second section unpacks the concept of 'regime of truth' as an analytical tool. I have identified and operationalised the constituent concepts, which function as building blocks for my analytical frame.

2.1 Analytical frame: 'Regime of Truth'

Foucault's (1980, p. 131) concept of 'regime of truth' presents a valuable analytical frame to answer the research puzzle. Foucault introduced the concept of 'regime of truth' in an Interview on *Truth and Power* in 1977, and defined it as:

The types of discourse it [society] accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances that enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1980, p. 131).

Foucault's definition recognises discourse as a social practice. Discourses are conditioned by specific social-historical contexts. In turn, discourses have social effects; they are the means by which social relations are reproduced, and interests are served. Foucault philosophical works informed our current understanding of CDA. 'Regime of truth' as an analytical frame is embedded in the broader theoretical background of CDA and can, thus be used to study control and power in a social setting through the analysis of discourse.

Foucault's (1980) philosophy on power/knowledge (originally *le savoir-pouvoir*) is particularly relevant. His work signifies that power is exercised through the production of accepted discourse and understandings of 'truth'. The discourses produced by those "who are charged with saying what counts as true", shape our understanding of the social phenomena in society. As such, the analytical frame recognises that the production of 'truth' – the "creation of knowledge through a discourse" – "isn't outside power" (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 386; Foucault, 1980, p. 131; Lorenzini, 2015; Ibrahim, 2005, p. 164; Reyna & Schiller, 1998). Certain institutions and apparatuses have a greater ability to produce discourses that come to be accepted as 'true'. In a regime of truth, 'truth' is linked in a circular relation with

systems of power. The systems of power produce ‘truths’ and are, in turn, sustained because an effect of power is that it preserves the system (Foucault, 1980, p. 133).

In relation to the research puzzle, the analytical frame recognises that the representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in discourses is an exercise of power, and a way to facilitate sectional interests (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 386; Foucault, 1980, p. 131). While we might accept dominant discourses as self-evident and as ‘true’, they are produced. Our understanding of the refugee crisis is shaped by the dominant discourses that powerful institutions and apparatuses produce; their discursive ‘truths’ constitute our knowledge. Moreover, our perception of the refugee crisis has real social and political implications. First of all, our perceptions have an impact on how asylum seekers and refugees are treated in the Netherlands. Second of all, the discursive ‘truths’ on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees might preserve unequal power relations.

It should be noted that the concept of ‘regime of truth’ has been criticised for being too theoretical and insufficiently conceptualised (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014). Foucault's (1980) original work is fundamentally philosophical. Scholars have dedicated papers, attempting to grasp Foucault's philosophy, exploring the entanglement of knowledge, power, and truth (Lorenzini, 2015; Reyna & Schiller, 1998). Despite this, as a concrete analytical tool, ‘regime of truth’ frame remains vague and limited. For example, Reyna and Schiller's (1998, p. 333) work *Pursuit of Knowledge and Regimes of Truth* lacks in practical application. Besides, while scholars within the organisational sciences and educational sciences have adopted the concept of regime of truth, they are limited in providing a clear conceptual operationalisation of it as an analytical frame (Carroll et al., 2008; Hall & Noyes, 2009; Loacker, 2013).

2.2 Unpacking ‘Regime of Truth’: operationalisation

Taking these limitations into account, I unpack the abstract concept of ‘regime of truth’. I argue five constituent concepts function as the building blocks for Foucault’s definition of ‘regime of truth’: (1) discursive practices, (2) status, (3) sanctioned, (4) knowledge, and (5) power. The purpose of this section is to clearly define and make researchable the constituent concepts of the regime of truth frame. I argue that these five units can be understood as concrete categories of sources for empirical evidence. I operationalise the concepts with the help of works by Foss and Gill (1987), Giddens (1987), Bourdieu (1991), and Jabri (1996).

To understand the first element of a regime of truth – “the types of discourse it [society] accepts and makes function as true” – the concept of discursive practices is

presented as a building block (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). Foss and Gill (1987, p. 387) define ‘discursive practices’ as “discourse that, because it follows particular rules or has passed the appropriate tests, is understood to be true in a culture.” The researchable indicators in this definition are ‘discourses’, and whether these discourses are understood to be true. A study of language in its social context is required to identify discourses. In this thesis, the language in Dutch newspaper articles, Dutch political party rhetoric, and policy documents is studied (these constitute the primary data sources). Given that discourses represent social relations and are used to construct meaning (Jabri, 1996, p. 94), I consider how asylum seekers and refugees are represented in these texts.

Subsequently, whether the discourse is understood to be true, is determined based on Foucault’s (1980, p. 131-132) understanding of ‘truth’ as:

centred on the form of discourse and the institutions which produce it; it is subject to constant economic and political incitement... ; it is the object, under diverse forms, of immense diffusion and consumption (circulating through apparatuses of education and information whose extent is relatively broad in the social body, notwithstanding certain strict limitations); it is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media); lastly, it is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation (‘ideological struggles’)

Based on this definition, there are certain elements which make a discourse on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis accepted as ‘true’ among segments of Dutch society. The main elements that I look for are (1) whether a discourse is the object of immense diffusion and consumption in the Netherlands, (2) whether the discourse is produced by dominant and great apparatuses, (3) whether the media and political apparatuses of information have a large extent in Dutch society, and (4) whether the discourse makes a ‘truth’ claim about asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis.

The second constituent concept in the analytical frame is ‘status’. To make this researchable Foss and Gills (1987, p. 389) definition of ‘status’ is adopted: “allowing certain rhetors in certain roles to be heard in that formation, while others are not”. In other words, status is about the ‘social role’ of the rhetor in the discursive formation. I research this by examining who is heard in the discursive formation; who produces the identified dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands? Besides, I consider the social role of these producers in Dutch society based on secondary literature.

Third, Giddens (1987 in Hexmoor et al., 2012, p. 92) was consulted to define ‘sanctioned’ as the “reaction of others to the behaviour of an individual or a group”. More specifically, this thesis recognises the discursive behaviour of media and political apparatuses in the Netherlands (regarding the topic of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis). The reaction of Dutch citizens is not studied directly. Nevertheless, through a CDA at the level of interaction, I assess whether discursive claims are heard and accepted as valid by Dutch citizens, based on the widespread consumption and reproduction of these claims.

Besides, Foss and Gill (1987, p. 388) further clarify the sanctioning of discourses. Whether a discourse is sanctioned is highly dependent on ‘rules’, which they define as “principles or procedures that govern a discursive formation” (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 388). I reflect on the ‘rules’ that determine whether a discursive claim about asylum seekers and refugees is accepted as valid among its audience. In particular, I consider what is expected of a discursive claim in terms of editorial style (length, language tone) and of substantiation (use of facts and figures and expert opinions).

The fourth fundamental unit in the regime of truth frame is knowledge. I have decided to work with a definition that does justice to a Foucauldian understanding of power-knowledge. While still relatively abstract, Foss & Gill (1987, p. 390) present the most suitable definition of knowledge as “whatever is considered to be truth in a discursive formation”. What constitutes knowledge is, thus, interpretable through the identification of the discursive practices, the first building block. In terms of this research, the dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis that are normalised and considered to be the ‘truth’ constitute the knowledge of the refugee crisis among Dutch citizens.

Last but not least, ‘power’ is a highly relevant concept in Foucault’s philosophy as well as in the CDA tradition. To stay true to these theoretical underpinnings, but also establish a concrete indicator, power is defined as the “symbolic relation between the producer and the receiver of discourse, (...) how the laws of production allow some form of discourse to be produced and some silenced or sometimes even misrepresented” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 66). More specifically, the ‘power to define’ is the “asymmetrical distribution [in ability to shape] structures of signification [that] are mobilized to legitimate the sectional interest of hegemonic groups” (Jabri, 1996, p. 96).

Hence, I will look at the in Dutch newspaper articles, Dutch political party rhetoric, and policy documents – and at the discourses in these data sources – and present answer to questions such as: what is the relation between the producers (i.e. the media and political

apparatuses) and the receivers (i.e. the subjects: asylum seekers and refugees) of discourses? Are groups of people silenced and/or misrepresented in the dominant discourses on the crisis? Do the data sources feature the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees?

For a more abstract understanding, I critically interpret: who has the power to shape discursive ‘truths’ on the refugee crisis in the structure of Dutch society? Whose interests are legitimated by these discursive ‘truths’? This building block is thus crucial in understanding the systems of power that produce and sustain a particular regime of truth on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands from 2014 to 2019.

2.3 Regime of Truth on the ‘Crisis’ of Asylum Seekers and Refugees

The operationalised concepts allow me to analyse the constituent parts of the analytical frame in relation to the whole: the regime of truth on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees in the Dutch society (Foucault, 1980). The “dialogue of ideas and evidence” (Ragin & Amoroso, 2018, p. 52) contributes to a higher level, theoretical understanding of the empirical complication: the systems of power seemingly allowing for the dominant discourses of ‘crisis’ to be produced and sustained.

Moreover, this thesis in general, and this analytical frame in particular, find their epistemological origin in critical theory, which understands “life [as] determined through social and historical processes and power relations.” (Mason, 2018, p. 8). ‘Regime of truth’ as an analytical frame will help uncover the power relations in discourses on asylum seekers, refugee, and the refugee crisis. Power balances are often normalised and taken-for-granted in a particular social context. This frame allows me to scrutinise the taken-for-granted.

The epistemological approach of post-structuralism also features prominently in this thesis. This approach entails the “deconstruction of established ways of knowing and dominant interpretations and discourses.” (Mason, 2018, p. 9). Foucault’s philosophy has always been about deconstructing established ways of knowing. As argued in the introduction: "When we understand the rules of a discursive formation, we are more able to question why some statements are considered true in a discursive formation and whether we want such rules to govern the discourse that creates our knowledge" (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 397).

As the aim of this thesis is to take a critical look at the discursive 'truths' on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis produced and sustained by systems of power in Dutch society, ‘regime of truth’ as an analytical frame is particularly valuable.

2.4 Chapter Summary

The previous chapter left us with the question: how to adopt a critical perspective on power in analysing discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis? In this chapter, I argued that Foucault's concept of 'regime of truth' as an analytical frame, in its broader theoretical background of CDA, is interesting and valuable. The frame recognises that the representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in discursive 'truths' is an exercise of power.

However, as a concrete analytical tool, the concept of 'regime of truth' remained too abstract and vague. I unpacked the 'regime of truth' frame and argued that five constituent concepts function as concrete building blocks: (1) discursive practices, (2) status, (3) sanctioned, (4) knowledge, and (5) power. Therefore, this thesis provides new insights into how to operationalise and harness this abstract theory for research practice.

Hence, 'regime of truth' as an analytical frame allows me to uncover power relations and deconstruct established ways of knowing in discourses on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees. How this is researched in my thesis will be elaborated upon in the next chapter: the methodology.

Chapter 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodological steps taken to comprehensively and systematically approach the research puzzle. The previous chapters introduced the theoretical background and framework, which form a crucial foundation for the methodological approach. The purpose of this chapter is to justify the methodological choices in gathering empirical evidence in answer to the research puzzle.

Firstly, the research design section proposes a qualitative research strategy and introduces the ontological underpinnings of the research. I give form to the who, what where and when of this thesis. Additionally, the data gathering technique provides insight into how the primary data was sampled and selected using theoretical sampling.

The second section presents the research method to explain how the primary data was analysed. I introduce Fairclough's three dimensional framework as the methodological approach to my CDA. I performed a CDA to identify the dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands, and uncover the systems of power in which these discourses are produced. I describe the methodological steps and present a roadmap of the structure of this thesis, to guide the reader in my dialogue of ideas and evidence.

The final section reflects on the ethical considerations, limitations and opportunities of this thesis.

3.1 Research design

This thesis adopts a qualitative research strategy to analyse the regime of truth on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugee in the Netherlands and the systems of power that produce and sustain this regime. The qualitative approach is particularly beneficial for this puzzle, as it will help with a thorough understanding of how the inflow of asylum seekers and refugees is represented and perceived in Dutch society. An interpretive and in-depth study of discourses in their socio-political context is needed.

3.1.1 Ontology underpinnings

The research puzzle and theoretical framework are grounded in the ontological position of social constructivism. As mentioned before, this ontological position implies that the 'truth' is not objectively 'out there' in reality, but it is constructed. Following this line of reasoning, 'truths' on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis are produced. In

accordance with Mason's (2018, p. 12) classification, the research puzzle is a mechanical puzzle, charged with understanding how discursive 'truths' are constituted.

More specifically, the ontological nature of the research puzzle is one of 'structures' as the essence of things in the social world (Mason, 2018, p. 4). As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis is concerned with these rules of social life (Wallace & Wolf, 1999, p. 181). The rules in the social system recursively implicate how to perceive and deal with the refugee crisis. Based on a Foucauldian understanding of the discursive formation, Foss and Gill (1987, p. 389) mention that "the ordering principle of knowledge will not be the knowing subject but rather discourse as a set of formal relationships, structures, and practices." The premise is that the structures of society and the regime of truth are mutually constitutive.

3.1.2 Case study - who, what, where, when

Next, essential questions in the methodological section are: what or who will be studied? Where and when can we situate this case? As the research puzzle asks about discursive 'truths', the 'what' of my research are media and political discourses on asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands from 2014 to 2019. So, why study media and political discourses? As mentioned before, the fundamental presumption is that discourses and institutions manifest and make researchable the socio-political structures, and as such the systems of power that produce and sustain a regime of truth in a particular societal context (Jabri, 1996, p. 134). Therefore, I performed a CDA, further elaborated upon in the research method section.

More specifically, I identified the discourses in the following data sources: in the (1) widely-featured Dutch newspapers '*De Telegraaf*', '*Het Algemeen Dagblad*' (*AD*) and '*De Volkskrant*', (2) *standpunten* (i.e. positions) from the political parties that are in the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*³ (the House of Representatives) as mentioned on their official websites concerning the topics of immigration and integration, (3) official policy documents or briefs on asylum seekers by the Dutch government, and (4) *Tweede Kamer* debates on asylum policy and integration. *De Telegraaf*, *AD*, and *De Volkskrant* were selected based on circulation figures from the national press, given they are the three most circulated newspapers (svdj, 2018). This selection of newspapers is also particularly suitable given that the newspapers cover different positions on the political spectrum; the political left and (moderate)right, progressive and conservative, quality press (i.e. *kwaliteitskranten*) and

³ People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), Labour Party (PvdA), Party for Freedom (PVV), Forum for Democracy (FvD), GreenLeft (GL), Democrats 66 (D66), Socialist Party (SP), and Christian Union (CU)

popular newspapers (i.e. *populaire kranten*). These data sources need to be situated in a social context, setting the ‘where’ and ‘when’.

The setting of this research puzzle is the Netherlands, more explicitly the socio-political structure of Dutch society. I selected the time period from 2014 to 2019, because 2015 is commonly considered to be the start of the refugee crisis. Extending the timeframe allowed me to see whether the discourses changed after 2014. Additionally, it is beneficial for the timeframe to extend a number of years, given these years cover different political environments and various influential social events. For example, several Islamic terror attacks.⁴ It will be interesting to examine whether these had an impact on discourses on the refugee crisis in the Netherlands. Thus, I consciously selected a longer timeframe to be able to incorporate the shaping role of contextual factors.

3.1.3 Data gathering technique

To generate the data for my research, I used the data gathering technique of purposeful strategic sampling, specifically theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Theoretical sampling does not aim to arrive at statistical generalisation, but entails selecting units of study based on their relevance (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Mason, 2018, p. 58-59). This theoretical sampling method allows for the sampling of a relevant range of discursive units on the topic of the refugee crisis with the purpose of building a well-founded argument.

The ‘what’ of my sampling method has been clarified in the previous section. The newspapers, party positions, policy documents, and debates are accessible online (newspaper articles through the NexisUni database). The relevant discursive units were sampled by searching for the concepts ‘*asielzoeker**’ and ‘*vluchteling**’. In the research puzzle and the analytical frame, elements of representation and power are pertinent. Therefore, discursive units were selected based on whether they (directly or indirectly) made a representational claim about asylum seekers, refugees, and/or the refugee crisis or mentioned social norms (see Appendix B for a thorough description of the sampling produce).

This theoretical sampling logic enabled me to select discursive units in a variety of contexts, to create a deeper and nuanced understanding of the complex empirical complication. The selected discursive units can be found in Appendix C, which presents a list of the newspaper articles and the political and policy sources included.

⁴ Islamic terror attacks in Europe within the timeframe: the 2015 Charlie Hebdo shooting in January and the November Paris attacks, the 2016 Brussels bombings, the Nice truck attack, the Berlin Christmas market attack, and the 2017 Manchester arena bombing in May and August Barcelona attacks.

3.2 Research method

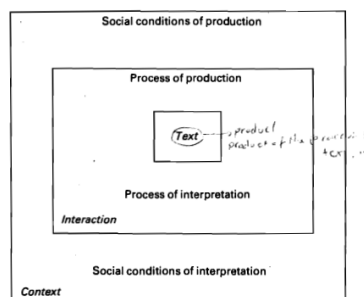
The research method section of this chapter will describe the process of data analysis, which is essential in forming a well-substantiated answer to the research puzzle. The gathered data was analysed by means of a CDA, and subsequently interpreted through the lens of ‘regime of truth’ as an analytical frame. The first step was to code the sampled data, using the coding programme NVivo12. The programme allowed for the creation of personalised codes which were assigned to selected text fragments. The codes (see Appendix D) were created based on the discursive themes in the secondary literature from the first chapter. The coded discourse fragments were then thoroughly analysed. The methodological steps of the CDA are presented in the paragraphs that follow.

3.2.1 CDA Fairclough’s three dimensional framework

A first question I asked myself is: how is a CDA analysis performed? There are various methodological approaches to a CDA. The common denominator that defines a CDA approach is the study of control and power in a social setting through the analysis of discourse (Janks, 1997; Regmi, 2017, p. 13). One of the founders of CDA is Norman Fairclough who published the influential book *Language and Power* in 1989. In this thesis, Fairclough’s three dimensional framework (1989, p. 24-25) is adopted as a structured methodological approach to the CDA.

Fairclough’s (1989, p. 24-25; Regmi, 2017, p. 7) three dimensional framework proposes the analysis of discourse at three levels (see Figure 1): at (1) the level of text, (2) the level of interaction, and (3) the level of context. The first level regards written and spoken text in itself. The second level moves beyond the level of text and focuses on the process of production, interpretation, and consumption. The third level regards the impact of the context on discourses, taking into account social and political conditions. The methodological steps of my data analysis are based on Fairclough’s dimensions.

Figure 1. *Discourse as text, interaction and context* (Fairclough, 1989, p. 24).



Step 1: Identifying dominant discourses at the level of text. The first dimension entails the analysis of media and political discourses on asylum seekers and refugees at the level of text. This text analysis considered the coded discursive units; the themes they iterate and their linguistics. Jäger and Maier's (2009) notions of 'discourse fragments' and 'discourse strands' were particularly useful to structure the data analysis. Discourse fragments are sentences or segments of text in which an attribute is ascribed to a particular keyword. This attribute generally refers to a characteristic feature of the keyword and may carry normative judgment. I coded the relevant discourse fragments; the segments of text in which an attribute was ascribed to asylum seekers or refugees.

A number of steps were taken to identify dominant discourses at the level of text. First, a lexicalisation-analysis of the coded discourse fragments was conducted. The lexicalisation-analysis entailed identifying what terms or labels were used to refer to asylum seekers and refugees in the newspapers and political and policy documents (Huisman, 2016). This was followed by a predication-analysis, which entailed identifying what normative, positive or negative characteristics or qualities were attributed to these asylum seekers and refugees and policy concerning the refugee crisis (Huisman, 2016).⁵

Second, the coded discourse fragments were categorised based on thematic similarities. Jäger and Maier (2009) proposed this categorisation of discourse fragments to develop an understanding of the patterns in the data and identify discourse strands. A discourse strand comprises thematically uniform discourse fragments (i.e. fragments that refer to categorically similar attributes). The discourse strands on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis let me to identify and describe the dominant discourses.

Step 2: Deconstructing discourses and systems of power. The second dimension concerns the analysis of discourses at the level of interaction. This second step is referred to as deconstructing discourses because it helps reveal the systems of power that produce and diffuse the identified discourses - answering questions such as: who produced what discourses? To interpret this, the background and interests of the newspapers and political parties were taken into account. The factors considered to delineate the background of the newspapers were editorial style, political ideology, target audience, and features of articles (i.e. length, use of factual information and experts). In addition, to lay down the background

⁵ Chapter Four only presents a short summary of the findings of the lexicalisation- and predication analysis, a detailed description of the findings is presented in Appendix E.

of the producers of political discourses (i.e. political parties in particular), place on the political scale, positions, targeted voters, and impact on policy were considered.

The overall purpose was to interpret discourses at the level of interaction to answer the question: in what systems of power are the discourses on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis produced? Nevertheless, this interpretation required further contextualisation.

Step 3: Contextualising discourses. The primary aim of a CDA is to study society through language; therefore, the third dimension of the discourse analysis covered the level of context (Regmi, 2017, p. 3; van Dijk, 1993). Contextualising discourses was essential given the explanatory value of socio-political conditions. First, I attempted to understand the prominence of certain discourses considering the time period. Second, I considered impactful social events. The secondary literature mentioned the insecurity of the Financial Crisis, Islamic terrorism in Europe, and sexual misconduct asylum seekers. Third, I examined the political environment, including elections and coalitions, and the rise of populism.

Again, the purpose of this third step was to establish what socio-political conditions facilitated the production of the dominant discourses by these systems of power. The deconstruction and contextualisation of the discourses allowed me to interpret and explain the images of the empirical data.

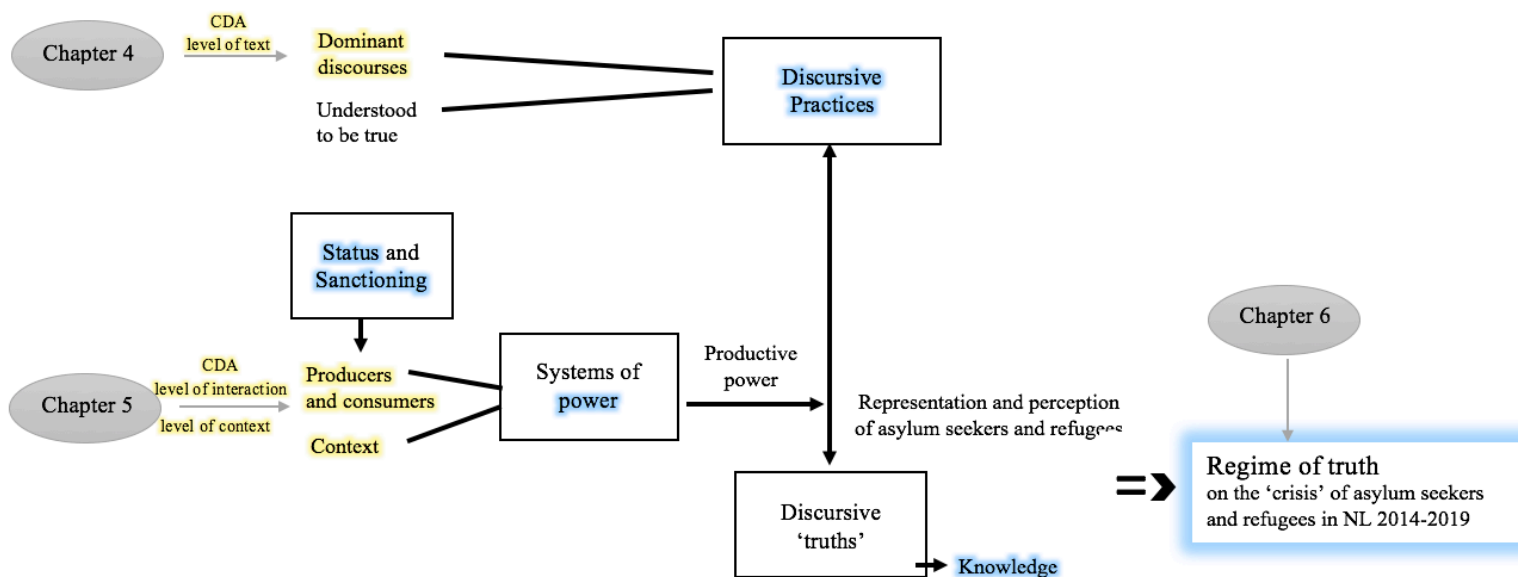
Step 4: Interpreting discourses through the lens of ‘regime of truth’. This brings us to step four of the data analysis, interpreting the discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis through the operationalised analytical frame: ‘regime of truth’. My purpose was to take the “dialogue of ideas and evidence” (Ragin & Amoroso, 2018, p. 52) to the next level, to derive a more conceptual and theoretical understanding of the research puzzle. I answered the questions: what types of discourses on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees are considered true in the Dutch context? Who has the power to produce discursive ‘truths’? How do status and sanctioning shape the systems of power that produce these discursive ‘truths’? What constitutes knowledge of the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees? I regarded the constituent parts in relation to the whole: the regime of truth on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands.

Moreover, I asked: what are the effects of power? Or in other words, what are the real-life consequences of these ‘truths’ for asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands? I took a critical look at the regime of truth, uncovering the taken-for-granted.

3.3 Roadmap

To guide the reader in my “dialogue of ideas and evidence” in this thesis, I present a roadmap in Figure 2 (Ragin & Amoroso, 2018, p. 52). First, Chapter Four describes images from the data (i.e. the findings from the CDA at the level of text); identifying discourses on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands. Chapter Five then deconstructs and contextualises these discourses, reflecting on the media and political apparatuses as systems of power, because they have the productive power to influence the process of discursive practices being considered as discursive ‘truths’ in Dutch society. This roadmap visualises how the empirical evidence (coloured yellow) interacts with the theoretical ideas (the five constituent concepts of the analytical frame, coloured blue) to form a conclusion about the regime of truth on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees in the context of the Netherlands 2014 to 2019. Chapter Six presents this dialogue to understand how the regime of truth is produced by the systems of power.

Figure 2. Roadmap thesis structure: the dialogue of ideas and evidence



3.4 Ethical considerations, limitations and opportunities

It is evident that there is always a need to consider the ethics and politics of your analysis and arguments, especially since this thesis takes a critical stance (Mason, 2018, p. 102). There are little ethical concerns with regards to the consent of participants or managing sensitive data, given the data sources are publicly accessible online. Reflecting on ethical considerations, I am confident that I have used my research and explanations effectively and ethically and that I have produced good quality arguments.

A limitation of this thesis research is that the phenomenon of migration is incredibly complex and that perceptions of and discourses on asylum seekers and the refugee crisis are more nuanced than can be presented here. Nevertheless, the sampling strategy was adopted to gather a relevant range of discourse fragments and include a variety of contexts to offer a nuanced understanding of social reality. To note a second limitation, I claim that asylum seekers and refugees are unheard and misrepresented in the dominant discourses; nevertheless, these asylum seekers and refugees are not heard in my thesis either. I find it unfortunate that I could not speak to them personally about their experiences. I had limited time to conduct this thesis research, and my research puzzle has a different focus.

Finally, the CDA approach advocates reflection upon ones' own positionality within the research. As a white Dutch woman, born and raised in the Netherlands, I find myself in the dominant group in the structure of Dutch society. The dominant discourses on asylum seekers and the refugee crisis have been the norm throughout my life. However, in this thesis, I take a critical look at my assumption and I strive to question the taken-for-granted in (my) society. Regarding my political positions, I am aware that it is impossible for me to be neutral. My political views are left-winged and progressive, in general, and with regards to the asylum debate. Nevertheless, my data analysis is substantiated by empirical evidence and does not aim to promote my political ideals. I argue that the reflection upon my own positionality is an opportunity for me to demonstrate awareness of my role in this thesis.

Chapter 4. DOMINANT DISCOURSES ON ASYLUM SEEKERS, REFUGEES, AND THE REFUGEE CRISIS

This third chapter describes the findings of my CDA, in answer to the second sub-question: *What are the dominant media and political discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands from 2014 until 2019?* More specifically, the chapter presents insight into how these asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis are represented in the widely-featured Dutch newspapers – *De Telegraaf*, *AD*, and *De Volkskrant* –, Dutch political party positions, political debates, and official policy documents. Identifying the dominant discourses is of great relevance to the research puzzle.

As the chapters in this thesis are according to the structure of Ragin and Amoroso's (2018, p. 55) logic of analysis, this chapter describes the images from the empirical data. The chapter covers the first dimension of my CDA, which entailed the analysis of discourses at the level of text. To structure the empirical data, the chapter presents the findings from the lexicalisation- and predication-analysis, and the thematically-uniform discourse strands.

The chapter identifies three dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands from 2014 to 2019: (1) the threat/securitisation discourse, (2) humanitarian discourse, and (3) human rights discourse. I will describe the discourses and identify their main claims. To realise this, I will consider the associations these discourses construe and the linguistic elements they use. In addition, I will substantiate my findings with examples from the empirical data in italics (more examples are presented in Appendix F).⁶

4.1 Lexicalisation- and predication-analysis

A primary question to ask is: how are asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis represented in the sampled discourse fragments? In this chapter, I present a short summary of the significant findings from the lexicalisation- and predication-analysis. Appendix E contains a full description of my findings. To obtain a first impression of the discourses in the newspaper articles, political rhetoric and policy documents, I coded the discourse fragments that use a particular label to refer to 'asylum seekers', 'refugees', and/or the refugee crisis (Huisman, 2016; Jäger & Maier, 2009).

⁶ The examples are presented in Dutch (the original language of the data sources), because a significant aspect of CDA at the level of text is analysing linguistic and grammatical features. CDA recognises that these features are embedded in culture; text carries a certain connotation and figures of speech and idioms for example have their own meaning. I present English translations of the examples in footnotes, but the translations might be interpreted differently.

The first thing that stood out from the lexicalisation-analysis is that the newspaper articles, policy documents, and political parties commonly use the label ‘crisis’ to refer to the inflow of asylum seekers and refugees. The label attributes a sense of urgency and predicament to the social issue of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands. A second label featured prominently in the data sources is ‘*stroom*’ or ‘*instroom*’ (translates to flow or inflow) to refer to asylum seekers and refugees migrating to the Netherlands. The use of this label is interesting linguistically because it forms an analogy between the inflow of asylum seekers and water. It creates the image that if the inflow is too large and unregulated, it could be problematic.

A third label that appeared regularly in the newspaper articles and in policy documents especially, to represent asylum seekers and refugees is ‘*vreemdelingen*’ (best translated to aliens or strangers). Even though the label is used foremost in the context of legality, it carries a certain connotation. ‘*Vreemdelingen*’ suggests a linguistically constructed dichotomy or segregation between the Dutch and the asylum seekers.

Another characteristic label that *De Telegraaf*, *AD*, and VVD ascribe to the subjects is ‘*echte vluchtelingen*’ (translates to real refugees), as opposed to ‘*gelukszoekers*’ (i.e. fortune seekers). The label is used to judge which asylum seekers are deserving of protection from the host country. The empirical evidence shows that the discursive theme of deserving versus non-deserving asylum seekers and refugees is prominent.

In the step prior to identifying discourses, the predication analysis is particularly important to see what normative, positive or negative characteristics or qualities are attributed to asylum seekers, refugees, and asylum policy (Huisman, 2016). Characteristics that featured dominantly in the discourse fragments are ‘*veiligelanders*’⁷, ‘*kansloos*’⁸, ‘*aso’s*’⁹, ‘*overlast*’ (i.e. nuisance), ‘*criminelen*’ (i.e. criminals), illegals, and terrorism. These attributes were used to establish that a particular group of asylum seekers in the Netherlands is not deserving of protection. Another category of ascribed characteristics is that of asylum seekers and refugees as culturally different. While this is not inherently a negative representation, some discourse

⁷ A literal translation of ‘*veiligelanders*’ would be ‘save countrymen’. This literal translation, however, falls short. The label ‘*veiligelanders*’ is used to refer to the asylum seekers that come from countries that are deemed safe. The understanding is that these asylum seekers are not deserving of refuge and naturalisation in the Netherlands, because the countries they fled from are safe (enough).

⁸ The label ‘*kansloos*’ literally translates to ‘chanceless’. It is used to characterise asylum seekers who (according to the one attributing the label) do not have a chance of officially obtaining refugee status.

⁹ ‘*Aso’s*’ translates to antisocial. The label is commonly used to characterise asylum seekers and refugees as self-centred, and to convey the message that they do not adhere to the customs of society or the social norm of what is deemed correct behaviour.

fragments suggest that (particularly Muslim) asylum seekers and refugees are culturally inferior.

Nevertheless, these are not the only dominant representations of asylum seekers and refugees in the sampled discourse fragments. Asylum seekers and refugees are also frequently characterised as '*mens*' (i.e. human) and as victims, a line of argumentation in which they are deserving because of these characteristics. These discourse fragments are overrepresented in *De Volkskrant* and in rhetoric by progressive left-winged parties.

The predication-analysis invites the reader of these discourse fragments to networks of associations on asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands. This facilitated the identification of the dominant discourse strands on asylum seekers and refugees, which I present in the next section.

4.2 Discourse strands

4.2.1 Threat/securitisation discourse

The first dominant discourse strand is the threat/securitisation discourse, in which asylum seekers and refugees are represented as a threat, and the refugee crisis is considered a security concern. This discourse strand communicates the claim that asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands threaten (1) safety and social stability, (2) national security, (3) culture and the Dutch identity, and (4) the economy and welfare system. The inflow of large numbers of refugees since 2015 is presented as major 'crisis', a '*groot maatschappelijk probleem*' (i.e. a major social issue) for the Netherlands (Azmani, 2015, in House of Representatives debate '*instroom asielzoekers*'). The discourse strand associates asylum seekers and refugees with a variety of negative characteristics, such as turmoil, nuisance, criminality, and cultural backwardness. The threat/securitisation discourse is mainly found in *De Telegraaf*, *AD*, and in political rhetoric by the parties PVV, FvD, and VVD (which I will reflect on in the next chapter).

So, in what way do the newspaper articles, political rhetoric and policy documents convey the message that asylum seekers and refugees are a threat? The use of loaded language is very common; they engage their audience through an appeal to emotion and stereotypes. By talking about asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis as a major cause for concern, they incite an emotional response from the reader, particularly fear and a sense of urgency and predicament. The following discourse fragment from *AD* gives an example of what constitutes the threat/securitisation discourse:

Ze is het 'helemaal eens' met de flarden op de PVV-flyer. „De asieltsunami uit islamitische landen bedreigt Nederland... Alles staat op het spel: onze veiligheid, vrijheid, en toekomst... Geen enkele asielzoekers er meer bij." Petra: „Grenzen dicht: daar ben ik het 100 procent mee eens." Mensen die Wilders racistisch noemen zijn volgens haar 'mesjogge'. „Hij is een held." (Oomen, 2015).^{10 11}

This example shows the use of emotionally loaded language in the threat/securitisation discourse. The discourse fragment draws an analogy between the inflow of asylum seekers from Islamic countries and a tsunami, to visualise the threat of asylum seekers. In the data sources, the ‘*stroom*’ (i.e. flow) metaphor is used frequently to conjure up an image of the refugee crisis as a threat or a danger to the Netherlands. Besides, the example demonstrates an appeal to stereotypes, since it explicitly refers to asylum seekers from ‘Islamic countries’ as a threat. The newspaper article attempts to incite an emotional response from the reader by stating that: “Everything is at stake: our security, freedom, and future”. The discourse fragment also presents a clear solution to the crisis: “Close the borders”. The data shows that these types of appeals and claims constitute the threat/securitisation discourse strand. I will further unpack and describe these claims and the threat/securitisation discourse in the next paragraphs.

The first claim in this discourse stand is that the ‘*overlast*’ (best translated to nuisance) and criminal behaviour of asylum seekers and refugees threatens social stability and the safety of Dutch citizens. The discourse fragments ascribe negative characteristics to asylum seekers, such as ‘*kansloos*’¹², ‘*aso’s*’¹³, ‘*criminele*’ (i.e. criminals) and illegals. Asylum seekers and refugees are presented as a source of ‘*overlast*’¹⁴; causing trouble, picking fights, committing acts of vandalism, complaining, being antisocial and lazy.

¹⁰ My translation: ‘She 'totally agrees' with the fragment on the PVV flyer. „The asylum tsunami from Islamic countries threatens the Netherlands... Everything is at stake: our security, freedom, and future... No more asylum seekers.’ Petra: „Close the borders: I 100 percent agree." People who call Wilders a racist are, according to her, ‘crazy’. „He's a hero.” (Oomen, 2015).

¹¹ The discourse fragment mentioned ‘*mesjogge*’, a loan word from Yiddish-Hebrew, that is used to refer to someone who is considered insane, crazy or foolish. The term is used mainly in and around Amsterdam.

¹² The label ‘*kansloos*’ literally translates to ‘chanceless’. It is used to characterise asylum seekers who (according to the one attributing the label) do not have a chance of officially obtaining refugee status.

¹³ ‘*Aso’s*’ translates to antisocial. The label is commonly used to characterise asylum seekers and refugees as self-centred, and to convey the message that they do not adhere to the customs of society or the social norm of what is deemed correct behaviour.

¹⁴ best translates to nuisance

Additionally, the discourse fragments claim that asylum seekers and refugees are more likely to commit criminal acts. The focus is generally on serious crimes, i.e. crimes against public order, violent crimes and sexual misconduct, of which detailed anecdotes are presented in newspaper articles. These severe cases are often overrepresented in newspaper articles and rhetoric by PVV and FvD. Criminal behaviour among asylum seekers is presented as a significant social issue, one that will undoubtedly worsen with the arrival of more asylum seekers in the Netherlands. These claims amplify a sense of threat and tell Dutch citizens that they should be worried about their safety and social stability.

The third claim in this discourse stand is that the inflow of asylum seekers and refugees poses a serious threat to national security, because of Islamic terrorism. The data shows that many discourse fragments talk about how Islamic extremists might use the refugee flow to enter the Netherlands. They also mention that European investigative services are operating at full speed to screen asylum seekers and “prevent terrorist attacks by extremist Muslims” (De Telegraaf, 2015, my translation). In making this claim, the discourse strand appeal to the Islamophobic¹⁵ stereotype of Muslims being terrorists.

The third claim in the threat/securitisation discourse strand is that culturally different asylum seekers and refugees present a threat to ‘our’ Dutch culture and identity. Especially, they threaten Dutch norms and values, and traditions and freedoms, including: gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, freedom of religion and freedom of speech. For example, in a debate by the Dutch House of Representatives on the topic of civic integration, (former) MP Azmani (2017, my translation) for the VVD stated: “We are also concerned about whether the Netherlands risks losing its identity by receiving large groups of migrants with different cultural norms and values.”¹⁶

Besides, the discourse fragments also communicate concerns about the strain on successful integration, or assimilation as the asylum seekers and refugees are often expected to adapt to the dominant Dutch culture fully. They claim that the culturally-different (especially Muslim) asylum seekers and refugees do not integrate, and as such, cannot function successfully in Dutch society. A headline in *De Telegraaf* (2018) reads “*Multicultuur is geen feestje*” (which translates to “Multiculture is no party”). The discourse

¹⁵ Islamophobia is defined as “an irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against Islam or people who practice Islam” (Durban, Hanika, & Carrick, 2019, p. 33).

¹⁶ The original Dutch fragment: “*Ook wij maken ons zorgen over de vraag of Nederland zijn identiteit dreigt te verliezen door de ontvangst van grote groepen migranten met een ander cultureel normen- en waardenpatroon.*” (Azmani, 2017).

strand produces evident examples of xenophobia¹⁷ in the Netherlands, since discourse fragments communicate a dislike or fear of foreign asylum seekers and refugees. Again, I identified Islamophobic attitudes in the discourse fragments that constitute the threat/securitisation discourse (for more examples see Appendix F).

A fourth element of the threat/securitisation discourse is the so-presented detrimental effects to the Dutch economy and welfare system. The data shows that discourse fragments present the refugee crisis as problematic because of the substantial costs involved.¹⁸ Besides, the claim is made that the sustainability of the welfare system is threatened because of the number of asylum seekers and refugees. A common claim is that asylum seekers are an economic burden; they harm the prosperity of the Dutch citizens. Besides, the discourse fragments mention that the economic investment is often not returned, as asylum seekers and refugees struggle to find employment.

In this discourse strand, the '*gewone mensen*' (i.e. the common man) fear that they will suffer the financial consequences of the inflow of asylum seekers and refugees. I found that discourse fragments frequently mention the term '*gewone mensen*'¹⁹, to appeal to the nationalist, common Dutch citizen (generally) with low socio-economic status (Vossen, 2016, p. 36). The common man believes that the asylum seekers and refugees might 'steal' their jobs and that they will displace them in the housing market. The discourse fragments in the threat/securitisation discourse corroborate these fears. Moreover, the discourse strand asserts that there is no longer any '*draagvlak*'²⁰ in Dutch society to host and integrate asylum seekers and refugees. Newspaper articles and political rhetoric mention examples of people demonstrating against the arrival of more asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands.

Based on my CDA at the level of text, I argue that the identified threat/securitisation discourse produces a representation of asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis that is founded in fear. This discourse strand identified the refugee crisis as a threat to stability, security, culture and identity, and the economy. Themes of worry, insecurity, xenophobia and Islamophobia feature dominantly in this discourse. Moreover, arguments appeal to emotion,

¹⁷ Defined by Cambridge dictionary as an "extreme dislike or fear of foreigners, their customs, their religions, etc." ("Xenophobia", n.d.).

¹⁸ Hosting asylum seekers and refugees; asylum centres, screening procedures, housing, food and care, and integration, simply cost a lot of money.

¹⁹ Particularly, populist parties use the term '*gewone mensen*' to appeal to their targeted voters.

²⁰ The literal translation of '*draagvlak*' is support base. More specifically, '*draagvlak*' refers to a platform of citizens or a group of people who support and are committed to a specific (policy-oriented) goal.

stereotypes and common sense²¹, instead of being substantiated by facts and figures or academic experts. There is little mention of reports or research to validate claims with official statistics or thorough substantiation. Moreover, the threat/securitisation discourse linguistically constructs a divide between the protagonist common Dutch citizens and the antagonist asylum seekers. It is this fear of asylum seekers and refugees, and this perception of threat that leads to an understanding of the refugee crisis as a security concern.

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, CDA builds on the presumption that discourses ‘do’ things (Jabri, 1996, p. 94-95). The threat/securitisation discourse has real-life consequences. The discourse propagates the securitisation of asylum. The inflow of refugees is discursively constructed as a security issue and, therefore, yields extraordinary measures. Discourse fragments mention examples of policy measures taken concerning the asylum procedures. An extraordinary measure advocated in this discourse – particularly by the *De Telegraaf*, PVV, FvD and VVD – is rigorous border protection²², and even the closing of the Dutch borders. Some discourse fragments proclaim the necessity of ‘Fortress Europe’ to protect Europe from the threatening inflow of asylum seekers and refugees.

While the threat/securitisation discourse dominates the mainstream, I found other dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis as well. The humanitarian discourse is the second dominant discourse. The humanitarian discourse critiques the threat/securitisation discourse and the climate of fear it propagates. As stated in *De Volkskrant* “the fear of strangers and the loss of identity overpowers reason and humanity.” (Vos, 2018).²³

4.2.2 Humanitarian discourse

Based on my CDA at the level of text, I identified a second dominant discourse strand: the humanitarian discourse. This humanitarian discourse represents asylum seekers and refugees as ‘human’ beings, who are deserving of ‘*medemenselijkheid*’ (i.e. compassion). The data demonstrated that the humanitarian discourse recognises the (1) human face of

²¹ With an appeal to common sense, an author attempt to make an idea seem like the only logical inference. The threat/securitisation discourse appeals to common sense; it is often implied that an understanding of the refugee crisis as threatening and dangerous is the only logical inference.

²² The measures of boarder protection mentioned in the data sources include the Frontex border police, the registration of asylum seekers, involving document checks, the taking of fingerprints, baggage checks, the taking of fingerprints, and the screening of mobile phones. Other border protection initiatives talked about in this discourse strand are the Dublin regulation and the EU-Turkey deal.

²³ The original Dutch fragment: “*De angst voor vreemdelingen en het verlies van identiteit wint het van de rede en medemenselijkheid.*” in “Minder draagvlak voor migratie”, *De Volkskrant* (Vos, 2018).

asylum seekers and refugees, (2) draws attention to the refugee crisis as a human tragedy, and (3) advocates a humane (policy) approach. This discourse on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis is particularly dominant in *De Volkskrant* and in statements by progressive left-winged, social-democratic political parties.²⁴

The humanitarian discourse strand is often presented in response to the threat/securitisation discourse, because it criticises the representation of asylum seekers and refugees as a threat. The discourse is also critical of the problematisation and exaggeration of the refugee ‘crisis’. The humanitarian discourse strand claims that fear divides; that threat narratives propagate xenophobia and polarise Dutch society. The discourse argues for a ‘humane’ approach to the refugee crisis.

The following discourse fragment from *De Volkskrant* provides an example of what constitutes the humanitarian discourse:

Wat wij in al dit geweld missen, is de menselijke maat, een besef van humaniteit en barmhartigheid. We hebben het niet over percentages of aantallen: het gaat om mensen. Mensen die vanwege oorlogsgeweld hun huis en haard hebben moeten ontvluchten, mensen die op zoek zijn naar een veiliger leven. Vaders, moeders, kinderen - mensen zoals wijzelf - die we niet onder een brug of in een lekkende tent kunnen laten slapen (Hamming & Buijs, 2016).²⁵

This discourse fragment illustrates that humanitarian discourse focuses on the ‘human’ aspect of the refugee crisis (for more examples see appendix F). The fragment mentions “this is about human beings”. It offers a critical reflection on how the Netherlands has approached the refugee crisis, by stating that “we miss ... an awareness of humanity and compassion”. Besides, the discourse fragment emphasises that we ourselves – Dutch citizens – resemble asylum seekers and refugees, because we are all human beings. The overall claim is that asylum seekers and refugees deserve the protection of the Netherlands as a host country, simply because asylum seekers and refugees are human beings.

²⁴ Nevertheless, hints of the humanitarian discourse can also be found in discourse fragments in the other two newspapers and *Tweede Kamer* debates in general. In *De Telegraaf* and *AD*, the discourse fragments demonstrate that the humanitarian approach is aimed solely at ‘echte vluchtelingen’ (i.e. real refugees).

²⁵ “What we miss, among all this violence, is the human aspect, an awareness of humanity and compassion. We are not talking about percentages or numbers: this is about human beings. People who had to flee their homes because of war and violence, people who are looking for a safe haven. Fathers, mothers, children – human beings like ourselves - we cannot let them sleep under a bridge or in a leaky tent.” (Hamming & Buijs, 2016, my translation).

One component of the humanitarian discourse is the use of imagery in putting a human face on the refugee crisis. In line with the representation of asylum seekers and refugees as human beings, a variety of discourse fragments paint a picture of the lives of these asylum seekers and refugees. An example is a discourse fragment that tells the story of Aylan Kurdi, a three-year-old boy who drowned while seeking refuge: “There he was, laying in the surf. Mouth and nose in the sand. Only his feet were reaching the dry land.” (Goossens, 2015, my translation).²⁶ The humanitarian discourse uses such anecdotes to incite an emotional response; to incite feelings of compassion among its readers.

This highlights a second component of the humanitarian discourse, the recognition of the refugee crisis as a severe ‘human tragedy’. The main claim is that the situation in which asylum seekers and refugees find themselves is tragic; they were forced to flee their country due to war and violence, migration routes are dangerous and deadly, and conditions in refugee camps are inhumane. Thus, asylum seekers and refugees who arrive in the Netherlands are victims deserving of refuge and protection. In discourse fragments from the political debates on asylum policy, the SP, GL and D66 repeatedly mention the need to ‘save’ asylum seekers and refugees (for example, from drowning at sea). Besides, discourse fragments from political positions of GL (n.d.) for example, mention “a responsibility to protect those fleeing from war, violence and persecution.”

Moreover, the humanitarian discourse has social and political implications as well (Jabri, 1996, p. 94-95); it criticises asylum policy for being unsuccessful, and advocates for ‘humaan beleid’ (i.e. humane policy). Many discourse fragments claim that the current policy measures are not effective in preventing human tragedies among asylum seekers, and they suggest alternative humane policy approaches. In the House of Representatives debate on the inflow of asylum seekers (2015), Voortman of GL and Voordewind of CU, for example, proposed a motion to allow vulnerable refugees to apply for a humanitarian visa through Dutch diplomatic posts, potentially enabling them to migrate to the Netherlands legally. In this way, the humanitarian discourse ‘does’ things (Jabri, 1996, p. 94-95).

²⁶ The complete discourse fragment in *AD*: “And all of a sudden, there was a face attached to the refugee crisis. There he was, laying in the surf. Mouth and nose in the sand. Only his feet reaching the dry land. Red T-shirt. Short, blue pants. Arms and legs still a little chubby from the last bits of baby fat. ... Aylan Kurdi, 3 years old, will never grow older. He drowned on Tuesday night when the rubber dinghy with his family on it, hoping to reach the Greek island of Kos, capsized at sea.” (Goossens, 2015, my translation).

The data also shows that the humanitarian discourse advocates for societal initiatives to help fellow-human asylum seekers and refugees and enlarge the ‘*draagvlak*’²⁷ in Dutch society. The discourse claims that it is our humanitarian duty to help those in need. Discourse fragments frequently present anecdotes of Dutch people helping asylum seekers and refugees, to find a job or housing for example. A discourse fragment from *De Volkskrant* mentions that “you have to help people in need” and that “housing refugees is our common human duty” (Bakker & Obbema, 2015, my translation). Overall, the humanitarian discourse represents asylum seekers and refugees as human beings and victims who need protection, advocating for a humane policy and social initiatives.

4.2.3 Human rights discourse

The third dominant discourse strand I identified in my CDA is the human rights discourse. The human rights discourse presents the refugee crisis as a serious human rights concern, that needs to be approached adequately in accordance with the (1) moral responsibility and (2) legal responsibility of the Dutch state. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (UN General Assembly, 1948) recognises the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all human beings, including asylum seekers and refugees. The main claim in the human rights discourse is that the Netherlands has accepted certain moral and legal responsibilities because it has ratified the UDHR and other human rights treaties. Part of the claim is that the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees are not sufficiently protected by the Dutch state, as many asylum seekers and refugees still live in inhuman conditions. For examples from the data see Appendix F. I found that the discourse fragments use word patterns and linguistic features that draw from a human rights language.²⁸ As a result, a well-known, dominant human rights discourse on the European refugee crisis can be identified.

While the human rights discourse is less dominant in the data sources, it is prevalent in debates on asylum policy by the House of Representatives. Again, *De Volkskrant* and left-winged socialist political parties more commonly produce and propagate this discourse. The human rights discourse has some overlap with the humanitarian discourse; there are similarities in arguments on the moral duty to protect asylum seekers and refugees.

²⁷ The literal translation of ‘*draagvlak*’ is support base. More specifically, ‘*draagvlak*’ refers to a platform of citizens or a group of people who support and are committed to a specific (policy-oriented) goal.

²⁸ This shows in reference to idealistic moral principles, the rights Articles, as well a legal terminology considering treaties.

Nevertheless, the data proves that there is a significant distinction, as the human rights strand focuses on the (role of the) host country (i.e. the Netherlands) and their policy approach to the refugee crisis.

The first fundamental element of the human rights discourse is the mention of the ‘moral responsibility’ of receiving states to host asylum seekers and refugees. The dominant claim is that a wealthy and righteous state, like the Netherlands, has the moral responsibility to protect the human rights that we ourselves have deemed fundamental and inalienable.²⁹ ‘*Morele plicht*’ (i.e. moral duty) and ‘*morele verantwoordelijkheid*’ (i.e. moral responsibility) are frequently reappearing word patterns in this discourse strand. The following example from the empirical data characterises the human rights discourse strand:

Het begint ermee dat alle Europese landen gezamenlijk hun verantwoordelijkheid nemen en leftonen, en soms over hun eigen schaduw een stap vooruit durven te zetten, om in ieder geval een begin van een oplossing te kunnen maken. Europa afsluiten voor mensen die vluchten voor oorlog, kan daarbij nooit een oplossing zijn. Niet omdat het volgens internationale verdragen niet zou mogen, maar puur omdat we ons herinneren waarom we überhaupt ooit tot die afspraken zijn gekomen en omdat we de morele plicht voelen om een veilige haven te zijn en te blijven voor degenen die deze nodig hebben. (Kuiken, 2015, in House of Representatives debate on the inflow of asylum seekers).³⁰

The second prominent theme in the human rights discourse is the ‘legal responsibility’ of states that ratified the UDHR and the European Convention of Human Rights – among which the Netherlands – to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees. The discourse strand claims that the Netherlands has assumed certain legal obligations and duties, which it cannot neglect in the case of the refugee crisis. The discourse fragments in this discourse strand frequently include modalities, i.e. statements

²⁹ Human rights are moral principles that provide a certain norm for the basic rights that all human beings should enjoy the acknowledgement of this norm for basic right comes with a certain responsibility to passively or actively uphold this norm. Following this line of reasoning in this discourse strand, at a certain point, the lack of action to protect the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees equates violating human rights.

³⁰ My translation: “It all starts with European countries taking their joint responsibility and showing courage, and sometimes daring to come out of the shadows, to at least be able to start working towards a solution. Closing Europe border to people fleeing from war, can never be the solution. Not because international treaties prohibit it, but solely because we should remember why we ever reached those agreements and because we feel a moral obligation to be and remain a safe haven for those who need it.” (Kuiken, 2015).

of what ‘could’ and ‘should’, of enforcing international human rights law. With a sense of urgency, these discourse fragments call for action by Dutch ministers in the context of the refugee crisis.

To conclude, although the newspaper articles and political party rhetoric feature the human rights discourse less prominently than the threat/securitisation and humanitarian discourse, it is still a dominant discourse.

4.3 Chapter summary

To summarise, based on my findings from the CDA at the level of text, I identified the threat/securitisation, humanitarian, and human rights discourse as the dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands from 2014 to 2019. The images from the empirical data demonstrated that these three discourses featured prominently in the newspaper articles, political party rhetoric, and policy documents. From my lexicalisation-analysis, I found that the inflow of asylum seekers and refugees is labelled a ‘crisis’. Besides, I found that asylum seekers and refugees are frequently ascribed negative characteristics, but they are also portrayed as ‘human’ and victims.

I categorised thematically uniform discourse fragments and came to identify the three discourses. First, the threat/securitisation discourse represents asylum seekers and refugees as a threat to stability, security, culture and identity, and the economy and welfare system. The discourse uses loaded language to appeal to emotion and stereotypes, and features xenophobic and Islamophobic narratives. Second, the humanitarian discourse represents asylum seekers and refugees as ‘human’ beings, and victims of tragedy who deserve compassion. Third, the human rights discourse represents the refugee crisis as a serious human rights concern and calls for the Dutch state to recognise their moral and legal responsibility.

To conclude, the purpose of this chapter was to gain an understanding of how asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis are represented in dominant discourses in the Netherlands from 2014 to 2019. These dominant discourses form the basis for the discursive practices and the discursive ‘truths’ in the regime of truth on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees. Nevertheless, before I can draw a conclusion about the regime of truth, there is a need to deconstruct and contextualise the discourses; to consider who produces and consumes these discourses, and in what context these became dominant. As well as, to ask the question: in what systems of power are these dominant discourses produced?

Chapter 5. DECONSTRUCTING AND CONTEXTUALISING DISCOURSES AND SYSTEMS OF POWER

I identified the dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands in the previous chapter. In this chapter I will deconstruct and contextualise these discourses. The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the second sub-question: *What systems of power [institutions and apparatuses] produce and sustain these dominant discourses?*

Understanding the systems of power in the production of discourses is a significant part of the research puzzle. The threat/securitisation discourse, humanitarian discourse and human rights discourse are the three dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands. While large segments of Dutch society might have accepted these discourses as normal and tacit, these discourses are produced. The deconstruction and contextualisation of the identified discourses, allows me to answer questions such as: who produces and diffuses what discourses? Which institutions and apparatuses have more productive power? How is the relationship between asylum seekers and refugees and Dutch society represented in these discourses? How have socio-political conditions facilitated the dominance of the identified discourses?

In order to answer these questions, I used the second and third dimension of Fairclough's CDA framework to analyse the discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis. In the first part of this chapter, I will deconstruct the identified dominant discourses at the level of interaction. First of all, I will interpret the background and interests of the widely-featured newspapers – *De Telegraaf*, *AD* and *De Volkskrant*.³¹ Second of all, I will interpret the production process of political discourses, taking into account the background of the political parties. In particular, I will consider their position on the political scale, what and who they represent, and their and impact on policy.

In the second part of this chapter, I contextualise the identified discourses on asylum seekers, refugees and, the refugee crisis in the Netherlands. Finally, I argue that the apparatuses of production and their dominant discourses in the Dutch context make visible the systems of power in which these discursive 'truths' are constructed and embedded.

³¹ The factors considered to delineate the background of the newspapers are political ideology, target audience, features of articles (i.e. length, placements, use of factual information), and reoccurrence of authors.

5.1 Deconstructing discourses at the level of interaction

5.1.1 Background media discourses

This first section focuses on the production of the media discourses; the threat/securitisation, humanitarian, and human rights discourse as featured in *De Telegraaf*, *AD*, and *De Volkskrant*. From the CDA at the level of interaction, I found that the newspapers differ in what representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis they feature dominantly, and as such what discourses they produce. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the threat/securitisation discourse is produced dominantly in *De Telegraaf* and in *AD*, while the humanitarian and the human rights discourse are produced prominently in *De Volkskrant*.³² Nevertheless, *AD* features hints of the humanitarian discourse, depending on the author of the newspaper article and on the socio-political context.

What will help us understand why these newspapers produce these discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis? First of all, a classification of editorial content distinguishes the *De Telegraaf* and *AD* from *De Volkskrant*. *De Telegraaf* and *AD* are considered so-called ‘popular newspapers’ which entails a higher degree of sensationalism; where editorial decisions are aimed at exiting the readers (Pels, 2008). While, *De Telegraaf* and *AD* cannot be classified as tabloid journalism given their editorial choices are more content oriented and their tone is more moderate, their articles lack depth. Contrastingly, *De Volkskrant* is classified as a quality newspaper (i.e. ‘*kwaliteitskrant*’ in Dutch), its editorial purpose is versatile, in-depth reporting. Newspaper articles generally provide quality information with a focus on society, politics and academics.

Second of all, what distinguishes the newspapers significantly is a classification of their political and ideological background. *De Volkskrant* is known for its progressive character and (middle)left-winged position on the political spectrum (Domevscek, 2006). *De Volkskrant* is oriented at higher educated readers with an inclination for more libertarian and cosmopolitan values. *De Telegraaf* is a conservative, right-winged newspaper (Media Bias/Fact Check, n.d.). It uses a populist style to appeal to, what they themselves refer to as, a broad public. According to Pels (2011, p. 47), *De Telegraaf* reaches a subculture of the lower educated with a disposition for nationalist and authoritarian values. *AD* originated from a fusion of regional newspapers and self-portrays as a neutral newspaper with no specified

³² A note of caution, however, is warranted. I would like to emphasise that the data was more nuanced on which newspapers produced what discourses. For example, some newspaper articles in *De Telegraaf* also contained hints of a humanitarian discourse on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis. Nevertheless, the inferences I present are substantiated generalisations.

political orientation (Media Bias/Fact Check, n.d.). In practice, *AD* being a popular newspaper targeting the average Dutch citizen, the editorial content appeals more to the (middle)right of the political spectrum. The background of these newspapers shapes their reporting on social issues, which in turn impacts their diffusion of discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis.

This brings us to the next questions: how do the editorial and political background of these newspapers shape their production of discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis? This question was particularly relevant in my CDA at the level of interaction, because it helps us understand how media apparatuses influence the production of discourses.

First, the popular and right-winged orientation of *De Telegraaf* largely explains the prominence of the threat/securitisation discourse on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis. This more sensation-oriented newspaper uses strong loaded words, appeals to emotion and stereotypes to engage their target audience (Media Bias/Fact Check, n.d.). For example, in headlines such as “Choosing between monsters? No!”³³ and “Asylum seekers on a rampage”³⁴. The newspaper speaks to the ‘*gewone mensen*’³⁵ by acknowledging their worries and insecurities and by representing asylum seekers and the refugee crisis as a threat. This type of reporting on the refugee crisis resonates with the target audience of *De Telegraaf*, and they are inclined to read more.

From the CDA, I found that the newspaper articles are generally short in length, lacking in-depth reporting. Besides, the editorial style of *De Telegraaf* is characterised by the limited use of research and academic experts (the ‘expert’ opinions presented are usually those of right-winged political figures). These features suit the lower educated target audience and popular nature of the newspaper.

Moreover, the discourse fragments in *De Telegraaf* normalise nationalist, xenophobic and Islamophobic narratives (Gotsbachner, 2001; Pels, 2011). This trend, were we engage with social issues such as the refugee crisis through a narrative of fear, is what Wodak (2015) refers to as a ‘politics of fear’. Figures are used to visualise the threat of the hefty inflow of asylum seekers and refugees. Discourse fragments illustrate that *De Telegraaf* actively associates the inflow of asylum seekers and refugees with trouble; nuisance, criminal behaviour, and an increased risk for Islamic terror attacks. Additionally, the discourse

³³ Translation of the original Dutch headline “*Kiezen tussen de monsters? Nee!*” (Telegraaf, 2015).

³⁴ Translation of the original Dutch headline “*Asielzoekers op rooftocht*” (Telegraaf, 2018).

³⁵ ‘*Gewone mensen*’ refers to the aforementioned typically-Dutch citizen. In practice, the label represents a subculture of the lower educated with a disposition for nationalist and authoritarian values.

fragments talk about polls among Dutch citizens, to convey the message that their claim of asylum seekers and refugees threatening the Netherlands, is widely accepted. In accordance with nationalist, right-winged political opinion, the refugee crisis is regarded as a security concern that needs to be regulated rigidly (Hameleers, 2019). Thus, *De Telegraaf* actively produces the threat/securitisation discourse, which is in line with their background and interests.

Second, the editorial and political background of *AD* also shape their reporting on the refugee crisis. As a popular newspaper with a slight tendency to the political right, *AD* mainly represents asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis as a topic of concern. Nevertheless, the discourse fragments in *AD* convey less normative judgments about the refugee crisis in the Netherlands (in comparison to *De Telegraaf*).³⁶

The discourse fragments in *AD* are more objective. This shows in the empirical data, as these fragments more often describe events related to the refugee crisis without attributing negative characteristics. Besides, the newspaper does not use a lot of loaded language; the focus is on factual reporting and not on appeals to emotion. The more opinionated positions on the refugee crisis are produced in the 'service' section of *AD*, where they publish commentary. The service section features both threat/securitisation and humanitarian narratives, but the threat/securitisation discourse features most prominently. The regional character of *AD* shows in the anecdotes: the locals worry and nuisance or unrest in their cities. The discourse fragments passively associate asylum seekers and refugees with trouble.

While the focus is on factual reporting, the news coverage of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands is not in-depth. Newspaper articles in *AD* are relatively short in length, and as such they do not provide a lot of background. This type of reporting makes sense for *AD*, because they target a broad audience among Dutch citizens. Not all people are interested in reading lengthy articles that provide substantive background on the refugee crisis. In short, the editorial style and political background of *AD* are less outspoken, which results in a less defined production of discourse on the refugee crisis.

Thirdly, how do the editorial and political background of *De Volkskrant* shape their discursive representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis? Based on my CDA, I found that the dominant discourses produced in *De Volkskrant* are the humanitarian and human rights discourse. These discourses are in general more welcoming of asylum

³⁶ The discourse fragments in *AD* more frequently represents asylum seekers and refugees as human beings and more frequently mentions moral responsibility and human rights, in comparison to *De Telegraaf*.

seekers and refugees, representing them as deserving victims and human beings with inalienable rights. This makes sense as *De Volkskrant* is a progressive, social-democratic and left-centred newspaper. In the current socio-political context, an open attitude to hosting asylum seekers and refugees is generally considered politically leftist and progressive.

Discourse fragments in *De Volkskrant* communicate a willingness in society to be open to asylum seekers and refugees; as a sense of ‘*medemenselijkheid*’ (i.e. compassion) and a ‘*draagvlak*’ (i.e. support base) for social initiatives, such as the facilitation of housing and integration. In some fragments, the newspaper explicitly recognises the social capital of asylum seekers and refugees. Moreover, in the article “The new taboo: saying something positive about migration”³⁷, Bakker mentions that she wants to break the taboo and be positive about the immigration of asylum seekers. I argue this is a progressive representation of asylum seekers and refugees which suits the newspaper.

Besides, *De Volkskrant* is a quality newspaper that targets higher educated readers with libertarian and cosmopolitan values. This shows in the editorial style and linguistic features from the articles that I analysed. *De Volkskrant* produces a more academic language, the claims made are substantiated, and reporting is factual and in-depth. The discourse fragments include findings and reports from research institutions and academic experts.³⁸ The newspaper uses evidence to back up statements. This editorials style resonates with a higher educated audience. The representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis is overall less negative and more nuanced. The length of the newspaper articles is significantly longer in comparison to the other two newspapers³⁹, which is suitable for a quality newspaper.

Furthermore, *De Volkskrant* is politically oriented and has a critical attitude. The data shows how fear-driven claims in the threat/securitisation discourse are scrutinized in *De Volkskrant*. The newspaper is particularly critical of the exaggeration and problemisation of the refugee crisis in Dutch society. In short, *De Volkskrant* produces a humanitarian and human rights discourse in their representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis, which resonate and are appropriate because of the editorial and political background of the newspaper.

³⁷ Translation of the original Dutch headline “*Het nieuwe taboe: iets positiefs over migratie zeggen*” in *De Volkskrant* on the 20th of August 2015 in the section *Ten Eerste*, written by Maartje Bakker (Volkskrant, 2015).

³⁸ Findings include academic research, facts and figures, polls conducted among Dutch citizens and thorough analysis by experts.

³⁹ The list of newspaper articles in Appendix C demonstrates this.

5.1.2 Background political discourses

The purpose of this second section is to look at the level of interaction for the political discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis. I answer the question: what political parties⁴⁰ produce and diffuse what discourses? I analysed the background of these apparatuses of production. The political representatives have a public platform, therefore, the discourses they produce are widely dispersed among Dutch citizens. These political parties logically produce discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis that resonate with their ideology and their targeted voters.

From the CDA at the level of interaction, I found that the political parties PVV, FvD and VVD predominantly produce the threat/securitisation discourse, which suits their ideological background and their interests. The PVV and FvD are generally classified as nationalist, right-winged populist parties with strong anti-EU, anti-immigration and anti-political elite positions (Hameleers, 2019; Pohl & Wodak, 2012; Vossen, 2016). These parties reach the white-nationalist, common Dutch citizens (i.e. the so-labelled '*gewone mensen*'), generally people with lower socio-economic status. Besides, the VVD is a (moderate) right-winged political party, known for its economic liberalism (Pels, 2011, p. 32). The VVD targets the middle-class entrepreneur.

In their production of the threat/securitisation discourse on the refugee crisis, these political parties speak to the concerns of their targeted voters. The '*gewone mensen*' are concerned about the inflow of asylum seekers, because it might impact their financial situation, their standing in the job and housing market, and their nationalist traditions (Pels, 2011, p. 20). Besides, the middle-class entrepreneurs believe that people are responsible for protecting their own interests.

By producing a threat/securitisation discourse, these political parties vow to put Dutch citizens before asylum seekers and refugees. Their nationalist position entails protecting the interests of their targeted voters, who perceive the refugee crisis as threatening or worrying. The VVD is the largest party since the general election of 2010, and the FvD has been on the rise in previous years (Kiesraad, n.d.). Moreover, the PVV was one of the largest political parties in 2015 (EenVandaag, n.d.). They propagate and diffuse the threat/securitisation discourse; a discourse that is consumed popularly among Dutch citizens. This helps us

⁴⁰ The political parties included are the political parties represented in the Dutch House of Representatives (i.e. *Tweede Kamer*) in the timeframe from 2014 until 2019. What discourses they produce is based on a CDA of their party *standputen* and *Tweede Kamer* debates on the topic of asylum and the refugee crisis.

understand why this discourse on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis is dominant in Dutch society, and as such.

The CDA also demonstrated that GL, SP, D66 and PvdA⁴¹ predominantly produce the humanitarian and the human rights discourse. In the House of Representatives, these political parties form the opposition.⁴² They represent an opposition that is critical of the rulings of the VDD-led coalition with regards to asylum policy. The political parties are more left-winged, social democratic and progressive. They promote social justice, believe that all human beings have basic human rights, and are open-minded about cultural diversity. Besides, they have a strong stance on solidarity in society, which extends to asylum seekers and refugees. This is demonstrated in their representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in the studied discourse fragments.

Moreover, the positions of these political parties in the asylum debate and on the refugee crisis, resonate with their— generally higher educated – targeted voters (Pels, 2011). The targeted voters support the solidarity ideals and recognise the human aspect of the refugee crisis. Logically, these parties want to maintain the votes of the electorate to remain influential politically. Given this background, it makes sense that these political parties dominantly produce the humanitarian and human rights discourse in their political positions and the asylum debates. Nevertheless, the production of dominant discourses is not just dependent on background and interests, it is also dependent on who has the power to produce.

5.2 Contextualizing discourses

The previous sections demonstrated that powerful media and political apparatuses produce the dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis. Nevertheless, in the production process, these apparatuses are restrained by the socio-political context of the Netherlands. The purpose of this section is to gain a better understanding of the context in which the dominant discourses are produced and the system of power operates. I will present the findings of my CDA at the level of context, and answer the question: what socio-political conditions facilitated or hampered the dominance of the identified discourses?

First, I will present a timeframe comparison to demonstrate how certain discourses were more prominent at certain moments in time. Second, I will look at the Dutch political

⁴¹ The PvdA produced the humanitarian and the human rights discourse less explicitly in the years from 2012 up until 2017, because they had to compromise in their *Tweede Kamer* coalition with VVD.

⁴² With the following exceptions; the PvdA was in the *Tweede Kamer* coalition from 2012 up until 2017, and D66 has been in the coalition since the general elections of March 2019.

environment and how it facilitates the production of dominant discourses. Third, I will analyse impactful social events and their influence on these discourses. Overall, this section interprets the empirical evidence analysing the interaction between discourse and socio-political context.

5.2.1 Timeframe comparison

Part of the contextualisation of the dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis, is looking at the moment in time in which these discourses were produced. A trends in the coded discourse fragments shows that in 2014 the inflow of refugees into Europe had not yet reached the ‘crisis’ stadium. The year after, 2015, was recognised as the start of the European refugee crisis, when high numbers of asylum seekers and refugees sought refuge in on the shores of Europe.⁴³ The ‘refugee crisis’ was set on the political agenda, both in the Dutch House of Representatives and the European Commission.

The inflow of asylum seekers and refugees had an evident effect on the coverage of the phenomenon in newspaper articles and political rhetoric. First, a trend in the number of published articles illustrates this. The number of articles in *De Telegraaf*, *AD*, and *De Volkskrant* that mentioned ‘asylum seekers’ or ‘refugees’ spiked in 2015, compared to 2014. It was still high in 2016, and declined steadily since. Second, the lexicalisation analysis demonstrated that the ‘crisis’ label was attributed more frequently in and after 2015.⁴⁴

Besides, the inflow of asylum seekers and refugees had an impact on what discourses on the refugee crisis the newspapers produced dominantly. In *De Telegraaf* and *AD* the humanitarian and human rights discourses featured more prominently in 2014, prior to the refugee crisis. With the start of the refugee crisis in 2015, the threat/securitisation discourse became more dominant. When comparing the 2014 and 2015 discourse fragments from political parties, the differences were less striking. Nevertheless, these findings illustrate that the production and normalisation of particular dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis is dependent on the time period.

5.2.2 Political environment

The second contextual factor that I will take into consideration is the political environment in the Netherlands from 2014 up until 2019.⁴⁵ How has the Dutch political

⁴³ The majority of asylum seekers and refugees fled from escalating violence in the Middle East and in Africa. Particularly, the Syrian civil war caused many Syrians to flee to Europe.

⁴⁴ For the full lexicalisation analysis, see Appendix E.

⁴⁵ The Netherlands has a parliamentary representative democracy with an Upper and a Lower House. The Lower House is the Dutch House of Representatives; its 150 members are elected directly by the people.

environment facilitated the production of dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis? First of all, in the Dutch general election of 2012 and 2017, the VVD (with Mark Rutte as lead candidate) received the most votes⁴⁶, and thus the most seats in the Dutch House of Representatives (Kiesraad, n.d.). In 2012, the VVD formed a coalition with the PvdA. The PVV was the third largest party. In 2017, while the PVV became the second largest party, the VVD formed a coalition with the CDA, D66, and CU. Besides, in the Dutch provincial elections of 2015 the VVD and the CDA overall received the most votes.⁴⁷ In the 2019 provincial elections, FvD received the most votes, and the VVD the second most. These election results are interesting because they demonstrate that the right-winged (VVD), nationalist (PVV and FvD), and more conservative (CDA and CU) political parties were quite influential politically from 2014 up until 2019. As such, the political environment facilitated the dominant production of the threat/securitisation discourse.

As briefly mentioned earlier on, GL, SP and D66 generally form the opposition in the House of Representatives⁴⁸. The left-winged progressive opposition is generally critical of right-winged nationalist stances in the asylum debate. The progressive political parties then use the humanitarian and human rights discourse to directly or indirectly criticise the representation of asylum seekers and refugees as a threat. The context thus allows them to produce the humanitarian and human rights discourse more prominently.

Another aspect of the political environment that has facilitated the production of the threat/securitisation discourse as the dominant discourse, is the rise of right-wing populism. Following the 2015 refugee crisis, anti-immigrant positions helped fuel the rise of right-winged populist party PVV (Vossen, 2016, p. 62). The PVV was one of the largest political parties in 2015 (EenVandaag, n.d.). The fundamental anti-immigration, anti-Islam, and anti-EU positions of the PVV were futile grounds for the construction of the threat/securitisation discourse in the context of asylum policy (Hameleers, 2019). Vossen (2016, p. 48) spoke

The House of Representatives has the right to propose legislation among others. The Dutch parliamentary representative democracy is known for its coalitions and necessitated consensus.

⁴⁶ The VVD got 26,6% of the votes in the general election of September 2012, and 21,3% of the votes in the general election of March 2017. In both elections, the VVD was the political party with the most votes.

⁴⁷ In the provincial elections, the members of the Provincial States are elected in the twelve provinces of the Netherlands. The provincial elections indirectly determine the composition of the Upper House. In March of 2015, the VVD received 89(out of 570) seats and CDA received 89(out of 570) seats. In March of 2019, the FvD won the most seats 86(out of 570), the VVD got second with 80(out of 570), and CDA third with 72(out of 570) (Kiesraad, n.d.).

⁴⁸ With the following exceptions; the PvdA was in the *Tweede Kamer* coalition from 2012 up until 2017, and D66 has been in the coalition since the general elections of March 2017. In these years they were less critical of asylum policy, because they had to reach consensus in their *Tweede Kamer* coalition with VVD.

about the anti-Islamic alarmism of the PVV, their nationalist rhetoric, and how they voice their concerns about the safety of the country.

Besides, the right-wing populist FvD has been on the rise in recent years, especially since 2019. Similar to the PVV, the FvD adopts a nationalist stance with regards to the refugee crisis, and emphasises the need to protect the Dutch culture. These nationalist, anti-immigration, anti-Islam narratives form the threat/securitisation discourse. The PVV and FvD use and propagate this discourse to appeal to their targeted voter population. The rise in popularity of the PVV and later FvD helps us understand why the threat/securitisation discourse on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis gained traction in Dutch society.

5.2.3 Impactful social events

Furthermore, impactful social events have influenced the production of dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis. First of all, the 2007-2009 Financial Crisis brought about wide-spread feelings of insecurity in Europe and in the Netherlands (Koser, 2016).⁴⁹ The groups of people in society that were hit hard by the Financial Crisis – particularly the lower educated with low socio-economic standing – were also the people that felt the most vulnerable when faced with the inflow of refugees. These people fear that they might lose their job, and that they might have to cover the costs of hosting refugees. The insecurities that arose during the Financial Crisis, were further exacerbated with the refugee crisis. The threat/securitisation discourse recognises and responds to these insecurities. The discourse resonated with a significant group of people in Dutch society⁵⁰, which facilitated the dominant production of this discourse.

A second social event that had a direct impact on the discourses on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis, is the death of Aylan Kurdi. I presented this empirical case in the introduction of my thesis. The photo of the three-year-old Syrian boy whose lifeless body washed up on a beach in Turkey – who he drowned in the Mediterranean Sea seeking refuge in Europe – had an enormous impact. From that moment on, September 2nd 2015, Aylan became the human face of the European refugee crisis. His drowning gained significant attention in the media, as his death became the embodiment of the tragic refugee crisis.

In September of 2015, and the weeks after, the representation of the refugee crisis in the three newspapers changed. The data shows that in *De Telegraaf* and *AD* particularly, the humanitarian discourse came to the forefront. Discourse fragments portray the European

⁴⁹ Even though the 2007-2009 Financial Crisis falls outside the time period I establish in my research puzzle, the secondary literature mentions the impact the

⁵⁰ Among these people are the so-labelled common man, who populist parties PVV and FvD appeal to.

refugee crisis as a humanitarian concern and mention the moral duty of Europe in dealing with the crisis. It is difficult to pin point how long this discursive trend lasted, but over a period of weeks the newspapers slowly featured the humanitarian discourse less prominently, and the threat/securitisation discourse again caught central stage (particularly in *De Telegraaf*). This empirical case illustrates how social events shape the production and normalisation of discourses on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis.

Furthermore, the representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in the media and political discourses was shaped significantly by the multiple Islamic terrorist attacks in Europe. Following the 7th-9th of January 2015 Île-de-France attacks (better known as the Charlie Hebdo shooting), word phrases and associations characteristic of the threat/securitisation discourse became more prominent in newspaper articles and political debates. In discourse fragments from *De Telegraaf*, *AD*, PVV and FvD, asylum seekers and refugees are explicitly associated with Islamic terrorism. The following discourse fragment presents an example: “The attacks in Paris were not yet over when PVV leader Geert Wilders tweeted: ‘Close the Dutch borders. Now! Protect the Dutch population!’” (Rosman, 2015, my translation).⁵¹ I found a similar discursive trend in the data after the Nice truck attack on the 14th of July 2016. In line with the threat/securitisation discourse, the producers of such discourse fragments claim that asylum seekers pose a threat to national security, because Islamic terrorists might use the refugee flows to enter the Netherlands. In addition, the closing of the border is frequently present as the solution; a legitimate securitisation measure.

While *De Telegraaf* produces the threat/securitisation discourse consistently, *AD* is more strongly influenced by the social context in the production of this discourse. The empirical evidence was less clear for other Islamic terrorist attacks in Europe and how these shaped the production of dominant discourses.⁵² Nevertheless, impactful social events – such as the Financial Crisis, Aylan Kurdi’s death, and Islamic terrorist attacks – evidently influence which discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis are produced most dominantly.

To conclude, these findings from the CDA at the level of context demonstrate that society and discourse are mutually constitutive. As Fairclough (1989; 1992) mentioned,

⁵¹ Translation of the original Dutch discourse fragment: “*De aanslagen in Parijs waren nog niet voorbij of PVV-leider Geert Wilders twitterde: ‘Sluit de Nederlandse grenzen. Nu! Bescherm de Nederlandse bevolking!’*” (Rosman, 2015).

⁵² For example, the Brussel bombing on the 22nd of March 2016, and the Berlin Christmas market attack on the 19th of December 2016.

discourse and society interact. In particular contexts, certain discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis feature more prominently. The producers of discourse are influenced by socio-political conditions, which they might use to their advantage in producing a dominant discourse. Thus, while Dutch society has accepted the threat/securitisation, humanitarian, and human rights discourse as normal and legitimate, these discourses are produced by certain powerful apparatuses in certain contexts.

5.3 Deconstructing discourses and systems of power

In the previous sections, I answered the question: who produces and diffuses what discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis and in what context? The next step is to reveal the inherent power relations in the production of discourse.

Foucault (1980, p. 93, 106) argued that “power is productive”, in particular productive of knowledge. This view implies that power, dispersed through social relations, produces possible forms of behaviour and restricts others. Foucault asserts that this productive power is inherently exercised through discursive practices. Thus, those with productive power can use discursive practices to produce accepted forms of knowledge on a topic. Fairclough, (1992, p. 50) adopts a similar view of power as productive. He argues that power, as implicit in everyday social practices, manifests in discourses and institutions to guide behaviour and manage populations. When I mention productive power in this thesis, I speak of the ability to produce dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis. In accordance with the theoretical framework, this type of power resides with institutions and apparatuses in society, and I therefore refer to them as systems of power.

So, who has productive power in the empirical case of this thesis? In the structure of Dutch society, the media and political apparatuses examined in this thesis have substantial productive power. They have the power to construe a narrative that is diffused and consumed dominantly enough that it construes a discourse.

I argue that the identified media and political discourses are so widely-featured that they form the dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands. While not the focus of this thesis, there are other discourses that represent asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in a different way. Nevertheless, the three identified discourses are the dominant discourses, largely because they are produced by media and political apparatuses with substantial productive power.

The narratives, claims and associations they produce in their newspaper articles, political rhetoric or policy documents are spread among a large number of people in the

Netherlands. In turn, people in the Netherlands consume these narratives and claims. They become so widely-diffused and consumed, that they constitute the dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis. Because of the productive power of the media and political apparatuses, their discursive representation has resulted in certain understandings of asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands.

On the one hand, *De Telegraaf*, *AD*, *PVV*, *FvD* and *VVD* have the power to produce a dominant discourse in which asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis are represented as a threat and a security concern. They have the productive power to construe this threat/securitisation discourse in line with their ideological background and interests. On the other hand, *De Volkskrant* and the progressive, left-social democratic political parties have the power to produce the dominant humanitarian and human rights discourse through their narratives on the refugee crisis. The powerful media and political apparatuses benefit from the diffusion of these dominant discourses, because these discourses resonate with their readers or voters. This allows them to remain influential and keep their position of power.

Thus, these media and political apparatuses are capable of shaping people's perceptions of the refugee crisis, in line with their background and their interests. In the context of Dutch society, these apparatuses of production are the systems of power. The apparatuses benefit from the status quo, therefore, they are motivated to preserve the status quo, and as such persevere the systems of power. By continuing to produce their discursive understanding of the refugee crisis – be it through the threat/securitisation, the humanitarian or human rights discourse – they sustain the power balance.

Asylum seekers and refugees have little to no productive power. Their story is rarely heard in newspaper articles, political rhetoric or policy documents. In the context of Dutch society, they are unable to produce dominant discourses. Hence, asylum seekers and refugees are generally not successful in shaping how they are perceived by people in the Netherlands. In conclusion, by deconstructing the dominant discourses, I revealed a stark power asymmetry. This will be further explored in the next chapter.

5.4 Chapter summary

Although the dominant threat/securitisation, the humanitarian, and the human rights discourse might be regarded as normal, they are produced by powerful media and political apparatuses and in particular contexts. In this chapter, I deconstructed the production process and contextualised the dominant discourses. Based on my CDA, I found that the newspapers

and political parties produce a dominant discourse on asylum seekers and refugees in line with their editorial, voter, and ideological background.

To summarise, the popular and right-winged orientation of *De Telegraaf* explains the prominence of the threat/securitisation discourse. As a more objective and neutral, but popular newspaper with a slight tendency to the political right, *AD* also represents the inflow of asylum seekers and refugees as a topic of concern. *AD*'s production of the threat/securitisation or humanitarian discourse was influenced by impactful social events. Besides, *De Volkskrant*, as a progressive, left-centred newspaper, produces a humanitarian and human rights discourse, more compassionate towards asylum seekers and refugees. Furthermore, it makes sense that nationalist, right-winged VVD and populist parties PVV and FvD with their anti-immigration positions produce the threat/securitisation discourse. Besides, the critical, progressive opposition GL, SP, D66, and at times PvdA and CU produces the humanitarian and the human rights discourse. This was facilitated by the political environment.

The relevance of this deconstruction and contextualisation is that it makes visible the systems of power that produce and sustain the dominant discourse. In the current social structure, the researched media and political apparatuses have substantial productive power. They have the power to shape how asylum seekers and refugees are represented and perceived by large segments of Dutch society, in line with their interests. In the context of Dutch society, these media and political apparatuses form the systems of power and are hence motivated to sustain the status quo.

In the next chapter, I will reflect on this status quo regime of truth on the crisis of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands. I will analyse why these media and political apparatuses have productive power, which is related to their status and sanctioning. Also, I will demonstrate how discursive practices on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis become discursive 'truths', and how this process is shaped by the systems of power.

Chapter 6. REGIME OF TRUTH AND THE EFFECTS OF POWER

In the introduction, I presented Foucault's (1980, p. 131) 'regime of truth' as the analytical frame to unpack the empirical complication. The purpose of this thesis is to understand how the regime of truth is produced and sustained by systems of power and their discursive 'truths' on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands from 2014 until 2019. With this purpose in mind, this chapter reflects on the third sub-question: *What are the effects of power on the discursive construction of 'truths' about the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees, and does this reproduce social systems of domination in the Netherlands?*

In my operationalisation of the analytical frame, I argued that a regime of truth⁵³ breaks down into five constituent concepts that function as building blocks: (1) discursive practices, (2) status, (3) sanctioned, (4) knowledge, and (5) power. This chapter covers these five fundamental concepts and the relationship between the parts in relation to the whole: the regime of truth.

6.1 Discursive practices

Discursive practices are the first building block in the 'regime of truth' frame. Foss and Gill (1987, p. 387) define discursive practices as "discourse that, because it follows particular rules or has passed the appropriate tests, is understood to be true in a culture." This section provides an answer to the first sub-sub-question: What discursive practices are there on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands? I will first reflect on the discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis. Second, I will argue that these discourses are understood to be true among large segments of Dutch society.

6.1.1 Discourses

To understand the discursive practices on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees, we first need to look at the discourses on this topic. As mentioned Chapter One, I adopted Jabri's (1996, p. 94-95) definition of discourse as "social relations represented in texts where the language contained within these texts is used to construct meaning and representation ..."

⁵³ Defined by Foucault (1980, p. 131) as: "The types of discourse it [society] accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances that enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true."

So, how are asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis represented and what meaning is constructed in texts? Besides, what social relations are represented in these texts?

The language in the studied newspaper articles, political rhetoric, and policy documents is used to construct a certain meaningful understanding and representation of asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis. The analysis of the empirical data let me identify three dominant discourse in Chapter Four: (1) the threat/securitisation discourse, (2) humanitarian discourse, and (3) human right discourse.⁵⁴ The language in these newspaper articles, political rhetoric, and policy documents, thus represents asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis as either a threat, a humanitarian concern or a human rights issue.

What social relations are represented in these newspaper articles, political rhetoric, and policy documents? Based on my finding from the CDA, I argue that the social relations between asylum seekers and refugees, and the dominant Dutch society represented in the identified discourses are characterised by (1) feelings of threat and an 'us vs them'-mentality, or (2) a victim and saviour dynamic.

Firstly, the threat/securitisation discourse shapes a social relationship in which a group of Dutch citizens fears (or is told to fear) the inflow of asylum seekers and refugees. In this discourse, asylum seekers and refugees are associated with nuisance, criminality and terrorism. Additionally, the discourse propagates a number of arguments in which asylum seekers and refugees present a threat to Dutch society; a national security concern, a threat to culture and Dutch identity, an economic burden, and a burden to the welfare system.

Additionally, I argue that this social relationship embodies an 'us vs them'-mentality; the Dutch vs the asylum seekers and refugees (Hameleers, 2019). Such a mentality entails the categorisation of people in an 'us' and 'them', or an in-group and out-group. Psychological theory asserts that this categorisation is enough for the in-group to foster hostilities towards the out-group. In the threat/securitisation discourse, the interests of the common Dutch citizens (or the '*gewone mensen*', the in-group), are presented as opposed to the interests of the asylum seekers and refugees (the out-group) (Hameleers, 2019; Wodak, 2015). Asylum seekers and refugees are understood as a foreign source of insecurity; as the 'other' who might threaten 'our' way of life. Because of its dominant diffusion, the threat/securitisation discourse normalises a xenophobic⁵⁵ relationship, where the 'threat' of the 'other' is entered into common sense for a segment of society (Gotsbachner, 2001).

⁵⁴ For a more thorough account of how I came to identify these dominant discourses, see Chapter Four.

⁵⁵ Xenophobia, defined in the Cambridge dictionary as an "extreme dislike or fear of foreigners, their customs, their religions, etc." ("Xenophobia", n.d.).

Secondly, the humanitarian and human rights discourse produce a social relation between (a targeted group of) Dutch citizens and asylum seekers and refugees that is characterised by a victim and saviour dynamic (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 616; von Bieberstein & Evren, 2016, p. 468). This is a social relationship in which the asylum seeker or refugee is defined by his or her victimhood. As a result of a humanitarian crisis and of gross human rights violations, the asylum seeker or refugee is a victim that should be pitied and that needs to be saved. In addition, the Dutch take on the role of the saviour of these victims. In the humanitarian and human rights discourse, the Netherlands, being a rich liberal democratic state, has the moral responsibility to save the victimised asylum seekers and refugees.

In conclusion, the identified discourses – their representation of asylum seekers and refugees and the derived social relations – are the basis for the discursive practices on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees in Dutch society.

6.1.2 Discourses understood to be true

Nevertheless, the discourses have to be understood as true in Dutch culture⁵⁶ in order for them to constitute discursive practices. I argue that the dominant discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis are so widely-featured that they have become accepted and normalised in Dutch society and that therefore, they are understood as ‘truths’. In this section, I will reflect on the interaction between discourse and ‘truth’. I apply Foucault’s definition of ‘truth’ (which I unpacked in Chapter Two) and link to the empirical case of discourses on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees.

First, Jabri’s definition of discourse has a second aspect to it, as “the underlying assumption of discourse analysis is that social texts do not merely *reflect* or *mirror* objects, events and categories pre-existing in the social and natural world. Rather, they actively *construct* a version of those things. They do not describe things; *they do things*. And being active, they have social and political implications” (Jabri, 1996, p. 94-95). Thus, discourses construct a certain representation of the social world. In the case of this thesis, the identified discourses construct a particular representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis. In other words, the discourses construct certain discursive ‘truths’ on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands.

⁵⁶ Culture is defined in the Cambridge dictionary as “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time” (“Culture”, n.d.).

To demonstrate that the identified discourses are indeed understood to be true in Dutch culture, I analysed Foucault's (1980, p. 131-132) conceptualisation of 'truth'⁵⁷ (since it is in line with the theoretical framework and ontological premise of this thesis. In particular, the premise is that 'truth' is constructed). I considered four elements (1) whether a discourse is the object of immense diffusion and consumption in the Netherlands, (2) whether the discourse is produced by dominant and great apparatuses, (3) whether the media and political apparatuses of information have a large extent in Dutch society, and (4) whether the discourse makes a 'truth' claim about asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis.

First, the previous chapter demonstrated that the discourses on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees are produced by dominant and great apparatuses. The newspapers are the most wide-spread in the Netherlands. Besides, the political parties have a significant role in the House of Representatives in governing the Netherlands. These are dominant apparatuses. Fairclough (1989), Fairclough and Fairclough (2012), Foucault (1980), Jabri (1996), and van Dijk (1993) argued that language is not neutral, it is shaped by economic and political incitement. As such, the discursive 'truths' on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees are produced by dominant apparatuses.

Second, I argue that the media and political apparatuses make 'truth' claims about asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis. The apparatuses are tasked with covering the news, providing credible information, and developing policy based on credible information. Moreover, in their reporting or their rhetoric, they claim to present the 'truth' about the refugee crisis.

Third, Foucault's (1980, p. 131-132) philosophical definition entails that for something to be considered 'truth' it has to be "the object (...) of immense diffusion and consumption". In Chapter Five (from my findings of the CDA at the level of interaction), I inferred that the media and political have their own interests in producing discourses that are in accordance with their ideological position and that resonate with their target audience. The goal of these political bodies is to propagate their political ideology and political position, and to attract voters in order to remain influential politically. Besides, the goal of such media

⁵⁷ To provide a reminder of Foucault's conceptualisation: 'truth' "is centred on the form of discourse and the institutions which produce it; it is subject to constant economic and political incitement... ; it is the object, under diverse forms, of immense diffusion and consumption (circulating through apparatuses of education and information whose extent is relatively broad in the social body, notwithstanding certain strict limitations); it is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media); lastly, it is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation ('ideological struggles') (Foucault, 1980, p. 131-132).

apparatuses is high circulation, to have a broad audience read your newspaper articles. Therefore, the objective of these apparatuses is diffusion and consumption.

Fourth, the apparatuses of production propagate a discourse on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis that resonates with their audience. Because the identified discourses resonate, they are diffused more, and in turn, consumed more, they become more prominent. The three dominant discourses resonate with large segments of Dutch society; they are acknowledged. As such, the media and political apparatuses have a large extent in Dutch society. Their stories of signification, discursive claims, and the associated social relations, are generally accepted as valid. Thus, the discourses they produce constitute the dominant representation of asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis in Dutch society.

The identified discourses are sufficiently dominant that they have become normalised; accepted as the norm, the standard understanding. Reflecting on what constitutes ‘truth’ (Foucault, 1980, p. 131-132) I, therefore, assert that the threat/securitisation, humanitarian, and human rights discourse represent the produced discursive ‘truths’ on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees in Dutch society. In conclusion, as the three identified discourses are understood to be true among large segments of Dutch society, they shape the discursive practices in the regime of truth on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees.

6.2 Status and sanctioning productive power

The second and third constituent parts of the regime of truth frame are status and sanctioned. These two constituent parts are particularly relevant to see how a regime of truth is produced and in what systems of power. I answer the sub-sub-questions: what is the status of the producers of discourse and of the asylum seekers and refugees? And how are media and political apparatuses on the one hand, and asylum seekers and refugees, on the other hand, sanctioned in the production of discursive 'truths'?

First, Foss and Gill (1987, p. 389) define status as “allowing certain rhetors in certain roles to be heard in that formation, while others are not”. In other words, status in the regime of truth frame considers the ‘social role’ of the producer of discourse. In this thesis, status is about what rhetors – given their social roles – are heard when they produce discourses on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis, while others are not.

Second, closely connected to status, is ‘sanctioned’ defined by Giddens (1987 in Hexmoor et al., 2012, p. 92) as the approving "reaction of others to the behaviour of an individual or a group". In this thesis, the focus is on what discursive behaviour of media and political bodies or asylum seekers and refugees is sanctioned and accepted by the dominant

Dutch society. Whether a certain type of discursive behaviour is sanctioned is highly dependent on the status of the apparatus or institution demonstrating discursive behaviour, and by the 'rules' that govern a discursive formation (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 388). For example, the apparatus which has an authoritative status, a social role as a provider of trustworthy information, and who provides evidence for their claim in producing a discourse, is more likely to be sanctioned.

Thus, to produce a discourse 'truth', one needs status, and one needs sanctioning. Ultimately, this section is about uncovering the source of productive power; why do media and political apparatuses have the power to produce a dominant discourse, and to let their discursive 'truths' on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees be heard in the context of the Netherlands from 2014 to 2019?

6.2.1 Powerful media and political apparatuses

The rhetors that I studied in this research are media and political apparatuses; the widely-featured newspapers *De Telegraaf*, *AD*, and *De Volkskrant* and the political parties', in the House of Representatives. The findings from the CDA at the level of interaction (Chapter Five), showed us how these apparatuses play a significant role in producing discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis. The rhetoric these apparatuses produce is widely diffused and consumed and reaches a broad audience among Dutch society. As a result, they have substantial productive power.

The media and political apparatuses I analysed take on a social role as providers of information and as reporters on everyday life. *De Telegraaf*, *AD* and *De Volkskrant* are popular, widely-circulated newspapers in the Netherlands, and because of that, Dutch society has adjudged them this social role. Besides, the purpose of political parties and political bodies is to propagate their ideology and political positions to get elected and govern the Netherlands. Their social role is to represent the Dutch citizens and shape Dutch society through policy. In general, their status is that of legitimate sources of authority with trustworthy reporting on societal issues, such as the refugee crisis. Thus, the social role of these media and political apparatuses is to speak, and their status allows them to be heard.

In addition, the status of these media and political apparatuses also influences what discursive behaviour is sanctioned and what not. I asked the question: what representation of asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis are sanctioned by and accepted in Dutch society? Even though the focus of this study was not on the reactions of others to certain discourses on the refugee crisis, the CDA allowed me to analyse the interaction between the

discourses and society. Giddens (1987, p. 28) argues that dominant discourses are in itself “sanctioned by the very nature of [their] ‘public’ character”. The threat/securitisation, humanitarian and human rights discourse are sanctioned because Dutch society regards them as valid and has accepted their public character.

There are of course nuances in what discourses are sanctioned depending on the producer of the discourses. Dutch society has sanctioned *De Telegraaf*, *AD*, PVV, FvD and VVD as producers of the threat/securitisation discourse, because the popular line of argumentation is coherent with their ideological background and interests. Further evidence and explanation for which was outlined in Chapter Five. Besides, *De Volkskrant* and the left-socialist political parties are sanctioned to propagate the humanitarian discourse and the human rights discourse. The discourses they produce are in line with their values of social justice and progressive stance with regards to hosting refugees. In the Dutch society, these two discourses are also sanctioned as critiques of the threat/securitisation discourse.

In the production process, the media and political apparatuses follow the ‘rules’ – the principles and procedures – that are necessary for their discursive behaviour to be sanctioned by their audience in Dutch society. Such rules the necessity of presenting facts and figures, expert opinions, or sensational anecdotes. As demonstrated in Chapter Five, *De Volkskrant* generally supports their discursive claims, using research reports, facts and figures, and expert statements. The claims are substantiated, there is more background and in-depth reporting, and a progressive stance with regards to the refugee crisis takes centre stage. Besides, *De Telegraaf*, *AD* (to a lesser extent), PVV and FvD use more sensational language and a populist narrative. The discursive claims speak to emotion and to the concerns of their target audience. Eventually, their discursive claims have merit, because they follow these (unspoken) rules of what a valid claim is supposed to look like according to their audience.

In conclusion the media and political apparatuses have productive power, because of their status. The discourses on the refugee crisis they produce, are sanctioned by large segments of the Dutch society, in part because they adhere to the rules of what a valid claim looks like for their audience. The status of the apparatuses of production and the sanctioning of their claims legitimises the discourses on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees. In turn, the status of these apparatuses allows them to diffuse and normalise these dominant discourses on the refugee crisis, which eventually will be regarded as discursive 'truths' in Dutch society. Thus, these media and political apparatuses present their discursive ‘truths’ of on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees, and that is the ‘truth’ that is heard.

6.2.2 *The unheard asylum seekers and refugees*

To the contrary, asylum seekers and refugees are not heard. Asylum seekers have official status as ‘asylum seekers’; as non-Dutch citizens seeking protection in the Netherlands. Besides, asylum seekers often spend months (or even years) in asylum seekers centres where they live separated from the Dutch society. As such, they have limited interaction with the prominent media and political apparatuses that produce the dominant discourses. Additionally, the status of refugees is that of new-comers; they have little to say about Dutch society as it is their responsibility to integrate.

Given their place in society, asylum seekers and refugees are regarded as outsiders. Their status makes them 'powerless' in the system of discursive formation; they have little input and little authority, even on the topic of the refugee crisis. Because, asylum seekers and refugees have very little productive power, their ability to shape the discursive ‘truth’ on the ‘crisis’ remains limited. The findings from the CDA demonstrate that in the dominant discourses on the refugee crisis, asylum seekers and refugees have no voice. In the discourse fragments, asylum seekers and refugees were rarely the ones doing the talking or the writing. The powerful media and political apparatuses speak about and for these refugees and asylum seekers.

At the same time, the refugees and asylum seekers do not have the productive power to let their story be heard among a broad audience in Dutch society. Moreover, prior research has demonstrated that asylum seekers and refugees frequently feel constrained in their ability to construct their own story and speak their ‘truth’. In the dominant discourses, they continue to be represented as a threat or as victims.

This has also influenced the type of discursive behaviour from asylum seekers and refugees that is sanctioned by these powerful media and political apparatuses and by the dominant Dutch society. In particular, asylum seekers and refugees are expected to voice their thankfulness and be ‘the good victim’ (Woudwijk, 2019). In the discourses, these asylum seekers and refugees are referred to as ‘*echte vluchtelingen*’; the real refugee, a victim of human tragedies and gross human rights violations, one that needs saving and protection. Asylum seekers and refugees are expected to comply with these norms, that is the type of behaviour and discourse that sanctioned. Therefore, they are expected to stay silent or reinforce the dominant discursive ‘truths’ on the refugee crisis as produced by the power apparatuses.

This lets me conclude that the prominent media and political apparatuses have the productive power and therefore, it is their ‘truth’ on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and

refugees that is heard in the Netherlands. The regime of truth on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees in Dutch society, does not give voice to the 'truth' of asylums seekers and refugees themselves.

6.3 Regime of truth and knowledge

In this section, I will present my claim on what the regime of truth on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands from 2014 until 2019 looks like. In the following paragraphs, I will first reflect on the fourth constituent part in the regime of truth frame: knowledge. I will answer the sub-sub-question: what is understood as knowledge on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands? Subsequent, I will establish the relationship between the constituent parts of the analytical frame in relation to the whole: the regime of truth.

6.3.1 Knowledge on the ‘crisis’

First of all, it is essential to reflect on what constitutes knowledge of the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands? In Chapter Two, I justified working with a definition of knowledge that is in line with a Foucauldian understanding of the power/knowledge nexus. Knowledge is defined by Foss & Gill (1987, p. 390) as “whatever is considered to be truth in a discursive formation”. What we ‘know’ is undeniably dependent on the information that we deem to be true or untrue. Besides, what we 'know' often comes from the information that we obtain in our daily lives; for example, from political rhetoric and the media, and the narratives and discourses they produce. For this thesis, it is relevant to consider what is known about the 'crisis' of asylums seekers and refugees in Dutch society.

The first section of this chapter discussed the discursive practices on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands. I argued that the threat/securitisation discourse, humanitarian discourse and human rights discourse are understood to be true in a large segment of the Dutch society, because of their wide diffusion, reproduction and normalisation. According to the definition of knowledge that I use, therefore, these three discourses constitute knowledge on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees in Dutch society. To give an example, a specific group of people in the Dutch society perceive asylum seekers and refugees as a threat (partly because of the information they obtained from a widely-diffused discourse that represents them as such); it is what they consider to be true. As such, this is what they know about the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands.

6.3.2 *The regime of truth*

Now, it is of great relevance to the research puzzle to interpret and establish the regime of truth on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees in Dutch society. The regime of truth frame acknowledges that 'truths' are constructed, and was chosen with the purpose of uncovering and "deconstruction of established ways of knowing and dominant interpretations and discourses" (Mason, 2018, p. 9). To interpret the established ways of knowing, the building blocks of the regime of truth frame need to be brought together. I analysed the discursive practices on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees in the Dutch society, the status of the producers of discourse, the sanctioning of certain discursive behaviour, the role of productive power, and that what is considered knowledge on the topic in question. This allows me to paint a picture of the regime of truth on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands.

I argue that the regime of truth in Dutch society is one in which asylum seekers and refugees are "suspended between victimhood and malevolence" (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 616). From the CDA at the level of text (Chapter Four), I found that widely-spread newspapers, political rhetoric and policy documents represent asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis through three dominant discourses: the threat/securitisation discourse, humanitarian discourse and human rights discourse. Additionally, in my interpretation of the discursive practices, I uncovered that the social relation between asylum seekers, refugees and the dominant Dutch society is characterised by (1) feelings of threat and an 'us vs them'-mentality, or (2) a victim and saviour dynamic. I argued that the discourses – and the social relations they amount to – are understood to be true among large segments of Dutch society. In line with these 'truths', asylum seekers and refugees are either defined by their malevolence or victimhood.

Moreover, asylum seekers and refugees are what I termed 'suspended' because they are stuck in this regime of truth. They are not heard, and they are powerless in the system in which the discursive 'truths' are produced. The CDA at the level of interaction revealed that asylum seekers and refugees could not significantly influence how they are represented in dominant discourses, and as such, how they are perceived in Dutch society. Their status as 'outsides' and sanctioned behaviour as a 'good victim' permit them little to no power to shape discursive 'truths'.

At the same time, the regime of truth is actively sustained by the powerful media and political apparatuses, because they are the ones that benefit. These apparatuses speak about – and for – asylum seekers and refugees. They maintain their status as legitimate and

trustworthy sources of authority in their reporting on the refugee crisis and produce discursive ‘truths’ that are sanctioned. In doing so, they produce a ‘truth’ on the refugee ‘crisis’ that suits their interests. Therefore, the regime of truth in the Dutch society that suspends asylum seekers and refugees “between victimhood and malevolence”, is produced and sustained by these systems of power (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 616). Evidently, there is a power inequality in this regime of truth. In the next section, I will critically deconstruct the effects of power on asylum seekers and refugees.

6.4 Systems of power

As I continue to unpack the research puzzle, a fundamental element is the systems of power, in which the regime of truth is produced and sustained. In this section, I will reflect on the notion of power in this research. Subsequently, I will reflect more on the interaction between power and ‘truth’ in the regime of truth where asylum seekers and refugees are “suspended between victimhood and malevolence” (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 616). I will provide an answer to the third sub-question: *What are the effects of power on the discursive construction of ‘truths’ about the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees, and does this reproduce social systems of domination in the Netherlands?* First of all, I consider the effects of power on how the current regime of truth is sustained. Second of all, I give insights into the effects of power on asylum seekers and refugees, which make visible social structures of domination.

6.4.1 The notion of power

The notion of power is highly relevant in this research, given this research is founded in a Foucauldian philosophy and adopts a CDA as a methodological approach. When Foucault philosophised about power/knowledge and stated that “power is everywhere” (Foucault 1998, 63), he recognised that the production of ‘truth’ – i.e. the “creation of knowledge through a discourse” – is an exercise of power (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 386; Ibrahim, 2005, p. 164). Earlier on in this chapter, we have seen that power is exercised in producing accepted forms of knowledge and understandings of ‘truth’ on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees in Dutch society (Foucault, 1980). It supports Reyna and Schiller (1998, p. 333) argument that institutions and apparatuses that control discursive practices utilise language in shaping ‘truths’ in their interests. In turn, the purpose of this research was to deconstruct discourses, and uncover the power relations and unequal structures of dominance, that they legitimise and sustain (Wodak, 2011).

To make ‘power’ researchable, while remaining true to these theoretical foundations, I defined it as the “symbolic relation between the producer and the receiver of discourse, (...) how the laws of production allow some form of discourse to be produced and some silenced or sometimes even misrepresented” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 66). More specifically, I also incorporated the definition of ‘power to define’ is the "asymmetrical distribution [in ability to shape] structures of signification [that] are mobilised to legitimate the sectional interest of hegemonic groups" (Jabri, 1996, p. 96). What can conclude about the role of power in light of the research puzzle, and specifically the third sub-question?

6.4.2 Effects of power and the regime of truth

Let me reflect on the all accompanying question here: how is the regime of truth produced and sustained by systems of power in the Netherlands? I discussed the symbolic relation between the producers of discourse – the media and political apparatuses – and the receivers of discourse – the asylum seekers and refugees – intensively in this chapter and in Chapter Four. The reason that I already discussed this before is that power is indeed everywhere; it is spread throughout the whole discursive formation and could not be ignored in prior sections (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 389; Foucault 1998, p. 63). I concluded that asylum seekers and refugees themselves are not heard in the production process and that the dominant discourses misrepresent asylum seekers and refugees as a threat or victim. There is an evident power inequality.

In the regime of truth on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees, productive power and the so-known ‘truth’ on the crisis interact in a way that produces and sustains the regime of truth. Foucault declared that “‘truth’ is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements. ‘Truth’ is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces, and which extend it. A ‘regime’ of truth.” (Foucault, 1980, p. 133). In other words, we find our ‘truth’ in discursive statements that are distributed to us in our everyday lives. However, these ‘truths’ are constructed by the powerful institutions and apparatuses that operate within the structure of a society; this system of power produced and sustained these ‘truths’.

In the empirical case of this thesis, this is what we see happening. A ‘truth’ is produced and circulated in which asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis are represented by a threat/securitisation discourse, a humanitarian discourse, or a human rights discourse. However, as argued, that what is considered to be true is not neutral or objectively-

out-there, 'truth' is produced and subject to the systems of power. The media and political apparatuses – the newspapers and political bodies – with their status and productive power, constitute the system of power that produces these discursive 'truths'. As such, the system of power is in control of the rhetorical creation of what is considered to be true about the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees. This shapes how the dominant Dutch society perceives asylum seekers and refugees, and it impacts the Dutch policy approach on the refugee crisis. That asylum seekers and refugees are either victims or a threat is not an objective 'truth'; it is a constructed representation. It is the 'truth' of the powerful, produced in the interest of the powerful.

The CDA at the level of interaction demonstrates that it is in the interest of certain media and political apparatuses – the popular, conservative newspapers and the right-winged populist political parties – to represent the refugee crisis as a threat. Additionally, certain media and political apparatuses – the progressive newspapers and the left-winged socialist political parties – benefit from a representation of asylum seekers and refugees as victims of human tragedy with they themselves taking the role of saviour. The regime of truth on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees is produced in this system of power.

However, as Foucault describes it, the relation between 'truth' and systems of power is a circular one. The effect of power is that the produced 'truths', sustain the status quo system of power. In the regime of truth where asylum seekers and refugees are “suspended between victimhood and malevolence”, asylum seekers and refugees continue to be regarded as inferior (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 616). To illustrate this: in the regime of truth, asylum seekers and refugees have no authority to speak; they are either a threat that has to be regulated or a conforming and thankful 'good citizen'. Moreover, the media and political apparatuses maintain their status and are perceived as legitimate in regulating the 'crisis'. The apparatus with productive power continue to be heard. The 'truths' on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis sustain this power balance, and as such sustain the system of unequal power. In conclusion, this is how the system of power produces and sustains a regime of truth on the 'crisis' in which asylum seekers and refugees are “suspended between victimhood and malevolence” (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 616).

6.4.3 Effects of power and systems of domination: structural and symbolic violence

I argue that the consequences of this regime of truth are severe, as it works to legitimise forms of symbolic and structural violence against asylum seekers and refugees in

the Netherlands. My critical analysis revealed that the effect of power is the reproduction of the social systems of domination in the Netherlands.

In support of this argument, I am going back to the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis, more specifically, Jabri's (1996, p. 94-95) assertion that discourses 'do' things. In the introduction, I claimed that discourses on the refugee crisis shape the perception of asylum seekers and refugees in Dutch society and that they influence the policy approach to the crisis. Throughout the chapters, I have provided evidence in support of this claim. However, in the previous section, I uncovered that our perceptions are formed by a system grounded in grave power inequalities. As mentioned before, in the current regime of truth on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees, these power inequalities are produced and sustained. Asylum seekers and refugees are unheard and misrepresented in Dutch society, that is an effect of power.

Nevertheless, the effects of power do not just have an impact on asylum seekers and refugees as individuals; there are also severe consequences at the structural level. In the previous paragraphs, I demonstrated that the systems of power sustain the status quo regime of truth in which asylum seekers and refugees are "suspended between victimhood and malevolence" (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 616). I argue that the result of this is a form of structural and symbolic violence against asylum seekers and refugees in Dutch society. The effect of these systems of power is that they reproduce social systems of domination in the Netherlands.

I interpret structural violence, in accordance with Galtung's definition, as "the violence built into unequal, unjust, and unrepresentative social structures" (Galtung, 1996, p. 196). I contend that the social structures in the Netherlands are unequal and unjust for asylum seekers and refugees, in comparison to the Dutch-born citizen (Jabri, 1996; Wallace & Wolf, 1999). In the arguments and analysis throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated that asylum seekers and refugees do not have the same access to media and political apparatuses and the discursive process. From what I have gathered, they are (close to) unrepresented in the Dutch government and in the editorial office of the newspapers. Moreover, the portrayal of asylum seekers and refugees in dominant discourses as either a victim or a threat is unjust.

Besides, Bourdieu and Wacquant (2004, p. 273) defined symbolic violence as "a form of social and cultural domination that is often taken for granted and experienced as 'natural', even by its victims". Interpreting the findings of the CDA through the lens of the analytical frame reveals structures of social and cultural domination in the Netherlands. Asylum seekers and refugees are systematically dominated in the structures of the Dutch society at the social,

the cultural and the political level. In the identified regime of truth, asylum seekers and refugees are dominated by the powerful (media and political) apparatuses. The discourses, as well as the discursive process, reveal power inequalities. In the dominant discourses, asylum seekers and refugees are frequently represented as inferior; either because of their lesser culture, because they are a nuisance, or because they need saving. The media and political apparatuses exercise their power and influence over asylum seekers and refugees, as they control how the asylum seekers and refugees are perceived by a large segment of Dutch society. In addition, they also control how asylum seekers and refugees are treated based on policy and measures.

Moreover, this form of domination has become experienced as 'natural'. As I uncovered earlier on in this thesis, dominant discourses become so widely diffused and consumed, that they are accepted as valid by a significant number of Dutch citizens. The result is that they become normalised. The discursive 'truths' on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees are considered self-evident. Consequently, the inherent social systems of domination in the Netherlands become normalised as well. The hidden forms of structural and symbolic violence against asylum seekers and refugees are considered natural.

To conclude, the regime of truth that suspends asylum seekers and refugees "between victimhood and malevolence" is considered normal and self-evident. The everyday perceptions of and policy on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees are not commonly questioned; neither are the severe and real effects of power on asylum seekers and refugees. The regime of truth is taken-for-granted. In conclusion, I strive to critically uncover this regime of truth in the next chapter, in anticipation of a more just alternative.

6.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I unpacked the regime of truth on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands. I analysed the five constituent elements of the regime of truth analytical frame in a dialogue between ideas and evidence.

First, I found that the social relation between asylum seekers and refugees, and the dominant Dutch society represented in the texts, are characterised by feelings of threat and an 'us vs them'-mentality or a victim and saviour dynamic. I argued that as the three identified discourses are understood to be true among large segments of Dutch society, and that they thus shape the discursive practices in the regime of truth on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees. Second, the status of the media and political apparatuses and the sanctioning of their claims, legitimise the produced discourses on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees.

These apparatuses have productive power; they produce and diffuse the dominant discourses, which become normalised, and will eventually be sanctioned as the discursive 'truths' on the crisis of asylum seekers and refugees in Dutch society. To the contrary, asylum seekers and refugees are not heard. Third, I argued that the identified discursive practices constitute knowledge on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees in Dutch society.

I analysed the constituent parts in relation to the whole and argued that the regime of truth in Dutch society is one in which asylum seekers and refugees are “suspended between victimhood and malevolence” (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 616). Asylum seekers and refugees are either represented as victims or as threats, and they are 'suspended' because they are stuck in this regime of truth. The regime of truth is produced and sustained by the systems of power. Asylum seeker and refugees are powerless in this system in which the discursive ‘truths’ are produced.

Furthermore, I answered the third sub-question: *What are the effects of power on the discursive construction of 'truths' about the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees, and does this reproduce social systems of domination in the Netherlands?* The first effect of power is that the regime of truth on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis is sustained because the apparatuses with productive power benefit from the status quo. As such, the unequal system of power is also sustained. I argued that the second effect of power is that it works to legitimise symbolic and structural violence against asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands. My critical analysis revealed that the regime of truth that “suspended between victimhood and malevolence” reproduces social systems of domination in the Netherlands (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 616). This regime of truth is taken-for-granted, something I will reflect on in my final critical discussion.

CRITICAL DISCUSSION AND FINAL REFLECTION

Aylan Kurdi's death is one of many. Twelve other Syrians refugees who were on the same boat as Aylan drowned that day. Over the years, many, many more asylum seekers and refugees lost their lives (UNITED for Intercultural Action, 2020). While the European Union strives to deter unwanted migrants, the suffering endures. In the introduction, I asked myself the questions: why are certain treatments of asylum seekers and refugees and policy approaches to the refugee crisis accepted? How is this legitimised? How are asylum seekers and refugees represented in dominant discourses, and how are they perceived in society?

Conclusion

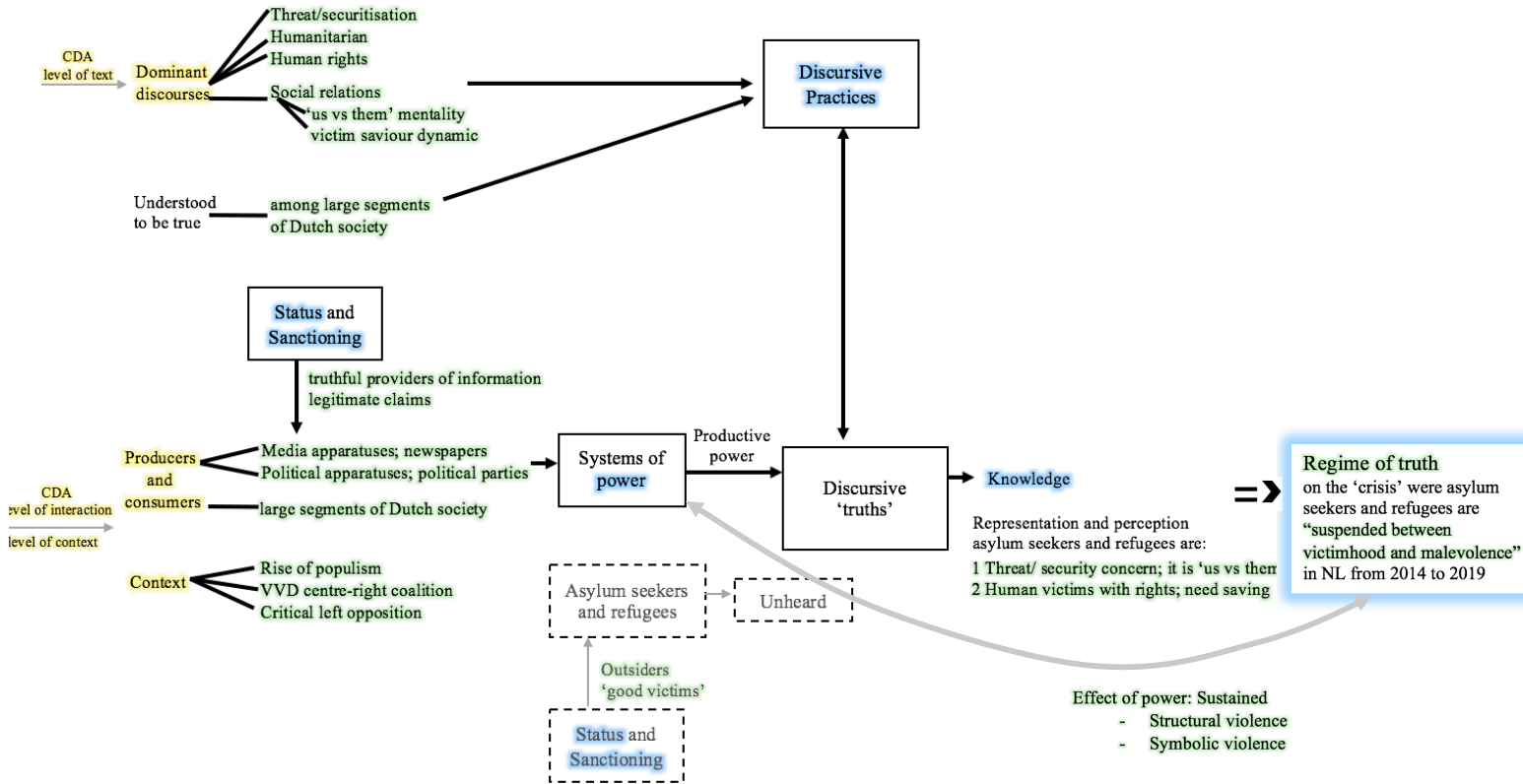
Throughout this thesis, I unpacked the research puzzle: *How is a regime of truth produced and sustained by systems of power and their discursive 'truths' on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands from 2014 until 2019?* This thesis contributed to the existing academic knowledge in a unique way by combining a discourse analysis on the topic of asylum seekers and refugees, with a critical lens to uncover the power in 'truth'. In addition, it contributed by operationalising Foucault's 'regime of truth', harnessing this abstract theory for research practice. The aim of this thesis was to take a critical look at the discursive 'truths' on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis produced and sustained by systems of power that are taken-for-granted in our society.

First, based on my CDA, I identified the dominant media and political discourses on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands from 2014 to 2019: the threat/securitisation, humanitarian, and human rights discourse. Second, I reflected on the media apparatuses – *De Telegraaf*, *AD*, and *De Volkskrant* – and political apparatuses – the political parties – as systems of power that are able to produce and sustain dominant discourses in line with their interests. Third, I argued that these discourses and their 'us vs them'-mentality or victim and saviour dynamic shape the discursive practices in the regime of truth on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees. Fourth, I argued that the status of these apparatuses and the sanctioning of their claims gives them the productive power to produce discursive 'truths' on the 'crisis' of asylum seekers and refugees.

I painted a picture of the regime of truth on the 'crisis' in which asylum seekers and refugees are "suspended between victimhood and malevolence" (visualised in Figure 3) (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 616). An effect of power is that this regime of truth and the unequal systems of power are sustained. Moreover, I argued that the discursive

representation of the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees works to legitimise symbolic and structural violence against these asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands.

Figure 3. Roadmap thesis findings: the dialogue of ideas and evidence



Finally, it is relevant to note that the contribution of this thesis goes beyond the empirical case in question. This thesis advances theory as it operationalises and harnesses abstract Foucauldian theory for research practices (Ragin & Amoroso, 2018, p. 42). It provides a concrete way to uncover the role of power in ‘truth’ and to deconstruct established ways of knowing. This is particularly relevant because the interaction of power and ‘truth’ unequivocally shapes our everyday understanding of social phenomena. Not just the refugee crisis, but a variety of social issues.

My critical discussion presents the empirical complication in this thesis as a case of “management of unease” in a ‘risk society’ (Beck, 1996; Bigo, 2002, p. 74). The mutually constitutive relation between power and ‘truth’ facilitates the legitimisation of the “management of unease”. I contend that we can see this “management of unease” in a ‘risk society’ happening for a variety of social issues. For example, in socio-political approaches to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, this thesis advances theory in making the abstract interaction of power, ‘truth, and knowledge researchable for a variety of social phenomena.

Critical discussion and final reflection

In conclusion, I present a critical discussion and final reflection. In this thesis, I have been critical of the regime of truth in the Netherlands that produces and sustains a ‘crisis’ discourse in which asylum seekers and refugees are “suspended between victimhood and malevolence” (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 616). I argue that this is a case of the “management of unease” (Bigo, 2002, p. 74; Lund, 2014).

In the dominant media and political discourses I identified in Chapter Four, asylum seekers and refugees are consistently constructed as problematic⁵⁸ (Bigo, 2002, p. 71; Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017). In the current regime of truth, the problematisation of the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees is regarded as normal, as self-evident. However, as I have argued in the previous chapters, a regime of truth is always ‘political’. The ‘truth’ is produced by systems of power. As premised in the theoretical framework, these discursively-produced rules on how to perceive asylum seekers and refugees can become so embedded in the structure of our society, that we are no longer aware of their socially constructed nature.

In the empirical case of this thesis, the social rule is that the inflow of asylum seekers and refugees is a ‘crisis’; a time of intense difficulty, trouble, or danger. As a result, the dominant political approach becomes one of “policing the crisis” (Gale, 2004, p. 321; Hall, Clarke, Critcher, Jefferson, & Roberts, 1978). At this point, power becomes a source of social discipline and conformity (Foucault, 1991). When Dutch citizens (subconsciously) regard the social phenomenon of asylum seekers and refugees in Europe as a ‘crisis’, they conform to the rule.

Hence, with the power to produce discursive ‘truths’ comes the power to socially discipline people, and to have them conform to your ‘truth’. In Chapter Five and Six, I demonstrated that the studied media and political apparatuses have productive power. Not only do they have the power to produce ‘truths’, they also have the power to normalise these ‘truths’ and sustain the status quo. Therefore, these media and political apparatuses constitute the systems of power that produce and sustain the regime of truth on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands.

As argued, the result is a regime of truth in which asylum seekers and refugees are “suspended between victimhood and malevolence” (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p.

⁵⁸ In the threat/securitisation discourse they are represented as a problem for stability and security, an endangerment to the Dutch identity, and an economic problem. In the humanitarian and human rights discourse, the inflow of refugees brings out problems of hosting and saving the victims, and the challenge of political compromise to make this happen.

616). Foss and Gill (1987, p. 397) stated “When we understand the rules of a discursive formation, we are more able to question why some statements are considered true in a discursive formation and whether we want such rules to govern the discourse that creates our knowledge.” We now understand the rules of the discursive formation and we scrutinized the statements on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees that are considered true in the Netherlands. What remains is that we ask ourselves the question: do we want these rules to govern the discourse that creates our knowledge? In other words, do we want these discourses and these ‘truths’ to govern our society?

I contend that the power asymmetry in the ability for asylum seekers and refugees to make their truth heard, is problematic. I maintain that the regime of truth in which asylum seekers and refugees are “suspended between victimhood and malevolence” is a gross misrepresentation (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 616). I maintain that the social relation between asylum seekers and refugees and the Dutch society characterized by feelings of threat and an ‘us vs. them’-mentality or a victim and saviour dynamic, is worrisome. Moreover, the consequences of structural and symbolic violence against asylum seekers and refugees in the Dutch society are alarming.

We can be critical of this regime of truth governing our society, but why is this regime of truth so powerful, instead of alternative stories? We need a more thorough understanding of the presuppositions of this regime of truth. Why do the dominant discourses in the Dutch society focus on threat and tragic victimhood instead of on opportunities for societal development, cosmopolitanism and a progressive understanding of citizenship?

The popularity of the ‘crisis’ discursive truth is not simply a response to the larger inflow of refugees in Europe; it is the product of a continuum of feelings of insecurity and unease (Bigo, 2002, p. 63). This is a continuum in which a variety of actors and powerful institutions and apparatuses share their concerns and their fears in the process of shaping a ‘risk society’ (Beck, 1996). Bigo (2002, p. 65-66) theorises that in such a ‘risk society’ there is a structural unease construed by neoliberal discourses⁵⁹ in which freedom is continuously associated with its limits, with danger and insecurity (Bigo, 2002, p. 65-66). I therefore, argue that the empirical complication in this thesis is a case of the “management of unease” in a ‘risk society’ (Beck, 1996; Bigo, 2002, p. 74; Lund, 2014). The powerful apparatuses

⁵⁹ Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001, p. 4) describe neoliberalism as a “double” discourse that “although founded on belief, mimics science by superimposing the appearance of reason”.

construe a risk society where there is a need to regulate and police the refugee ‘crisis’; a so-perceived need for them to manage the unease (Bigo, 2002; Hall et al., 1978).

The regime of truth on the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees is based on and sustained by presuppositions that legitimate the “management of unease”: presupposition of state, sovereignty and body politics (Bigo, 2002, p. 74). The Dutch state justifies the management of unease by means of the sovereignty myth, i.e. the presumed “need to monitor borders to reassure the integrity of what is ‘inside,’ in the practice of territorial protection” (Bigo, 2002, p. 67). The legitimacy of their control of the inflow of asylum seekers and refugees is grounded in an understanding of the Dutch state as a sovereign body and a regulative regime (Bigo, 2002, p. 67; Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 617). The powerful political apparatuses want to maintain their “symbolic control over the territorial boundaries” (Bigo, 2002, p. 65), by normalising their role as regulators. However, a consequence of this is that they also keep in existence the structural and symbolic violence against asylum seekers and refugees in Dutch society.

We arrive at the question: how to change this? A significant limitation of this research is that it gives little insight into how to bring about change. How to make sure that asylum seekers and refugees are treated well? How to ensure that they are not solely perceived as a threat or as victims? This type of change necessitates an alteration in the rules that tell people how to ‘do’ social life, a difficult task (Wallace & Wolf, 1999, p. 181). This brings me to a second limitation of my research. While my thesis is about asylum seekers and refugees, I did not speak with asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands myself. Their perspective and their experiences are invaluable, and would be interesting and relevant for further research.

Another relevant topic for further research would be how to bring about this alteration in the structures of society with regards to how asylum seekers and refugees are represented and perceived. According to Jabri (1996, p. 146) and Fairclough (1989; 1992), social change can be instigated through discourse. In *Discourses on violence*, Jabri (1996, p. 146) argues for ‘a discourse on peace [which] is necessarily a counter-discourse which seeks to understand the structured legitimation of violence and challenges the militarist order and exclusionist identities which encompass it’. Beck (2003, p. 454-457) theorised about ‘cosmopolitan discourse’, which rests on fundamental principles of recognising and celebrating cultural pluralism and intercultural dialogue. It would be interesting to see if a ‘cosmopolitan discourse’ could function as a counter-discourse on the social phenomenon of asylum seekers and refugees in Europe and the “management of unease” (Beck, 2003, p. 454).

A cosmopolitan discourse might offer an alternative legitimate 'truth' on the social phenomenon of asylum seekers and refugees in Europe. Moreover, given that discourses 'do' things (Jabri, 1996), an alternative regime of truth could be produced by an alternative systems of power. Hopefully a regime of truth in which asylum seekers and refugee are heard; a regime that empowers them. In conclusion, there is a range of social phenomena to be researched with this advanced theory, striving to uncover the role of power in 'truth' and to deconstruct established ways of knowing.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Glossary

Discourse. Social relations represented in texts where the language contained within these texts is used to construct meaning and representation (...) The underlying assumption of discourse analysis is that social texts do not merely *reflect* or *mirror* objects, events and categories pre-existing in the social and natural world. Rather, they actively *construct* a version of those things. They do not describe things, *they do things*. And being active they have social and political implications (Jabri, 1996, p. 94-95).

Discourse. Representations of how things are and have been, as well as imaginaries – representations of how things might or could or should be (Fairclough, 2003, p. 207).

Discursive formation. Elements involved in the rhetorical creation of knowledge that can serve as units for a well-developed epistemic rhetorical theory (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 386).

Discursive practices. Discourse that, because it follows particular rules or has passed the appropriate tests, is understood to be true in a culture (...) not limited to written and spoken discourse but includes non-discursive acts as well (...) such phenomena as architectural forms, use of space, institutional practices, and social relations (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 387).

Discursive legitimacy. To the extent a collective decision is consistent with the constellation of discourses present in the public sphere, in the degree to which this constellation is subject to the reflective control of competent actors (Dryzek 2010, p. 35).

Discursive régime. The effects of power peculiar to the play of statements (Foucault, 1980, p. 113).

Episteme. The fundamental codes of a culture – those governing its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices – established for every man, from the very first, the empirical order with which he will be dealing and within which he will be at home. (Foucault, 1980, p. xxii; Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 386).

Knowledge. Is whatever is considered to be truth in a discursive formation (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 390).

Power. Symbolic relation between the producer and the receiver of discourse, (...) how the laws of production allow some form of discourse to be produced and some silenced or sometimes even misrepresented (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 66).

Power to define. Asymmetrical distribution [in ability to shape] structures of signification [that] are mobilized to legitimate the sectional interest of hegemonic groups (Jabri, 1996, p. 96).

Power (in Foucauldian philosophy). As set of institutions and apparatuses, and power as a multiplicity of relations of force immanent in the domain in which they are inscribed (Foucault, 1980, p. 187).

Power (in Foucauldian philosophy). As the overall system, process, or network of force relations spread through the entire discursive formation (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 389).

Power (the *how* of). Relate its mechanisms to two points of reference, two limits: on the one hand, to the rules of right that provide a formal delimitation of power; on the other, to the effects of truth that this power produces and transmits, and which in their turn reproduces this power. Hence we have a triangle: power, right, truth (Foucault, 1980, p. 92-93).

Regime of truth. i.e. ‘general politics’ of truth. The types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances that enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (Foucault, 1980, p. 131).

Rules. Principles or procedures that govern a discursive formation; a discursive formation assumes its particular character because of these rules (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 388).

Sanctioned. The reaction of others to the behaviour of an individual or a group (Giddens, 1987 in Hexmoor et al., 2012, p. 92)

Securitisation. The accepted classification of certain and not other phenomena, persons or entities as existential threats requiring emergency measures (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde, 1998, p. 23).

Status (i.e. social role). Allowing certain rhetors in certain roles to be heard in that formation, while others are not (Foss & Gill, 1987, p. 389).

Structures. Rules that are articulated in social interaction and tell people how to “do” social life, and the resources on which people can call to achieve their objectives (Wallace & Wolf, 1999, p. 181).

Structures. Rules and resources recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems (Giddens, 1979, p. 64).

Structural violence. The violence built into unequal, unjust, and unrepresentative social structures (Galtung, 1996, p. 196).

Symbolic violence. A form of social and cultural domination that is often taken for granted and experienced as ‘natural’, even by its victims (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2004, p. 273).

‘Truth’. Is centred on the **form of scientific discourse** and the **institutions** which produce it; it is subject to constant economic and political incitement (the demand for truth, as much for economic production as for political power); it is the object, under diverse forms, of immense diffusion and consumption (circulating through **apparatuses** of education and information whose extent is relatively broad in the social body, notwithstanding certain strict limitations); it is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great **political and economic apparatuses** (university, army, writing, media); lastly, it is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation (‘ideological struggles’) (Foucault, 1980, p. 131-132).

The sub-questions (with highlights matching the colour highlight in the definitions of the concepts presented in the glossary above):

- (1) What are the **dominant media and political discourses** on asylum seekers, refugees, and the refugee crisis in the Netherlands from 2014 until 2019?
- (2) What **systems of power** [**institutions and apparatuses**] produce and sustain these dominant **discourses**?
- (3) What are the **effects of power** on the **discursive construction of ‘truths’** about the ‘crisis’ of asylum seekers and refugees, and does this **reproduce social systems of domination** in the Netherlands?

Appendix B – Sampling procedure roadmap

Sampling procedure; the discursive units were selected and included based on the following roadmap

In *Discourse and Migration: in Qualitative Research in European Migration Studies* van Dijk (2018), Yalaz and Zapata-Barrero (2018) and Zapata-Barrero (2018) discuss the value of studying European migration through discourses. Discourses produced in the media and by political actors or political bodies are interesting because of their public character. Sources of media and political discourses that were adopted in this thesis include:

- Media discourse: newspaper articles (both printed and digital)
- Political discourse: parliamentary debates, bills, policy documents, party programs, rhetoric of politicians

* these Dutch newspapers were selected based on circulation figures from the national press, they constitute the three newspapers with the largest circulation

** political parties in the *Tweede Kamer* were selected based on whether ‘migration’ is mentioned as one of the main *standpunten* (in the national electoral programme)

Sources of origin (accessed through NexisUni database Rijksoverheid.nl) – in the socio-political context of the Netherlands from 2014 to 2019

1. Newspaper articles from ‘*De Telegraaf*’, ‘*Algemeen Dagblad*’ and ‘*De Volkskrant*’*
2. *Standpunten* from political parties in the *Tweede Kamer***
3. Official policy statements or briefs/reports on immigration and integration by the Dutch government
4. *Tweede Kamer* debates on asylum policy and integration.

Keywords inclusion criteria

- “asylum seeker*” OR “refugee*”

Keywords inclusion criteria (in Dutch)

- “asielzoeker*” OF “vluchteling*”

Exclusion criteria

- if it does not regard the Dutch society
 - non-European refugee crisis
 - foreign policy, humanitarian aid
 - EU policy oriented

Theoretical sampling (Mason, 2019, p. 57-59)

To generate the data for my research – i.e. to select discursive unit of study – I used the data gathering technique of purposeful strategic sampling, specifically in the form of theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Theoretical sampling entails selecting units of study based on their relevance to the research puzzle and the analytical frame (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Mason, 2018, p. 58-59). This theoretical sampling method allows for the sampling of a relevant range of discursive units on the topic of asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis with the aim of building a well-founded argument.

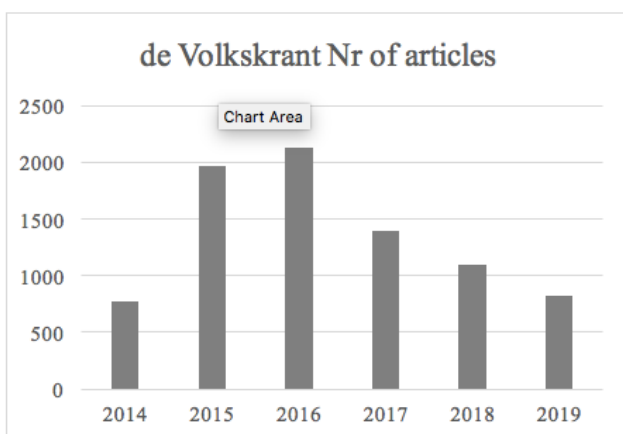
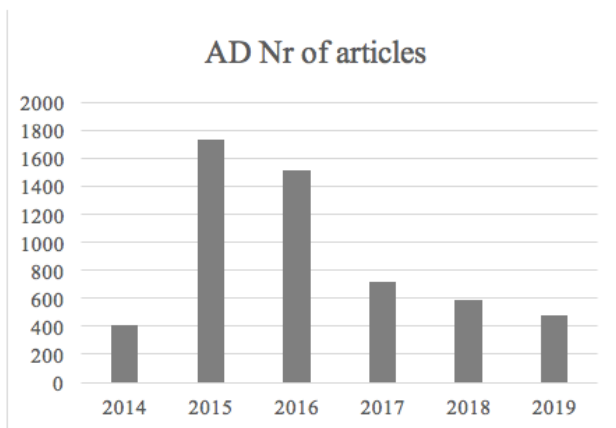
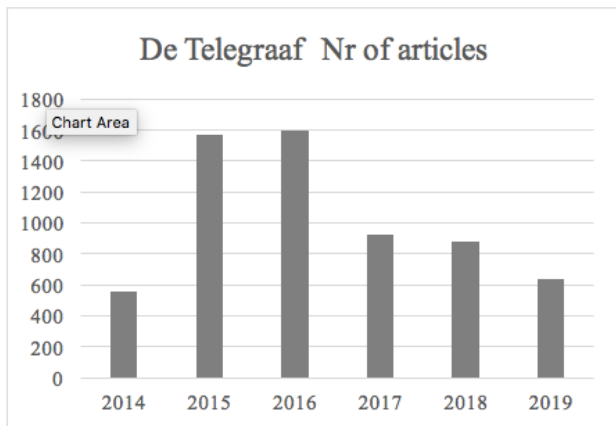
In order to determine whether a discourse fragment was/is relevant, the empirical and theoretical meaningfulness with regards to the research puzzle and analytical frame was established (Mason, 2018, p. 58-59). In the research puzzle and the analytical frame, elements of (discursive) representation and power are particularly pertinent. Therefore, discursive units were sampled based on whether they (directly or indirectly) said something about the elements of power and the representation of asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis. Asking questions about the newspaper articles such as:

- Do they demonstrate how asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis are perceived by (a segment of) Dutch society?
- Does the discursive unit communicate a representation of asylum seekers or refugees containing a normative judgement, i.e. positive or negative attribute?
- Do these discourse fragments indicate a power relation between asylum seekers, refugees and the dominant Dutch society or citizens within the Netherlands?
- Do they make claims about the ‘truth’ about asylum seekers, refugees and/or the refugee crisis?

This theoretical sampling logic enabled me to select a variety of discursive units in a variety of contexts, to create deeper understanding of a complex, nuances and situated empirical research puzzle.

Appendix C – Data selection

Number of newspaper articles published that mention “asielzoeker*” OR “vluchteling*” (by newspaper, by year).



List of newspaper articles sampled, coded and analysed (structured by newspaper, by year).

De Telegraaf – 2014

Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
Gevecht tegen 'vergeten criminelen'; Vloedgolf asielzoekers uit Eritrea en Syrie blaast strijd tegen mensensmokkelaars nieuw leven in	24 mei 2014		Pagina; Blz. 8	1177
Migranten overspoelen Europa; Grenspolitie: meer vluchtelingen dan tijdens Arabische Lente	31 mei 2014		Buitenland; Blz. 9	465
Rijs wil rust !; Komst honderden asielzoekers geeft bewoners gevoel te worden 'opgeofferd'	17 november 2014	Bakker, Alexander	Nieuws; Blz. 6	723
Grenscontrole werkt averechts; Vluchtelingen op doorreis blijven nu hier	22 mei 2014		Voorpagina; Blz. 1	306
'Huisvest vluchtelingen in lege kantoorpanden'; Schiedamse partijen willen hun sociaal gezicht laten zien	1 oktober 2014	Frankenhuis, Gerda	Rotterdam; Blz. 9	352
Invasie van asielzoekers; Grenscontroles druppel op gloeiende plaat	15 mei 2014		Voorpagina; Blz. 1	252
VoorNederland start site asielklachten: Na Rijs en Oranje ook Rekken in rep en roer om komst vluchtelingen	14 december 2014	Jonker, Jorn	Nieuws, Blz. 3	243
Ridicuur	25 november 2014	Emmer, Jan-Kees	Nieuws, Blz. 2	228

2015

Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
'Totale chaos'; Griekenland kan vluchtelingenstroom niet meer aan: 55.000 asielzoekers in één maand tijd	8 augustus 2015		Buitenland; Blz. 14	472
'Ijделе hulphype voegt niets toe'; Kritiek op vele burgerinitiatieven voor vluchtelingen	7 september 2015		Nieuws; Blz. 2	507
Mini-Schengenals buffer; AsielstroomAanslagen in Parijs benadrukken belangvan registratie vluchtelingen	18 november 2015		NieuwsVanDeDag; Blz. 2	598
Moslimmigrant is ongewenst: Steeds meer EU-landen willen alleen christelijke vluchtelingen	22 augustus 2015		Buitenland; Blz. 20	490
Taboe; Kringen	10 april 2015	Hoogland, Rob	Nieuws; Blz. 5	454
Binnenhof in maag met Wilders; Analyse Vluchtelingenproblematiek	7 oktober 2015	Rigter, Niels	NieuwsVanDeDag; Blz. 2	278
Chique buurten ontzien: Asielzoekers bijna altijd opgevangen in armerevolkswijk	20 oktober 2015	Kalkman, Niels	NieuwsVanDeDag; Blz. 2	594
Vluchtelingen	12 september 2015	Reekers, Arno	Financieel; Blz. 38	484

Vernieling en overlast aan orde van de dag; Almere houdt de adem in voor de komst van nog meer asielzoekers	29 september 2015		NieuwsVanDeDag; Blz. 4	418
Geen zicht op wie er inkomt: Vluchtelingen Kwaadwillend kunnen simpel misbruik maken van procedure	17 november 2015		NieuwsVanDeDag; Blz. 3	585
Stad worstelt met huis asielzoekers; 'Ook vluchtelingen in omliggende plaatsen'	11 februari 2015	Graveland, Germa	Nieuws-regio; Blz. 16	477
Een onmogelijke opgave 'Hou ze uit de bijstand'; Asielinstroom In jaar tijd huis vinden voor 43.000 asielzoekers	6 oktober 2015		NieuwsVanDeDag; Blz. 3	556
Raad is verdeeld over asielzoekers; Zorgen over draagvlak tweede azc onder Utrechters	24 juni 2015	Maes, John	Nieuws-regio; Blz. 16	379
Fort Europa kraakt in zijn voegen; Analyse Frans-Duitse top over vluchtelingen	25 augustus 2015	Van Gessel, Ronald	Buitenland; Blz. 19	385
Gewone man is haast met asielopvang zat; ANALYSE Vlam in de pan tijdens bijeenkomsten over vluchtelingen	17 oktober 2015		NieuwsVanDeDag; Blz. 4	556
Kiezen tussen de monsters? Nee!	30 december 2015		Binnenland; Blz. 11	849

2016

Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
Heel veel mis met controle asielzoeker	17 mei 2016		Binnenland; Blz. 5	648
Die andere helft asielzoekers	2 mei 2016		Binnenland; Blz. 7	914
Opvang vluchteling binnen de perken	19 juni 2016	Jonker, Jorn et al.	Reportage; Blz. 8	1518
Voorrang asielzoeker bij regelen toeslagen	23 januari 2016	Jonker, Jorn; Langenberg, Rudolfine	Binnenland; Blz. 5	402
Premier: 'Asielzoekers moeten zich gedragen'	9 januari 2016	Loonen, Patrick	Binnenland; Blz. 7	296
Europa staat niet in rij voor vluchteling	5 april 2016	Bakker, Alexander; Jonker, Jorn	Binnenland; Blz. 4	353
Adviescommissie looft vluchtelingen	11 maart 2016	Maes, John	Regio; Blz. 12	297
Raad negeert wens bewoners; Overvechters tegen opvang 400 vluchtelingen	21 januari 2016	Maes, John; Herman, Huis	Regio; Blz. 14	354
Vluchteling (16) betast meisje (12) in zwembad	23 februari 2016	Bakker, Alexander; Ten Cate, Arjen	Binnenland; Blz. 12	414
Handjeklap over rug vluchtelingen	8 maart 2016	Van Gessel, Ronald	Binnenland; Blz. 4	504

Toevloed kansloze asielzoekers	12 oktober 2016	Jonker, Jorn; Navis, Jan- Willem	Binnenland; Blz. 7	170
‘Mooi ze op weg te helpen’	24 september 2016		Reportage; Blz. 27	939
Agressie, geweld en diefstal; Verdubbeling van aantal incidenten in opvangcentra voor vluchtelingen	30 januari 2016	Bakker, Alexander; Jonker, Jorn	Binnenland; Blz. 2	867
‘Blij zijn met wat je krijgt’	15 maart 2016	Hiskemuller, Coosje	WatUZegt; Blz. 16	538
Nederland is veel te naïef	13 juli 2016	Verburg, Eline	WatUZegt; Blz. 14	548

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Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
Bijval uit het hele land	4 januari 2017		Binnenland; Blz. 2	833
Cijfers schieten tekort	1 juli 2017	Navis, Jan- Willem	Binnenland; Blz. 4 analyse	416
‘Heesch is geen tokkiedorp’	18 januari 2017		Binnenland; Blz. 10	746
VVD wil vluchtelingen niet laten bungelen	26 september 2017	Van Den Eng, Marcel	Regio; Blz. 14	426
PvdA stelt grens aan vluchtelingenopvang	27 februari 2017	Parlementaire redactie	Binnenland; Blz. 3	437
Ook Ijmuiden nu vluchtelingenroute	10 augustus 2017	Van Dam, Daniel	Binnenland; Blz. 10	481
Vrijheid blijheid	16 mei 2017	Mikkers, Ruud; Navis, Jan-Willem	Binnenland; Blz. 10	577
EU krijgt hoofdpijn van asielquota	15 december 2017	Mikkers, Ruud	Buitenland; Blz. 19	360
Kamer wil actie	1 juli 2017		Binnenland; Blz. 4	567
Op weg naar 18 miljoen	31 oktober 2017		Binnenland; Blz. 2	759
Veiligheidsraad is niet genoeg	12 mei 2017	Marbe, Nausicaa	Binnenland; Blz. 11	900

2018

Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
Asielbeleid niet elke keer doorschuiven	23 juni 2018		Binnenland; Blz. 11	847
Asielzoekers op rooftocht	2 februari 2018	Van Dam, Daniel;	Binnenland; Blz. 13	563

		Swart, Albert Jan		
De balans tussen veiligheid en angst	8 mei 2018	Duk, Wierd	Binnenland; Blz. 3 analyse	435
Een op vijf ergens van verdacht	7 november 2018	Navis, Jan- Willem	Binnenland; Blz. 3	471
Fort Europa in de maak	18 juni 2018	Mikkers, Ruud	Buitenland; Blz. 16	552
Goede integratie en ambitie gaan samen	8 januari 2018	Van Gaal, Annemarie	Binnenland; Blz. 9	891
Harbers: 'Voor deze groep is het iedere dag oud en nieuw'	7 november 2018		Binnenland; Blz. 3	318
'Immigratie mist elke regie'	20 oktober 2018	Scheffer, Paul	Binnenland; Blz. 15	965
'Multicultuur is geen feestje'	14 juni 2018		Binnenland; Blz. 13	960
Ophef over milder vonnis verkrachtende asielzoeker	19 september 2018	Navis, Jan- Willem	Binnenland; Blz. 6	261
Ver van huis met Eritrese burens	16 juni 2018		Reportage; Blz. 28	1499

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Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
'Overheid zit integratie asielzoekers in de weg'	31 mei 2019	Wynia, Syp	Binnenland; Blz.21 column	613
Overlast in azc's eist zijn tol	27 december 2019		Binnenland; Blz. 2	1227
'Achtergrond is belangrijk'	17 december 2019		Binnenland; Blz. 7	225
EU moet angst voor Erdogan laten varen	11 oktober 2019		Binnenland; Blz. 11	876
Bescherm Europese manier van level	29 november 2019		Binnenland; Blz. 11	878
Asielroer moet om	4 november 2019		Binnenland; Blz. 2	214
'Selectie moet geen taboe zijn bij immigratie'	4 november 2019		Binnenland; Blz. 8	775
Draagvlak onder gemeenten en burgers brokkelt af	27 december 2019		Binnenland; Blz. 3	383
Migratie	23 december 2019		Binnenland; Blz. 2	212
'Europa als honingval voor vluchtelingen'	2 november 2019	Mak, Geert	Reportage; Blz. 34	1108

Algemeen Dagblad – 2014

Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
Meer verzet tegen komst vluchteling	16 december 2014	Van Beeten, Martijn	Nieuws; Blz. 6	642
‘We moeten die asielzoekers niet als probleem zien’	11 november 2014	Van Beeten, Martijn	Nieuws; Blz. 10	567
Vluchtelingenopvang in voormalige gevangenis Breda	4 juli 2014		Algemeen; Blz. 16	119
Toch bed en bad voor asielzoekers	10 november 2014	Wiegman, Marcel	Nieuws; Blz. 14	508
Veel meer asielzoekers	19 november 2014		Nieuws	59
De instroom van vluchtelingen lijkt een rare inzet...	21 mei 2014		Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 2	227
Nederland rekent op goed 2015	30 december 2014	Keultjes, Hanneke	Nieuws; Blz. 1	353
In Onnen is pas echt iedereen welkom	31 mei 2014		Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 2	221

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Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
Ideetje: John de Mol die asielzoekers opvangt	30 september 2015	Goossens, Jerry	Nieuws column	479
Identiteit van asielzoeker niet altijd meteen bekend	12 november 2015	Den Hartog, Tobias	Nieuws; Blz. 10	238
Zorgen om asielzoekers maken u nog geen racist	13 oktober 2015	Van Mersbergen, Sander	Nieuws	787
De angst reageert, angst voor de vluchtelingen	5 september 2015	Bijlo, Vincent	Nieuws; Blz. 9 column	484
Kabinet verdeeld over vluchtelingenstroom	5 september 2015	Boogaard, Frans; Den Hartog, Tobias	Nieuws	472
Oproep van Rutte in vluchtelingendebat: blijf rustig	10 oktober 2015		Nieuws	578
Europa worstelt met onmacht en angst	3 september 2015	Rosman, Cyril; Van Huët, Bob	Nieuws; Blz. 12	875
Vluchteling moet homo accepteren	28 november 2015	Den Hartog, Tobias; Kok Laurens	Nieuws; Blz. 11	509
Wees realistisch, er zijn te veel vluchtelingen	15 september 2015		Service	1148
Halen we met asielzoekers een paard van Troje binnen?	16 november 2015	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuws; Blz. 6	818

Blijf alert op haat jegens asielzoeker	26 augustus 2015	De Groot, Natasja	Nieuws; Blz. 2 opinie	228
Criminele asielzoekersneller uitgezet	25 november 2015	Den Hartog, Tobias	Nieuws; Blz. 1	242
Wortelen in een nieuw land	19 december 2015	Van Rees, Florian	Weekend	1648
Europa zet slot op belangrijkste aanvoerroute vluchtelingen	16 oktober 2015	Boogaard, Frans	Nieuws; Blz. 13	586
‘Geert heeft groot gelijk: grenzen dicht!’	5 oktober 2015	Oomen, Eefje	Nieuws	895
Aylan kan niets anders meer worden dan een symbool	4 september 2015	Goossens, Jerry	Nieuws; Blz. 11 column	522
‘Kan ik m’n rokje nog wel aan?’	18 september 2015	Den Hartog, Tobias	Nieuws	868
Brussel legt quotum op voor vluchtelingen	13 mei 2015	Boogaard, Frans	Nieuws; Blz. 13	400
Nog geen eind aan gesleep met vluchtelingen	30 oktober 2015	Van Mersbergen, Sander	Nieuws; Blz. 10	438
‘Vluchtelingen zijn ook mensen, zie ze dan ook zo’	8 oktober 2015	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuws; Blz. 5	524

2016

Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
Vluchteling moest eerst worden gered, registreren kon wel later	29 juli 2016	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuws; Blz. 8, 9	592
Veel Nederlanders: niet nóg meer vluchtelingen	30 juni 2016	Winterman, Peter	Nieuws; Blz. 12	354
‘Overheid is veel te slap bij toewijzen van asielzoekers’	19 maart 2016	Van Zon, Hans	Nieuws; Blz. 21 interview	779
Bitterballen voor vluchtelingen	11 juni 2016	Baard, Luciën; Rosman, Cyril	Nieuws; Blz. 17	629
Vluchteling blijft vaak vreemdeling	21 april 2016	Jongejan, Deborah	Nieuws, Blz. 14	400
‘Regeling vluchtelingen is te krap’	21 april 2016		Nieuws; Blz. 9 vervolg voorpagina	289
Vluchteling vindt moeizaam baan	25 juni 2016		Nieuws; Blz. 14	168
‘Met vluchtelingen naast de deur doen ze geen oog dicht’	6 augustus 2016	Van Egmond, Joris	Nieuws; Blz. 15	456
Tweede Kamer boos over falende controle duizenden asielzoekers	20 juni 2016	Van Der Aa, Edwin	Nieuws; Blz. 10	316

‘Niet wij, maar zij moeten zich aanpassen’	15 januari 2016	Keultjes, Hanneke; Van Soest, Hans	Nieuws; Blz. 17 interview	722
‘Mijn vrienden stemmen PVV’	15 oktober 2016	Duk, Wierd	Nieuws; Blz. 17	768
‘Europeanen, leer eens een deel van onze welvaart af te staan’	1 juli 2016	Duk, Wierd	Nieuws; Blz. 12 13	1892
Nederland is vol... met gastvrije mensen	19 september 2016	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuws; Blz. 15	330
We gaan ze halen!	30 november 2016	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 18	792
Terrorist als vluchteling EU binnen	12 juli 2016	Rosman, Cyril	Voorpagina; Blz. 1	248
Fort Europa nog minder aantrekkelijk	22 januari 2016	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuws; Blz. 6	657
Onrust	15 december 2016	Akyol, Özcan	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 2 column	417

2017

Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
‘Dwing gemeenten tot vluchtelingenopvang’	24 mei 2017	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 12	195
Vluchtelingen zetten politiek schaak twistpunt	12 juni 2017	Den Hartog, Tobias; Jongejan, Deborah	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 12	664
Hoeveel vluchtelingen kunnen we nog toelaten in ons land?	6 maart 2017	Nieuwenhuis, Marcia	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 11	393
Vluchtelingen breekpunt	18 mei 2017		Service; Blz. 26	1040
Zeker nog 1.000 kansloze asielzoekers in Nederlandse azc’s	17 juli 2017	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuwsdienst; blz. 6	282
Burgemeester: ‘Vervolg de aso-asielzoekers’	30 juni 2017	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 13	512
‘Criminele asielzoekers meten het land uit’	24 februari 2017		Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 11	391
Extra screening asielzoeker	18 januari 2017		Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 13	106
Kiezen tussen mensenrechten en miljarden	17 mei 2017	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 4	444
Plaag	9 januari 2017	De Jong, Nynke	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 2 column	345
Nieuwkomers: hoe laat je ze integreren?	11 februari 2017	Jongejan, Deborah	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 15	416
Cohesie in een mistig landschap	28 januari 2017	Duk, Wierd	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 16	757

Neem snel maatregelen tegen de migratiechaos	1 februari 2017		Service; Blz. 23 opinie	474
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2018

Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
Zijn aanslagplegers geradicaliseerd of enkel gefrustreerd?	3 september 2018	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 5	421
‘Somber beeld’ integratie Eritreeërs	16 november 2018	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 3	313
‘Antisemitisme is geen probleem van vluchtelingen’	24 april 2018	Van Der Mee, Tonny	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 11	466
Geen banen voor asielzoekers	25 mei 2018	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 1 voorpagina	298
Elke twee seconden een nieuwe vluchteling	19 juni 2018	Van Dongen, Annemieke	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 15	581
Leiders Europa vergeten dat ook wij mensen zijn	16 maart 2018		Service; Blz. 21 opinie	494
Azc zorgt niet voor meer criminaliteit in de wijk	2 februari 2018	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 15	335
‘De crisis kan zo weer oplaaien’	19 maart 2018	Rosman, Cyril	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 5	759

2019

Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
‘Nederland doet het best goed met vluchtelingen’	8 juni 2019	Van Huët, Bob	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 13	813
Criminele asielzoekers in database	25 februari 2019	Selles, Jaap; Ten Cate, Arjen; Van Soest, Hans	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 3	610
Asielzoekers	26 oktober 2019	Özcan, Akyol	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 2 column	408
EU schiet tekort bij opvang van vluchtelingen	14 november 2019	Van Assen, Mark	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 8	395
Criminele asielzoekers Is dit nog wel mijn land?	18 mei 2019		Service; Blz. 16	63
Asielprobleem verre van voorbij, erkent kabinet	19 november 2019	Den Hartog, Tobias	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 9	426
Harbers moet harder optreden	18 mei 2019		Service; Blz. 16	380
Beschaving	3 januari 2019	Özcan Akyol	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 2 column	373

Niemand in Den Haag wil Mark Harbers zijn	26 januari 2019	Den Hartog, Tobias	Nieuwsdienst; Blz. 7	827
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De Volkskrant – 2014

Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
Snel bedjes nodig, geeft niet waar	29 november 2014	Van Es, Ana	Ten Eerste; Blz. 5 reportage	1044
Denk je dat ik mag blijven?	30 augustus 2014	Bos, Rolf	Vonk	932
Nu de Syriërs, straks de Libiërs en Irakezen	30 augustus 2014	Obbema, Fokke	Vonk	475
Vluchteling klem tussen twee Europa's	16 mei 2014	Vreeken, Rob	Ten Eerste; Blz. 1 analyse voorpagina	651
Steden, laat asielzoeker niet op straat zwerven	1 oktober 2014	Paternotte, Jan; Peter, Daniel; Verschuure, Klaas; Schipper, Tim	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 33	571
Ruttes Europa laat armen voor de crisis betalen	10 mei 2014	Van Ojik, Bram (GL)	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 33	710
Grenzen open voor Syriërs die vluchten	23 januari 2014	Rade, Maurits; uni	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 30	475
Teeven roept wel hard, maar kan, zeker alleen, weinig doen	17 mei 2014	Bakker, Maartje	Ten Eerste analyse	659

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Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
Syriër kan niet illegaal én vluchteling zijn	29 augustus 2015	Kranenberg, Annieke ombudsvrouw	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 20	1042
'Minder, minder, minder... behalve als het 'echte' vluchtelingen zijn'	15 augustus 2015	Bakker, Maartje; Obbema, Fokke	Ten Eerste	1505
Willen we minder of meer vluchtelingen?	22 augustus 2015	Kranenberg, Annieke ombudsvrouw	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 20	1119
Ter bescherming van de welvaartsstaat?	12 oktober 2015	Herderscheê, Gijs	Ten Eerste; Blz. 5	1180
'Krenterige opstelling van kabinet'	28 mei 2015	Oranje, David (Lucassen, Leo)	Ten Eerste; Blz. 15	776

Steden moeten zich niet boven asielwet plaatsen	9 juni 2015	van Dijk, Inge	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 21	779
2015 zoals het is vastgelegd	24 december 2015	Hablous, Gijs; Kooistra, Sybren	Vonk	1743
Je bent een vluchteling en je wilt er snel bij horen...	20 oktober 2015	Dirks, Bart; Visser, Jeroen	Ten Eerste	1989
'Er moet debat komen over een bovengrens'	21 november 2015	Brouwers, Arnout; De Jong, Laura	Opinie en Debat	1736
Een vluchteling op zolder	14 april 2015	Bolwijn, Marjon	Ten Eerste	530
Laat vluchtelingen hier hun plaats vinden	9 september 2015	Entzinger, Han; Scholten, Peter uni	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 24	709
Is '13 november' voor Europa wat 9/11 was voor VS?	16 november 2015	Elshout, Arie	Ten Eerste Analyse	886
Aantal asielzoekers gaat naar naoorlogs record	23 september 2015	Vos, Carlijne	Ten Eerste	712
Geen Draagvlak voor 'meer vluchtelingen'	15 augustus 2015	Bakker, Maartje; Obbema, Fokke	Ten Eerste; Blz. 2	592
Ook Nederland verandert door Aylan	4 september 2015	Feenstra, Willem; Van Loosbroek, Sebastiaan	Ten Eerste; Blz. 4 Analyse	883
Asielzoekers toch risico voor veiligheid	10 november 2015	Bakker, Maartje	Ten Eerste; Blz. 10	465
Kabinet informeert asielzoekers: sorry, u zult zich moeten behelpen	21 oktober 2015	Du Pré, Raoul	Ten Eerste	563
Leveren deze vluchtelingen de schatkist juist wat op?	11 augustus 2015	Trommelen, Jeroen	Ten Eerste Interview	1202
Het nieuwe taboe: iets positiefs over migratie zeggen	20 augustus 2015	Bakker, Maartje	Ten Eerste	2477
Vluchtelingen	8 september 2015	Wagendorp, Bert	Ten Eerste; Blz. 2 column	583

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Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
Laat asielzoekers meteen beginnen met inburgeren	20 januari 2016	Terphuis, Sander	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 25	733
'Wie is Wilders zonder ons, de buitenlanders?'	27 januari 2016	Van Walsum, Sander	Ten Eerste interview	1749
Asielminister die provocatie niet schuwt	19 december 2016	Vervaeke, Leen; Francken, Theo	Ten Eerste	884

Ook moslims op de vlucht zijn welkom bij de paters	2 mei 2016	De Graaf, Peter; Van Berne, Abdij	Ten Eerste reportage	1295
Burgers voor betere asielopvang	20 juni 2016	Van Der Velden, Lisa	Ten Eerste; Blz. 15	1410
Waarom islamofobie wel degelijk racistisch is	7 mei 2016	De Koning, Martijn	Vonk; Blz. 14, 15	1730
Een vuist vanuit het 'radicale midden'	1 oktober 2016	Ekiz, Fidan	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 20, 21	1516
Zware kritiek op tentenkamp voor asielzoekers in Nijmegen	10 februari 2016	Stoffelen, Anneke	Ten Eerste; Blz. 5	518
Harde grenzen: terug van weggeweest	29 april 2016	Tempelman, Olaf	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 20	969
Burgemeester: laat opvang aan ons over	22 februari 2016	Tromp, Jan	Ten Eerste; Blz. 1 voorpagina	759
Meer banen voor vluchtelingen	27 mei 2016	Dirks, Bart	Ten Eerste; Blz. 10	1157
De vrijheid van de grens	16 april 2016	Ezzeroli, Nadia	Sir Edmund; Blz. 21	723
Vluchteling steeds minder welkom	29 december 2016	Vos, Carlijne	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 23	631
Lastige asielzoeker naar sober AZC	1 april 2016	Geels, Maartje	Ten Eerste; Blz. 8	412
Vluchtelingen niet gecontroleerd	18 juni 2016	Marselis, Daan; Stoffelen, Anneke	Ten Eerste; blz. 3	733
Asielbeleid straalt uit: vluchteling, u moet hier niet zijn	20 februari 2016	Stoffelen, Anneke	Ten Eerste; Blz. 14, 15	1808
Vluchtelingen dreigen onderklasse te worden	5 januari 2016	Bolwijn, Marjon	Ten Eerste; Blz. 1 voorpagina	647
Protest tegen asielzoekers wordt groter en grimmiger	23 januari 2016	Singeling, Loes; Stoker, Elsbeth	Ten Eerste; Blz. 5	606
Laat vluchtelingen direct meedoen	22 februari 2016	Hamming, Jan; Buijs, Mark burgemeester	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 18	895
Aanrandingen en dus cultuurles? Of straf?	11 januari 2016	De Graaf, Peter; Kreling, Tom	Ten Eerste	1099
Toch IS-strijders tussen asielzoekers	12 juli 2016	Groen, Janny	Ten Eerste; Blz. 6, 7	895

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Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
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Asiel onder Rutte III: sneller, soberder	20 oktober 2017	Stoffelen, Anneke	Ten Eerste; Blz. 12, 13, 8, 9	1474
Twaalf jaar voor asielzoeker Eritrea	5 mei 2017		Ten Eerste; Blz. 4	82
Asielzoekers zo nodig langer vastgehouden door onderzoek	18 januari 2017	Meijer, Remco	Ten Eerste; Blz. 14	217
Syrische vluchtelingen verdacht van terrorisme	4 december 2017	Gualthérie van Weezel, Tjerk	Ten Eerste; Blz. 14	577
‘Veiligelanders’ maken het echte asielzoekers moeilijk	1 juli 2017	Hotse Smit, Pieter; Stoffelen, Anneke	Ten Eerste; Blz. Blz. 4	710
Geef vluchtelingen hun eigen steden	21 oktober 2017	Van Zijl, Frank; De Jong, Laura	Opinie zaterdag; Blz. 4	933
Hof verwerpt recht op humanitair visum voor asielzoekers	8 maart 2017	Stoffelen, Anneke	Ten Eerste; Blz. 11	324
De rechts-populistische temperatuur van Rutte III	14 oktober 2017	Bolwijn, Marjon; Van Walsum, Sander	Zaterdag; Blz. 6, 7	1930
Immigratie: open armen of grenzen dicht?	9 maart 2017	Meijer, Remco	Ten Eerste; Blz. 7	742
Ambtenarij en (asiel)politiek	28 oktober 2017	Sommer, Martin	Opinie zaterdag; Blz. 5	918

2018

Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
Vluchtelingen niet slecht voor economie	21 juni 2018	Keulemans, Maarten	Ten Eerste; Blz. 12	837
‘Stuur asielzoekers niet naar Griekenland’	25 mei 2018	Bolwijn, Marjon	Ten Eerste; Blz. 18	394
‘Politieke vluchtelingen tegenhouden is asociaal’	31 maart 2018	Meijer, Remco – Van Ojik, Bram	Ten Eerste; Blz. 8 interview	567
Investeer veel meer in werk voor vluchteling	19 april 2018	Wagenaar, Eveline	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 24	502
De asielhoppers	11 mei 2018		Opinie en Debat; Blz. 21 column	810
Hoe kon de terrorist van Amsterdam hier zo radicaliseren?	8 september 2018	Bouma, Kaya; Misérus, Mark; Vos, Maaïke	Ten Eerste; Blz. 8, 9	2066

Kwestie statushouders zwengelt woondebat aan	27 oktober 2018	Mebius, Dion	Ten Eerste; Blz. 6	588
EU verslikt zich in mensenrechten	19 juli 2018	Sommer, Martin	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 22	1302
Minder draagvlak voor migratie	28 december 2018	Vos, Carlijne	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 21	551
Mislukte integratie	18 april 2018	Klok, Pieter	Opinie en Debat, Blz. 21	398
Migratieangst	23 november 2018	Du Pré, Raoul	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 21	377

2019

Title	Publication date	Author	Publication section	Word count
Harbers bespaart VVD nieuwe martelgang	22 mei 2019	Hendrickx, Frank; Mebius, Dion	Ten Eerste; Blz. 4, 5 analyse	1013
Asielsysteem	15 februari 2019	Giesen, Peter	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 21	390
Zo boos is de burger helemaal niet	2 februari 2019	Giesen, Peter	Zaterdag; Blz. 6, 7	1809
De hobbels op weg naar asielopvang zonder rottigheid	28 februari 2019	Borst, Thomas; Effting, Maud; Kreling, Tom	Ten Eerste; Blz. 13 analyse	1050
Erdogan haalt uit naar EU	11 oktober 2019	Brouwers, Arnout	Ten Eerste; Blz. 1 voorpagina	787
Wegkijken	15 juli 2019	Slob, Marjan	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 14 column	744
Misdaden asielzoekers afgedaan als 'incidenten'	17 mei 2019	Thijssen, Wil	Ten Eerste; Blz. 2	524
Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland: wachttijd asielzoekers loopt op	25 januari, 2019	De Zwaan, Irene	Ten Eerste; Blz. 10	601
Asielzoekers	19 juni 2019	Vos, Carlijne	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 19	393
EU moet schandvlek in Griekenland snel wissen	16 januari 2019	Lucassen, Leo	Opinie en Debat; Blz. 21	890

List of policy and political documents selected, coded and analysed.

1. *Standpunten* (i.e. positions) from the political parties that are in the Dutch *Tweede Kamer* (the House of Representatives) on their official websites concerning the topic of immigration

- VVD Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie, i.e. People's Party for Freedom and Democracy
- CDA Christen-Democratisch Appèl, i.e. Christian Democratic Appeal
- PvdA Partij van de Arbeid, i.e. Labour Party
- PVV Partij voor de Vrijheid, i.e. Party for Freedom
- FvD Forum voor Democratie, i.e. Forum for Democracy
- GL GroenLinks, i.e. GreenLeft
- D66 Democraten 66, i.e. Democrats 66
- SP Socialistische Partij, i.e. Socialist Party
- CU ChristenUnie, i.e. Christian Union

2. Official policy statements or briefs/reports on immigration and integration by the Dutch government

- Kamerbrief over toepassing van het concept van veilige landen
Staatssecretaris Dijkhoff (VenJ) informeert de Tweede Kamer over de toepassing van het concept van veilige landen voor de toelating van vluchtelingen en asielzoekers.
Kamerstuk: Kamerbrief | 03-11-2015
- Kamerbrief over integrale migratieagenda
Staatssecretaris Harbers (JenV), minister Blok (BZ), minister Kaag (Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking), minister Koolmees (SZW) en minister Ollongren (BZK) informeren de Tweede Kamer over de integrale benadering van het Kabinet op het gebied van migratie.
Kamerstuk: Kamerbrief | 29-03-2018
- Brief regering; Vreemdelingenbeleid – Overzicht van diverse toezeggingen over overlastgevende asielzoekers
Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal Vergaderjaar 2018-2019 19 637
Vreemdelingenbeleid Nr. 2478 BRIEF VAN DE STAATSSECRETARIS VAN JUSTITIE EN VEILIGHEID
- Kamerbrief over maatregelen asiel en migratie naar aanleiding van regeerakkoord
Staatssecretaris Harbers (JenV) informeert de Tweede Kamer over de verschillende maatregelen die hij wil nemen op het gebied van asiel en migratie. ... maatregelen asiel en migratie naar aanleiding van regeerakkoord'
Kamerstuk: Kamerbrief | 29-01-2019
- Antwoorden Kamervragen over afspraken kwetsbare vluchtelingen
Staatssecretaris Harbers beantwoordt Kamervragen over het bericht 'Kabinet komt afspraken hervestiging kwetsbare vluchtelingen niet meer na'
Kamerstuk: Kamervragen | 05-04-2019
- Kamerbrief over aanpak overlastgevende asielzoekers

Staatssecretaris Harbers informeert de Tweede Kamer over verdere aanscherpingen in de aanpak van de groep criminele en/of overlastgevende asielzoekers. Daarnaast gaat hij in op de misdragingen door vreemdelingen in Detentiecentrum Rotterdam (DCR), begin januari 2019.

Kamerstuk: Kamerbrief | 17-04-2019

- The information provided on <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/asielbeleid>

3. *Tweede Kamer* debates on asylum policy and integration, through <https://debatgemist.tweedekamer.nl/>

- Tk debat asielinstroom 2015 - plenaire zaal
- Tk debat Wet Inburgering Feb2017 - plenaire zaal
- Vreemdelingen- en asielbeleid 2019 - commissie
- Tk debat Veiligheid en Justitie 2019 - plenaire zaal

Appendix D – List of nodes

Themes

- deserving vs. non-deserving
- ‘us’ vs. ‘them’

- threat
 - national security
 - criminal
 - terrorism
 - illegal
 - culture and identity
 - Dutch norms and values, freedoms and traditions
 - economy and welfare systems
- humanitarian
 - human face
 - human tragedy
 - bad circumstances
- human rights
 - legal responsibility
 - moral responsibility

- crisis
- insecurity
 - worry

Labels mentioned explicitly

- stroom
- echte vluchtelingen
- vreemdelingen
- veiligelanders
- aso’s
- kansloos
- misbruik
- vol
- gewone mensen
- tolerantie
- open deur

- politics
 - policy initiative
 - policy unsuccessful (policy is perceived as and critiques for being unsuccessful)
 - policy successful (policy is perceived as and praised for being successful)
- borders
 - border protection
 - fortress Europe
 - sovereignty
- integration
 - assimilation

- segregation
- multiculturalism
- impact society
 - *draagvlak*
 - demonstrations
 - *overlast*
 - social cohesion (the deterioration of)
 - polarisation
 - discrimination (the criticising of)
 - inequality (of the impact of the inflow of asylum seekers)
 - taboo (talking about the positive aspects of the refugee crisis is a taboo)
- initiatives (taken by society)
 - housing
 - work
 - bed bad brood
- problem exaggeration (it is mentioned that the problemisation of the refugee crisis is exaggerated)
 - criticism
 - exaggeration economy
 - social capital (that the asylum seekers and refugees bring with them)

Appendix E – Lexicalisation- and predication-analysis

A number of steps were taken to identify discourses at the level of text. First, to examine the coded discourse fragments, a lexicalisation-analysis was conducted, followed by a predication-analysis. The lexicalisation-analysis entails identifying what terms or labels are used to refer to a subject (Huisman, 2016). In other words, what labels do newspapers and political representatives use to refer to asylum seekers and refugees. The predication-analysis in turn entails identifying what characteristics, qualities and features are discursively attributed to these subject (Huisman, 2016). As this research evolves around the society's perception and discursive construction of vluchtelingen and asielzoekers, the predication analysis will allow me to document what normative, positive or negative characteristics or qualities are attributed to vluchtelingen and asielzoekers and policy concerning the refugee crisis.

Lexicalisation-analysis

To obtain a first impression of the discourses on asylum seekers, refugees and the refugee crisis in the newspapers and political documents, I coded the discourse fragments – i.e. segments of text in which an attribute is ascribed to *asielzoekers* or *vluchtelingen* – that used a particular label or term to refer to these subjects (Huisman, 2016; Jäger & Maier, 2009). An elementary question to ask is: how are asylum seekers and refugees represented in the selected discourse fragments. The first thing that stood out from this lexicalisation-analysis is that the newspaper articles refer to '*vluchtelingen*' or '*asielzoekers*' generally without providing justification or explanation for the chosen label. For the majority of the discourse fragments it cannot be established whether the assigned label is consistent with the well-established definitions by the UNHCR. According to the UNCHR (1997) every refugee is initially an asylum seeker, but not all asylum seekers will be recognised as a refugee. This is dependent on whether it is recognised that this person “has fled their country of origin and is unable or unwilling to return because of a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.” (UNCHR, 1997). In asylum policy this distinction is highly relevant and the labels are more deliberately attributed.

A well-known label attached to this social issue is that of '*crisis*', specifically the *vluchtelingencrisis*. In the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) a crisis is defined as “a time of great disagreement, confusion, or suffering” and “an extremely difficult or dangerous point in a

situation”. It is evident that the crisis label attributes a sense of urgency of adversity and predicament to the social issue of asylum seekers and refugees in the context of the Netherlands. It was found that the label reoccurs in the empirical data exemplified in the following discourse fragments:

Verandert Aylans dood iets aan de vluchtelingencrisis? Ik ben bang van niet. Als Europa de poorten openzet voor alle ontheemden, zal de verzorgingsstaat op termijn onhoudbaar zijn. De grenzen sluiten voor de legioenen die niets anders willen dan een toekomst, voor zichzelf en hun kinderen, is daarentegen onmogelijk en onmenselijk. Een duivels dilemma dat niemand op korte termijn zal oplossen.
(AD, 2015)

Nog niet zo lang geleden brak door de oorlog in Syrië de vluchtelingencrisis uit. Honderdduizenden mensen sloegen op de vlucht en kwamen in gammele bootjes naar Europa. Het maakte veel Nederlanders bang: zo veel mensen die opeens hierheen komen, dat kunnen we toch helemaal niet aan? Political party statement VVD

In 2015 bereikte de vluchtelingencrisis het hoogtepunt met een instroom van 58.900 asielzoekers in Nederland. Vorig jaar was dat bijna met de helft afgenomen: 31.600 asielzoekers. (AD, 2017)

This last example demonstrates another label that featured very prominently in all data sources, both the media and the political discourses, is: ‘*stroom*’, ‘*instroom*’ or ‘*toestroom*’ (which translates to flow or inflow). The use of this label is particularly interesting, because linguistically it creates a metaphor of water flowing in. It shapes the understanding among the audience of the discourse, that the refugee *stroom* needs to be regulated and if the inflow is too large it might be problematic. In texts, the *stroom* metaphor is frequently used in combination with a mention of numbers; the number of refugees worldwide, the number of (expected) asylum requests in the Netherlands, the number of asylum seekers in azc’s in the middle of a long asylum procedure. Again, this association services the argument that the *stroom* requires regulation.

VLUCHTELINGEN | Vijf redenen waarom u zich heel goed ongemakkelijk kunt voelen door grote toestroom (...) 1 Het worden er steeds meer (...) 2 voorlopig houdt dat niet op (AD, 2015)

Bij de huidige instroom van ruim 1.700 asielzoekers per week moet er in een jaar voor 85.000 mensen onderdak worden gevonden. (Telegraaf, 2015)

A third label that appeared regularly in all newspapers as well as policy documents and reports to represent refugees and asylum seekers is ‘*vreemdelingen*’. According to Judex, a *vreemdelingen* is someone who does not legally possess the Dutch nationality.⁶⁰ This label in particular was frequently used in official policy documents, including the *Brief regering; Vreemdelingenbeleid* and *Kamerbrief over aanpak overlastgevende asielzoekers*. In the Netherlands, *vreemdelingenbeleid* is the official name for policy regarding the inflow of *vreemdelingen* (which has its foundations in the 1951 Refugee Convention in Geneva, the European Convention on Human Rights and the *Vreemdelingenwet 2000*). Even though the label is used foremost in the context of legality, it still carries a certain connotation in other contexts. *Vreemdelingen* (best translated to strangers) suggests a linguistically constructed differentiation between the Dutch and the refugee or asylum seeker. The label conveys a dichotomy, a segregation. As Hameleers (2019) found an ‘us versus them’-mentality frequently underlies discourses on asylum seekers and refugees.

Another characteristic label that the newspapers attributed to the subjects was that of ‘*echte vluchtelingen*’ or ‘*echte asielzoekers*’ (as opposed to the so labelled ‘*gelukszoekers*’). A literal interpretation of this label is incomplete, because officially an *echte vluchtelingen* is unambiguously defined in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol (as ratified by the Netherlands). Nevertheless, as mentioned in chapter one the theoretical underpinnings of CDA, language is always political (Fairclough, 1989; 1992). Moving beyond a literal interpretation of the label, it becomes apparent that *echte vluchtelingen* or *echte asielzoekers* refers to refugees and asylum seekers that adhere to societies understanding of what a refugee or asylum seeker should look like and how they should behave. The label also brings about a normative judgment of which asylum seekers deserve the protection and the benefits from the host country and which do not.

⁶⁰ <https://www.judex.nl/rechtsgebied/vreemdelingenrecht-asiel/vreemdeling-en-nederlandschap/artikelen/wat-is-vreemdelingenrecht-en-wanneer-is-iemand-een-vreemdeling/>

Featured most prominently in *De Telegraaf*:

“Deze maatregel is niet bedoeld om échte oorlogsvluchtelingen te belemmeren, zeker niet. Maar door die ándere helft van de stroom asielzoekers c.q. gelukszoekers in te dammen, kunnen we onze energie richten op de asielzoekers uit échte oorlogssituaties die onze opvang en aandacht hard nodig hebben.” (Telegraaf, 2016)

“Een echte asielzoeker is blij met alles wat hij krijgt, anders is het gewoon een gelukszoeker”. Een kleine meerderheid vindt de Syriërs wel 'echte' asielzoekers. Volgens een Albanese medebewoner 'slikken de Syriërs gewoon alles zonder protest'. Dat vindt u gepast gedrag voor een vluchteling, die daarmee voor u bewijst geen gelukszoeker te zijn.” (Telegraaf, 2016)

De Volkskrant criticises the usage of this term:

“Oorlogsvluchtelingen worden vaak 'echte vluchtelingen' genoemd. (...) De aversie, zo blijkt uit het onderzoek, richt zich vooral tegen 'economische vluchtelingen', van wie 75 procent er minder wil. Er is één probleem, aldus een aantal briefschrijvers: de 'economische vluchteling' bestaat niet. 'Iemand kan wel om economische redenen naar een ander land vertrekken, maar dat maakt hem geen vluchteling', schreef een jonge journalist (tevens Volkskrant-medewerker) in een kritisch stuk op O&D van woensdag 19 augustus. Volgens de VN-vluchtelingenorganisatie UNHCR bestaat er maar een soort vluchteling (...)” (Volkskrant, 2015)

A further comparison of the three newspapers is discussed in the CDA at the level of interaction. While some newspapers – like *De Volkskrant* – might criticise the use of a particular label or term, this does not make label less dominant. In fact, this shows that critics often use the language of the discourses they criticise to communicate this criticism.

This *echte vluchtelingen* or *echte asielzoekers* label clearly demonstrates a prominent discursive theme of deserving versus non-deserving refugees and asylum seekers in the Dutch context. This theme featured quite prominently in discourses on asylum seekers and refugees in other context, as appeared from the secondary literature (Gale, 2004, p. 333). Based on the existing literature, the deserving versus non-deserving distinction was expected to and is found to pertain to multiple elements of the discourses on asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands. This is evidently supported by a number of other characteristics

and features attributed to refugees and asylum seekers that featured repeatedly in the newspapers. These characteristics will come to light in the predication-analysis that follows.

Predication-analysis

In the first step of identifying discourses, the predication analysis is particularly important for what normative, positive or negative characteristics or qualities are attributed to asylum seekers, refugees, and policy concerning the refugee crisis (Huisman, 2016). The normative characteristics attributed to asylum seekers and refugees in the coded discourse fragments construe associations, as produced by the institution with the discursive power. Subsequently, these associations form networks of association as labels and characteristics frequently appear together in the discourse fragments. The predication analysis shows (networks of) associations are relatively similar in the newspapers compared to the political parties *standpunten* and policy documents. In chapter three, the three dominant discourse strands are introduced: (1) the securitisation discourse, (2) the humanitarian discourse, and (3) the human rights discourse. These three discourse strands are closely connected with the networks of association identified here. The differences in discourses between the newspapers and between the newspapers and political documents is discussed in-depth in step two, the CDA at the level of interaction.

To provide more of an answer to how asylum seekers and refugees are represented in the discourse fragments, the findings of the predication-analysis are described in these paragraphs. The theme of deserving versus non-deserving that characterised a few of the labels used to refer to asylum seekers and refugees, again features prominently in the characteristics, qualities and features attributed. The ascribed attributes can be subdivided in negative characteristics that represent asylum seekers and refugees as non-deserving, more neutral characteristics, and/or more positive features that make asylum seekers and refugees deserving.

To start of with the more negative, normative characteristics and features, dominant attributes were ‘*veiligelanders*’, ‘*kansloos*’, ‘*aso*’s’, ‘*criminelen*’, ‘illegal’, and ‘terrorism’. In the three newspapers and in the political documents, *veiligelanders* was frequently used to characterise a group of asylum seekers that came from more safe countries and who were therefore deemed *kansloos* (translates to without a chance) in the asylum procedure. Particularly, the *AD*, *De Telegraaf* and the right-winged political parties used these attributes to establish that a particular group of asylum seekers in the Netherlands is non-deserving of becoming a Dutch citizen. These normative positions were often presented together with the

label of *echte vluchtelingen*, because *echte vluchtelingen* are of course deserving. While the other group of asylum seekers are *veiligelanders* and *gelukszoekers* and their prior living-situation was not bad enough to be deserving of refuge in the Netherlands. A similar line of argumentation was presented in the discourse fragments with the *aso*'s label ascribed to a certain group of asylum seekers and refugees that are represented as a serious source of 'overlast' (translates to nuisance). The mention of this negative characteristic is in many of the discourse fragments accompanied by an anecdote of this type of *overlast*.

Migratie is een van de grootste problemen van deze tijd. In 2016 kwamen meer dan honderdduizend immigranten naar Nederland. Vluchtelingen op zoek naar bescherming voor oorlog, kansloze asielzoekers, arbeidsmigranten en regelrechte criminelen. (AD, 2017) – an example of the deserving versus non-deserving theme as featured in the discourse fragments

Amsterdam en Hoogeveen vinden dat er in hun aso-azc's geen plek is voor criminele asielzoekers en mensen uit 'veilige landen'. (AD, 2017)

Another commonly-made association of remarkably negative nature is the representation of asylum seekers and refugees as criminal, anticipating criminal behaviour ranging from petty theft, to crimes against public order, to battery, to sexual misconduct and violent crimes. This association is formed both explicitly and implicitly. Discourse fragments (mainly) in *AD* explicitly refer to asylum seekers and refugees (excluding the *echte vluchtelingen*) as *criminelen*. The newspaper articles present anecdotes of individual cases in which asylum seekers committed a serious crime (sexual misconduct for example), this type of criminal behaviour is in turn overgeneralised. It highlights the fear that resides within the Dutch society. In the services section of *AD*, a reader asks the rhetorical question:

criminele asielzoekers Is dit nog wel mijn land? (AD, 2019, service section)

In addition, the implicit association of increased criminal behaviour among asylum seekers and refugees was made regularly in discourse fragments in *De Telegraaf*. In these newspaper articles, figures are commonly used to conclude that asylum seekers and refugees are overrepresented in misdemeanour and crime statistics. Nevertheless, only in a few instances do these newspapers articles acknowledge that the facts are presented without nuance; confounding variables such as age category and gender (young, males) and low socio-

economic standing are not presented to the reader and as such these general facts remain ambiguous. This discursive representation of asylum seekers and refugees as criminal, has real consequences (see quote on suggested database for criminal residents at asylum centres). Policy documents generally deal with the more practical aspects in how to handle with *overlastgevende* or *criminele asielzoekers*, with measures such as increased surveillance and area restrictions (*overlastgevende asielzoekers vreemdelingenbeleid*). Besides, in *standpunten* from political parties FvD, PVV and VVD, and in policy debates it is advocated that criminal asylum seekers and refugees should be immediately evicted from the Netherlands.

Een nadere blik in de cijfers leert dat asielzoekers relatief vaker verdacht worden van strafbare feiten dan gewone burgers. Van alle autochtonen worden er jaarlijks op elke 10.000 inwoners gemiddeld 77 verdacht van een strafbaar feit, aldus het CBS. Voor asielzoekers is dit getal 200, tweemaal zoveel als het landelijk gemiddelde van 106, maar weer minder dan de score van niet-westerse allochtonen: 294. Op deze vergelijking is van alles af te dingen. (Telegraaf, 2017)

Informatie over criminele bewoners van asielcentra moet opgeslagen worden in een landelijke databank. Dit voorstel van de politie in Kampen krijgt de steun van VVD, PVV en PvdA. (AD, 2019)

Furthermore, asylum seekers and refugees being referred to as potential terrorists is a characteristic that cannot be ignored. The association is significantly less prominent than the association with *overlast* or criminal behaviour, but the adverse image is the more severe. The perceived enlarged threat of Islamic terror attacks in the Netherlands is stimulated by these allegories and is expected to enhance societal feelings of xenophobia and insecurity.

Het bloedbad in Parijs zet het toch al beladen vluchtelingendebat nog verder onder hoogspanning. Nederland is bang dat met de komst van tienduizenden Syrische vluchtelingen ook de oorlog wordt geïmporteerd. Uit een enquête van Maurice de Hond bleek gisteren dat 56 procent van de Nederlanders de kans (vrij) groot acht dat aanslagen ook in Nederland zullen plaatsvinden. 70 procent wil dat er weer grenscontroles komen. (AD, 2015)

„Dit kabinet doet niet aan terreurbestrijding maar aan terreurbevordering”, twitterde PVV-leider Geert Wilders zaterdag. (AD, 2016)

While the association is more normalized in *AD*, *de Volkskrant* remains very critical:

Europa dreigt steeds meer te worden meegezogen in de spiraal van haat en geweld in het Midden-Oosten. Vluchtelingen splijten met hun massale komst landen en samenlevingen. Terroristen van Islamitische Staat (IS) brengen met de aanslagen in Parijs de oorlog naar het hart van het continent. Europa reageert met de grimmigheid van een gewond dier dat in iedere vluchteling en moslim een potentiële terrorist ziet. Het wil zich afgrendelen en terugbijten. (Volkskrant, 2015)

Another category of ascribed characteristics that draws a fine line between a more neutral and still relatively negative representation of asylum seekers and refugees, is that of them being culturally different. The discourse fragments in *De Volkskrant* provide a more neutral, expert-driven predication of the cultural different asylum seekers and refugees, emphasizing the importance of the Dutch state highlighting similarities between the refugees and the Dutch population.

Lucassen ziet wel dat de culturele verschillen tussen de Europese bevolking en de vluchtelingen van nu groter zijn. 'Toch is het mogelijk dat mensen zich met hen identificeren. Het is belangrijk dat de staat de overeenkomsten benadrukt. Je kunt zeggen: dit zijn mensen, net als wij, niet wezenlijk anders, met allerlei capaciteiten. Laten we proberen gebruik van hen te maken. Nu wordt in het discours afstand gecreëerd.' (Volkskrant, 2015)

A significant number of discourse fragments that characterize asylum seekers and refugees as being culturally different, however, suggest a power relation with a more negative undertone. An undertone in which the cultural traditions, beliefs and values of the asylum seekers and refugees are references as less developed, as inferior. In addition, *De Telegraaf*, *AD*, PVV and FvD feature discourse fragments with cultural differences as a so-perceived threat. A threat to the dominant western culture and to ‘our’ Dutch identity; to the norms and values and the freedoms and traditions that are valued by the Dutch citizens. The discourse fragments commonly describe how gender equality, respectful treatment of women, tolerance of homosexuality, freedom of religion and freedom of speech, could be threatened with the inflow of more culturally-different refugees. Especially Islamic or Muslim refugees are

presented as a threat to Dutch culture and identity, demonstrating a clear case of Islamophobia in these discourse fragments. To give two examples, one of the newspaper articles in *De Telegraaf* is titled ‘Multicultuur is geen feestje’, which is basically a metaphor for multiculturalism being bad news. The second example, show how the Islam is discursively represented as a threat to the Dutch society.

Meer islam: meer spanningen? Nederland heeft de laatste decennia al aangetoond dat het bloed, zweet en tranen kost om moslims op een voor iedereen acceptabele manier een plek te geven in de samenleving. Nu komen er tienduizenden bij, van allerlei pluimage. Een deel van deze mensen is niet gewend om in een land vol vrijheid te leven. Godsdienstvrijheid, om maar wat te noemen. Het zal tijd en moeite kosten om van hun integratieproces een succes te maken. (AD, 2015)

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An evidently negative representation of asylum seekers and refugees features prominently in the media and political discourses, discursively constructing asylum seekers and refugees as non-deserving, as misbehaving and different. Nevertheless, this is not the only dominant predication of asylum seekers and refugees in the sampled discourse fragments. Asylum seekers and refugees are also frequently characterised as ‘mens’ (translates to) human and as victim, a line of argumentation in which they are deserving because of these characteristics. The discourse fragments with these characteristics are overrepresented in *De Volkskrant* and in debates and *statements* by left-winged and socialist political parties. The following discourse fragments present examples:

Wat wij in al dit geweld missen, is de menselijke maat, een besef van humaniteit en barmhartigheid. We hebben het niet over percentages of aantallen: het gaat om mensen. Mensen die vanwege oorlogsgeweld hun huis en haard hebben moeten ontvluchten, mensen die op zoek zijn naar een veiliger leven. Vaders, moeders,

kinderen - mensen zoals wijzelf - die we niet onder een brug of in een lekkende tent kunnen laten slapen. (Volkskrant, 2016)

In die detentiecentra daar zitten ook Eritreeërs. Dat zijn mensen die recht hebben op asiel in de EU. Politieke vluchtelingen tegenhouden is onverantwoordelijk en asociaal.' (Volkskrant, 2018)

Nederland moet deze slachtoffers van de vele conflicten in de wereld een veilige haven blijven bieden. Mevrouw Kuiken PvdA – in *Tweede Kamer* debat asielinstream 2015

The predication-analysis invites the reader of these discourse fragments to networks of associations on asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands. The first network of associations is that of turmoil, of *overlast* and threat. Of discourse fragments in which asylum seekers and refugees are represented by normative, negative characteristics. A network that is characterised by the theme of non-*echte vluchtelingen* being non-deserving, because they are *veiligelanders*, *kansloos*, *aso's*, *criminele*n, and worst-case scenario potential terrorists. The second network of associations, in stark contrast, represents asylum seekers and refugees as 'humans' who fled from human tragedies to the humanitarian liberal democracy of the Netherlands. In the discourse fragments that form this network of associations, it is this human nature that make asylum seekers and refugees deserving of refuge in the Netherlands.

To conclude, these networks of associations of threat and of human victims– which arose from the lexicalisation-analysis and predication-analysis – were formed by categorising thematically uniform discourse fragments. This has facilitated the identification of the dominant discourses on asylum seekers and refugees that are produced in these newspapers and political documents. The identified dominant discourses are presented in chapter three. As Jabri (1996, p. 94-95) defines discourses as “social relations represented in texts (...)”, the CDA yields requires an in-depth analysis of these social relations. This analysis is presented chapter 4 in the CDA at level of interaction.

The empirical case presented in the introduction

Verandert Aylans dood iets aan de vluchtelingen crisis? Ik ben bang van niet. Als Europa de poorten openzet voor alle ontheemden, zal de verzorgingsstaat op termijn onhoudbaar zijn. De grenzen sluiten voor de legioenen die niets anders willen dan een toekomst, voor zichzelf en hun kinderen, is daarentegen onmogelijk en onmenselijk. Een duivels dilemma dat niemand op korte termijn zal oplossen. Maar als Aylans dood erin resulteert dat het zoeken naar geluk niet langer als een parasitaire bezigheid wordt gezien, dan is het arme jochie niet voor niets gestorven. (Het Algemeen Dagblad, 2015).

Does Aylan's death change anything about the refugee crisis? I am afraid not. If Europe opens its gates for all displaced people, the welfare state will eventually become unsustainable. Closing the borders for the legions who want nothing but a future, for themselves and their children, is however impossible and inhumane. A diabolical dilemma that no one will solve in the short term. But if Aylan's death results in the search for happiness no longer being seen as a parasitic activity, the poor boy has died for a reason. (Het Algemeen Dagblad, 2015, my translation).

Examples threat/securitisation discourse 3.2.1

Ze is het 'helemaal eens' met de flarden op de PVV-flyer. „De asieltsunami uit islamitische landen bedreigt Nederland... Alles staat op het spel: onze veiligheid, vrijheid, en toekomst... Geen enkele asielzoekers er meer bij." Petra: „Grenzen dicht: daar ben ik het 100 procent mee eens." Mensen die Wilders racistisch noemen zijn volgens haar 'mesjogge'⁶¹. „Hij is een held." (AD, 2015)

She 'totally agrees' with the fragment on the PVV flyer. „The asylum tsunami from Islamic countries threatens the Netherlands... Everything is at stake: our security, freedom, and future... No more asylum seekers.” Petra: „Close the borders: I 100 percent agree." People who call Wilders racist are, according to her, ‘crazy’. „He's a hero." (AD, 2015).

⁶¹ The discourse fragment mentioned ‘mesjogge’ which is a loan word from Yiddish-Hebrew that is used to refer to someone who is considered crazy or foolish. The term is generally used of in and around Amsterdam.

Examples of nuisance and criminal behaviour

De lijst van vechtpartijen, berovingen, verkrachtingen en andere incidenten in asielzoekerscentra wordt langer. Afgelopen dagen ging het fout in Almelo en Utrecht, waar asielzoekers met elkaar op de vuist gingen. (Telegraaf, 2015)

The list of fights, robberies, rapes and other incidents in asylum seekers centres is getting longer. In the past few days, things went wrong in Almelo and Utrecht, where asylum seekers fought each other. (Telegraaf, 2015)

Uit een overzicht bleek dat de politie vorig jaar 4600 keer is ingeschakeld na misdrijven die asielzoekers pleegden rond een opvanglocatie. Uit een top 10 die erbij stond, bleek dat het vooral ging om winkeldiefstallen en zakkenrollerij (in totaal 2280 meldingen), maar ook mishandelingen (250), bedreigingen (240) en vernielingen (200). Dat zware misdaad als aanranding (47), verkrachting (4), (pogingen tot) moord en doodslag (31) en seksueel misbruik kinderen (5). (AD, 2019)

An overview showed that the police were called in 4600 times last year after crimes committed by asylum seekers around an asylum seekers centre. From a top 10 that was included, it showed that this mainly concerned shoplifting and pickpocketing (a total of 2,280 reports), but also assaults (250), threats (240) and vandalism (200). That serious crime such as sexual assault (47), rape (4), (attempted) murder and manslaughter (31) and child sexual abuse (5). (AD, 2019).

Examples threat to national security

Het voedt de angst dat er met de stroom vluchtelingen terroristen meekomen. Een angst die IS zelf al lang oproept, door te zeggen dat zij strijders op die manier naar Europa zal sturen. Halen we met asielzoekers een paard van Troje binnen? Wilders twitterde: „Een zogenaamde asielzoeker dus. In werkelijkheid een moslimterrorist. Grenzen dicht!!“ (AD, 2015)

It feeds the fear that terrorists are coming with the flow of refugees. A fear that ISIS has been evoking for a long time, saying that it will send fighters to Europe in this way. Are we allowing in a Trojan horse by letting these asylum seekers enter? Wilders tweeted: „A so-called asylum seeker. In reality, a Muslim terrorist. Close the borders!!“ (AD, 2015)

Op dit moment draaien de Europese opsporingsdiensten op volle toeren om aanslagen door extremistische moslims te voorkomen. Die extremisten geloven dat zij ons moeten doden, en mochten zij daarbij onverhoeds sterven, dan reizen zij linea recta naar het paradijs. (Telegraaf, 2016)

European investigative services are currently operating at full speed to prevent attacks by extremist Muslims. These extremists believe that they have to kill us, and should they die unexpectedly, they will travel straight to paradise. (Telegraaf, 2016)

Examples threat to culture

Ook wij maken ons zorgen over de vraag of Nederland zijn identiteit dreigt te verliezen door de ontvangst van grote groepen migranten met een ander cultureel normen- en waardenpatroon. Ik kan het niet vaak genoeg zeggen: integratie van grote groepen nieuwkomers met een ander cultureel normen- en waardenpatroon is lastig, zo niet onmogelijk, want die integreren veelal niet, waardoor de samenleving vooral segregert. VVD in Tweede Kamer debat Wet Inburgering Feb2017

We are also concerned about whether the Netherlands risks losing its identity by receiving large groups of migrants with different cultural norms and values. I can't stress it enough: integrating large groups of newcomers with different cultural norms and values is difficult, if not impossible, because they often do not integrate, causing society to largely segregate. VVD in the Dutch House of Representatives – debate Integration Law Feb2017

Meer islam: meer spanningen? Nederland heeft de laatste decennia al aangetoond dat het bloed, zweet en tranen kost om moslims op een voor iedereen acceptabele manier een plek te geven in de samenleving. Nu komen er tienduizenden bij, van allerlei pluimage. Een deel van deze mensen is niet gewend om in een land vol vrijheid te leven. Godsdienstvrijheid, om maar wat te noemen. Het zal tijd en moeite kosten om van hun integratieproces een succes te maken. (AD, 2015)

More Islam: more unrest? In recent decades, the Netherlands has already demonstrated that it takes blood, sweat and tears to give Muslims a place in society in an acceptable manner for everyone. Now tens of thousands are have entered, of all sorts. Some of these people are not

used to living in a free country. With religious freedom, for example. It will take time and effort to make their integration process a success. (AD, 2015)

Examples threat to economy and welfare system

De kosten van levensonderhoud van de migranten moeten worden betaald. De procedures die moeten leiden tot een uitspraak over een al dan niet te geven permanente verblijfsvergunning duren zo lang dat de kosten per asielzoeker enorm kunnen oplopen. Tegelijkertijd is hun economische bijdrage nihil. (Telegraaf, 2015)

The living costs of the migrants must be paid. The procedures that must lead to a decision on whether or not to issue a permanent residence permit take so long that the costs per asylum seeker can rise enormously. At the same time, their economic contribution is nil. (Telegraaf, 2015)

Maar er zit wel een grens aan wat je van de samenleving vraagt. Ik ga geen maximaal aantal vluchtelingen noemen, maar de manier waarop het nu gaat, met alleen massale opvanglocaties, is niet goed. Het draagvlak neemt daardoor af. Het is een heilloze weg. Dat moet anders." (AD, 2016)

But there is a limit to what you can ask of society. I am not going to mention a maximum number of refugees, but the way it is now, with only massive housing locations, is not good. Support in society will decrease as a result. It is a destructive path. That has to change." (AD, 2016)

Miljoenen Nederlanders hebben schoon genoeg van de islamisering van ons land. Genoeg van de massa-immigratie en asiel, terreur, geweld en onveiligheid. Hier is ons plan: in plaats van het financieren van de hele wereld en mensen die we hier niet willen, geven we het geld uit aan de gewone Nederlander. PVV
verkiezingsprogramma

Millions of Dutch citizens are fed up with the Islamization of our country. They have had enough of mass immigration and asylum, terror, violence and insecurity. Here's our plan: instead of funding the whole world and people we don't want here, we'll spend the money on the common man. PVV election programme

Examples of security measures

De beveiliging van de EU-buitengrenzen had sinds de migratiecrisis van 2015 topprioriteit moeten zijn, maar dat is nog niet geregeld. (Telegraaf, 2019)

The security of the EU's external borders should have been a top priority since the 2015 migration crisis, but that has not yet been arranged. (Telegraaf, 2019)

Voor de PVV is het klip-en-klaar: de grenzen moeten dicht. „Het is overduidelijk dat met het vreselijke opengrenzenbeleid van het kabinet ook overlast, criminaliteit en islamitische agressie tegen bijvoorbeeld vrouwen wordt binnengehaald”, stelt Kamerlid Fritsma in Telegraaf (2016)

For the PVV it is perfectly clear: the borders have to be closed. „It is abundantly clear that the cabinet's terrible open borders policy brings in nuisance, crime and Islamic aggression against women, for example," says MP Fritsma in Telegraaf (2016)

Brussel - De EU moet veranderen in een fort Europa, onbereikbaar voor migranten die met bootjes illegaal over de Middellandse Zee willen komen. (Telegraaf, 2018)

Brussels - The EU has to change into fortress Europe, inaccessible to migrants who want to enter illegally, crossing the Mediterranean Sea with boats. (Telegraaf, 2018)

Bij het herontwerp van het gehele asielproces blijft er onverminderd aandacht voor maatschappelijk onaanvaardbaar gedrag. Hierbij wordt nauw samengewerkt met de politie en andere organisaties uit de strafrechtketen. In de fase van identificatie en registratie draagt de Afdeling Vreemdelingenpolitie, Identificatie en Mensenhandel zorg voor verbeterde aansluiting van processen, zodat signalering sneller verloopt en indicaties met betrekking tot nationale veiligheid sneller doorgezet worden. In de fase van asielopvang is goede voorlichting over de hier geldende normen en regelgeving van belang. Overlastgevende asielzoekers kunnen in de recent gecreëerde Extra Begeleidings- en Toezichtslocaties worden geplaatst.– Source: policy documents, Tweede Kamer integrale migratie-agenda

With the redesign of the entire asylum process, the focus on socially unacceptable behaviour is unabated. This involves close collaboration with the police and other organizations in the criminal justice system. In the phase of identification and registration, the Aliens Police, Identification and Human Trafficking Department ensures better correspondence of processes, with the aim of faster signalling proceedings and indications relating to national security being forwarded more quickly. In the asylum reception phase, good information about the applicable standards and regulations is important. Nuisance-causing asylum seekers can be moved to the recently created Extra Guidance- and Supervision Locations - Source: policy documents, Dutch House of Representatives integral migration agenda

Examples critique on the threat/securitisation discourse, by *De Volkskrant*

'Als politici immigratie als iets verschrikkelijks beschrijven, dan moeten ze niet verbaasd zijn dat mensen geloven dat al die problemen worden opgelost als immigratie ophoudt. Maar politici moeten die gedachte niet legitimeren. Ze moeten eerlijk zijn over het werkelijke aantal asielzoekers dat naar Europa komt, vorig jaar net iets meer dan één per duizend inwoners. Integratieproblemen ontstonden vooral doordat van gastarbeiders nooit werd verwacht dat ze Nederlands werden. En immigranten pakken geen banen af, maar dragen juist bij aan de staatskas. De dappere, ondernemende jonge mensen die de Middellandse Zee oversteken zijn precies degenen die een land als Nederland nodig heeft. Dat geluid hoor je niet genoeg.' (Volkskrant, 2015)

"If politicians describe immigration as a terrible thing, they shouldn't be surprised that people believe that all those problems are solved when immigration ends. But politicians should not legitimise that thought. They should be honest about the actual number of asylum seekers coming to Europe, just over one per thousand inhabitants last year. Integration problems arose mainly, because it was never expected of guest workers to naturalise and become a Dutch citizen. And immigrants do not take jobs, but rather contribute to the national treasury. The brave, enterprising young people who cross the Mediterranean Sea are exactly what a country like the Netherlands needs. You don't hear that enough.' (Volkskrant, 2015)

De angst voor vreemdelingen en het verlies van identiteit wint het van de rede en medemenselijkheid. (Volkskrant, 2018)

The fear of strangers and the loss of identity overpowers reason and humanity. (Volkskrant, 2018)

Examples humanitarian discourse 3.2.2

Wat wij in al dit geweld missen, is de menselijke maat, een besef van humaniteit en barmhartigheid . We hebben het niet over percentages of aantallen: het gaat om mensen. Mensen die vanwege oorlogsgeweld hun huis en haard hebben moeten ontvluchten, mensen die op zoek zijn naar een veiliger leven. Vaders, moeders, kinderen - mensen zoals wijzelf - die we niet onder een brug of in een lekkende tent kunnen laten slapen. (Volkskrant, 2016)

What we miss in all this violence is the human aspect, an awareness of humanity and mercy. We are not talking about percentages or numbers: this is about people. People who had to flee their homes because of war and violence, people who are looking for a safe haven. Fathers, mothers, children - people like ourselves - we cannot let them sleep under a bridge or in a leaky tent. (Volkskrant, 2016)

GroenLinks wil een realistisch, humaan en rechtvaardig asielbeleid. We hebben de verantwoordelijkheid bescherming te bieden aan mensen die vluchten voor oorlog, geweld en vervolging. In plaats van praten over het sluiten van grenzen, moeten we samen tot een werkbare oplossing bieden. – statement Groenlinks

GroenLinks wants a realistic, humane and fair asylum policy. We have a responsibility to protect those fleeing from war, violence and persecution. Instead of talking about closing borders, we have to come up with a workable solution together. - statement Groenlinks

Example humanitarian duty

Maar mensen in nood moet je helpen. De minderheid van 24 procent die meer vluchtelingen wil, redeneert omgekeerd. We kunnen het best betalen, als rijk en westers land, vinden zij: 'Er is nog ruimte en verpleeghuizen kunnen worden omgebouwd.' Bijna vijftig keer valt het woord 'plicht'. Als in: 'Vluchtelingen opvangen is een algemeen menselijke plicht.' Of: 'Het is onbeschoft om mensen die aan je deur kloppen niet te ontvangen.' (Volkskrant, 2015)

But you have to help people in need. The 24 percent minority who want more refugees, reason the other way around. We can afford to pay, as a rich and western country, they believe: "There is still room and nursing homes can be converted." The word 'duty' is mentioned almost fifty times. For example: 'Hosing refugees is our common human duty.' Or, 'It's rude not to receive people who are knocking on your door." (Volkskrant, 2015)

Example the human face of asylum seekers and refugees

En ineens had de vluchtelingencrisis een gezichtje. Het lag in de branding. Mond en neus in het zand. Alleen zijn voeten op het droge. Rood T-shirt. Korte, blauwe broek. Armpjes en beentjes nog een beetje mollig van de laatste restjes babyvet. (...) Aylan Kurdi zal nooit ouder worden dan 3. Hij verdrong dinsdagnacht toen het rubberbootje waarmee zijn familie het Griekse eiland Kos hoopte te bereiken, op zee omsloeg. (AD, 2015)

And all of a sudden, there was a face attached to the refugee crisis. There he was, laying in the surf. Mouth and nose in the sand. Only his feet reaching the dry land. Red T-shirt. Short, blue pants. Arms and legs still a little chubby from the last bits of baby fat. (...) Aylan Kurdi, 3 years old, will never grow older. He drowned on Tuesday night when the rubber dinghy with his family on it, hoping to reach the Greek island of Kos, capsized at sea. (AD, 2015)

De stemming is omgeslagen van onverschilligheid in compassie. 'De dood komt dichtbij.' Daar dreef ze dan, het meisje zonder naam, met haar roze jurkje. Haar lijkje verscheen op 19 april aan het wateroppervlak van de Middellandse Zee, nadat ze met honderden lotgenoten was verdronken. Op nog geen drie uur vliegen van Nederland. Het was een iconisch beeld, net zoals de foto van Aylan Kurdi (3), die woensdag levenloos aanspoelde op het strand van de Turkse badplaats Bodrum. De foto's van de dode peuters verspreidden zich als een olievlek over internet. Ze zijn er mede de reden van dat steeds meer Nederlanders zich willen inzetten voor de opvang van vluchtelingen en hun integratie. (Volkskrant, 2015)

The sentiment has changed from indifference to compassion. 'Death is getting close.' There she floated, the girl without a name, with her pink dress. Her corpse appeared on the surface of the Mediterranean Sea on the 19th of April, after she, and hundreds more, drowned. A

distance that would only be a three-hour flight to the Netherlands. It was an iconic image, just like the photo of Aylan Kurdi (3), who washed up lifeless on the beach of the Turkish Bodrum on Wednesday. The photos of the dead toddlers spread rapidly on the internet. Their death is part of the reasons that more Dutch citizens want to commit to the hosting and integration of refugees. (Volkskrant, 2015)

Example human tragedy

Ondertussen is aan de oorlog en het vluchtelingenleed allerminst een einde gekomen. Miljoenen vluchtelingen overleven in schrijnende omstandigheden in kampen in de regio of scharrelen hun kostje bij elkaar in de rafelranden van de Turkse samenleving. (Volkskrant, 2016)

In the meantime, wars and the suffering of refugees have not come to an end. Millions of refugees survive in appalling conditions in camps in the region or scrape together their food in the frayed edges of Turkish society. (Volkskrant, 2016)

De deals met derde landen vergroten het risico dat migranten en asielzoekers 'stranden' in transitlanden. Hier lopen zij meer risico op straffen en restrictieve maatregelen als refoulement, administratieve detentie en mishandeling. Het is ook een manier voor EU-lidstaten om de eigen verantwoordelijkheid voor de bescherming van vluchtelingen van zich af te schuiven. Groenlinks.

The deals with third world countries increase the risk of migrants and asylum seekers 'being stuck' in transit countries. In these countries, they are at a higher risk for punishment and restrictive measures such as refoulement, administrative detention and mistreatment. It is also a way for EU Member States to relinquish their own responsibility to protect refugees.

GroenLinks

Examples critiquing the current policy approach

Beide gevallen laten pijnlijk zien dat het in Europa vier jaar na de 'vluchtelingen-crisis' nog steeds ontbreekt aan een structureel beleid. Want de oorzaak van de menselijke drama's op de Middellandse Zee en in de Griekse kampen is niet zozeer het falen van de Griekse overheid, maar van de Europese Unie, dat medelidstaten als Griekenland niet bijstaat. (Volkskrant, 2019)

Both cases unfortunately show that a structural policy is still lacking in Europe, four years after the start of the 'refugee crisis'. Human tragedies happening on the Mediterranean Sea and in the Greek camps, is not really caused by the failure of the Greek government, but by the failure of the European Union to assist Greece. (Volkskrant, 2019)

De Kamer, gehoord de beraadslaging, overwegende dat illegale migratie vooral wordt veroorzaakt door het gebrek aan mogelijkheden tot legale migratie; van mening dat het voor de meest kwetsbare en noodlijdende vluchtelingen mogelijk moet zijn om bij diplomatieke posten van de EU aan te kloppen voor hulp zodat zij zonder tussenkomst van mensensmokkelaars naar veilig gebied kunnen komen; verzoekt de regering, de mogelijkheid te creëren voor verifieerbaar noodlijdende vluchtelingen om een humanitair visum aan te vragen bij Nederlandse diplomatieke posten op basis waarvan legaal naar Nederland kan worden gereisd om alhier een asielaanvraag in te dienen; TK debat asielinstroom2015 – motion by Voortman of GroenLinks and Voordewind of ChristenUnie

The House of Representatives, after hearing the debate, deliberating whether illegal migration is mainly caused by the lack of opportunities for legal migration; presenting the motion that the most vulnerable and suffering refugees should be able to turn to EU diplomatic posts for help, so that they can get to a safe region without having to rely on human traffickers; requests the government to create the possibility for refugees, who are verifiably suffering, to apply for a humanitarian visa at Dutch diplomatic posts, based on which they can legally travel to the Netherlands to submit an asylum application. House of Representatives debate asylum intake 2015 - motion by Voortman of GroenLinks and Voordewind of ChristenUnie

Examples human rights discourse 3.2.3

Het ene Europa is het continent dat, na de verschrikkingen van de Tweede Wereldoorlog, serieus werk heeft gemaakt van artikel 14 van de Universele Verklaring van de Rechten van de Mens: 'Een ieder heeft het recht om in andere landen asiel te zoeken en te genieten tegen vervolging.' (Volkskrant, 2014)

One, Europe is the continent that, after the horrors of World War II, has seriously pursued Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 'Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum in other countries against persecution. ' (Volkskrant, 2014)

De weerstand over het pact⁶², door rechtse politici met succes gemobiliseerd, vormde een nieuw dieptepunt in het Europese migratiedebat. Het verdrag scheidt geen juridische verplichtingen, maar was bedoeld om basale mensenrechten veilig te stellen. Na de crisis van 2015 wilde de VN voorkomen dat mensen op de vlucht voor oorlog en armoede onderweg verdrinken, verkracht worden, in opvangkampen doodvriezen of worden uitgebuit. (Volkskrant, 2018)

Resistance to the pact⁶³, which has been successfully mobilized by right-wing politicians, has set new lows in the European migration debate. The treaty does not enforce legal obligations, while its intention was to safeguard basic human rights. After the 2015 crisis, the UN wanted to prevent people fleeing from war and poverty from drowning, being raped, freezing to death, or being exploited in refugee camps. (Volkskrant, 2018)

Example moral responsibility of the host state

*Het begint ermee dat alle Europese landen gezamenlijk hun verantwoordelijkheid nemen en lef tonen, en soms over hun eigen schaduw een stap vooruit durven te zetten, om in ieder geval een begin van een oplossing te kunnen maken. Europa afsluiten voor mensen die vluchten voor oorlog, kan daarbij nooit een oplossing zijn. Niet omdat het volgens internationale verdragen niet zou mogen, maar puur omdat we ons herinneren waarom we überhaupt ooit tot die afspraken zijn gekomen en omdat we de morele plicht voelen om een veilige haven te zijn en te blijven voor degenen die deze nodig hebben. Tweede Kamer debat asielinstream2015 PvdA
Mevrouw Kuiken*

It all starts with European countries taking their joint responsibility and showing courage, and sometimes daring to come out of the shadows, to at least be able to start working towards a solution. Closing Europe border to people fleeing from war, can never be the solution. Not

⁶² Refers to the UN Marrakech Migration Pact

⁶³ Refers to the UN Marrakech Migration Pact

because international treaties prohibit it, but solely because we should remember why we ever reached those agreements and because we feel a moral obligation to be and remain a safe haven for those who need it. Dutch House of Representatives debate asylum inflow 2015 PvdA Ms. Kuiken

Example legal responsibility of the host state

Nederlandse en EU-politici verwijzen maar al te graag naar de Verlichtingsidealen van universele mensenrechten waarop onze morele en culturele beschaving is gefundeerd, maar het is zeldzaam dat deze principes ook worden toegepast wanneer een internationale humanitaire crisis daarom vraagt. Het zou een positief signaal van democratische verantwoordelijkheid zijn als de Nederlandse minister en EU-ministers van Buitenlandse Zaken de idealen die ten grondslag liggen aan het internationaal humanitair recht zouden respecteren door het vluchtelingenbeleid te hervormen en een oprechte poging te doen om tot een wapenstilstand te komen. (Volkskrant, 2014)

Dutch and EU-politicians are only too happy to refer to the Enlightenment ideals of universal human rights, on which our moral and cultural civilization is founded, but these principles are rarely honoured even when an international humanitarian crisis demands it. It would send out a positive signal for democratic responsibility if the Dutch minister and EU foreign ministers respected the ideals underpinning international humanitarian law, by reforming refugee policy and making a sincere effort to reach a truce. (Volkskrant, 2014)

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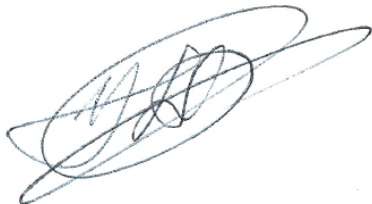
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⁶⁴ <https://students.uu.nl/en/practical-information/policies-and-procedures/fraud-and-plagiarism>

⁶⁵ <http://www.plagiarism.admin.cam.ac.uk/what-plagiarism/universitys-definition-plagiarism>