

From Inclusion to Indifference

Cultural openness as a layered repertoire of urban Dutch youth

Keywords: *cultural openness; ordinary cosmopolitanism; boundaries; cultural diversity; city culture; youth*

Abstract

This paper studies cultural openness as a cultural resource of Dutch urban youth. Young urban inhabitants navigate encounters with diversity on a daily basis, and often have a multicultural background themselves. This research consists of 20 in-depth interviews with urbanites aged 18 to 20 years old, using a topic list, dilemmas, and a newly developed visual method. Building on research on cosmopolitanism, boundary making, and city culture, it develops its own framework of situational forms of cultural openness. Interaction with otherness is found to be at the core of cultural openness. The way young people experience otherness is addressed by uncovering social and symbolic boundaries between friends and school groups, and in the public sphere. The findings show cultural openness as a layered urban repertoire that can take the form of inclusion, acceptance and respect, or indifference. These forms of openness differ in their handling of boundaries: indifference ignores boundaries, acceptance and respect acknowledge boundaries, and inclusion stretches boundaries. This repertoire of cultural openness fits an urban environment where a highly diverse and dense public space is combined with private niches of similar people. In the public realm indifference gives others space and avoids cultural conflict, while in more personal encounters inclusion bridges differences. Urban youth experiences boundaries differently in various layers of social organisation: the private, parochial and public realm. Relationships between social and symbolic boundaries are suggested to often be implicit, with unconscious connections between social categories and symbolic boundaries. The interviews display how the visceral part of detecting boundaries is easier for respondents than the literal part of explaining them. They display cosmopolitan actions and preferences without the reflexive capacity to explain them, or the moral discursive resources to express them in cosmopolitan ideals. Respondents in this research use both emotional and rational arguments in their reasoning about cultural openness. The latter is slightly more frequently used by youth with a migrant background and by female respondents. These findings ask for caution with research on cosmopolitanism based on argumentation, and for more attention to practise-oriented research, the visceral experience of boundaries, and different forms of reasoning behind cultural openness.

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Introduction

Many politicians and citizens in European countries are apprehensive of alleged cultural effects of globalisation. Refugees and other migrants crossing national borders are major topics in national elections, and these discussions are often coloured by remarks about cultural boundaries. Newcomers are framed as culturally different, and these cultural or sometimes racial differences as causing trouble and conflicts.¹ In the Netherlands, the debate about migration and social cohesion has been found to be primarily a debate about culture (Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012).² Attitudes towards “other” cultural groups play a major role in the way people look at society. According to Andriessen (2016), ethnocentrism and the fear that the Netherlands is changing culturally are the main causes of interethnic tensions for native Dutch. Amongst Dutch with a non-Western background, feelings of exclusion are a common theme (ibid). Recent research shows how Dutch citizens can roughly be classified as more “universalist” or “particularist”, more cosmopolitan or more nationally oriented (Bovens, Dekker, & Tiemeijer, 2014). Universalists are more positive about other cultures and immigration. The differences between these groups are sometimes explained as a result of income differences and anxiety about income loss due to immigrants, but research often finds education to be the most distinguishing factor (e.g. de Koster & van der Waal, 2014).

On a more local level, in larger European cities, the cultural effects of globalisation are not just debated; they are above all experienced. Cultural diversity is part of the everyday reality in cities, also called “commonplace diversity” (Wessendorf, 2010, p.7). Urban citizens nowadays differ in so many ways and can be divided in so many categories, that theorists and policy makers speak of superdiversity.³ In cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the

¹ A majority of Europeans wants to stop immigration from majority-Muslim countries (Osborne, 2017).

² Dutch research signals a tougher tone in the political and public debate on non-Western migrants (Gijsberts & Lubbers, 2009; Haenen, 2016). A right wing politician asked for “less Moroccans” (Haenen, 2016). When asked for societal problems, Dutch respondents mention integration and immigration most (Den Ridder et. al. 2016). Debates about cultural “heritage” like the Dutch Black Pete (e.g. Rueb, 2016), and white privilege evoked fierce discussion on social media and television and in Dutch newspapers in recent years (e.g. NRC, 2015). In those discussions, distinction is made between “white” and “black” groups.

³ The term superdiversity was coined by Vertovec in 2007. It describes how much, and in how many ways people in Western societies differ from each other; not only in ethnicity and culture, but also for example in legal status, work relations, and attachment to the place they live, and other places.

“native”, “original”, “white” Dutch inhabitants form less than half of the population (cf. Dirks, 2012). In these cities, “native” is also a disputable term, as inhabitants with a migrant background are often born in the city⁴ and the alleged “natives” are often the ones who moved to the city later in life.

With diversity as a main feature of city life, and intercultural encounters as everyday practise, urban citizens need a way to co-exist in a culturally highly differentiated, physically dense, and ever changing environment. Openness towards otherness here can be seen not (just) as an attitude, but as a competence to navigate these encounters; a prerequisite for living together closely and for agreeable interaction. This competence could be one of the core skills of the 21st century, enabling people to thrive in both urban settings and in an international environment. A lack of cultural openness, on the other hand, can lead to tensions in cities, a lack of social cohesion, and less local and international cooperation. This research aims to extend the scientific knowledge on cultural openness in practise, and to contribute to policies to improve this competence.

The prominence of cultural openness and closeness to other cultures in public debates and urban living is mirrored by growing attention for the concept of cultural openness in (cultural) sociological theory and research, often referred to as cosmopolitanism. The definition of this concept is much debated. Vertovec and Cohen (2002) discern six forms: a socio-cultural condition, a philosophy, a political stance, the development of multinational institutions, an attitude, and a practise or competence. With these multiple and disputed meanings, cosmopolitanism has been criticized for being too broad and idealistic and difficult to define and operationalize (Skrbis, Kendall & Woodward, 2004; Skey, 2012). Several authors call for empirical research on cosmopolitanism (Skrbis et al. 2004; Hanquinet & Savage, 2013). Existing empirical research concentrates on cultural consumption and lifestyles, elites, and international comparisons (cf. Ollivier, 2004; Pieri, 2014). Furthermore, it focuses on openness as an attitude rather than a practise.

To examine the cultural openness needed in cities, a more practise-oriented approach seems suitable. Such an approach connects to earlier research on ordinary cosmopolitanism

⁴ Cf. www.buurtmonitor.nl

and city culture that looks at cultural openness as a cultural repertoire (e.g Lamont & Aksartova, 2002; Skrbis & Woodward, 2007). This paper will further explore this theoretical concept of cultural openness by analysing attitudes and practises of openness as found in interviews with Dutch urban youth. It will thus contribute to the strand of research that aims to specify localised, ordinary forms of cultural openness, as they appear in everyday lives.

Urban youth is chosen as the research group because the globalised world and diverse cities have been a reality their whole lives, and young people in cities can thus be seen as forerunners in dealing with cultural differences in practise. Furthermore, research on universalism and particularism (Bovens et al, 2014) finds that universalists live in cities more often, and young people are more likely to have an open attitude toward other cultures, immigration and open borders. This is mirrored in recent elections, with young Dutch people voting relatively often for progressive parties with universalist positions (NRC, 2017), and young people in the UK voting more against Brexit (Drake, 2017).

This paper looks at ordinary cosmopolitanisms of urban youth and examines the following research question: *What practises of cultural openness do young people in the largest Dutch cities use to navigate the density and the diversity of their everyday environment?*

In the next chapter, after a review of theory and previous research, this question will be specified into research questions. Building on research on cosmopolitanism, boundary making, and city culture, this study develops its own framework of situational forms of cultural openness. The method section presents the set-up of the empirical research. The results section considers how the specific, superdiverse city environment asks for specific forms of openness and closeness. It also addresses the way young people experience social and symbolic boundaries in different spheres in their lives. Subsequently it construes how different ways of navigating those boundaries entail different forms of urban cultural openness.

Theory

Globalisation and locality: differentiation in public and private spheres

A common starting point for theory on cosmopolitanism is globalisation. For many authors (e.g. Hannerz, 1990; Roudemetof, 2005), cosmopolitanism is an attitude or ideal fitting the process of globalisation, the increasing global interconnectedness of countries and

people. Scholars describe cosmopolitanism as an ideal of a globally shared humanity (Beck, 2002) and as “ethics in a world of strangers” (Appiah, 2006). As globalisation entails the growing international exchange of persons, goods and ideas (Janssen, Kuipers & Verboord, 2008), it produces growing intercultural encounters, and these are facilitated by -and may produce- an attitude of openness towards other cultures. While research on cosmopolitanism started by looking at international elites in business, travel and education, some scholars (e.g. Werbner, 1999) pointed to the existence of working class cosmopolitans, living transnational lives. Furthermore, cosmopolitanism as attitude manifests itself not just in international exchanges, but also in local settings. Beck (2002, p. 116) talks of “globalisation from within” referring to the internal diversification of national societies. Globalisation thus affects both local and global scenes. Giddens sees globalisation as a dialectical process (Giddens, Duneier & Appelbaum, 2003). The world is growing “more interconnected and more intricately partitioned at the same time” (Geertz, in Guillen, 2001, p.240). Similarly, Robertson (2012) describes the core dynamic of globalisation as the particularisation of the universal and the universalisation of the particular. Globalisation entails both the development of a shared culture and literacy, and of more differentiated local cultures and identities.

Urban sociologists study the consequences of these processes of differentiation and universalisation on a local level. Sociologists have long discussed how urban density and diversity influences social interaction. Simmel (1923), in Keith, 2005, p.167) already details how the nearness of strangers in cities asks specific skills of urban citizens, and a superficial level of interaction. Goffman (1971, in Tonnelat, 2010, p.5) mentions the rule of “civic inattention”. When strangers cross paths, they give social space by seemingly ignoring each other. Sennett (2015) calls this the manoeuvring between closeness and indifference. He argues that this social experience of cities creates cosmopolitanism: an openness towards other cultures. In cities, indifference can be a form of tolerance, a settlement between freedom and connectedness (Tonkiss, 2003). Cities thus have their own form of interaction, and, as some say, cosmopolitanism. Wessendorf (2014), describing the commonplace diversity in modern superdiverse cities, speaks of “cornershop cosmopolitanism”. This sketches the intercultural skills and general form of openness to “different” people that she found in diverse neighbourhoods. Likewise, Neal et al. (2013) review several studies showing

how common daily interactions and negotiations in multicultural environments bring conviviality. These scholars, then, report a practised form of cosmopolitanism that is often depicted as light and casual. Van Leeuwen (2010) highlights the same superficiality in “side by side citizenship”, where a certain level of indifference provides tolerance and personal freedom in a multicultural city. This practical form of intercultural urban citizenship is less demanding than “cosmopolitan citizenship”, which requires an active interest and appreciation of differences. Alternatively, side by side citizenship entails indifference of differences, that is not acknowledging or discussing ethnic, religious, or other cultural differences.

While these authors look mainly at interaction in cities at the public level, others distinguish several levels of personal closeness in the city. A useful distinction here is that between the public and the private realm - the polis and the household (Arendt, 1958; Sennett, 1974). Wessendorf (2010) extends the public-private division to three levels, using Loflands (1998) differentiation between the public, parochial and private realm. These realms “could also be described as social territories defined by specific relational forms” (Wessendorf, 2010, p.22). In the city, the public realm consists of the streets, parks and other public spaces where strangers meet. The parochial realm is the place for neighbours, colleagues, sports clubs and other places where people encounter each other regularly. The private realm is the space reserved for family and friends.

Several scholars studied relationships in different urban realms. boyd (2014) portrays American schools, where during breaks, students assemble along racial and ethnic lines. The only exceptions are schools with low levels of diversity. Other authors also show how the diversity of the group composition varies according to the level of closeness. When relationships are closer, people tend to interact with others that are culturally similar to them. However, friend networks have been found to be more culturally diverse than young people’s school and home situations, for instance in the case of youth with a migrant background in Geneva, Switzerland (Bauer, Loomis & Akkari, 2013). Blokland and van Eijk (2010) studied the social networks of middle class people who choose to live in diverse neighbourhoods. Although their respondents used the diversity of services in the neighbourhood (restaurants, shops), their social networks mostly existed of either original Dutch or of ethnic minority backgrounds, conform the personally reported cultural

background of the interviewee. Wessendorf (2010) discloses similar differences in her study of the diverse neighbourhood Hackney in London, United Kingdom. She uncovers “the co-existence of mixing and ‘parallel lives’, characterised by different degrees of interaction and mixing in public as opposed to private space” (p.8). While in public and parochial spaces people interact with many differences, in private they mingle mostly with people similar to them, ethnically and socio-economically. At the same time, the parochial space is the place where people acknowledge and sometimes discuss each other’s cultural backgrounds, contrary to the public realm (Wessendorf, 2010).

Next to the loose encounters with strangers that are very different, the city is at the same time a place where people have a close circle of friends and family that are very similar to them; the city hosts many lifestyles and milieus. This makes the city the place for great differences in the public realm, and at the same time great similarities in the private realm (Wessendorf, 2014a). An unsolved question is whether and how these different levels of closeness and difference in the city influence the way people interact, and their cultural openness. As scholars state that the diversity and density of the public realm of the city ask for a light form of cultural openness or cosmopolitanism, the degree and form of openness seems to cohere with the diversity and density of the environment. The cultural openness of the parochial and private realm have, however, not been theorised or empirically researched until now.

Forms of cosmopolitanism: attitude and practise

Research shows several ways of defining and operationalizing cultural openness. One way is to define and measure cultural openness as a general attitude or personality trait,⁵ as openness to experience, being imaginative, intellectual, and openminded. This general personality trait influences specific attitudes, preferences and behaviour, for instance in the field of politics (McCrea, 1996). In research on cultural openness, it is constructed found as being open to new experiences, for example in the field of travel, food, and art. This more

⁵ In this form, cultural openness is frequently present in psychological studies. Openness to experience is one of the five dimensions commonly used to describe personalities, along with neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness (John & Srivastava, 1999).

attitudinal approach to cosmopolitanism is also found in the extensive strand of research that looks at cultural consumption. Here, a broad cultural consumption pattern, called omnivorousness, is seen as a form of cultural openness. In research on cosmopolitanism, this is combined with geographical borders, as “otherness” is often defined in terms of cultural forms (food, music, etc.) from other countries (e.g. Cappeliez & Johnston, 2013; Meuleman & Savage, 2013; Rössel & Schroedter, 2015). This form of cosmopolitanism has, however, been criticised for being inherently elitist and having a Western bias (Pieri, 2014). It would also neglect more general forms of cultural openness (Ollivier, 2008; Skey, 2012).

According to several scholars, more academic attention should be paid to cosmopolitanism in ordinary lives (Vertovec & Cohen, 2002; Skrbis et al., 2004). Skey (2012) pleads for research into everyday cosmopolitanism, and what Beck (2002) calls “unintended and lived” cosmopolitanisms (p.7). Some empirical research has already looked at cosmopolitanism in ordinary life situations. Lamont and Aksartova (2002) investigate ordinary cosmopolitanisms: “the strategies used by ordinary people to bridge boundaries with people who are different from them” (p.1). They interviewed black and white workers in the US and France about how they experience racial boundaries and commonalities in their day to day lives. By sketching how these different groups draw upon different cultural repertoires, they make a connection between these stories and social positions. Skrbis and Woodward (2007) extend this research on “ordinary cosmopolitanism” by studying how Australians engage with globalisation and cultural diversity. Like Lamont and Aksartova (2002) they find that people use a set of “structurally grounded, discursive resources” (p. 730). Plage et al. (2013) analyse how people bridge differences, and discuss when such interactions are cosmopolitan encounters. This focus on actual encounters and on the way people handle these, using repertoires, is a more practise-oriented form of research. Vertovec (2009) distinguishes this research on cosmopolitan practises and skills from cosmopolitan orientations or attitudes. Several authors have singled out (urban) youth to study this practical cosmopolitanism. Vasudevan (2014) sketches how the communicative and expressive practices of young people in a theatre in New York bridge differences among them. Campano and Ghiso (2011) describe migrant students in American cities as cosmopolitan intellectuals, and suggest to use their transnational and multivoiced stories in education. DeJaynes and Curmi (2015) extend this vision and illustrate how all their students

in a New York City high school are “intellectually invested global citizens” (p.75), engaged in discussions about topics like cultural differences and migration. These studies both display existing cosmopolitan practices among city youth, and suggest to use these experiences in education, fostering a cosmopolitan outlook and teaching global citizenship.

In contrast to the concept of cosmopolitanism as a fixed personal trait, cosmopolitan as practices implies that people can use cultural openness as a repertoire in certain situations. The environment can thus influence the use of the repertoire. Swidler (2002) explicates how “culture works differently at different levels and locations in social organisation”(p.2) and cultural repertoires can differ for example between countries or institutions. Others demonstrate the contrasts between French and American cultural values and cultural demarcation (Lamont, 1992) and modes of justification (Thévenot, Moody & Lafaye, 2000). In cities, cultural repertoires might differ between the private, parochial and public realm. The varied nature of city relations in these three realms thus asks for a matching approach of cosmopolitanism; local and situational, examining cultural openness as a practise and an urban cultural repertoire.

This still leaves the substantive content of cosmopolitanism undefined. To determine this content, the core of the concept of cosmopolitanism needs to be filtered from all its appearances. Some authors already aimed to find a common thread in definitions of cosmopolitanism. Hanquinet and Savage (2013) state that most scholars agree with Hannerz (1990, p. 239) that it has the “willingness to engage with the Other” as its core. Here, cosmopolitanism is seen as an attitude and not as a competence and practise. The engagement with the other seems, however, a valuable formulation. Skrbis and Woodward (2007) speak of a conscious openness to non-local otherness. Here, the “otherness” claims its place again. The “non-local”, however, brings a problem for research of cosmopolitanism in cities, as all in the city can be seen as local. What remains of both these definitions is the *interaction with otherness*, which appears to be the core of cosmopolitanism.

When otherness is, however, not determined by national borders (openness to people, produce, habits from a foreign culture), the next important question is how to define the other. While the introduction sketched how in public debates otherness is often specified as ethical or religious differences, the concept of cultural openness leaves room for a broader range of differences, from nationality and religion to lifestyle and convictions.

Wessendorf, (2014a) reviewing research of several urban researchers, shows how the boundaries between different groups in neighbourhoods are not always the same; sometimes they are drawn between newcomers and the “older” population of neighbourhoods, at other times between generations or along ethnic or religious lines. Pachucki, Pendergrass, and Lamont (2007), accordingly, find that the forming and consolidating of (cultural) groups, occurs differently in different environments. Thus, otherness can be situational, and the demarcation of who is the other, who is the same and who is different, needs to be the first step in research on cultural openness.

Boundaries and inequalities

To look at the demarcation of otherness, theory and research on boundary processes are a useful addition to the theoretical framework of this paper. Theory on boundaries often distinguishes symbolic boundaries and social boundaries (Pachucki, Pendergrass, & Lamont, 2007). Symbolic boundaries are “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space” (Lamont & Molnar, 2002, p. 168). They are understandings about status, classifications, and group boundaries, and tools to negotiate definitions of reality and categorizations. Social boundaries are “objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities” (Lamont & Molnar, 2002, p. 168). They are the more durable, institutionalised differences. Other authors, like Wessendorf (2010), call them “categorical boundaries such as religion, ethnicity, race and class” (p. 18). The interaction between social and symbolic boundaries makes for interesting research ground, as it connects social positions to the discourses that support social structures. When symbolic boundaries and social boundaries are confirming, they create and sustain inequalities; when they differ, symbolic boundaries can challenge social categories and inequalities (Lamont & Molnar, 2002).

To be open towards cultural differences, these differences have to be demarcated. Cosmopolitanism thus does not entail the disappearance of social and symbolic boundaries, nor eliminates social inequalities (Ollivier, 2008; Hanquinet & Savage, 2013). While defining cultural preferences and similarities, people at the same time define boundaries. This makes cultural openness a paradoxical concept: while it entails openness, at the same time it

creates inclusion and exclusion. Many scholars indeed show how cultural openness, used as a form of cultural capital, to create distinction. In cultural consumption research, omnivorousness, a broad pattern of cultural choice, has been described as a form of distinction (Peterson & Kern, 1996). Cultural openness as a value is most popular in certain circles, specifically in progressive politics, and among artistic elites (Ollivier & Fridman, 2002; Michael, 2016). At the same time, a more general form of openness is found with lower classes (Lamont & Aksartova, 2002; Ollivier, 2008), and without class distinction (Skrbis & Woodward, 2007; Roose, van Eijck, & Lievens 2012).

Otherness requires boundaries, but this does not necessarily mean that these boundaries create or sustain social inequalities. While some scholars couple cosmopolitanism with distinction, others state that real cosmopolitanism does not endure unequal relationships. According to Plage et al. (2013) cosmopolitanism entails the ethics of sharing, with equality and reciprocity as conditions. Alternatively, while cosmopolitanism does not eliminate boundaries, some scholars say cosmopolitanism entails the shifting of boundaries of inclusion and exclusion; of appreciated and unappreciated culture, and of sameness and otherness. According to Rathje (2007), intercultural competence is the ability to create cohesion through familiarity between groups or people that experience foreignness. By creating shared culture, differences are included. This connects to Beck's (2002) view of cosmopolitanism as a logic of "inclusive oppositions", replacing a logic of "exclusive oppositions" like nationalism (p.19). Dialogic imagination, integrating different ways of life and rationalities, are a central characteristic of cosmopolitanism here. Plage et al. (2013) agree that cosmopolitanism presupposes a "readiness to incorporate changes into one-self" In this way, openness connects to the ability and willingness to look for similarities instead of differences, for inclusion instead of exclusion.

In conclusion of this theory section, the theoretical framework of this research can be summarized as follows. This research explores urban cultural openness. It takes into account that cultural openness is situational; it coheres with the level of social organisation, and with the density and the diversity of the environment. Cosmopolitanism and cultural openness entail interaction with otherness and the navigating of cultural differences. This research will use "cosmopolitanism" to refer to cultural openness that is positive about differences, and aims at shifting boundaries. "Cultural openness" will be used as a broader term, including

more superficial forms of openness like conviviality and indifference. Otherness can be located by looking at social and symbolic boundaries. To study the interplay between social and symbolic boundaries, as Pachucki, Pendergrass, and Lamont (2007) advocate, the interviewees should represent relevant social categories. Lastly, the connections between the levels of closeness (private to public realm), the forms of cultural openness (e.g., more or less superficial), and the social and symbolic boundaries deserve attention. This leads to the following research questions:

- *What repertoire of cultural openness is manifest among Dutch urban youth?*
- *How do young people draw boundaries in the public, parochial, and private realm?*
- *(How) do these repertoires and these boundaries vary between social categories?*

Research design and method

As a translation of the, private, parochial and public realm, this research asks 18-20 year olds about friends, peers at school, and the public realm. This age makes them old enough to move through the city independently, and to choose the way they spend their leisure time, showing more personal choices in what they do and who they mingle with. At the same time, education provides for a place with unchosen social contacts, and contacts with multiple cultural groups. Many of them have just changed schools, and can compare friends and classmates. To add another layer of social organisation, interviewees with experience in villages or small cities are asked about the possible differences in interaction compared to cities. By asking about experiences and interactions with friends and peers at school, and not, e.g., parents and teachers, hierarchical relations are excluded. Thus the focus is on equal relationships, as this is, according to some scholars (e.g. Plage et al., 2016), a prerequisite for cosmopolitanism. As social categories, this research looks at cultural background, education and gender. To look at a possible difference between youth raised in dominant cultural environments and others, youth with a migrant culture in the family are included. Interviewees that describe themselves as Dutch, without any other (ethnic) cultural influences in their family, will be mentioned “plain Dutch”. The term “diverse Dutch” will be used to refer to the interviewees that mention an additional cultural background, different than plain Dutch. As education has been found to be a major determinant of

openness to other cultures and processes of globalisation the most (Bovens, Dekker & Tiemeijer, 2014), young people from different educational backgrounds (MBO and HBO – lower and higher vocational education- and university) are interviewed. Finally, both female and male respondents have been included as gender has also been found to affect forms of cultural openness (e.g. Høy-Petersen et al., 2016).

Method

This research consists of 20 in-depth interviews with Dutch youth aged 18 to 20 years old⁶, who are all still in school (from vocational education to university). All of them live in a Dutch city, except for two interviewees who live in a satellite town and go to school in a big city. Six respondents do not live with their parents anymore. Interviewees were found mainly by approaching contact persons at schools and cultural institutions, and through multiple steps in the network of the researcher. The interviewees were never personal acquaintances of the researcher.

Qualitative methods are chosen for several reasons. The main concept of cultural openness is still in need of theoretical development, especially for the part that is not connected to cultural consumption. Although research has grown the last decennia, the concept is often operationalised differently. This research, then, is explorative, and can bring insights and categories for further, large scale quantitative research. Qualitative interviews are a good way to “combine depth of understanding with purposeful, systematic, analytic research design to answer theoretically motivated questions” (Lamont & Swidler, 2014, p.159). Furthermore, interviewing is a suitable method for exploring the discourses, meanings and categorizations that people use to understand and explain their lives. In addition, the research is focused more on interaction than attitude, and open interviews offer the opportunity to gather and later analyse personal stories of encounters with otherness. Lastly, datasets with the desired information could not be found, and acquiring these datasets would not be possible in the available timeframe of this research project. The research uses interviews and not focus groups because one of the topics concerns personal

⁶ An overview of the interviewees can be found in Appendix 2

networks, which are easiest explored with one person at the time. Moreover, the research touches upon sensitive issues like group boundaries that might be more easily discussed in private. Before the composition of the interview guide, the researcher consulted four professionals with knowledge of the target group: a lower vocational education school career developer, a high school manager of the higher level secondary school (VWO), a cultural entrepreneur and networker with a migrant background, and a psychology student with an (other) migrant background, schooled in intercultural themes. With them, the researcher talked about the daily world and the vocabulary of the target group, and discussed the themes and the composition of the interview. Their advices varied from the use of words and examples to daily experiences of groups and more abstract comments on the theme of cultural openness.

The interview consisted of a topic list with some starting questions.⁷ Opening with an exploration of social and symbolic boundaries on friends level, the interviews moved on to social environments with less closeness; school, habitations (villages, towns or big cities), and the public realm. For each environment, interviewees were asked about interaction patterns. To avoid determining and limiting cultural differences as for example differences between nationalities or ethnicities, boundaries were not predefined but formulated by the respondents. This means the youth was asked with who they mingle, how groups form according to similarities and differences, and what they are. First, they were asked to map out the friends and groups around them, in a network visualisation on a whiteboard.⁸ This steered the conversation, and made it easier to talk about closeness and boundaries. Questions about boundaries and openness are thus connected to their social environments, and by asking for examples, experiences from their lives were integrated into the research. Later in the interview, dilemmas and a Youtube movie about boundaries were used to trigger further conversation about cultural openness. At the end of the interview, openness was sometimes discussed directly, as a trait, skill, and/or attitude. The interview guide was reviewed and adjusted during the data collection, for example to improve the sequence and formulation of questions, or if interesting examples came forth in interviews that could be

⁷ The interview guide can be found in Appendix 1.

⁸ More information about the network visualisation can be found in Appendix 1.

used in other interviews. As a qualitative research methods with an iterative process of data collection and coding (Boeije, 2009), this process continued in the analysis phase.

Furthermore, the interview phase and analysis phase alternated, and the interview questions and flow were slightly changed as a result of interview experiences and findings.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim. NVivo was used for analysis of the interviews. All interviewees were coded with social background variables for gender (F/M), education level (lower/higher), ethnical background (divers or not) and living environment (village, town, big city). Interviews were first coded with sensitising concepts from theory and memo's. After this first round of coding, several forms of openness appeared from studying nodes themed around openness, practices, and societal debates. Keywords connected to these forms of openness were then used to code these forms of openness and connect them to the different interviewees and their social background variables. The keywords were both found in the different interviews through a text search, and through interpretation of the nodes about openness, practices, and societal debates. Finally, for each interviewee the consistency in forms of openness throughout the different situations was analysed, and differences were connected to the social background variables.

Results

The findings of the analysis will be presented here according to the research questions; starting with the repertoires of cultural openness the interviewees demonstrate. Next, the experienced boundaries in the public, parochial and private realm are reviewed. This results section concludes by considering possible connections between the social background variables and the reported boundaries.

Cultural openness as a layered urban cultural repertoire

Cultural openness and the city

The interviewees explain how cities are living environments with specific characteristics that require matching manners (cf. Simmel, 1923; Sennett, 2015). Seven of the interviewees moved from a little village to a big city, and can compare the two living environments. It is noteworthy that 6 of them are of plain Dutch background. They come to the city for their education. This means, at the same time, that almost all diverse Dutch interviewees grew up

in a big city. The interviewees acknowledge the greater diversity and density in the city. This quote expresses this liveliness of the city, and also already indicates that there are sub-milieus within the city.

I: en in de stad in wijdere kring, op straat ofzo, is daar de sfeer ook anders dan Bergschenhoek?

R: ja, nou hier wordt je gewoon aangesproken op straat; het is hier natuurlijk veel levendiger, in de stad. Maar verder, ja, nou ja, je ziet gewoon heel veel meer mensen. Het is ook nog steeds wel een soort klein dorp, of een heel groot dorp, Rotterdam, want als ik gewoon op een willekeurige dag door de stad loop dan zie ik meestal wel mensen die ik ken ergens van, dus ja, echt heel groot is het niet hier, maar ik vind het wel echt een stuk leuker omdat het meer variëteit heeft aan mensen en aan culturen.. dan Bergschenhoek, ja daar had je 1 Marokkaan, die kende iedereen, dat was de Marokkaan.. [...] sowieso door de stad word je ook wel geforceerd, met je kop erin gedrukt dat er verschillende mensen zijn met verschillende meningen en verschillende levensstijlen. En daar kun je ook wat meer kiezen wat het beste bij jou past. (interview 4)

Many interviewees who have lived in smaller villages sketch how people there are more alike, and (have to) act more alike. They tell how they feel they have to dress more moderate in a village, and people there more easily judge deviant behaviour. In the city, they find their niche group of friends where they feel they can be themselves.

I: ja, wat is er zo anders?

R: ja, daar is het ons kent ons, iedereen roep hoi, ze kennen je overal, en dat is hier in Amsterdam veel minder. Maar het verschil is ook, mensen zijn hier misschien sneller wie ze zijn, of uitbundiger qua kleding, qua kleding denk ik wel ja, soms zijn mensen wel wat warmhartiger van een dorp, maar toch, iedereen die ik hier aanspreek.. het is gewoon individueler, maar dat is de samenleving sowieso wel de laatste tijd. Dat is wel anders. Het is wel leuk om in ieder geval het verschil te zien. Een plek waar je iedereen kent, en een plek waar je niemand kent, en waar je jezelf eigenlijk heel erg tegenkomt, omdat je gewoon je eigen ding kan gaan doen en moet doen ook. (interview 11)

This fragment already hints at different modes of interaction in cities and villages. The respondents describe how people in villages are kinder and more helpful to each other, people in cities are less quiet, and bolder.

I: want hoe denk je dat het voor hem is dan? hij komt uit Willemstad hier..

R: ja, ik merk wel dat hij heel anders is. Je merkt het wel maar hij voegt zich wel gewoon bij de groep.. hij is wat stiller en wat terug.. hij is wat stiller gewoon, en wat meer bij zichzelf. En je merkt ook wel als het dan wat drukker is in de klas, dat hij zoiets heeft van ok jongens nu is het genoeg geweest.. Terwijl wij zoiets hebben van ja het is gezellig en we gaan met zijn allen eten en bowlen..

I: en heb je een idee, want jij hebt altijd in de stad gewoond, maar heb je een idee hoe het anders is op zo'n plek, in Willemstad of

R: eh, nou hij zegt ook wel echt hij woont echt in de middle of nowhere, en hij zegt ook mensen zijn daar heel vriendelijk naar elkaar toe, heel behulpzaam, dat zie je vaker in kleinere dorpjes (interview 7)

They often describe city people as more open

R: het lijkt net of mensen in Zeeland oogkleppen ofzo op hebben. Voor echt zoveel dingen.

I: bijvoorbeeld?

R: nou, bijvoorbeeld voor mensen met een andere huidskleur. Of jongens die op jongens vallen, of dat soort dingen. (interview 10)

They experience that you learn to deal with differences in a city, and how a cosmopolitan attitude helps to thrive there.

R: er zijn hier verschillende mensen ja.. ik denk dat je gewoon leert ook, aanpassen ofzo, er zijn heel verschillende mensen

I: ja.. ik ben zo benieuwd wat dat dan is, wat mensen dan leren, ik ben een beetje aan het zoeken wat mensen dan kunnen bijvoorbeeld, die goed in de stad kunnen wonen.. behalve dan omgaan met die drukte.. je zegt aanpassen?

R: hmm dat is een goeie

I: ja, nou het is ook een ingewikkelde vraag.. maar je zei je moet je leren aanpassen

R: ja ik denk gewoon leren aanpassen, als je bijvoorbeeld met iemand zit te praten, ja, het is gewoon anders, van een ander cultuur, je gaat het misschien niet begrijpen.. dat denk ik, aanpassen aan hoe diegene denkt enzo

I: en dat kun je een beetje leren, denk je, want je zei dat moet je leren?

R: ja dat leer je meer als je in de stad bent dan in een dorp. Want je hebt verschillende mensen, je leert meer, je gedraagt je anders, je past je aan naar elk persoon. (interview 1)

I: en moet je dan denk je ook iets meer kunnen, om hier goed in de stad te gedijen?

R: nou, je moet wel van de stad houden. Je moet van verschillende culturen houden, van verschillende mensen zo, ja jong en oud.. je hebt overal studentenhuizen, die zitten ook in woonwijken.. eh, ja, je moet echt een vrij persoon zijn denk ik. En houden van drukte om je heen.. (interview 11)

The appearance and practise of cultural openness were further explored with all respondents. In both stories and in answers to direct questions, interviewees describe cultural openness. They use words like open-minded, free, and open to describe people who

accept differences, and they talk about what you have to do to navigate differences; adjust, talk and listen, not be prejudiced. When asked if this openness is something you are, or something you can learn, most interviewees say it is both.

ja, nou ik denk, zij is wel heel open en niet zo judgy. [name] is dat ook niet, zij zijn allebei open, en het maakt niet uit, ze zullen je nooit veroordelen. (interview 12)

To learn and practise being open, the most important thing is to talk to each other according to many respondents.

R: ik denk dat het belangrijkste gewoon is, praten. Wij hebben bijvoorbeeld Nederlandse burens, half Nederlands half Grieks, die Islamitisch zijn geworden.. dus dat ze geloven echt in het geloof. En mijn oma, die heeft niet met ze gepraat, dus dan krijg je al heel snel dat ze in een hoekje worden gedrukt van dat zijn Islamieten, dat zijn Turkse mensen, daar moet je niet mee praten want die zijn niet leuk. (interview 19)

R: ik zal niet zeggen dat je het direct van iemand leert, van je moet tolerant zijn, maar het is meer van je leert elkaar eerst begrijpen, en dan komt het vanzelf. Want er wordt hier bijvoorbeeld ook godsdienst levensbeschouwing gegeven, en dat gaat op een gegeven moment wel , ja, het is een beetje een mix van alles, en daar leer wel hoe verschillende mensen denken echt heel erg en daar ga je vooral discussies met elkaar aan - dan krijg je het perspectief van de ander, dan kunnen ze dat naar buiten brengen - bijvoorbeeld paarse vrijdag, een keer straight alliance heb je dan.. (interview 13)

Others also mention or illustrate how knowledge – whether from conversations, media, or school, can help understand others. Upbringing is also mentioned as influencing openness.

R: ja.. maar ik weet dat de eerste periode was het onderwerp gewoon de Islam. Dat is gewoon kennis, die je dan meekrijgt. Dat is alleen maar positief.

I: ja want met kennis.

R: nou, dan heb je ook denk ik, als mensen meer weten over een bepaald onderwerp, heb je ook minder vooroordelen denk ik. En ook minder van die domme uitspraken (interview 6)

Several interviewees connect openness with not having prejudices. This can also be seen as not having boundaries based on looks or (supposed) cultural group identities.

R: open-minded.

I: ja, en kan je daar wat meer over zeggen, wat dat dan is?

R: nou ja, eigenlijk dat je gewoon, zoals ik al zei dat je niet als je iemand ziet of weet waar die vandaan komt, dat je niks daar op baseert.. (interview 16)

To summarise, the interviewees describe cultural openness both as an attitude and as a practise. They recount how cultural openness is a repertoire more prevalent with city people, a competence you can learn in interaction with others.

Several layers of urban cultural openness: inclusion, acceptance and indifference

The interviewees show several ways of dealing with everyday differences. In their stories and reactions to the dilemmas, several interviewees show a classical cosmopolitan outlook; they tell how they like interacting with differences and learn from it.

Bijvoorbeeld deze vriendinnen hebben weer een andere mening dan deze vriendinnen, en mijn vriend denkt ook weer anders dan ik, en ja, ik heb al best wel veel discussie gehad, ik vind het ook altijd interessant om te weten wat anderen denken (interview 3)

ik vind het heel leuk om dingen uit iemand anders zijn opzicht te zien. En dan soms zie ik het gewoon echt op die manier niet in, en dan als iemand anders het zegt denk ik van "oja, inderdaad, op die manier kan je het ook zien".. en dan ga je er over nadenken, en je maakt eigenlijk alleen maar breder voor jezelf, en jezelf ontwikkelen vind ik gewoon heel belangrijk. (interview 7)

These remarks are made about personal encounters, sometimes with friends, sometimes about other personal encounters. The last quote also illustrates how some interviewees show a cosmopolitan competence in that they see other viewpoints and broaden their view, incorporating other standpoints and new information. This broadening fits the form of cosmopolitanism as inclusion of other standpoints or ways of life (cf. Beck, 2002; Rathje, 2007). For this research, I will call this form of openness ***inclusion***.

nou, ik bedoel bijvoorbeeld bij, ja noem eens een feest, ja bijvoorbeeld inderdaad met kerst, dat niet iedereen gelovig is, en dat ze dan kerstfeest winterfeest noemen. Dan snap ik dat wel, zeg maar, dan betrek je iedereen erbij. En anders, als je het wel kerstfeest noemt, dan sluit je mensen eigenlijk buiten. Die voelen zich daar niet fijn bij (interview 7)

One interviewee explains that people have to adjust to each other, with an example; when she meets a client that does not shake hands, she asks him how she can greet him – thus expanding the possible practices of greeting. These stories of boundary shifting are mostly found with interviewees that show strong cultural openness on all levels; in personal stories, in societal dilemma's, in all levels of social organisation.

Cosmopolitanism is, however, not the only form of openness found in the interviews. A second, lighter form of cultural openness can be described as ***accepting and respecting*** differences. These terms are both often used to express that different people should co-exist

next to each other. Here, there is no mention of adjusting to each other, or appreciation, as long as everyone can be who they want to be.

I: en wat denk je dat belangrijk is, als mensen met verschillen dan met elkaar omgaan

R: ja, respect denk ik, dat dat wel echt op nummer 1 staat. Ja, respect gewoon, elkaar respecteren. Dat vind ik ook met alle andere mensen zeg maar.. bijvoorbeeld, gek voorbeeld, als iemand bijvoorbeeld zich raar kleed ofzo, of raar, wat is raar,

I: anders

R: zich gewoon anders kleedt, ja, dan moet je dat ook respecteren, ik vind gewoon iedereen mag doen wat ze zelf wil. Dat is ook hetzelfde met stemmen eigenlijk, de 1 stemt op de PVV, de ander stemt op Groen Links. En je moet het maar accepteren, ieder heeft een eigen mening. (interview 3)

En je hoeft echt niet met iedereen vriendjes te zijn, echt niet, ik ben ook niet met iedereen vriendjes.. maar wel dat we elkaar respecteren, en gewoon iemand in zijn waarde laten, en als jij een hoofddoekje wil dragen veel plezier. Ik bedoel, je valt mij er niet mee lastig, dus.. (interview 15)

This form of cultural openness is dominant with some interviewees, and also more prominent in conversations about more public places, or society as a whole.

On the more diverse and abstract levels of social organisation – the city and society and societal dilemma's- a special form of co-existing is found: **indifference**. For some interviewees this attitude of indifference prevails in both public places and societal matters. The difference between accept and respect, and indifference, is that the former acknowledges the other, the latter (seemingly) ignores the other or otherness. When asked about the dilemmas, many interviewees stress that they themselves do not care much what happens.

R: ja, ik denk dat ik.. ik heb geen zin om er over na te denken. Van.. sinterklaasjournaal lost het maar op, ik kijk er toch niet naar. Ik vind het dan heel simpel, want ik kijk bijvoorbeeld ook geen nieuws ofzo (interview 10)

I: en wat vind je dan van zo'n winterfeest, in plaats van een kerstfeest

R: ja, ik weet niet, mij maakt het niet uit, ik lig er echt niet wakker van (interview 2)

This form of indifference also translates into the civic inattention as described by urban sociologists (Goffman, 1971; Sennett, 2015).

ik vind het juist heel fijn dat in Rotterdam iedereen een beetje op zichzelf is op straat. Gewoon, dat als je echt op straat loopt, dat je gewoon niet iedereen groet (interview 10)

A special form of indifference is found in the stories of some diverse Dutch interviewees,

when they explain you should not care about what some people say about your group, and how you should ignore some people, and not let incidents of discrimination get to you.

Ik heb, ja ik heb zoveel dingen nu al gehad in mijn leven, dat ik zoiets heb van weet je, het maakt eigenlijk, niet perse uit, tenzij het echt een groot iets is in mijn leven dat ik denk ok, dan wil ik er echt voor gaan, maar anders dan kan ik het zo voorbij laten gaan. En ik denk dat sommige mensen daar heel anders over nadenken. Dat ze het gelijk, als er dan een klein ding is, dan is het misschien wel een issue, maar dan zien ze het gelijk als een drama (interview 7)

ja, over het algemeen is het in Nederland wel negatief.. over Marokkanen in het algemeen, dat hoor je vaak genoeg.. maar het is niet dat ik me gediscrimineerd voel ofzo in Nederland, tuurlijk, er zijn altijd wel kleine dingetjes, maar.. ja het is niet anders.. (interview 16)

Indifference can be a way of avoiding difficulties, by ignoring potential conflicts. As urban sociologists explained (Tonkiss, 2003; van Leeuwen, 2010), this can be a form of politeness, of leaving space for others. The three forms of openness thus differ in the way they handle boundaries. Indifference ignores boundaries, acceptance and respect acknowledges boundaries, and inclusion changes boundaries. We will now zoom in on how the interviewees experience those boundaries.

Symbolic boundaries: sameness and difference in public, parochial and private realm

In speaking about their daily lives, most interviewees have no trouble identifying the people and groups that are important to them, and drawing boundaries in different realms. They can also well describe what is important in these relationships, and what behaviour is suitable. These boundaries vary across different levels of social closeness (friends, school, public realm).

As close friends are the ones you need for support, to share your problems with, trust is often mentioned first if asked what is important in friendship. Boundaries are broken if trust is broken. Close friends have often known each other for a longer time and deliberately contact each other often. When asked for similarities between friends personalities are often mentioned. In a wider range of friends, contact is more often regulated by shared activities; sports or going out. Cosiness and humour are often said to be important in these friendships.

I: Hee en zijn er overeenkomsten denk je, tussen al die mensen, of zijn ze allemaal heel verschillend?

R: nou ze zijn best wel verschillend.. Martijn is heel rustig, Luca is op zich ook wel heel rustig, Adil is echt superdruk, Nassim is superdruk, Achraf heeft zijn periodes, Linda is heel druk.. en als je qua niveau zou kijken, qua schoolniveau.. VWO, Havo, Havo, Mavo, ik weet niet hoe het Belgische programma werkt.. zij zit op de universiteit.. eh.. mavo, vwo en vwo, dus dat is ook best weer uitgespreid.. voor de rest, ja, houd niet van sporten, houd wel van sporten, houd niet van sporten.. de meesten houden niet van sporten. Ehm.. overal het algemeen willen ze wel allemaal graag naar buiten als we afspreken.. wat nog meer? (interview 13)

This quote also presents education as a difference, and this is the social category most mentioned in the interviews as difference. Cultural diversity in friends circles was mostly not acknowledged when asked about differences. This was true for both groups; a diverse Dutch girl was surprised she almost exclusively has diverse friends, while a plain Dutch girl at the end of the interview realised that her friend Oussama is bicultural. Interviewees are sometimes not sure of the ethnical background of people they know, including their closer network. Still, although cultural background is rarely mentioned when asked about similarities and differences within their friends group, the friends maps drawn by the respondents show how many diverse Dutch interviewees have mostly diverse Dutch (not monocultural) friends, and the plain Dutch group has almost no diverse friends – some have one or two. Also, some diverse Dutch interviewees explain how their diverse friends understand them better specifically when it comes to stories connected to being diverse Dutch.

ja best wel grappig om dat nu zeg maar zo te zien, maar ze zijn allemaal wel van buitenlandse afkomst, ja misschien bindt dat ook wel, het zorgt wel voor bepaalde gevoelens die gemeenschappelijk zijn..(interview 14)

This division of friends according to cultural background resonates with the findings of other research on urban youth (boyd, 2014; Bauer, Loomis & Akkari, 2013) and urban populations (Blokland & van Eijk, 2010; Wessendorf, 2014b).

In class, almost always two or three groups are distinguished. Differences mentioned are often between a popular and a nerdy group, or between a quiet and a more prominent group. Differences in cultural background are only mentioned if the dominant group concerns diverse Dutch. When specifically asked about cultural groups on school level, a few say that diverse Dutch sometimes look each other up, but do not form tight groups. The racial or ethnic group boundaries thus seem less prominent here than boyd (2014) found in

the American schools. A boundary experience that diverse interviewees describe is paradoxically when they are not recognised or explicitly not seen as part of their migrant group. This mostly happens on the parochial level, for example at school.

maar dat vind ik ook best wel apart, dan word er wel eens tegen mij gezegd, ja, ik haat Marokkanen maar ik haat jou niet, snap je wat ik bedoel? dus dat is best wel, dan denk ik van ok.. wat bedoel je? (interview 16)

The last level of social organisation, the public realm, can be divided into public space at the city level, and, more general, the public sphere. Although the respondents indicate that ethnic boundaries, if present, are quite light in school situations, in the public sphere these boundaries are often described as stronger. This could be both boundaries between white and non-white, or Muslim or Moroccan groups singled out and portrayed negatively. Boundaries of cultural background were not the only social boundaries mentioned; there were also examples about handicapped people, homosexuals, and education level. Which form of discriminated groups are mentioned is often coupled with personal experience; a handicapped sibling, personal experiences of discrimination on personal background, sensibility for differences between education levels or classes due to upwardly rising.

I: en denk je dat mensen in de stad of in het land ook groepen zien of mensen als groepen zien

R: ja, dat denk ik wel

I: en hoe, wat zijn de belangrijkste groepen denk je die mensen nu zien?

R: ja, ik denk dat, vroeger was het meer man en vrouw, nu denk ik echt dat het nationaliteit is vooral, en je kleur ook. dat denk ik gewoon echt. En je kledingstijl ofzo. (interview 18)

Looking at the stories and the rejection of prejudice, many interviewees acknowledge social boundaries (often cultural background and religion) but they do not approve of the use of these boundaries to treat people differently, or judge them before you know them. Diverse Dutch interviewees tell stories in which they themselves or people around them are treated a certain way because of their perceived cultural background, and, with others, they identify the labelling of cultural groups in media, like newspaper articles and Facebook posts.

en ik snap wel dat de media daar ook een grote rol in speelt, want als bijvoorbeeld een buitenlander iets gedaan heeft, wordt de achtergrond altijd natuurlijk erbij vermeld.. (interview 14)

Interviewees themselves, however, also sometimes use social boundaries: education level is used quite often as distinction. This could be caused by the life phase of the interviewees, as school is their daily environment, and it could also be a sign of the growing social divide between education levels (Bovens, Dekker & Tiemeijer, 2014). Differences in interaction and atmosphere between school levels is mentioned several times by higher education students and once by a lower education student. The former sketch lower education level students as being noisier, less tolerant, and more aggressive. None of the lower education students makes such remarks about higher education students. Two university students mention how other higher education students can be condescending about other education levels or class differences. Sometimes, cultural openness is used as distinction (cf. Lamont & Molnar, 2002), and people who are not open are called dumb.

Examples of boundary breaking on city or society level are often also law breaking, for instance fighting, stealing, throwing beer bottles.

Behaviour patterns and behavioural boundaries are thus very different in the private and the public realm; from supporting each other always and not breaking trust to not breaking the law. Interviewees recount how they invest more in relationships in the private realm, especially with close friends.

of bijvoorbeeld, heel stom voorbeeld, als jij iets zou zeggen, en ik denk, ik ben het niet met je eens, dan zou ik het ook niet eens tegen je zeggen, ik denk ja ok, ik ken je toch niet, dit is de enige keer in mijn leven dat ik jou waarschijnlijk zie.. heel stom gezegd, dus dan zou ik het daarbij laten. Maar als het in mijn vriendengroep gebeurt, zou ik er iets van zeggen.. op het moment dat je iets hebt waarin je heftig met elkaar verschilt, dan zou ik het eerder kenbaar laten maken bij vrienden, omdat ik daarmee vaker een terugkomende interactie heb dan bij vreemden. (interview 2)

This seems to connect with the preference for cosmopolitanism, as bridging boundaries, adjusting behaviour, on this friends level. A Christian girl, confronted with the occurrence that her boyfriend converts to Islam, explains that after many talks she realised that all religions are alike and equal. Otherness between friends can also influence their activities together, like going out for coffee instead of drinks with a friend that does not drink, or getting halal food for a Muslim friend at your birthday party. The behaviour and rules mentioned for the public realm, alternatively, resemble more the interaction in cultural openness as acceptance or indifference. Just as many of the interviewees indicate that they

do not care much about debates in the public sphere about for example Black Pete, they try to avoid and ignore unpleasant confrontations in public space.

R: Dus ja en toen zei ze ook gewoon van "dit is mijn land en ik wil je hier niet hebben" ja en toen dacht ik echt van whoo wat heb ik jou misdaan? dus dat was wel echt de eerste keer dat ik echt in aanraking kwam.. dat was wel jammer

I: en wat moet je kunnen, denk je, om daar dan mee om te kunnen gaan?

R: ehm.. ja ik denk dat je er sowieso niet op in moet gaan eigenlijk, ik denk dat heel veel mensen dat juist wel doen.. maar ik denk ja als iemand zomaar zulke dingen wil zeggen, ja je kunt er wel een discussie mee aangaan maar wat haal je eruit, je voedt diegene alleen maar, en je laat alleen maar zien, ja je bevestigt alleen maar zijn vooroordelen waarschijnlijk.. (interview 14)

While this story is about a confrontation based on looks in the public realm, this is an exception. Most stories about the public space in cities do not mention specific ethnic groups. Just like in the research on conviviality and ordinary cosmopolitanism (Wessendorf, 2014a; Neal et al. 2013), difference is the norm in the city, and although youth sometimes refer to cultural background when describing a person, they do not talk about ethnical groups. Here, the stories about the public sphere in cities deviate from those about the more abstract public realm, where social boundaries based on cultural background are experienced as stronger. This research thus shows differences in boundaries between the private, parochial and public realm, and also within the public realm; between the public sphere in the city and the more abstract public realm of media, politics and "people".

Connection between social and symbolic boundaries

This research tries to unravel the intricate relationship between social and symbolic boundaries for urban youth. Some of the social characteristics (education, plain or diverse Dutch, gender) do seem to make a difference in the forms of openness and defined boundaries. As this research works with small numbers, these findings must be treated with much caution.

An interesting finding is that social categories do not play a mayor role in personal encounters (private and parochial realm). Friend groups are often divided in diverse or plain Dutch (which would point to a divide between these groups rather than to other cultural divisions), but this is not acknowledged as boundary by youth themselves. The same is true for two other social boundaries, gender and age. These categories are not mentioned often

as boundaries, but they seem to strongly influence the composition of the friends groups, as these mainly include peers of the same gender and comparable age. The interviewees mostly mention personality, interaction styles (e.g. humour) and leisure pastime choices as similarities with their friends. Indirectly, however, some of these symbolic boundaries could be connected to social categories like class, education, or cultural background. Cultural sociologists studied how cultural consumption, including leisure pastimes, can both distinguish and sustain social groups (cf. Katz-Gerro, 2004). For example, people from different social classes prefer different sorts of humour and comedy, and this serves as a strong symbolic boundary (Friedman & Kuipers, 2013). Additionally, friends groups could be formed on the base of foci, the places and activities where people meet (cf. Feld, 1981). For urban youth, this could for example be school, sports, and places to go out. Taking a closer look at these places in the interviews, there are signs of foci that could imply a distinction between plain and diverse Dutch, with plain respondents playing rugby and handball, attending arts school, and going to specific bars. Furthermore, leisure activities could also be specific for age groups (e.g. going out) and gender (e.g. certain sports). Thus, the interviewees' symbolic boundaries of personalities, style and activities could be connected to social boundaries of cultural background, as the friends groups suggest. In sum, according to most interviewees social categories do not function as symbolic boundaries, but at the same time symbolic boundaries they do mention could be connected to social categories, thus sustaining social boundaries.

In this story about social boundaries, education seems to be an exception, as some interviewees connect school level to symbolic boundaries. This fragment implies a lack of openness as acceptance or respect with respect to lower education:

nou, mijn zusje zit op de Mavo, maar dat is gewoon, ze zijn meer bezig met hoe je eruit ziet en wat je zegt, en je wordt wel heel snel heel raar gevonden, en je hebt niet zullen we maar zeggen de plek en de ruimte om je eigen ik te zijn... dan hoor ik verhalen en het is niet van oh ze pesten dit of dat, meer het is wel van ik zei dit, en toen moesten ze allemaal lachen, weetjewel, en dan denk ik ja, dat zou op VWO nooit gebeuren (interview 15, VWO)

Higher educated interviewees also more often say they think it is interesting to get to know people with other cultural backgrounds or religions, thus showing cosmopolitan behaviour. This resonates with findings in research on cosmopolitanism in cultural

consumption and cosmopolitan attitudes, where higher educated people also score higher on cosmopolitanism (Ollivier & Fridman, 2002; Michael, 2016). At the same time, this research found no difference for education level in cosmopolitanism as a practise, in stretching boundaries. This is in line with prior research indicating that a more general form of openness can be found throughout society (Ollivier, 2008; Roose, van Eijck, & Lievens 2012; Wessendorf, 2014a). The next finding concerns *how* cultural background influences the way interviewees draw boundaries. The interviews show how the diverse Dutch group has more experience with cultural difference, both in their friends groups, in (mostly negative) social situations where they are singled out based in their looks, and in personal stories they hear through acquaintances and for example Facebook. Moreover, they are already used to mixing cultural repertoires by growing up biculturally (cf. Campano & Ghiso, 2011). Missing these personal stories, most plain Dutch interviewees get their knowledge from school and media. This difference between personal stories as source or more distant abstract information might also have consequences for the form of cultural openness. From these interviews, there seems to be a small relative preference for knowledge and factual arguments with the plain Dutch respondents, and a relative preference for emotional or visceral reasoning with the diverse Dutch group. Thus there is a small indication that diverse interviewees use emotional reasoning more often, explaining that people can get hurt, or feel excluded. This more emotional reasoning seems, furthermore, to appear more with female interviewees than with male, and also the preference for the more cosmopolitan forms of openness is found a bit more with the female interviewees. This connects to the findings of other authors that women use other, more emotion based frames of openness (e.g. Høy-Petersen et al.; 2016)

I: ja, en kan je dan nog iets meer zeggen over waarom het goed zou zijn, als het zou veranderen?

*R: ehm.. ik denk dat, ja, dat de kloof wel minder wordt, want het is natuurlijk wel een barrière waarbij twee hele tegenstrijdige meningen staan, waarbij de allochtoonse kant dan, de bruinere mens dan, zich niet echt begrepen voelen, en dat ze daardoor dan wel een kloof kunnen voelen, en in het land zelf, dus betreft Nederland, dat ze zich wat minder thuis voelen in Nederland, en ja, dat dit wel kan helpen bij de integratie, dat ze ook het gevoel hebben van, ze doen natuurlijk ook heel erg hun best om zichzelf aan te passen, dat ze misschien daarbij ook nog een hulpmiddel eigenlijk krijgen als het ware dat zij zich ja daardoor nog beter kunnen aanpassen.. en ik denk ja dat het ook gewoon heel veel dan voor hen zou betekenen, en zou zeggen over dit land verder.
(interview 14)*

R: ja dus bijvoorbeeld cultuur, dat je je kan aanpassen aan de cultuur van iemand. Dat je niet alles kan zeggen tegen diegene, omdat het misschien diegene zal kwetsen ofzo (interview 1)

The connection between social and symbolic boundaries often seems to reside just under the surface. Mostly, social boundaries are not acknowledged in personal relations, but personal networks - relationships in the private and parochial realm- do seem to be structured by social categories (cf. Wessendorf, 2010; Blokland & van Eijk, 2010; Bauer, Loomis & Akkari, 2013). Symbolic boundaries - leisure pastimes, manners and taste- could be connected to social boundaries – cultural background, age, gender- here (cf. Katz-Gerro, 2004, boyd, 2014). Additionally, there could be a difference between social categories (cultural background, gender) in how symbolic boundaries are drawn – with what sort of reasoning.

Conclusion

While cultural openness (and closeness) as an attitude is strongly influencing the public debate and the socio-cultural divide in the Netherlands, urban citizens also need and use a more practical approach; a cultural resource to handle the diversity, density and fluidity of their daily environment. My research shows cultural openness as a layered urban repertoire that can take the form of inclusion, acceptance and respect, or indifference. These forms of openness differ in their handling of boundaries: indifference ignores boundaries, acceptance and respect acknowledge boundaries, and inclusion stretches boundaries. This repertoire of cultural openness fits an urban environment where a highly diverse and dense public space is combined with private niches of similar people. In the public realm indifference gives others space and avoids cultural conflict, while in more personal encounters inclusion bridges differences. All these forms of openness are used to navigate social and symbolic boundaries, to interact with otherness. This research shows how urban youth experiences these boundaries differently in the private, parochial and public realms. Relationships between social and symbolic boundaries were suggested to often be implicit, with social boundaries behind symbolic boundaries, and differences in the reasoning behind symbolic boundaries.

The findings on the connection between social and symbolic boundaries are tentative, due to the limited number of interviews. They do, however, offer directions for further research. The first is the relationship between cultural openness and inequality. On the one hand, scholars say cultural openness can be used as a way of distinction (Ollivier & Fridman, 2002; Michael, 2016). There are some signs in this research of cultural openness used as way of distinction. Interviewees judge others – mostly lower educated or villagers – for being less open, dumb, and narrowminded. On the other hand, scholars see cultural openness as *reducing* inequality, as it is seen as relationships between equals (cf. Plage et al., 2016) in which people make room for each other, and for each other's differences. Of the three forms of openness found in this research, especially *inclusion* could be seen as reducing inequality, if there are positional differences that are bridged. Indifference, on the other hand, will likely result in the remaining of the status quo, not changing unfairness or inequalities caused by boundaries.

Respondents themselves did not talk about unequal relations much, not even when asked. This can have several reasons. Firstly, interviewees were asked specifically about relationships with peers. Also, they were questioned about daily practices in a superdiverse environment, where everyone is different and the same. This might result in other reasoning than questions in previous research about hospitality, tourism, or newcomers and refugees (e.g. Skrbis & Woodward, 2007; Høy-Petersen et al., 2016, Plage et al., 2016). Additionally, power differences could be present unconsciously, just like social categories. There are, however, references to inequality in the interviews, mostly in the remarks about discrimination and prejudice. In these stories and comments, interviewees condemn the use of social (ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation) and symbolic boundaries (dress, looks) to treat people differently. For the interviewees, discrimination and prejudice are the opposites of openness. The interplay between social inequality and cultural openness deserves further academic attention. In general, the dynamics between social and symbolic boundaries present fertile further research ground (cf. Pachucki, Pendergrass, & Lamont, 2007). In this research, questions arose how symbolic boundaries, for example attitudes at school or preferred hang-outs with friends, are connected to social boundaries. The finding that interviewees in this research are not consciously aware of the social boundaries in their lives deserves attention in future research designs. This is also true for the construction of

otherness, as this research shows how the determination who is the other differs per situation – especially per level of closeness - and for each person.

Furthermore, although cultural background is not mentioned as a distinguishing group boundary at the private and parochial level, when talking about practises with otherness, interviewees often use examples with differences in cultural background or religion.

Whether this is because of the questioning by the interviewer (sometimes probing for these differences, or using examples of differences in religion or cultural background), an/or these (cultural) differences are triggered by attention in the public debate, or they are more obvious because they are connected to cultural background, or the term “cultural” is diffuse and sometimes read as ethnical, or these are the most prominent boundaries, is not exactly clear. Further research should explore this terminology and subsequent findings further. Another possible shortcoming of this research could be interviewer effects caused by the older age and the plain Dutch appearance of the interviewer. While there are quite some remarks about age and ethnical boundaries, interviewees might for example have hold back on issues like white privilege or have been triggered to think of age differences.

Some other themes that surfaced during this research deserve more attention. There appears a contradiction in the way cultural differences, and specifically ethnic and religious differences, are mostly ignored in the public realm in superdiverse cities, and how they do play a big role in the public debate. This difference could be connected to the fact that superdiversity in cities makes difference the norm (Wessendorf, 2014b), and groups harder to discern, and maybe also brings a different power balance and division of resources in cities. In cities, the boundaries of who are newcomers and who are natives are not divided as in national states; people with migrant background are more often the natives here, and the city identity belongs to all inhabitants, while a national identity is often more connected to the “native” Dutch group. Hurenkamp, Tonkens and Duyvendak (2012) report that “new” Dutch identify more with their city than with the Netherlands as a country, as opposed to native Dutch. Furthermore, the relative share of people with a migrant background in cities keeps growing.(e.g. www.buurtmonitor.nl). Maybe ethnical group thinking does not work if differences are so many, and group distinctions are more practice-based in situations of living together with superdiversity. Examples are the division between yuppy newcomers and older residents of Hackney (Wessendorf, 2010), and the divisions at schools in this

research, between the quieter and the more present groups. As signalled before, these symbolic boundaries could still be connected to social categories, like the middle class background of the newcomers in Hackney. Furthermore, as these interaction-based boundaries seem to appear on the parochial level, and this is also the level where people encounter otherness more often than in private, and encounter each other on a regular basis, the parochial realm seems a good place to study cultural openness further. As in school behaviour is very regulated, maybe other parochial places like public squares and local bars or sport clubs could be studied.

A next conclusion concerns the way cosmopolitanism is expressed. Respondents sometimes struggled to explain why they thought openness is important, although their stories did reveal cosmopolitan behaviour. While some other research found a discrepancy between spontaneous visceral and scripted honourable scripts (Jarness & Friedman, 2016) or states that reflection is a vital element of cosmopolitanism (Plage et al., 2016), young people in this research showed cosmopolitan actions and preferences without the reflexive capacity to explain this, or the moral discursive resources to express this in cosmopolitan ideals. The moral code most mentioned was that one should not have prejudices or think too much in groups, which is a quite practical rather than idealistic approach. For further research, this asks for caution when determining cosmopolitanism (only) through reflexivity and moral deliberation.

The interviews also display how the visceral part of detecting boundaries was easier for these respondents than the literal part of explaining them. Interviewees easily identify the relative closeness of their friends, but have to think about the reasons. They can easily discern school groups but have trouble explicating their characteristics. Similarly, this research already signalled different forms of reasoning in talking about cultural openness, with more emotional and more rational arguments. Emotional arguments were used more frequently by diverse Dutch and women. Further research should include the visceral experience of boundaries, and different forms of reasoning behind cultural openness, e.g. emotional, rational, ethical (cf. Høy-Petersen et al., 2016). A subsequent question is whether these forms of reasoning are connected to personal experiences with boundaries, and to social categories.

This brings us to the more worldly consequences of this research. Sharing personal stories and experiences, instead of merely focusing on facts, could be a good way to understand “the other” and create openness this way. Cultural openness is something you can learn, interviewees say. If you talk to others, you can understand them better. A diverse environment like the city also helps. Furthermore, sometimes school appears as a place where interviewees learn about other cultures and histories, and also learn to see other viewpoints and discuss them. Although several interviewees understand that some issues can be sensitive, most of them agree that you should discuss these subjects at school. This suggests that programs focused on sharing views and experiences could stimulate cultural openness. Many young urban respondents have shown themselves to be practical cosmopolitans already handling otherness on a daily basis. Still, they might profit from a larger vocabulary to explain why openness matters to others, to connect to worlds where words prevail. Besides that, an awareness of the social and symbolic boundaries in their environment could strengthen their understanding of themselves and their environment. The attention to different levels of social organisation provides the next suggestions. If indifference to ethnic and religious differences is part of cultural openness on city level, it would be interesting to see if this could be an inspiration for more cultural openness on a national level. A linked advise could be the consideration of scale in expectations about cultural openness, promoting lighter forms of cultural openness in more anonymous, diverse surroundings. In diverse public space, indifference to differences can be a workable strategy⁹. In more personal encounters, acknowledging and bridging differences can be the preferred form of openness.

Finally, urban cultural openness is an intricate, multi-layered practise. “*je past je aan naar elk persoon*” (interview 1) and at the same time sometimes you just leave things be. Still, many interviewees appreciate the diversity and dynamics in the city, and their own places and friends where they can be themselves. They deserve more attention in academic research, as they give an inspiring empirical example of practising cultural openness and closeness, manoeuvring between inclusion and indifference.

⁹ See appendix 3

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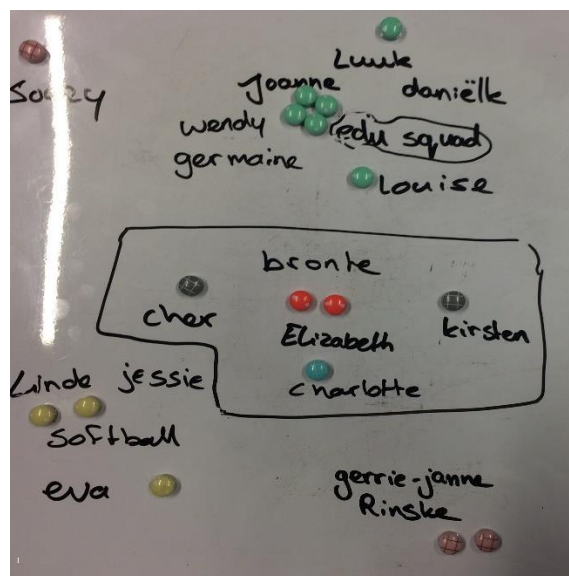
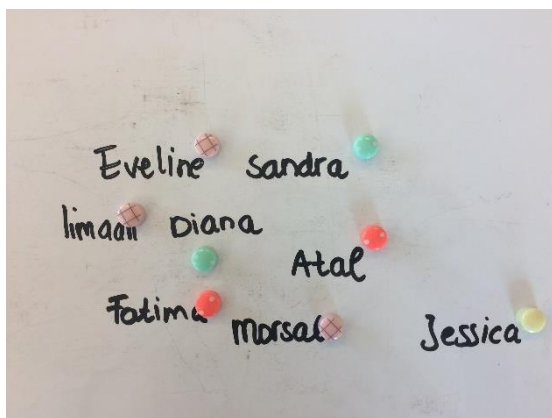
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Appendix 1 Sociogram, topic list and dilemma's

Sociogram

For the sociogram, interviewees were asked to map out their close friends as magnets on a whiteboard, with their names next to it. Instructions were to put themselves as a magnet in the middle of the board, with their friends around them; if a friend is close, also closer to the middle on the board, and if friends know each other, closer to each other. Family members were only allowed on the board if they feel like friends. The colours of the magnets could be used as the interviewee wished, and they were often used to mark groups, for example people who know each other. Making the sociogram made it easier for interviewees to think of and explain their network. The visualisation makes the closeness of friends tangible and easy to show; interviewees would often shove magnets a bit closer or further away during the process. When the sociogram was finished, the interview explored the similarities and differences between friends, groups of friends, and friends and others, therewith exploring boundaries. The visualisation and names on the board made this an easy process. Furthermore, the process took the pressure situation of the interview away a bit. The sociograms are probably not completely accurate; to be correct in the distance between the others in the sociogram, the model should technically be three-dimensional. For the purpose of interviewing, the two-dimensional model worked well, as it still made clear who, of the people on the board, knew each other (well) and who didn't, and where groups occur.



Interview guide

Can you tell me something about yourself?

Age, school, where were you born, your parents?

What do you like to do in your free time? what music/ movies/ art do you like?

Sociogram on whiteboard:

Tell something about it

How do you know each other?

Sameness, differences, groups. practices

What is important in friendship? when does it go wrong?

Can you describe your school?

Atmosphere

Different schools

Groups

Differences - interaction

City - village

Differences? Different people? act different?

Likes/ dislikes

What is important, when is it not going well

Public sphere

Groups?

How do they interact, is this going well?

How do you interact with differences? do you have an example?

Openness (refer to words previously used by interviewee)

Can you describe it?

Is it something you are, or something you can learn?

Are some people more open than others, who?

How do you do this; interaction with differences? what is important? why is it important?

dilemmas

I read in the newspaper that some teachers choose not to discuss everything in class; they for example avoid talking about Israel – Palestina or homosexuality. What do you think of that?

Do you think you should learn about other cultures and religions at school?

Another interviewee told me that, where she had her internship, they changed the name of the party they had with all employees in December from “Christmas party” to “winter party”. What do you think of that?

What do you think of the Black Pete discussion?

What do you think of this movie? why?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD8tjhVO1Tc>

Appendix 2

Overview interviewees and social categories

	education	m/v	plain Dutch (nl) / diverse Dutch (div)	extra cultural background
1	MBO	F	div	Turkisch/Kurdish
2	HBO	M	nl	
3	HBO	F	nl	
4	WO	M	nl	
5	MBO	M	div	Moluccan
6	VWO	M	nl	Surinam, Argentinian
7	HBO	F	div	Surinam
8	HBO	M	div	Indonesian
9	MBO	F	nl	
10	MBO	M	nl	
11	WO	F	nl	
12	WO	F	div	Vietnamese
13	VWO	M	div	Moroccan
14	VWO	F	div	Armenian/Russian/Afghan
15	VWO	F	nl	
16	VWO	F	div	Moroccan
17	MBO	M	nl	
18	MBO	F	div	Antillean
19	MBO	F	nl	
20	MBO	F	div	Surinam

Appendix 3

Derek Otte, city poet of Rotterdam, 2017

Nou en of

een soort van onverschilligheid
wellicht nog wel ons grootste goed
omdat het hier uiteindelijk
vrijwel niemand iets kan schelen
of jij mijn of andere kijk
of ik op stand en jij de wijk
of jij nou u terwijl ik jij
één voor allen
allen voorbij

*a kind of indifference
might be our greatest good*

mede-, Neder-, anderlander
hier werkt wie er werken ken
wie d'r hier doorgaans weinig vrij
boeit het meestal toch vrij weinig
of jij zondag of toch vrijdag
of ik jou moet of jij mij mag
of jij nou wit terwijl ik zwart
soms hand in hand
vaak hart tot hart

al lijken we als dag op nacht
onze strijd gelijkenissen
het zou er hier toe kunnen doen
wat zou het uit moeten maken
of jij van dame of toch heer
of ik met minder jij met meer
of jij nou groots waar ik dan klein
vooruit komt voort
uit anders zijn

kaders tralies
hokjes fabels
ik heb jou als
jij dan mij hebt
geen goed of slecht
slechts nep of echt
hier zijn we wij
en zonder zij

een soort van onverschilligheid