

Framing and Reframing of Immigrants in the Dutch Caribbean Islands

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Outline presentation

- Look at how the processes of ‘Othering’ and ‘framing’ of migrants have taken place in Curaçao, Aruba, and Sint Maarten;
- Identify and discuss the various frames that are embedded on these islands in relation to migrants;
- Look at how the discourse on migrants can be reframed.

Data

- Desk research of reports on migration that provide certain information about the social life of migrants and that discuss themes such as: the dynamics of integration, the social connections between migrants and host populations, assimilation, and multiculturalism

Othering

- The process by which one delimits and defines an 'us' or Self by delimiting and defining a 'them' or Other;
- One constructs the Other by ascribing different, opposite characteristics to the Other, in most cases through the use of **value-laden binary oppositions**;
- The defining of 'us' and 'them' is mutually dependent; the Self cannot exist without reference to and without defining the Other.

Framing

- People in general try to make sense of the world through frames: a series of selected, perceived realities, both biologically and culturally influenced.

Some statistics regarding migration on the islands

- The 2011 Census shows that Curaçao's total population of 149,679 inhabitants included 35,647 migrants, meaning that more than 23 percent of the population was born elsewhere;
- For Aruba, the 2010 Census shows that 34,432 people on the island had been born abroad, which amounts to almost one-third of the total population;
- In Sint Maarten, only one-third of the population is born on the island according to the 2011 Census; 63% of the people come from the other islands of the former Netherlands Antilles, from the Netherlands, and from the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and Guyana

An overview of relevant studies to deduce framing

- Historical aspects of migration (Allen, Do Rego, Alofs, Cain),
- Quantitative demographic accounts of migration;
- Economic impact of migration;
- Legal aspects of immigration
- Studies on the patterns of integration of immigrants in the receiving societies:
 - OMIC Report on migration and integration in Curaçao (De Bruijn and Groot 2014);
 - *Double or Quits: A Study on Recent Migration to Aruba 1993–2003*, (Bureau of Statistics of Aruba, 2003);
 - *The Impact of Migration on Caribbean Microstates: Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Saint Maarten, United States Virgin Islands* (ECLAC, 1998); Francio Guadeloupe, *Chanting Down the New Jerusalem: Calypso, Christianity, and Capitalism in the Caribbean* (2009)

Frames

- Frame One: “They are grabbing all our jobs”. Migrants as an economic threat;
- Frame Two: “They don’t want to learn our culture.” Migrants as a threat to national or local identity;
- Frame Three: The ‘Other’ in racial stereotyping based on physical appearance;
- Frame Four: Migrants as a criminals;
- Frame Five: “They are taking all our men.” The challenge posed to local sexual morality.

Conclusion and recommendations

- Identify five *us-versus them* frames;
- These frames seem to be shaped by the way in which the various social groups on the Dutch Caribbean islands have historically dealt with ethnicity, race, color, and gender and have negotiated belonging, citizenship, and nation-building amongst themselves.
- More in-depth studies should be conducted to analyze the present tendency to problematize migration and to see it as a threat to the receiving nations. What impact does the continuing search for what it means to be Curaçaoan, Aruban and Sint Maartener – as part of the Caribbean, of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, or of today's global village – have on how the people of the islands view themselves in relation to migrants?
- More studies in order to discover how cultural interaction takes place, changes over time, and may lead to better relations and mutual benefits.