

In Media We Trust?

Mainstream media perceptions and media trust of Moroccan
Dutch citizens in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

Many studies have reported declining levels of media trust over the last years. Reasons vary from increased polarization to the spread of social media and misinformation. In any case, traditional media is under increased pressure to keep being an attractive tool for citizens to stay informed. Because the role of the media is critical for functioning societies and democracies, in which the notion trust is essential, this present study aims to shed light on media perceptions of Dutch mainstream media and media trust among the Moroccan Dutch minority in the Netherlands. The twelve semi-structured interviews that were conducted show that while media perceptions and levels of media trust are very diverse among Moroccan Dutch, many feel that biased media representation and media-generated stereotypes are still present in media content. Their perceptions and media trust have effects on their media consumption strategies and behavior vis-à-vis non-Muslim Dutch. Media consumption strategies that were reported include checking sources and statements, or turning to Middle Eastern and alternative media when Moroccan Dutch feel that media coverage is biased, incomplete or inaccurate. Other issues that were discovered through the interviews, were the lack of diversity, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and media coverage of Palestine, which all affected participants' perceptions and trust levels regarding Dutch mainstream media. This research advocates for the construction of a strong body of literature regarding media perceptions and media trust among minority groups, and takes into accounts the complexities and nuances that trust entails.

Keywords: Media perceptions, media trust, minorities, representation, media skepticism, mainstream media

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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*“The media are a corporate monopoly.
They have the same point of view.
The two parties are two factions of the business party.
Most of the population doesn't even bother voting because it looks
meaningless.
They're marginalized and properly distracted.
At least that's the goal”
~ Noam Chomsky (Media Control, 2002)*

*“The media's the most powerful entity on earth.
They have the power to make the innocent guilty
and to make the guilty innocent,
and that's power.
Because they control the minds of the masses.”
~ Malcolm X*

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Theoretical framework	8
2.1 Conceptualizing trust	8
2.2 Media trust and citizenship	10
2.3 Factors influencing media trust	11
2.4 Media representations of minorities and Muslims	13
2.5 Minority perceptions of mainstream media	15
3. Research context and population	18
3.1 The Moroccan Dutch population	18
3.2 Contextualizing Dutch mainstream media	19
4. Methodology	21
4.1 Data collection	21
4.1.1. Semi-structured interviews	21
4.1.2 Sample and sampling process	23
4.1.3 Procedures	24
4.2 Data analysis	25
4.3 Ethics	26
4.4 Positionality and reflections	26
5. Results	28
5.1 Media trust	28
5.1.1 News consumption strategies and media skepticism	28
5.1.2 Politics and media trust	31
5.1.3 The impact of COVID-19	36
5.2 Media perceptions, media biases and representation of Moroccan Dutch	37
5.2.1 Representations and visibility of Moroccan Dutch in mainstream media	38
5.2.2 Perceptions of diversity in Dutch mainstream media	41
5.2.3 Perceptions of public and commercial media	44
5.2.4 The Palestinian issue	45
5.3 The importance of local news	48
6. Conclusion and discussion	50
6.1 Implications for future research	51
6.2 practical recommendations	51
6.3 Limitations	52
References	54
Appendix A – interview guide	61
Appendix B – Overview of articles for elicitation	68
Appendix C – Informed consent form	69
Appendix D – Coding tree	70
Appendix E – Overview of participants	73

1. Introduction

Trust forms the basis of citizenship, and citizenship functions on the basis of common knowledge and generally shared ideas (Coleman, 2012). Because it is impossible for most citizens to gather all the information needed to critically consider various issues, media organizations are crucial for this process (Tsfati & Cohen, 2005). However, only when citizens believe the news, they will engage with it and act upon it (Swart & Broersma, 2021). Coleman (2012) states that “[u]nless we can trust the news media to deliver common knowledge, the idea of the public – a collective entity possessing shared concerns – starts to fall apart”. In democratic societies, trust in the media is therefore crucial, not only to maintain the idea of the public, but also for citizens to trust political decisions (Schranz et al., 2018; Tsfati & Cohen, 2005). This means that without substantial levels of trust in the media, there can be no functioning democratic society (Coleman, 2012). However, over the last decades, many studies have reported declining levels of trust in media in Western societies, alongside declines in trust in other institutions, including governments (Livio & Cohen, 2018; Van der Wurff & Schönbach, 2014; Myllylahti & Treadwell, 2021). This decline has been caused by growing polarization, populism, partisanship and critics, including politicians, questioning the quality and trustworthiness of contemporary journalism (Swart & Broersma, 2021; Van der Wurff & Schönbach, 2014). It is also a consequence of processes of deinstitutionalization, deregulation and individualization, causing personal experiences and truths to be valued over official information from institutions or experts (Van Zoonen, 2012). Besides, whereas mainstream media institutions used to have a monopoly on providing information, increasing competition and the rise of alternative media are currently challenging traditional journalism (Swart & Broersma, 2021; Van der Wurff & Schönbach, 2014; Myllylahti & Treadwell, 2021).

Apart from these developments within media landscapes, Raza et al. (2021) state that biased and stereotypical media-generated content also affects media trust negatively. Individuals might therefore turn to alternative media sources when they perceive mainstream media organizations as biased. One group that has been the subject of persistent media-generated stereotypes is (Muslim) Arabs (Shaheen, 2003; Raza et al., 2021). As Arabs have consistently been portrayed as the cultural ‘Other’ (Said, 1979; Shaheen, 2003), this has led to declines in media trust, but also declining levels of trust in the general political system (Saleem et al., 2019). Raza et al. (2021) confirm that media trust “is also assessed by

individuals based on the extent to which an individual relies on ethnocentric information” and that media trust is therefore interconnected with ethnic stereotyping in the media. Perceiving the media as biased or as representing one’s group inadequately is then a logical cause for low levels of media trust.

Tsfati and Capella (2003) note that mistrust in the media has not received much attention and that the ramifications and possible effects of media trust have been largely overlooked. According to Livio and Cohen (2018) however, the scholarly and public interest in researching media trust has increased over the years. During the last two decades, research on media trust has led to useful insights, such as the interconnectedness of political trust and media trust (Myllylahti & Treadwell, 2021), the influence of political views on media trust (Schranz et al., 2018; Livio & Cohen, 2018) or the relation between media use and media trust (Schranz et al., 2018). However, trust has mostly been used as a dependent or an independent variable, rather than as a construct or process (Khodyakov, 2007). As a consequence, the complexities behind levels of trust have often been overlooked (Khodyakov, 2007). Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap in the literature and uncover the complexities of media trust. This will be done by adopting a more complex understanding of what trust is and what it entails. More specifically, this study will treat trust more as a process and as a subjective experience that can vary over time and across social groups (Khodyakov, 2007; Coleman, 2012).

Having a comprehensive understanding of media trust is crucial, because low levels of media trust affect individuals, but also society at large (Coleman, 2012; Myllylahti & Treadwell, 2021). Various scholars have stressed the importance of trust in the media and the consequences of media mistrust on political, social and economic levels (Tsfati & Capella, 2003; Coleman, 2012; Schranz et al., 2018; Myllylahti & Treadwell, 2021; Yamamoto et al., 2020). And as Myllylahti and Treadwell (2021) mention, the issue of trust has become even more pressing as the lines between traditional and alternative media have blurred. For these reasons, it is important to understand media perceptions and media trust within various contexts and social groups.

Yet, there is not a lot of literature on media trust in the Dutch context. More specifically, there is no literature on media trust amongst minority groups in the Netherlands. Given the scientific evidence that Arabs and Muslims have been the subject of biased and stereotypical media content, it is important to have a comprehensive understanding of their media perceptions and media trust and the consequences for these groups and society at large when media trust levels are low (Shaheen, 2003; Saleem et al., 2019; Raza et al., 2021).

However, the consequences of these media representations have not been well enough studied (Raza et al., 2021). In the Netherlands, one of the largest minority groups is the Moroccan Dutch, who make up over 400.000 people of the total Dutch population (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021). 95 percent of them identify as Muslim (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2018). It has been largely acknowledged that this minority group has also been the subject of negative and biased media representations (Leurs et al, 2012). Therefore, this research will ask the question: “How do perceptions of Moroccan Dutch regarding Dutch mainstream media relate to their trust in media?” in order to better understand media perceptions and the levels of media trust amongst Moroccan Dutch.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Conceptualizing trust

Coleman (2012) has argued that democracies are reliant on the informed consent of citizens, meaning that citizens are expected to have knowledge of, or at least be aware of, policies, events, or other matters that affect them or society in general. Tsfati and Cohen (2005, p. 32) even state that “It is impossible to trust democracy unless one perceives that the electorate is well and fairly informed. [...] Without trust in the conduit of political information, trust in the fairness of collective decision making is likely to be undermined.” Besides, Tsfati and Capella (2003) mention that collective behavior cannot be feasible without at least some level of trust. Therefore, trust is “the foundation of the social relationship we call citizenship” (Coleman, 2012, p. 36). Citizenship works only when members of a society share common knowledge and agree on ways to live, but as citizens need to also interact with individuals that they do not know personally, they need to be able to trust that other individuals share this common knowledge (Coleman, 2012). In other words, citizens need to stay informed for themselves, to be able to perform their citizenship, but they also need to trust that other members of society are more or less equally well-informed (Coleman, 2012; Swart & Broersma, 2021). Without trust in other individuals, trust in institutions is impossible (Khodyakov, 2007). Trust, therefore, plays a role in almost every human interaction (Tsfati and Capella, 2003). But what exactly is trust?

Trust has been defined in various ways and has been treated as a variable, a construct or a process (Khodyakov, 2007; Coleman, 2012). In social sciences, the concept of trust is twofold: consisting of a side that places trust, the trustor, and a side that is being trusted, the trustee (Coleman, 1994; Tsfati & Capella, 2003). Sociologist James Coleman (1994) is a much-quoted scholar on the topic of trust and he speaks of two types of trust: mutual trust and asymmetrical trust. In mutual trust relations, an individual is both a trustor and trustee, whereas in asymmetrical relations an individual is either a trustor or a trustee. He frames trust predominantly as an expectation: the expectation that placing trust in a certain trustee will lead to gains for the trustor, rather than losses (Coleman, 1994; Tsfati & Capella, 2003). Levi (1998) emphasizes the presence of risk within the process of placing trust in a certain trustee and Tsfati and Capella (2003) note that almost every definition of trust takes into account that there needs to be some uncertainty for the trustor, in order for trust to be relevant.

While Tsfati and Capella (2003) adopt Coleman’s (1994) idea of trust as an

expectation, Levi (1998) thinks of trust like a piece of knowledge or belief that a trustee will act the way the trustor wants them to. Coleman (1994) says that trust is a voluntary act of the trustor, without any considerable commitment on the side of the trustee. Khodyakov (2007) also stresses this voluntary aspect of placing trust and frames trust as a decision and a form of agency. Khodyakov (2003) differentiates between three different forms of trust: thick interpersonal trust, thin interpersonal trust (also referred to as trust in strong ties and weak ties) and institutional trust. Some scholars have referred to the notion of institutional trust as 'political trust' or 'system trust' (Khodyakov, 2007). However, this notion of institutional trust has also been criticized. Levi (1998), for instance, argues that trust only exists between individuals, whereas trustworthiness can be applied to institutions and people. Institutional trust to her means that citizens believe the agents working within these institutions are trustworthy (Khodyakov, 2007). She thereby shifts the focus on institutions to a focus on individuals working for or within these institutions. Although Khodyakov (2007) and Levi (1998) disagree on the existence of institutional trust, both acknowledge that institutions or the state can obstruct or stimulate interpersonal trust.

Furthermore, Khodyakov (2007) criticizes how Levi (1998) uses trust as a variable. Using trust as a variable has been done in the fields of anthropology, international relations, history, management, education and various other disciplines (Tsfati & Capella, 2003). According to Khodyakov (2007), those who use trust as an independent variable are mostly researching the benefits of trust, whereas researchers using trust as a dependent variable are concerned with factors that impact trust levels. Instead of researching trust in this way, Khodyakov (2007) argues that trust should be treated as a process, by focusing on the temporality of trust and including the notion of agency to draw attention to how "the past, present, and future work in the development of trust as respectively manifested in routine behaviour, evaluation of currently available information, and anticipation of future results under conditions of uncertainty and risk" (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 116).

In contrast to Khodyakov's (2007) argument, Coleman (2012) argues for a constructivist approach and, as mentioned above, defines trust as the realization of social expectations. These expectations are variable and subjective and social trust can therefore not be generalized: expectations are met for some, but not for others (Coleman, 2012; Tsfati & Capella, 2003). Rotter (1967) also defines trust as an expectation and says that trust is an "expectancy held by an individual or group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual can be relied upon." This research will adopt Rotter's (1967) definition but will take into account the constructivist approach Coleman (2012) advocates to

explore expectations of mainstream media and trust in mainstream media of Moroccan Dutch people.

2.2 Media trust and citizenship

In the previous paragraph, the importance of trust for the performance of citizenship and democracies has been briefly laid out. Citizenship and democracies can only function when citizens are informed and share knowledge on ways to live (Tsfati & Cohen, 2005; Coleman, 2012). Trust is needed for this, because citizens cannot know every other individual within society personally, meaning that they must trust that others are in agreement on ways to live and share more or less the same knowledge (Coleman, 2012). The role of media is therefore crucial for citizenship and democracy as both Coleman (2012) and Tsfati and Cohen (2005) acknowledge. Media, and especially news sources, function as a bridge between what citizens need to know to stay informed and what we can know (Tsfati & Cohen, 2005). Schranz et al. (2018, p. 73) state: “The media in general, and the information media in particular, are central to our idea of how a society is constituted, what its major problems are, and what diverse agents and opinions are available to address these problems. If we no longer trust the media and turn away from them, we lose our bearings to a significant degree. And if we no longer trust the media, our trust in reasoned political decision-making is also lost and our willingness to accept political decisions declines.”

Although well-informed citizens are crucial for a functioning democracy and society, staying informed might be difficult (Coleman, 2012). Firstly, it can be difficult to understand what you need to know, and there might be discrepancies between what individuals need to know and what they are personally interested in (Coleman, 2012). Secondly the abundance of information and different sources can pose barriers to staying informed. And lastly, even if one finds the information they need, the question is whether they can trust what this source is saying. Swart and Broersma (2021) underline these barriers outlined by Coleman (2012) and state that due to the deinstitutionalization of media, citizens can choose from an overwhelming amount of news sources to gather information, making it increasingly difficult to stay informed on important matters. Moreover, Swart and Broersma (2021) state that citizens will only engage and act upon news when they believe the news. This means that citizens have to trust each other, but that it is also important that citizens trust what the news tells them. According to Swart and Broersma (2021), when citizens do not trust the news,

they will not engage with the news and act upon it, meaning their participation in society is obstructed.

2.3 Factors influencing media trust

Myllylahti and Treadwell (2021) note that the digitalization of media has made the distinction between traditional media and online media less clear, which is why the issue of trust in media has become more urgent. According to them, recent surveys have shown that trust in news media is declining (Myllylahti & Treadwell, 2021). They add however that declines in media trust have existed even before the Internet. Schranz et al. (2018) partially agree with Myllylahti and Treadwell (2021) and say that although levels of trust in media vary across different countries, the overall level of trust in traditional media is declining. Tsfati (2010) and Swart and Broersma (2021) also confirm this decline in mainstream media. According to Swart and Broersma (2021), this decline is caused by growing polarization, populism and partisanship and by politicians questioning the trustworthiness of journalism. Moreover, the decline in media trust is also a consequence of processes of deinstitutionalization, deregulation and individualization, causing personal experiences and truths to be valued over information from official institutions and experts (Van Zoonen, 2012).

Schranz et al. (2018) state that the public debate has revolved around distrust as well, which is expressed through terms such as *Lügenpresse* (lying press) or fake news. Various scholars have expressed their concerns about social media platforms, that in their opinion undermine public trust and mainstream media trust due to misinformation, polarization and unfiltered statements (Van Dijck & Alinejad, 2020). Livio and Cohen (2018) confirm the general decline in media trust but also emphasize the dynamic nature of trust, which varies over time and across different media types or platforms. Besides, media trust can of course also vary across individuals or groups (Livio & Cohen, 2018).

As mentioned in the previous section, trust is only relevant when there is some uncertainty in place on the side of the trustor (Tsfati & Capella, 2003). And as it can be hard to determine whether a specific news medium is trustworthy, credibility is important in determining whether specific media can be trusted (Tsfati, 2010; Myllylahti & Treadwell, 2021). However, individuals often rely on affective tactics, intuition, hearsay and opinions of family and friends besides relying on other media and checking sources to determine the trustworthiness of media (Schranz et al., 2018; Swart & Broersma, 2021). Trust in the media therefore “goes beyond the accuracy of facts: it also encompasses the confidence that news

media will meet public expectations around news, including more affective assessments of feeling represented in news coverage, that news outlets operate based on genuine motives and journalism does reflect social reality and audiences' everyday experiences" (Swart & Broersma, 2021, p. 2)

Schranz et al. (2018) discuss how citizens who position themselves on the far or radical margins of the political spectrum tend to have less trust in media. According to Livio and Cohen (2018) however, leftist individuals have higher levels of trust than those who consider themselves right-wing. Another factor influencing media trust is the social network of an individual, gender and age (Schranz et al., 2018). Schranz et al. (2018) find that women tend to have higher levels of media trust than men and younger respondents tend to have a stronger level of distrust toward media. However, trust does not increase with age, according to their study. They find that people between the ages of 30 and 49 generally have high levels of media trust, but trust levels decline among participants over the age of 50 (Schranz et al., 2018). The reason for this decline might be the perceived distance between users and the content published by information journalism (Schranz et al., 2018).

Other factors influencing levels of media trust within a given society could be specific events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Schranz et al., 2018; Myllylahti & Treadwell, 2021). According to Schranz et al. (2018) and Livio and Cohen (2018), media trust can decline when media reports on these events in a way that is divergent from an individual's own experience. Media trust can however also increase due to these events (Myllylahti & Treadwell, 2021)

The relation between media trust and media use has also been researched by several scholars. Swart and Broersma (2021) write that high trust does not always equal high levels of news consumption and stress the complexity behind the correlation between media trust and media use. Although various scholars have found such a correlation, the question of causality remains unresolved. Do people with high levels of trust consume more media because of their trust or do people who consume more media have higher levels of trust as a consequence because of their media use? According to Tsfati and Ariely (2014), higher intensity of media use leads to higher levels of media trust. Schranz et al. (2018) confirm that exposure to media, especially mainstream media, increases media trust. However, they also find that high levels of media trust enhance a 'fundamental interest in news' (Schranz et al., 2018, p. 86). Not only do high levels of media trust lead to a higher interest in news, but also to more willingness to follow media organizations and journalists on social media platforms. The interest in (news) journalism in a more general sense thus increases as well (Schranz et

al., 2018).

Lastly, there is one more factor that needs to be discussed. Representation in the media of one's social group or one's views and beliefs, has the potential to influence levels of media trust significantly (Yamamoto et al., 2020; Fawzi & Mothes, 2020). The next section will therefore focus on media representations of minority groups and Muslims.

2.4 Media representations of minorities and Muslims

A simple definition of representation is “the production of meaning through language” (Hall, 2013, p. 2). Representations work within discursive frames, but also produce and reproduce discourses (Hall, 2013). According to Hall et al. (2013), there are two systems of representation. The first of these two systems helps humans give meaning to the world around them through the construction of correspondences between ‘things’ such as people, objects, ideas et cetera, and our ‘system of concepts’, which refers to the mental representations of these things (Hall et al., 2013, p. 5). The second system concerns the construction of correspondences between this system of concepts and a set of signs that stand for or represent the concepts. According to Hall et al. (2013, p. 4), “[t]he relation between ‘things’, concepts and signs lies at the heart of the production of meaning in language. The process which links these three elements together is what we call ‘representation’.” These systems of concepts, or conceptual maps as Hall et al. (2013) call them, are crucial for understanding and communicating with other individuals, but also for the idea of a ‘shared’ culture. Hall et al. (2013) mention that culture is sometimes defined in terms of shared meanings or conceptual maps because individuals within particular cultures make sense of the world in more or less the same ways.

The role of media is crucial for the process of creating these systems of meaning. Media content is then also largely responsible for the conceptual maps individuals have of other individuals and groups, especially since most rely on media as their main source for information (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017; De Coninck et al., 2019). Ahmed and Matthes (2017) write that mass media communicate prevailing social values, ideologies and developments. Besides, Raza et al. (2021) also state that the media has a critical role to play in promoting a pluralistic society by including diversity in its reporting, which is why they argue that journalistic practices must be more pluralistic and inclusive, to avoid stereotypical representations. Still, the role of media in communicating dominant social discourses has often led to inaccurate and stereotypical depictions of minorities in the media (Ahmed &

Matthes, 2017).

The consequences of these inaccurate or stereotypical representations are illustrated by De Coninck et al. (2019). They write that many people in Western countries do not have (meaningful) interactions with refugees and immigrants, meaning that people's attitudes towards these groups are largely constructed through media representations. Although several studies on the relation between media use and attitudes towards (im)migrants and refugees have shown that negative attitudes were higher among commercial media consumers, compared to public service media consumers, De Coninck et al. (2019) note that representations of refugees and immigrants are not particularly positive regardless of the medium. Moreover, in representations of minorities, the minority perspective is largely neglected and dominant professional journalistic practices are often conservative and disadvantageous to minorities (Awad, 2011; Ahmed & Matthes, 2017).

There are many studies on media representations of minorities, but nowadays the minority debates largely revolve around Muslims and Islam (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017; Raza et al., 2021). Various studies have shown how media produce and perpetuate negative and reified discourses of Muslims, by structurally representing them as the Other (Soares & Osella, 2009; Mythen et al., 2009; Ahmed & Matthes, 2017). In many Western countries, Islam and Muslims and Islam are seen as anti-democratic and incompatible with Western society, because of associations of Islam with intolerance, backwardness, oppression and a lack of freedom of expression (Byng, 2010; Leurs et al., 2012; Ahmed & Matthes, 2017). Besides, Islam is being associated with risk, violence, oppression of women, extremism and terrorism (Mythen et al., 2009; Ahmed & Matthes, 2017)

These associations are confirmed by Shaheen (2003) in his work about representations of Arabs and Muslims in Hollywood. He states: “[p]ause and visualize the reel Arab. What do you see? Black beard, headdress, dark sunglasses. In the background - a limousine, harem maidens, oil wells, camels. Or perhaps he is brandishing an automatic weapon, crazy hate in his eyes and Allah on his lips. Can you see him? Think about it. When was the last time you saw a movie depicting an Arab or an American of Arab heritage as a regular guy? [...] [T]he kind of guy you'd like to have as your next-door neighbor, because well, maybe because he's a bit like you.” (Shaheen, 2003, p. 172). Although his work focuses on Hollywood films, rather than mainstream media, this quote shows that there is a pattern of misrepresentation throughout the whole media system, rather than just within news media. However, when looking at news media and causes for misrepresentations in this field, we find that (alleged) objectivity is one of these causes (Awad, 2011; Robinson & Culver, 2019).

Awad (2011) describes how professional journalism requires standardization and homogeneity, which are achieved by using techniques that are associated with objectivity. These techniques include procedures for using and checking sources and the way in which stories are written (Awad, 2011). Journalists prefer purely factual stories and the use of bureaucratic sources, whose information is treated as factual, whereas information from non-bureaucratic sources is perceived as speculation, or as unconfirmed reports (ibid.). By treating sources this way, however, news stories often end up being more biased, as minority sources tend to be more non-bureaucratic. This means that these objectivity efforts are, in effect, counterproductive (Bennett, 2001). Besides, these objectivist representations of minorities in mainstream journalism in fact contribute to the disconnect between mainstream news and minority audiences, while also reifying existing power structures and undermining minorities' empowerment (Awad, 2011).

Although it has widely been acknowledged that Arabs and Muslims are represented in a negative manner, the consequences thereof have not been sufficiently studied (Raza et al., 2021). The issue of media trust as a consequence of these negative portrayals of migrants and minorities in the media is therefore still under-researched too. It has already been explained in the previous sections how crucial trust is for citizenship and democracies. As the debates regarding media representations of minorities nowadays mostly deal with Muslims and Islam, it is important to not only understand exactly how Muslims and Islam are represented, but also to understand the implications and consequences of these representations. These consequences are exactly what this research focuses on, as it investigates media perceptions and media trust among the Moroccan Dutch community.

2.5 Minority perceptions of mainstream media

Many academics have discussed the misrepresentation of minorities in mainstream media and it has been argued that these misrepresentations are the result of biases and ignorance of journalists toward these biases (Awad, 2011). As has been mentioned in the previous paragraph, the effects of media-generated stereotypes on receivers' trust and attitude have long been debated, but that there is actually not much scholarly work on this topic (Raza et al., 2021). Ahmed and Matthes (2017) also call on other scholars studying media and Islam to pay more attention to perceptions in a majority-minority environment. Although more scholarly work should be done on the topic, various studies have already found that Muslims, including Moroccans, do not feel represented by media and feel that media treat them

unfairly and unjustly (Mythen et al., 2009; Prins et al., 2013). Moreover, Muslims have even reported that they felt under surveillance at the hands of the media (Ivanescu, 2016). Mythen et al. (2009) write that their respondents felt that the media is prejudiced towards Muslims and that Muslims were being stereotyped and caricatured by the media in ways that made them seem dangerous and villainous. Besides these negative representations of Muslims, it has been mentioned in the previous section that the minority perspective is oftentimes missing in media representations of minorities. Awad (2011) discusses how the Latina/o community in San José has often felt ignored or silenced by a local newspaper, which has been the case in news coverage of many other minorities. The perceptions of minorities towards mainstream media are thus not particularly positive, as mainstream media structurally fail to accurately represent minorities.

Swart and Broersma (2021) state that media trust goes beyond simple factual accuracy, meaning audiences also take into account more affective factors. Stereotyping and biased representations of minorities are such affective factors, and as Raza et al. (2021) note, individuals take into account their own context when evaluating media or news articles. This means that not feeling represented possibly leads to lower levels of media trust (Raza et al., 2021). As Saleem et al. (2019) note, minorities learn their social status largely through the media, meaning that misrepresentations or stereotyping in the media diminish minorities' identification with the majority group and are often ultimately perceived as a social identity threat by minorities. Besides, Raza et al. (2021) conclude that inaccurate representations of social groups might harm the reputation of media organizations, especially within the context of these social groups.

Although there is not much literature on the consequences of low media trust, especially in the context of minorities, it has been researched how low levels of media trust often result in the search for alternative media sources. As Tsfati and Cappella (2003) state, these alternative media often hold negative attitudes towards mainstream media and portray themselves explicitly as alternatives to mainstream media, and present more nonconformist information to their audiences. However, Tsfati and Cappella (2003) also write how individuals often continue to consume mainstream media news because there are no good-quality established alternative sources. The use of alternative sources by minorities or Muslims has not often been researched, although there has been research on the use of online forums used by Muslims.

Aydin and Hammer (2009) discuss one of the Islamic online forums, where Muslims can talk about topics that are often taboo in the physical sphere, and state that these forums

provide a space where Muslims can discuss topics that might challenge or overstep the boundaries of Islamic norms and values. On the other hand, these spaces simultaneously reaffirm Islamic norms and values and create a more reified image of Islamic discourses (Aydin & Hammer, 2009). Leurs et al. (2012) discuss forums for Dutch minorities and Muslims as well and note that the founder of one of these forums has explicitly stated how the forums provide an opportunity to show other perspectives of the argument, meaning that negative images of Dutch minorities, Moroccans or Muslims can interact with 'positive images' through these forums. By using these forums, minorities reclaim their voice instead of being ignored or spoken for and have the chance to tell their own story (Leurs et al., 2012). These forums are also used as a way to maintain intra-ethnic contact, but social networking sites such as Facebook fulfill this role as well (Dekker et al., 2015).

Although the online forums and social networking sites are spaces where Moroccan Dutch can find each other, researchers have also noted how social media networks undermine trust in science, the government and news media, because of misinformation and polarizing content (Van Dijck & Alinejad, 2020). On the other hand, Van Dijck and Alinejad (2020) note that social media can also increase institutional trust. In their article, Van Dijck and Alinejad (2020) mention that social media has become a major provider of news, and mainstream news channels and journalists also increasingly rely on social media to inform their audiences (Van Dijck & Alinejad, 2020).

Still, there is a lot unknown about the role of social media in media use, media perceptions and media trust of Moroccan Dutch. For instance, in their article, Dekker et al. (2015) discuss the social media use of Dutch ethnic minorities, but their research does not specifically focus on Moroccan Dutch. Their research also focuses more on inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic contact online, whereas this study focuses on media perceptions and media trust. Besides, social media platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat are missing from their study. These aspects underline the research gap that this research will aim to fill.

3. Research context and population

This section will provide a bit of context of the situation of Moroccan Dutch in the Netherlands, specifically regarding their position in society and how they are portrayed within society and media. Besides, this section will offer some insights into the Dutch mainstream media landscape.

3.1 The Moroccan Dutch population

In the Netherlands, there are approximately one million Muslims, who account for slightly over five percent of the total population (COA, n.d.). Most individuals within the Muslim population have a Turkish or Moroccan background, as people from Turkey and Morocco were hired as guest workers after World War II (Shadid, 2006; Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). In 2020, there were over 400.000 people with a Moroccan background (CBS, 2021) The policy of the Dutch State focused mostly on the maintenance of these guest workers' language and culture, as the perception was that their stay in the Netherlands would be temporary (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). Eventually, most of these guest workers stayed in the Netherlands, as they had built a life in this country and their families had joined them (Shadid, 2006). Although the guest workers had the freedom to maintain their own culture and language, their presence caused frictions in Dutch society, which was the prelude to the contemporary public debates that are still persistent in the contemporary Dutch society (Shadid, 2006).

In these debates, both the ethnic and religious background of Moroccan Dutch are prominently featured several surveys have shown that Dutch citizens place Moroccan immigrants at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy and that their ethnic and religious identities are negatively valued (Prins et al., 2013). In the section on media representations of migrants and minorities, some of the dominant perceptions concerning Muslims have been mentioned, such as how they are anti-democratic and intolerant. This last perception is particularly interesting in the Dutch context, as Dutch society has often been described as being tolerant (Leurs et al., 2012). Part of this image of the Netherlands as a tolerant country has to do with the fact that the Netherlands "prides itself on progressive sexual politics" such as gay marriage and gay and gender equality (Wekker, 2016, p. 111). Islam is often perceived as a threat to these values, as Muslims are believed to be intolerant of women and gays or other individuals defining themselves as part of the LGBTQIA+ community (Leurs et al., 2012).

Interestingly, the ‘common knowledge’ in Dutch society is that Moroccans pose the biggest threat, as they are perceived as the main perpetrators of violence against gays (Wekker, 2016). According to Wekker, implicit in this notion is that gays are white, whereas “the racial other is straight”, meaning that a dichotomy is created between the white Dutch majority and the Moroccan minority (Wekker, 2016, p. 116). Ironically, Wekker (2016) notes that the main perpetrators of gay violence are actually white, making up 68 percent of cases of anti-gay violence. However, the view that Moroccan Dutch are violent and aggressive persists, especially regarding (male) youths (Prins et al., 2013). As a result of these dominant negative perceptions of Moroccan Dutch, many have shifted the focus from their ethnic identity to a stronger emphasis on their religious identity, although Islam is often perceived negatively as well (Prins et al., 2013). In doing so, they go beyond the national boundaries, that are perceived to be exclusive, and instead find their sense of belonging to a global, more inclusive, Muslim community (the *Ummah*) (Prins et al., 2013). Alongside this shift, the public discourses around migrants and Muslims have shifted as well (Leurs et al., 2012). From guest workers to Moroccans to Muslims in this day and age. According to Leurs et al. (2012), this development, in which the focus came to lie on the identity of Moroccan Dutch as being Muslim, was the result of events such as 9/11, but also of the increased visibility of Islam and the rise of Islamism in some Muslim countries.

3.2 Contextualizing Dutch mainstream media

McCurdy (2012) defines mainstream media as “the public and corporately owned and or controlled media which are available to the general public across radio, print, television and the Internet within a particular media environment”. The concept is mostly used in contrast with alternative media, such as social media or citizen journalism initiatives (Tsfati, 2010).

Of course, it is beyond the scope of this research to explain the whole Dutch media system, but a brief overview and contextualization will be provided here.

The most well-known Dutch broadcasting service is the NPO (Stichting Nederlandse Publieke Omroep), which is the Dutch public broadcasting service (Rossini, 2018). Other well-known broadcasting services are RTL and SBS, which are both commercial media. In terms of print media companies, DPG Media and Mediahuis are the only two major players in the Dutch print media landscape. DPG Media owns over 80 different brands, including leading newspapers such as Trouw, De Volkskrant and Algemeen Dagblad, the news website NU.nl and the radio station QMusic (DPG Media, n.d.). Mediahuis is the company behind the

newspaper Telegraaf, which has the biggest reach out of all Dutch newspapers, commuter newspaper Metro and magazines such as VROUW and Privé (Mediahuis, n.d.).

It is worth noting that the contemporary Dutch media landscape still shows some signs of pillarization, which can be defined as a social phenomenon that occurred in the Netherlands in the 1960s (Rossini, 2018). During this pillarization period, Dutch society was divided into four social groups: Catholics, Protestants, Social Democrats and Liberals. Each of these groups had its own sports association, schools, shops, newspapers and television channels and there was very limited contact between these social groups. However, as only two television channels existed during the pillarization period, on which each broadcaster aired on, people did get some exposure to content produced by other pillars (IsGeschiedenis, 2018). Various media institutions from this period still exist, although many have now merged. An example of this is the public broadcasting channel KRO-NCRV, which used to be the Katholieke Radio Omroep (KRO) and the Nederlandse Christelijke Radio Vereniging (NCRV) (Catholic Radio Broadcaster and the Dutch Christian Radio Association) (IsGeschiedenis, n.d.).

This research distinguishes between public media and commercial media, but looks into media perceptions and media trust regarding every platform, such as radio, television, newspapers, news websites and online streaming platforms such as the commercial streaming platform Videoland and the public streaming channel NPO Start. Besides, this research recognizes the interplay between traditional media and social media and other alternative forms of media (Van Dijck & Alinejad, 2020). For instance, broadcaster BNN-VARA has various programs that are only available on YouTube, such as BOOS and 101Barz, which attract hundreds of thousands of viewers. Moreover, most mainstream media of course also created social media accounts on which they post their content.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data collection

4.1.1. Semi-structured interviews

This study investigates Moroccan Dutch people's perceptions of and trust in Dutch mainstream media. To do so, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants who identify as Moroccan Dutch. As Alshenqeeti (2014) notes, qualitative data are usually collected through the use of interviews and questionnaires. Interviews, however, are more useful for research aiming to explore people's views and beliefs more deeply (Alshenqeeti, 2014). Interviewing is a flexible method, as it can be used during almost every stage of research. The method is used for more exploratory research as the main form of data collection, but also to validate other types of research and to identify issues that need further exploration (Breakwell, 2006). As this research takes an exploratory approach, interviewing is a suitable method to gain insights into the media perceptions and the media trust of Moroccan Dutch.

Besides, interviewing helps researchers to learn about particular aspects of social life from the perspective of the interviewees (Boeije, 2009; Breakwell, 2006). Both the interviewer and the interviewee play an active role in the interview process. Although the researcher asks most of the questions, participants have a significant role too, as their answers also shape the conversation to a certain extent (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). This means that interviews can never be entirely pre-structured, but the extent to which they are pre-structured varies. Boeije (2009) and Clark et al. (2019) discuss three types of interviewing: Unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews, which are both types of qualitative interviewing, and structured interviews. This research uses semi-structured interviewing as it provides a feasible balance of control between the interviewer and the interviewee. Semi-structured interviews are dynamic conversations that offer interviewees the opportunity to speak freely and to tell their stories, to which researchers can then adapt their questions, while on the other hand an interview guide is used to make sure that each question gets asked (Boeije, 2009; Clark et al., 2019).

Interviewing is usually used as a method when the research concerns topics that are not easy to measure or that cannot be observed directly (Clark et al., 2019). Interviews are a suitable method for many types of social research, as they can be used to research almost every aspect of the human world (Breakwell, 2006; Clark et al., 2019). This research

concerns media perceptions and media trust, which can indeed not be observed directly. These perceptions and levels of trust in the media are shaped throughout the course of one's life, which is why participants might not consciously think about their media perceptions and media trust. Although major events might shape their perceptions and trust to a significant extent, these processes also take place on a more latent level. Interviewing is a feasible method to uncover these latent processes and to gain an in-depth and detailed understanding of these perceptions and experiences of media trust among Moroccan Dutch. Besides, building rapport is an important aspect of this method, which refers to the genuine interest of both the researcher and the participant in the "asking, answering and listening during an interview" (Boeije, 2009, p. 62). Building rapport allows researchers to get to know the participants and gain their trust. Establishing rapport is also crucial because interviewing is a method that is often used to research more sensitive topics (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). As a result of building rapport, researchers have the opportunity to gather richer and more nuanced information that enhances knowledge on the topic (Boeije, 2009).

Nevertheless, using interviews also have some important limitations that need to be addressed. An important limitation is that research results are not easily generalizable to the total population, as research that uses interviews yields findings that are grounded in a specific sample and setting (Breakwell, 2006). This means that research results might not be relevant for more general samples (Breakwell, 2006).

Another limitation, as Alshenqeeti (2014) notes, is that interviews are subject to many possible biases of the researcher, as the researcher is the main research instrument (Boeije, 2009). These potential biases then negatively affect the validity and reliability of the research. However, skilled interviewers can avoid this negative impact to a large extent, for instance by avoiding leading questions, taking notes, conducting a pilot interview and being aware of their positionality throughout the course of the research (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

During the interview, a form of elicitation will be used. Elicitation usually refers to the practice of using material such as photos, videos, or articles during an interview and asking the participant about it (Johnson & Weller, 2001). In this case, interviewees will be asked to read a news article. Four different articles from different sources that concern news about Moroccan Dutch will be presented to the participants, out of which they can then pick one article (For an overview of the articles, see Appendix B). After reading the article, they will be asked several questions regarding their opinion of the article. Using this method helps to understand more concretely what might be the issues for participants when it comes to

mainstream media, as specific examples of mainstream media content are used during the data collection (Johnson & Weller, 2001).

4.1.2 Sample and sampling process

In this research, 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants that self-identify as Moroccan Dutch. Participants were recruited through the use of requests on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn and by using snowball sampling. While the requests on social media did some responses, snowball sampling proved to be particularly effective for the recruitment of participants as well. The snowball sampling strategy ended up being multilateral: on the one hand, participants were asked if they knew any others that would be willing to participate. On the other hand, the requests that were posted on social media were forwarded by others to people of Moroccan descent.

This research explicitly aimed for a diverse sample by not maintaining strict criteria in order to make sure the final sample was as comprehensive as possible in terms of age, gender, socio-economic background, education and demographics. The final sample consisted of both men and women of various ages and with varying educational and socio-economic backgrounds. Participants also came from different cities. The diversity of this final sample is important, regarding the diversity within the Moroccan Dutch community. Besides, although this research does not explicitly focus on geographical or gender differences, these differences might occur. For instance, De Coninck et al. (2019) found that women in their sample generally consume less news media than men.

It should be noted here that, although the sampling process aimed at diversity, the final sample turned out to be less diverse than anticipated prior to the sampling process. The research aimed for diversity on all levels, including age, but including all age groups proved to be difficult. Many Moroccan Dutch individuals who are of older age, do not have sufficient skills in the Dutch language to be able to understand the questions asked during the interview. Besides, although the researcher has some knowledge of the Tamazight and Arabic languages, this knowledge was far too limited to be able to conduct the interviews in either of these two languages. Older individuals were also difficult to reach through Islamic and cultural barriers, especially with regard to older Moroccan Dutch men. A young Muslim woman conducting an interview with an older Moroccan Dutch man is not something that is usually considered culturally appropriate. Data on the older Moroccan Dutch generations

were thus only obtained through the answers by the younger participants, but was too limited to offer fruitful insights into the media perceptions and media trust of these older age groups.

4.1.3 Procedures

The 12 interviews were conducted during the last three weeks of May. Interviews were conducted both online and in-person, depending on the preference of the participant. Online interviews were conducted using Google Meet, for its accessibility and the fact that no account is needed to use this platform. Participants willing to be interviewed in person, were asked if they had any preferences for a suitable location. All interviews were conducted in Dutch. The interviews took approximately one hour each, including the elicitation part. Before the start of the interview, participants were also asked for their consent to record the interview. After verbal consent, the interviews were recorded on a cellphone. Apart from the record, additional notes were taken during the interviews in order to provide more contextual information on the data.

In the request to participate, the participants were properly informed about the goals and topic of the research and that their data will be solely used for the analysis in this thesis, but this information was repeated before the start of the interview. During the interview, an interview guide (see appendix A) was used to make sure each topic was addressed. This interview guide was based on the theory outlined in the theoretical framework. Based on the theoretical insights that were incorporated into the interview guide, it was possible to analyze how participants view the media and participants' trust in the media. The interview guide then was tested during a pilot interview after which was adjusted to make the interviews during the actual interaction with participants run more smoothly.

The final interview guide consisted of five parts: 1) media practices, which includes questions about the media the participant likes to use, whether they read the news and/or watch tv, which media sources they use most, which kinds of media content they find interesting, whether they have any news or media apps on their cellphone and media they do not like to consume. 2) media perceptions: this topic addressed participants' opinions of media, their views on the objectivity of media, the connotations they have when they think about media, their political views, representation of their social group and perceived biases in media. 3) media expectations: Participants were asked about what they thought the primary purpose is of media, what they expected from media and whether media lived up to these expectations. Media trust in this research was then predominantly asked about in terms of

participants' expectations. 4) stereotypes: this part touched upon the participants' upbringing, their social life, and stereotypes participants see reflected in society and media and how this affects them. 5) elicitation: participants were asked about the article they had chosen. Questions included: 'what stood out to you?' and 'How did reading the article make you feel?'. A more detailed overview of questions can be found in the interview guide (see appendix A).

4.2 Data analysis

4.2.1 Thematic analysis

The analysis of this research was guided by the following key concepts: mainstream media, trust, media trust, media perceptions, citizenship, minorities and Moroccan Dutch. To analyze the data, a thematic analysis was conducted (Braun & Clark, 2006). As qualitative research requires going back and forth between data gathering and data analysis, also referred to as constant comparison, data was already analyzed early on in the research (Boeije, 2009). Thematic analysis has been widely used for the analysis of qualitative data (Clark et al., 2019). A major advantage of this method is its flexibility, offering the researcher many options to analyze the data. This flexibility makes it a suitable method to use for this research project (Clark et al., 2019). Since this research is exploratory, important themes can be discovered later on in the analysis, which is why a method is needed that offers the possibility to change the themes.

The interviews were transcribed in Dutch in order to stay as close to the actual data as possible. Instead, specific quotes that were used in the results section were translated into English. After the transcription was completed, interviews were then coded by using the software program Atlas.ti (For the coding tree, see appendix D). The coding process within thematic analysis consists of several steps which are completed once saturation is reached. In other words, when no additional new information is found. These steps are: 1. Open coding, 2. Axial coding and 3. Selective coding (Tijmstra & Boeije, 2005). In the first step, interview transcripts and additional field notes are thoroughly read and codes are ascribed to useful pieces of information. Here, the researcher stays close to the text, rather than making interpretations. Axial coding means creating overarching themes to which open codes are assigned. In this stage, the researcher also starts exploring possible relations between themes. Lastly, selective coding means looking for a core category, which is the main focus of the research findings. Besides, the researcher also looks for codes that need further articulation in

this stage. However, using this method means a serious effort has to be made to analyze the data in a meaningful way and to go beyond simply describing the data (Braun & Clark, 2006). Therefore, the method requires reading between the lines and accurate interpretation of the data.

4.3 Ethics

The research will be conducted in line with the APA code of ethics, which offers a code of conduct for researchers working in the field of psychology (American Psychological Association, 2017). Although this research does not qualify as research in the field of psychology, this research does deal with humans and psychological processes. Therefore, the APA code of ethics is still a suitable guideline to keep in mind throughout the course of this research. Concretely, following this code of ethics means that participants were informed about the nature of the research beforehand and that this research relied on the informed consent of participants, which in this case was given verbally (For the informed consent form, see appendix C).

Naturally, all data was processed confidentially and anonymously through the use of pseudonyms. In addition, data was stored in a secure location and was not shared with third parties to guarantee participants' privacy. During interviews, it was stressed that participants do not have to answer questions they are not comfortable with answering and that they can quit participating in the research at any moment, in which case all their data will be deleted. The researcher shared her contact details with participants so that they can reach her in case they have any questions or second thoughts. Lastly, participants were given the opportunity to see the final thesis upon their request.

4.4 Positionality and reflections

As reflexivity is a key feature of ethical qualitative research, it is important to consider the researcher's positionality here (Broom et al., 2009). The researcher identifies herself as white, female, and Muslim and she was aware throughout the course of the research that these aspects of her identity might influence the interpretation of findings but also the research design itself. The researcher, therefore, kept her positionality in mind during every step of the research in order to limit her influence on the research as much as possible. The researcher was also especially aware that her identity as a Muslim might influence the research. Whereas her female identity might have led to more reserved attitudes in male

participants, it might have also led to more open attitudes in female participants (Broom et al., 2009). Although being female, but especially being Muslim might have possibly led to more openness and self-disclosure from participants, it is important to stress that the researcher does identify herself as white and Dutch. Considering that this research focuses on Moroccan Dutch, who have a different ethnic background, rightfully and correctly interpreting participants' words might be difficult. Therefore, considerable efforts were made to probe during the interview and participants were asked to clarify whenever something was unclear to the researcher.

The Dutch background of the researcher might also have affected the interviews to some extent. At one point during an interview, the researcher responded to an answer given by the participant, by making a joke about '*tawies*' (deception) of the media, a commonly used Moroccan slang word. The participant immediately nodded and said: "Yes, *tawies*. Yes. Exactly." This participant then went on to explain how this notion of *tawies* causes Moroccans to be more suspicious of others, but also of vaccines, institutions and the media. If the researcher had not mentioned this word, she would not have gotten this data. It might be possible, that more participants feel the same way this participant does, but refrain from using words that they think are unknown to the researcher. It is very likely that participants assume that a Dutch researcher does not know a lot about the Arabic and Tamazight languages and Moroccan culture, and therefore refrain from using certain words or phrases. Indeed, it is likely that the participants engage in code-switching, adapting their language use to the social setting and the conversation partner. Of course, it is impossible to fully grasp to what extent the Dutch background of the researcher has actually affected the outcomes of this research, but by making an innocent joke, the researcher got insights into media perceptions that would likely not have been obtained otherwise.

5. Results

5.1 Media trust

It should first be stated that media trust is a complex process and that trust levels may vary over time (Livio & Cohen, 2018). Therefore, no simple answer can be given to the question of how much Moroccan Dutch trust the media and why that is. Moreover, the participants in this study gave very diverse answers to interview questions. Therefore, it should be kept in mind that not every detail can be shared in this section and that the lived experiences and realities of the participants are more complex and nuanced than can be put into words in this chapter.

This section will first reflect on the strategies participants have for evaluating the trustworthiness of news coverage and the media skepticism of some of the participants. Then, an overview will be provided of the connection between political interest and media trust and perceived political biases in mainstream media. Lastly, attention will be paid to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on media trust among Moroccan Dutch. These three paragraphs offer useful insights into the media trust of Moroccan Dutch and reaffirm the connection between politics and media trust.

5.1.1 News consumption strategies and media skepticism

Tsfati and Capella (2003) state that there is no way for the trustor to empirically verify the intentions of the trustee. Trust therefore always comes with uncertainty and audiences of media content are “always at least somewhat uncertain about news media contents in the sense that it is usually hard for them to verify media reports with nonmedia sources” (Tsfati & Capella, 2003, p. 506). Tsfati and Capella (2003) and Khodyakov (2007) also note that there needs to be some uncertainty for the trustor, in order for trust to be relevant. For the participants in this research, this uncertainty about the trustworthiness of mainstream media is something they are aware of. Layla (29), who is an entrepreneur and mother living in The Hague, often wonders what the intention behind certain news content is and says: “[media] put out news, but I don't think their real intention is to tell 100% the truth. Yeah, I just sincerely don't think so. I don't think that's their intention.” She explicitly sees herself as being skeptical and critical of the media and expressed having doubts about the true intention of media.

In line with Swart and Broersma (2021), this research showed that some participants

mostly judge the reliability of media by looking at the familiarity of a medium, rather than by looking up descriptions of the medium on the brand's website or by looking up the political views of the medium, which shows that participants often base their judgment more on intuition rather than factual information. However, three participants mentioned that they avoid media that they perceive to be right-wing or far-right, such as the Telegraaf or a new public media channel called Ongehoord Nederland, which was perceived to be spreading misinformation as well as being the mouthpiece for conspiracy theories and far-right ideologies.

Some participants have developed strategies to reduce the uncertainty that comes with trust. For instance, Rumi (26) who lives in Utrecht and works at a solar panel company, often compares news articles from different sources to be able to validate the news articles he reads. Besides reading multiple articles about a topic, he often uses a fact-checking tool to become surer that the truth is being told in news articles. Omar, a 22-year-old man who works at a pizzeria, also reads multiple articles about the same topic and uses different sources too, including news sources from other countries. Apart from this, Omar also tries to look for the sources that are used in news articles, to get his information directly from the original source. When he encounters an article covering a topic that he is interested in, he uses it as a starting point for further research on the topic. Although Omar believes the Dutch mainstream media, both public and commercial media, to be of high quality, he does acknowledge that media have the power to create certain narratives, intentionally or unintentionally. He also mentions some personal and general examples that illustrate how Dutch news coverage does not always resonate with his worldview and personal experiences. Although Omar has a relatively high level of media trust, he still critically reviews news articles from different sources to get a more comprehensive overview. About his use of multiple sources, he says:

“Usually, they all say the same thing, but sometimes a source does give a little bit more detail than another source. And sometimes that's just nice. But yeah, most of the time I trust public broadcasting just fine. I trust most of the major newspapers and journalists and so on. And what I usually always try to do is look for the sources that they use. I do think that's important. It's interesting to read about the climate on the NOS, but then I'm also curious about the sources they use to find more depth in what I'm reading.”

Although Rumi has more or less the same strategies to review news coverage, he considers himself to be more skeptical. Whereas Omar usually thinks articles tell the truth, albeit from their own perspective, Rumi does not assume this. This relates to the article by Tsfati and Capella (2003), who use the term media skepticism to describe the feeling that mainstream media are not credible and reliable, and that journalists do adhere to professional standards and are not always fair and objective. Of course, media skepticism is a subjective belief that can vary over time, and many different levels of media skepticism exist. Some participants read multiple articles about the same topic mostly because they simply want to get the full overview and are interested in reading different perspectives, whereas others employ these tactics because they do not assume that they are being told the truth.

Tsfati and Capella (2003) say that media trust is the expectation that society will benefit from the work done by media, which was found to not be entirely the case in this research. Even the most skeptical participants recognized the importance of media. Saloua (30) who works at the Dutch employee insurance agency, for instance, says that she has become much more skeptical of the media since COVID 19, but she still finds it important to be informed about the major events and developments happening in the Netherlands and the world. Interestingly, the reasons participants offered, however, mostly had to do with the issue of safety. Layla finds it important to stay informed because she is raising her children in this world, whereas Saloua said that it is important to know what is happening in other countries as people travel all around the world nowadays. Besides, Saloua mentioned that countries are interconnected and things happening elsewhere can directly affect Dutch society. She says:

“Well, nowadays we travel to countries that are on the other side of the world. Then it's also just important that we also know what's going on in countries that are far away. Nowadays things can directly affect you. Uhm for example that war in Ukraine that suddenly affects us. [...] So that's why I do think it's important that media is definitely there. That you do know about the things that are going on.”

Saloua then also said that she finds it important to be aware of the misery other people around the world are dealing with, such as the war and famine in Yemen or the situation of the Uyghurs in China.

While these reasons for finding media important are of course valid, they are not found in the literature, where the emphasis is placed on the notion of citizenship and how citizenship

only functions when there is shared common knowledge (Coleman, 2012). In this research, however, 26-year-old Anass, who lives in Amsterdam and works at Rabobank, was the only participant that immediately highlighted the connection between media, citizenship and democracy. He says:

“The role of the media in a democracy is especially important because they are the information providers for the population. And if that's not done in an objective way, or at least a neutral way, then the population can't make good choices about the direction the country should take either.”

He refers here to the election process and stresses that citizens need to be properly informed in order to make a well-considered choice in the voting booths. Although no other participant mentioned the connection between politics, democracy and media trust, this connection still proved to be an important finding in this research. Therefore, the next section will offer more insights into these connections.

5.1.2 Politics and media trust

Schranz et al. (2018) note that levels of media trust depend strongly on one's political views and that those who consider themselves to be more at the margins of the political spectrum are more likely to have low levels of media trust. These individuals are, as a consequence, more likely to turn to alternative media (Schranz et al., 2018). However, Schranz et al. (2018) and Livio and Cohen (2018) add that left-wing individuals have higher levels of trust than those who consider themselves to be right-wing. In this study, these points were not confirmed. No indication was found that placing oneself at the political margins would mean lower levels of media trust and more alternative media consumption. Political views were however discussed with each participant and this research found that a personal interest in politics tends to influence both media trust and news consumption. This relation between political interest and media trust is also supported by scientific literature. Tsifti and Ariely (2014) for instance, found a positive correlation between political interest and media trust. Although the question of causality remains unresolved here, the finding that interest in politics relates to higher levels of media trust, underlines the interplay between politics, political trust and media trust, and shows that politics must be taken into account when researching media trust (Schranz et al., 2018). It has also been suggested by Lee (2010) that

more trust in politics relates to high levels of trust in media, but no such relation was found as political trust was not included in this study.

The participants who showed a greater interest in politics and political issues and those who showed considerable reflexivity on their political stances, tend to have higher levels of media use, more interest in news and higher levels of media trust. In this study, two of the participants who are particularly interested in politics, considered themselves to be left-wing. Anass, for instance, is politically active within a local division of Groenlinks (GreenLeft), a leftist political party focusing on climate issues and equity and he mentioned the interplay between media, politics and democracy several times. Omar too, showed a lot of reflexivity in his political views and said that he considered himself a socialist and a Marxist. He is also a member of ROOD, a socialist political association for youths. Zakaria (22), a law student living in Amsterdam who also works 24 hours a week at youth services, mentioned that he is a member of the political party D66. His membership in this party meant that he considered himself to be in the middle of the political spectrum which, according to him, is in line with the views of D66. Hamid, a 21-year-old student who also works as a policy officer in the municipal council for the DENK fraction and for the municipality of Rotterdam, considered himself a pragmatist and like Zakaria, he finds the division between right-wing and left-wing to be outdated.

It should be noted here that while more interest in politics and being politically involved relates to higher levels of media trust, the participants did not blindly trust the news. The participants were still critical about topics such as representation, media biases and coverage on certain topics. Hamid for instance says:

“There was a source from a US government official about Putin being treated for cancer. Of course, I don't believe that immediately. It was reported by a lot of big media, but that came from an intelligence official from America. So, I am indeed looking into that. Whom did it come from?”

This quote shows how even participants with high levels of trust can be critical about certain news coverage and that they critically look at the sources they use and the sources the media uses. There is then an important distinction to be made between being critical and being skeptical. Or, more generally, there is a distinction between criticism and skepticism or mistrust. Trusting the news does not mean trusting it blindly. In this research, media trust was found to relate mostly to believing (Dutch) mainstream media generally provide content of

good quality, believing that journalists are doing their best to report as neutral and objective as possible and believing that media try to tell the truth by using reliable sources and checking certain statements. At the same time, participants with higher trust levels also critically reflect on the role of media in democracies and society, media's power, news coverage and potential biases. The suggestion made here is that these reflections should be perceived as a form of healthy criticism that does not affect media trust negatively. Instead, these reflections demonstrate knowledge of (Dutch) mainstream media and its workings.

Indeed, this research found that participants with higher levels of trust had more knowledge of media. This finding also relates to the aforementioned relation between media trust and media consumption. Participants with high levels of media trust were more often able to discuss individuals working within the media industry, in contrast to other participants, who often struggled much more with remembering the names of journalists, columnists or presenters. They also use a more diverse array of sources and consume informational programs on tv and podcasts more often.

The individuals with more knowledge of mainstream media also recognized that media companies have their own political backgrounds, which in some cases also relates to the pillarization period. They also recognized that journalists have their own personal biases, which cannot be completely ignored while at work. However, these participants also found it logical, or even healthy, that media write from a certain perspective. And although some did mention how they avoid far-right media, to them it can be good to consume news from different perspectives. Anass gives a clear summary of these views:

“I just notice that the FD [Het Financieele Dagblad] is a little bit more right-wing. GroenLinks is, of course, it's already in the name, relatively left. Uhm, so I have an opinion about that. I think well, what it says here, it's not that, black and white, of course. And I think that's a good thing. Because as a journalist you can't turn off your views and you can't be one hundred percent objective. You can try to remain factual. But you're always going to color that a little bit. And I think that's only healthy that as a human being, especially as a politician, to also consume news or consume information from people who have a different point of view than yourself.”

Recognizing these political biases within mainstream media, thus did not necessarily lead to less trust in the media. According to Lee (2010) however, political biases in media are not supported by scientific research. Instead, Lee (2010) finds that the perceptions of political

biases in media are the results of personal standpoints and ideologies. As this research did not concern biases in media companies, no conclusion can be given here as to what extent recognizing biases in media is justified. Therefore, further research needs to be done on political biases in media.

Of course, there were also participants that had little or no interest in politics. The media consumption and levels of media trust among these participants are very diverse. Kauthar is one of the participants who shows skepticism towards mainstream media. She is 27 years old and works as an English teacher at a school in Utrecht. She thinks media are often too one-sided when it comes to certain topics, and therefore she generally does not watch television. She finds that media coverage of foreigners, including Moroccan Dutch in this context, and Muslims, have a bad aftertaste for these groups. She does have a subscription to the Dutch streaming platform Videoland, which she uses to watch reality shows and American documentaries. She uses the free version of NPO Start, the Dutch public media streaming platform, to watch Dutch documentaries. Regarding news, she mentioned that she does not see any difference between different news sources, and finds the coverage to mostly be the same. Others, such as Najat, consume quite a lot of news but still perceive the media to be unreliable and untrustworthy. Najat (21) studies Social Work in Amsterdam and follows an internship as a forensic social worker. When asking Najat which words come to mind when she thinks about media, she immediately replied ‘untrustworthy’. The reason for this response is that she thinks the media chooses which topics to report on, so she feels that not everything is being shown to the public. Then, there were also a few participants who were little or not interested in consuming news or other media. Layla and Yara for instance, still come across news articles daily, but mostly on social media (Swart & Broersma, 2021). Yara is a 36-year-old mother of two children who also works as an HR support at the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM). She did not consume a lot of media, and while she hopes that media tell the truth, she also notices the same one-sidedness in news coverage on certain topics as Kauthar does. She therefore wonders about the accuracy of content, but at the same time, she is not preoccupied with her doubts about the credibility of media. Layla said that she is skeptical about every form of mainstream media and uses the example of clickbait titles she comes across on Facebook to clarify her point:

“If you as an editor choose to put down a juicy and clickbait title, then I immediately start thinking about the intention of such people. Very often the headlines of those

news articles don't match up with really the content of the article. And people are lazy. So very often they only read the title. And they form an opinion immediately.”

Her point shows how she views the media as institutions that have the power to influence opinions of their audiences, which she thinks is quite dangerous. She uses media to get a general overview of what is happening in the Netherlands and the world, but said that she does not want to spend a lot of her time reading the news, as she has better things to do. She also mentions that she does not read a lot of news because she finds news to be very negative. Interestingly, Kauthar, Layla and Yara have no clear preferences as to which sources they use. Media skepticism thus did not relate to a more critical choice in the sources participants use, which indicates that participants continue to consume news media despite their mistrust (Tsfati & Cohen, 2005). Moreover, participants with higher levels of trust showed a more conscious selection of the sources they use.

Another finding is that while participants like Layla and Yara mostly read news articles they find on social media, the sources they use are considered mainstream media. This also goes for participants that find their news in other ways. They consumed news articles from NOS, NU.nl and online Dutch newspaper articles. This finding is confirmed by Tsfati and Cappella (2003) who write how individuals often continue to consume mainstream media news because there are no good-quality established alternative sources, or these sources are hard to find. Although they do turn to foreign news sources or individual journalists, they did not consume news from established alternative sources. In light of this finding, it is suggested that media trust is not always a matter of agency and it is not always a conscious choice. This is in contrast to Khodyakov (2007), who states that trust is an agentic choice made in the present. In this research, trust was not found to be a decision made in the present. Rather, participants reported growing into their own patterns and strategies of media consumption, instead of actively choosing which media to consume and with what frequency. Khodyakov (2007) also suggests that trust is a contact process, based on the past, present and future, which was found to be a more compatible perception of trust in this research. Participants with low levels of media trust, but also some with higher levels of trust, reported seeing negative representations of Moroccan Dutch (which will further be reflected on below), the influence of media consumption of their parents and their general upbringing, which all relate to past experiences. Kauthar reflects on the media consumption of her father and says:

“My father, for example, always watches [NOS]. And my father really has a certain prejudice about Afghans because of that and I feel like it's all because of NOS. Because, he just really thinks Afghans follow, a certain you know? Taliban. They're bad to their women. Anyway, so my father, he really has this view of Afghans and he doesn't even know any Afghans. So, then I wonder, where does it come from? But I do know that my father watches the NOS news every evening at eight o'clock sharp. I can quickly make the connection that this is where it comes from. And I think it's a pity that my father values it so much. And also believes that NOS very simply speaks the truth”

These past and present experiences affect the media trust levels of the participants, who come to value media negatively and be more skeptical. Still, they perceived media to be important. Tsfati and Cappella (2003) note about this that skeptical audiences, who believe that mainstream media fall short in terms of accuracy, credibility and objectivity, continue to consume mainstream media because they enjoy spending their time using media or they find it an important tool to stay connected to society. For the participants, the latter reason mostly was the case. Participants noted that they find media to be important in order to stay informed on events and developments in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

5.1.3 The impact of COVID-19

News coverage of the coronavirus has caused some participants to become much more critical or skeptical of mainstream media. Soumia, a 22-year-old healthcare worker, mentioned that she missed the ‘other side of the story in news on the virus and the vaccines. She says:

“Certain truths are not being told because it doesn't fit their alley. So those are left out. It's not that we are being lied to, it's just being left out. Just like how much effect the corona vaccine really has had on society and what has really changed and what has ensured that we don't have to quarantine anymore and that we don't have to wear a mouth mask anymore. Has everyone become a little bit immune to it and or has the vaccine really worked? Do you know what I mean? They make it seem like it's better than it really is.”

As has indeed been noted by Schranz et al. (2018) and Myllylahti and Treadwell (2021), specific events can have a considerable impact on levels of media trust. This effect becomes even stronger when news coverage of these events differs from one's personal experiences. Myllylahti and Treadwell (2021) have mentioned how trust levels can increase due to these events. However, an important difference between the work of these scholars and the findings of this research, is that trust levels actually declined considerably due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Saloua remembers how her friend working at a hospital said that the situation in the intensive care was far less severe than the media coverage made it seem, which caused her to question the truthfulness of the news.

While most participants closely followed the updates on the virus at the beginning of the pandemic, for most this engagement declined later on. Participants listed various reasons that caused this decrease in interest. Rumi and Layla experienced how all the statistics on how many people got infected and how many people had died, affected them mentally. They both took their distance from the news after noticing the negative effect on their mental health and their daily lives. However, a more important reason that was found for participants' increased skepticism was the news coverage of vaccines. Not only did some feel that there is a lack of reporting on the actual effect of the corona vaccines, most felt that the need to get vaccinated was pushed by the media, causing a dichotomy within Dutch society.

5.2 Media perceptions, media biases and representation of Moroccan Dutch

This research confirms previous scientific research that has indicated how Muslims and Moroccan Dutch are often portrayed negatively in media content (Soares & Osella, 2009; Mythen et al., 2009; Ahmed & Matthes, 2017). This paragraph will further explain how Moroccan Dutch perceive media representations of their social group and how it affects them. Besides, the issue of diversity in the Dutch mainstream media landscape will be explained, by shedding light on the perceptions of participants regarding diversity and its effects on representation and media trust. Furthermore, the third section will analyze participants' perceptions regarding public and commercial media, which were found to differ significantly between these two media types. Lastly, as media coverage of Palestine and the Middle East proved to be an important topic for the participants, the last section in this paragraph will pay attention to this.

5.2.1 Representations and visibility of Moroccan Dutch in mainstream media

Most participants think there is still a lack of representation in terms of quantity and accuracy. Most of them feel that the media represent Moroccan Dutch in a negative way.

Kauthar for instance, cynically notes:

“It may well be partly true or it may only apply to a small group. But when I look at how many Muslims I know and just make a simple summation ... If all Muslims thought like that then it would really get out of hand.”

Here, she refers to topics such as extremism. Kauthar, as well as some other participants, feel that Islamic extremism and terrorism are overrepresented in mainstream media. They think that the connection between terrorist attacks and Islam is made too quickly in media coverage, while religion might not even play a part in someone’s deeds. For Rumi, the negative connotations associated with Islam became so predominantly featured in media, that he started to think differently about his faith. He started to feel that extremism and terrorism had indeed become part of Islam. But like Kauthar, he does not see a lot of criminality and extremism in his environment and he says that he has now realized that it is just more often mentioned in media when an attack is committed by a Muslim.

While most participants feel negatively represented or not represented at all, some note that the representation of Moroccan Dutch has improved over the last few years. Some of these participants feel that representation has become more accurate and more positive, whereas others feel that media coverage of Moroccan Dutch, including negative coverage, has generally decreased. Some of the participants have also noticed gender differences in media representations of Moroccan Dutch. Zakaria summarizes his perception of this as follows:

“There are women of Moroccan origin, who I also know for example, who just give everything. They have careers and are successful. You don't really see that. But the Moroccan woman who is saddled with five children at home, you don't really see that in the media either. So, for Moroccan boys, you could say that these negative articles are more common. And I think with Moroccan women there is nothing at all. Not an

article at all. Not in a positive sense and not in a negative sense. I don't even think they are represented.”

His quote signifies how the news coverage about Moroccan Dutch women is perceived as being absent altogether in Dutch mainstream media. Others noted this same gendered difference in media coverage. Dua (23), a student in specialized pedagogical care, however, remarked that she noticed how women wearing the hijab were often featured in pictures used in articles covering the coronavirus. She does not understand why but says that her friends noticed this same issue. In light of the representation of the hijab in media, Byng (2010) notes that veils have often been associated with political concerns in news media content and how religious symbols like the hijab have often been used for political purposes. Ahmed and Matthes (2017) add to this that the visibility of hijabs in media representations has often signified difference, which means that the hijab has been used in media content as a tool for Othering practices. No scientific research has been done on the representation of hijabs in the coverage of COVID-19. Therefore, no indication can be given as to why the hijab was so prevalent in COVID-19 news articles. However, recently a Dutch podcast was released about the visibility of the hijab and niqab in the image archive of the ANP news agency (Looijestijn, 2022). Most Dutch media draw their images from this archive and the podcast argues how these images stigmatize and damage Muslim women (Looijestijn, 2022).

As Ahmed and Matthes (2017) write, media play a crucial role in communicating social discourses, which has led to inaccurate and stereotypical representations of Muslims and Islam in media. The consequences of these representations are twofold. Firstly, it might diminish media trust for individuals and groups that these representations concern (Fawzi & Mothes, 2020; Raza et al., 2021; Yamamoto et al., 2020). Interestingly, Rumi is the only participant who explicitly states that these representations have negatively affected his trust in the media. Anass says that negative media portrayals did not affect his trust and he thinks ignorance or a lack of knowledge of Moroccan Dutch is the cause of these negative portrayals. He however notices that it does affect other Moroccan Dutch in his network who, according to Anass, end up in a “negative spiral of mistrust.” Others did mention their skepticism or mistrust towards media but did not explicitly connect this to media representations of their social group or religion.

Secondly, these representations also have societal effects, as most Dutch citizens mainly rely on mainstream media for their perceptions on Moroccan Dutch or Muslims (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017; De Coninck et al., 2019). Many participants felt that these societal

consequences affected their behavior toward non-Muslim Dutch. Participants reported how they try to be extra friendly or sociable in order to avoid negative judgments. Dua says:

“You want to kind of prove to others, look at me, I'm also very normal just like you. you're just trying to show the person, look, we're just very normal people. We are open-minded, we don't force you to do anything. We don't necessarily want you to convert or anything. We're just here to just have a nice chat and talk. I'm here you know. So yeah, I do feel like I have to prove myself.”

Her statement shows that she is trying to come across as friendly and as similar to non-Muslim Dutch in order to show them that she is not the type of Muslim that is shown in media content. Others, such as Najat, reported downplaying their ‘Moroccan side’ when spending time with non-Muslim Dutch friends:

“For example, I also have Dutch friends and when I go to their homes with their parents, I try to show my Dutch side to be honest. I try to show them I'm also Dutch, I'm not just Moroccan. And that's true, I'm not only Moroccan but also Dutch. But I notice that my friends find it very strange when I suddenly show more the Moroccan side of me when she sees me with Moroccan friends. She thinks: ‘I don't know this side of you.’”

The words of Dua and Najat also show that they think that others believe the stereotypical and inaccurate media representations of Moroccan Dutch and Muslims and will therefore have prejudices against them. Both of them feel that media representations have played a significant role in this, as these representations often contain and reinforce stereotypes. Other participants agree as well that stereotypes in mainstream media content have an impact on Dutch society. Most participants believe that ethnicity is emphasized when someone with a migration background commits a crime. Participants especially mentioned that famous Moroccan Dutch are described as ‘Dutch’ when they have accomplished something that is perceived as good or important within Dutch society and as ‘Moroccan’ when they have done something bad. Zakaria reflects on this and uses the example of Badr Hari, a Moroccan Dutch kickboxer.

“A few years ago, with Badr Hari, you had that. In some news articles, in a positive sense, he was qualified as the Dutch kickboxer. And if he had done something, he was the Moroccan kickboxer. That's what I meant, in the end I know, it's not as pure as I want to think it is. I am aware of that. So, I do go along with that. I certainly see it as well. And I also see that it can strike a chord with the general public, that they take it over as well. And yes, the media contribute to that, I think. They are the ones who write about it and who therefore have the power to do things differently. So, you should put it back in their hands as well.”

Although Zakaria recognizes the emphasis on ethnicity in negative content, he does not agree with Moroccan Dutch who believe the media have the intention to portray Moroccan Dutch negatively. However, his statement shows that he is well aware of the power media have. All participants agreed that media have power, although some added that it is mostly the individuals with high positions in media institutions who hold that power, rather than journalists that are simply doing their jobs. Others focused more on how media have the potential to influence society and public opinion, which shows a similar stance to what Zakaria says in the quote above. Soumia and Layla however, partially hold audiences accountable for the influence of media on public opinions by saying that most do not take the time to thoroughly read articles and instead base their opinion on titles or just one article. Soumia says: “When you as a media outlet post something... Whether it's true or not, it does stick with a lot of people. And most of them don't bother to check if it's true or not.” Other participants placed more emphasis on how media are the main tool through which matters are communicated and did not mention individuals in high positions or the role of the audience.

5.2.2 Perceptions of diversity in Dutch mainstream media

With regards to diversity, some participants were more optimistic than others. Half of the participants felt that diversity in the workplace and in media content is important for better representation of Moroccan Dutch and other minority groups in media. Others felt that more diversity in the media industry workforce would not change the representations of Moroccan Dutch for the better. Others said that more visibility of Moroccan Dutch in media did not make them feel represented per se. Saloua mentioned Khalid & Sophie, a talk show broadcast on a public tv channel. Khalid is a Moroccan Dutch, but Saloua did not feel that his

presence on tv changed her feeling of not being represented. Kauthar even got a bit frustrated when she talked about the representation of Moroccan Dutch. She says:

“I mean if I should feel represented now then... Then we really need to live in a different time. That you think, ‘oh wow a woman with a hijab on television, wow!’ No, that's from another time. It must be normal now. Actually, I think it's just weird that it's still so little. I think I feel that more than feeling represented. Yes, I think it's too little.”

Kauthar clearly feels that more diversity in the Dutch media landscape is long overdue. Indeed, more diversity in media would feel like a better reflection of society to the participants. Layla for example said that although she does not think it would change her media perceptions, media would be more credible if their workforce reflected the diversity she sees in society. Rumi noted that the visibility of Moroccan Dutch in media should not have to matter, but added how it is nice to hear the news from “not only Hans, but also from Fatima”. To him, seeing journalists, presenters or talk show hosts with the same background increases the connection one feels to media featuring these Moroccan Dutch employees. This idea resonates with Khodyakov’s (2007) argument that people who have a lot in common are more likely to trust each other. However, Khodyakov (2007) connects this notion to the concept of thick interpersonal trust, the type of trust that exists between families and close friends, whereas thin interpersonal trust to him concerns trusting members of out-groups. The suggestion here is that an argument could be made that for Moroccan Dutch, others with a shared background are perceived as in-group members. In this context, that would imply that the idea that people with the same background are more likely to trust each other also applies to thin interpersonal trust. Therefore, more diversity in the Dutch media landscape could have the potential to increase the media trust of Moroccan Dutch.

Indeed, Awad (2011) and Robinson and Culver (2019) note that news coverage becomes more objective when minority perspectives are taken into account and when there is more diversity in the workplace. Raza et al. (2021) also state that the media has a critical role to play in promoting a pluralistic society incorporating diversity in reporting, and argue for journalistic practices to be more pluralistic and inclusive. However, so far, no indication has been found that diversity efforts have a positive impact on media trust levels (Awad, 2011). Trust is something that is easier lost than gained, and regaining trust from audiences requires significant efforts (Myllylahti & Treadwell, 2021). Robinson and Culver (2019) confirm that

more is needed to build trust among minority communities, for instance by developing long-term relationships with individuals.

Yet, the disconnection between diversity and media trust does not mean that diversity efforts are useless. Apart from diversity efforts having a positive impact on objectivity, Anass notes that employees coming from a minority group can add a different perspective to news coverage. He mentioned how a Moroccan Dutch friend followed an internship at NOS, where she had the opportunity to add this minority perspective:

“She was often the only one who had a slightly different perspective on certain news items. Maybe also because of her age, being a bit younger. But also because of her background, being Moroccan herself, which often made it easier for her to identify with certain viewpoints, for example. [...] And a lot of her colleagues appreciated that in the end. And sometimes they didn't [...] But also very often they really appreciated it. Because she brings a different perspective. And I think if you have more Moroccans in newsrooms, but also more broadly, people of color. That's a really valuable addition to bringing the news.”

In contrast to the findings in the literature, Anass does think that these different perspectives can add to media trust. As an example, he mentions using the term ‘enslaved’, which a lot of Dutch mainstream media have adopted, rather than ‘slaves’. According to him, these relatively simple changes in coverage mean a lot to the black community. On that same note, two participants, Rumi and Soumia, chose to read an article by RTL Nieuws about the usage of the term ‘Suikerfeest’ (See appendix B) during the elicitation part of the interview. The article explains why more and more Muslims disagree with the usage of the term ‘Suikerfeest’ and advocate for using ‘Eid al Fitr’ instead, which is the official Arabic name for the celebration that takes place after Ramadan. Soumia thinks that articles like this will not change the perceptions of Moroccan Dutch in society, while Rumi felt that it might help non-Muslims understand the meaning and importance of Ramadan and Eid al Fitr. Still, both agreed with the content of the article, although Rumi would have liked the article to be a bit longer. Both also reported feeling more understood and said that it is good that media pay attention to these kinds of issues.

5.2.3 Perceptions of public and commercial media

First, it should be stated that media consumption was very diverse among the participants. Most of them mostly accessed media online, but a few participants mentioned watching live television from time to time or listening to the radio, both for informational and entertainment purposes. Some used podcasts for more information and context on certain events, news updates or big crime cases. Participants consumed content from online newspapers, online news websites and documentaries on streaming platforms NPO Start or Videoland. Social media and news widgets were also prominent tools to access news for most participants. Besides, some used Google to look up news on certain topics or, as mentioned above, to verify news articles.

What stands out in this research, is that only one participant had subscriptions to media. Zakaria, the participant in question, has subscriptions to the online versions of most major Dutch newspapers and receives a physical newspaper of Trouw on Saturdays and he jokingly mentioned how his friends call him ‘infobesitas’ because of his extensive media consumption. Apart from Zakaria, the willingness to pay for media content was very low. Omar even used a tool to avoid paywalls in order to access premium articles.

According to Schranz et al. (2018), audiences with high media trust levels are more willing to pay for news. The lack of a willingness to pay for news and other media content among the participants thus signifies a lack of trust in media. This lack of willingness to pay is one of the reasons why participants did not consume a lot of commercial media content. However, more important reasons that were mentioned for not consuming a lot of commercial media content, is that participants perceived commercial media to be of lesser quality compared to public media. Moreover, most participants felt that commercial media content from tv channels such as RTL, SBS or newspapers, which publish a lot of articles that need to be paid for, shared content that they find to be less relevant. Rumi says:

“I think anyway those channels like RTL, SBS... They share news that creates as many viewers as possible. Which makes me think, would you share this if it didn't attract so many people? And there are also other things that I care about but that I don't get to see here because it just doesn't make money.”

This statement shows how he feels that making a profit is a prominent intention behind content published by commercial media, which makes him doubt the accuracy of these media. Besides, he and most other participants think that commercial media are more focused

on content that is entertaining, rather than informational. Most participants reported that they are not interested in showbiz content about famous Dutch, gossip or reality shows, which were perceived to be featured more in commercial media. Only Kauthar and Soumia mentioned consuming content that is more related to these topics. Soumia however, followed juice channels rather than mainstream media channels for this type of content. The term juice channel refers to individuals sharing gossip on social media or on YouTube. Kauthar used the streaming platform Videoland to watch reality tv shows such as Married at First Sight, which she refers to as her 'guilty pleasures'.

The reluctance to consume commercial media also relates to a lack of trust in commercial media for a few participants, who find public media to be more reliable. These findings might implicate consequences for commercial media, as a lack of trust and willingness to pay impacts their profits (Schranz et al., 2018). Besides, the business models of media organizations rely more and more on revenue from subscribers, paying members and other supporters (Myllylahti & Treadwell, 2021).

As has already been implied, participants generally had a clear preference for public media, which was perceived to be of higher quality, more serious, more enjoyable and more objective. Omar even stated that he is really happy with the Dutch public media. According to Schranz et al. (2018) as well, this better judgment and higher consumption of public media content positively affect trust in the media system. However, in the context of this research, this heightened trust seems to be limited to public media only, rather than the media system as a whole. Besides, the higher media trust in public media does not translate into a higher willingness to pay for media content in this research.

5.2.4 The Palestinian issue

A noteworthy finding in this research is that a lot of the participants brought up the news coverage of Palestine and the ongoing conflict between Palestinians and Israel. For example, the interview with Saloua took place shortly after the death of the Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who worked for Al Jazeera. Saloua felt that some news coverage of the death of Abu Akleh was not adequately being shown in Dutch newspapers or on TV. She found the information she was missing in the Dutch media on Instagram. Layla too, explicitly expressed her doubts about Dutch media coverage of the situation in Israel and Palestine and said that she found discrepancies between the news she encountered on the Dutch public medium NOS and Al Jazeera. She felt that the two sources are often saying

completely different things, which causes her to doubt the objectivity and the credibility of the media, but especially the Dutch media. Anass reflected on the perceived partisanship of Western and Arabic media concerning news coverage of Palestine and Israel:

“Western media of course mainly write about things from a Western point of view. And the Arab media mainly from an Arab point of view. Perhaps the most visible example is the Palestinian issue, Palestine-Israel. Arab media structurally take the side of the Palestinians of course. And I think rightly so, to an extent. While the Western media, if it comes along at all, they try to remain sort of neutral. They don't mention certain things that are mentioned in the Arab media. For example, when Israel is carrying out certain actions. But the reverse is also true, that in the Western media for example, if Palestinian activists do something, it is mentioned, but perhaps less so in the Arab media. I've noticed that from time to time. So, they do seem to take sides.”

Omar observed this same partisanship but thinks it is understandable that media such as Al Jazeera immediately seem to blame the Israeli defense forces. He also understood why Israeli media then try to defend their state and blame the Palestinian authorities. He found it to be an integral process within conflict situations and mentioned that the same dynamics are in place in the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Some participants expressed a need for more coverage and better accuracy in the coverage of the situation in Palestine and Israel. In a more general sense as well, some participants wished for more news items about things happening in the whole Middle Eastern region. Most of the participants felt that not enough news content is being published on the Middle-Eastern region, and they barely came across news items in Dutch mainstream media about the region. Raza et al. (2021) state that when media content is perceived as biased, individuals might turn to alternative sources to verify or to access information that is perceived as more accurate. Schranz et al. (2018) add to this that when news coverage on certain topics differs from one's own experiences, media perceptions can be affected to a significant extent.

For news on Palestine, but also on the Middle East in a more general sense, participants indeed tend to turn to news sources such as Al Jazeera and alternative media, such as social media accounts. Yara for instance, follows Boutaina Azzabi on Instagram, a Moroccan Dutch journalist who works in Qatar. This journalist often shares news on developments or events in the Middle East on her social media channel, of which Yara feels that it is missing in the

content shared by NOS or other Dutch mainstream media. She also used Al Jazeera for news on Palestine. This shows that participants have more trust in Middle Eastern media organizations when it comes to news on Palestine and the Middle East, because the content published by Al Jazeera and other Middle Eastern media is perceived as more accurate. Besides, participants were also more likely to double-check news coverage on Palestine by using social media, Google, multiple sources or, in Layla's case, by asking a Palestinian friend about current developments and events.

Although no final answer can be given here as to why news on Palestine and the Middle East matters so much to the participants, one explanation is that participants feel connected to the people living in Palestine and the Middle East. Most of the participants consider themselves to be Muslim, but even if they do not, they feel a shared experience and shared background with Muslims and/or Arabs. Prins et al. (2013) have also noted how Moroccan Dutch transcend national boundaries by feeling part of a global Islamic community, the *Ummah*. Of course, this is not to say participants do not consider themselves Dutch and Moroccan as well, but shared cultural and religious heritage and shared experiences when it comes to geopolitical and cultural frictions between Western countries and the Middle East, cause participants to feel a sense of belonging to this global community. As Saloua notes: "I look at it with a very different feeling, when I see the footage, I get very angry, it affects me. With her [her Dutch neighbor] it probably won't be like that. She will have these emotions a little less."

5.3 The importance of local news

The importance of local news is a finding that had not been anticipated before conducting the interviews. Nevertheless, this finding provides useful information about media practices, perceptions and trust levels.

Some participants in this research live in Amsterdam, and it was found that they make considerable use of the local medium AT5. This is a news company that shares news on their website, but also on tv. The participants did not watch the tv broadcasts by AT5, but they did use the website for news on events happening in their city. Participants seemed to have significantly high levels of trust in AT5. They felt that AT5 provided good quality content, which is diverse and offers a good balance of positive and negative news. Zakaria however, preferred using Parool, which is a national newspaper with a focus on Amsterdam. He felt that Parool offered more depth compared to AT5, while also covering the same topics, which is why he did not feel the need to use both Parool and AT5.

Participants also shared news articles published by AT5 with friends or family. In a more general sense as well, participants more often receive news from others, or send others news articles about a local topic or event. Moreover, Dua explained how she and her family used AT5 to their advantage:

“Also, when we have problems somewhere, we often report them to AT5. For example, we had trouble with a lot of rats outside. In fact, we still do. But, you know, we've reported it more than once but the housing association didn't do anything about it. So, we sometimes say that if nothing is done about it, we'll tell AT5. And now they started handling the situation”

This quote signifies how the feeling of proximity to media, helps to build trust and get in touch with media. And of course, participants will feel this proximity and connection more with local media. The fact that Dua and her family get in touch with AT5 when they have problems with their housing association, signals how they feel that they will be taken seriously by this medium. It also demonstrates how participants engage more actively with local media in comparison to national or international media. The proximity of local news media is therefore one of the key factors behind the success of local news media (Nielsen, 2015)

The importance of local news is also underlined by Anass, who expressed a need for more local news coverage when he was asked about what he feels is missing from the Dutch media landscape, and wished for national news companies such as the NOS to incorporate more news coverage on local issues. Most participants were also considerably interested in news from their hometown, even more so than nationwide topics. Participants felt that it is important to be informed about what is happening in their city because they might know people or places that are covered in local news articles, which was found to be the main reason for the importance of local news. The findings in this research confirm other research findings that indicate that audiences positively view local news media (Nielsen, 2015).

6. Conclusion and discussion

This research has investigated how perceptions of Dutch mainstream media relate to media trust among Moroccan Dutch in the Netherlands. The aim was to get a better understanding of media perceptions and media trust among this minority group. This was done by conducting twelve semi-structured interviews with participants who identified as Moroccan Dutch and who had relatively diverse backgrounds in terms of education, socio-economic background, geographical location, gender and political views.

It was found that the participants' media trust varied significantly, with some trusting Dutch mainstream media relatively well and others demonstrating clear media skepticism (Tsfati and Cappella, 2003). Therefore, no unequivocal answer can be given as to how much Moroccan Dutch trust mainstream media. Participants also held different perceptions of mainstream media, with some being a lot more optimistic about mainstream media than others. In the analysis, three themes were identified: 1. Media trust, 2. Media perceptions, media biases and representation of Moroccan Dutch and 3. The importance of local news.

The first theme shows that participants have developed strategies for assessing the credibility of media and news articles, by checking sources, statements and other sources. More importantly, it was found that political interest is strongly related to media, as has previously been suggested by Tsfati and Ariely (2014). However, an important addition to this finding is that even participants who found media to be relatively trustworthy discussed their critical reflections on mainstream media and news coverage. It is therefore suggested that a distinction should be made between criticism and skepticism. Lastly, this research shows that events such as the COVID-19 pandemic had a strong impact on media perceptions and media trust for some participants.

The second theme identified the main issues participants have with how their social group is represented in mainstream media. Participants felt that the media published biased and prejudiced content about Moroccan Dutch and highlighted how these media representations affect their behavior towards non-Muslim Dutch people. Diversity in media coverage and the workplace is also addressed within this theme, showing that while most considered diversity to be important, the effects of more diversity in the workplace were not unanimously acknowledged. Some participants felt that more diversity would not change media representation, for instance, because those who hold positions of power within media organization decide what gets published. It was also found that participants perceived media

to be especially biased in their coverage of Palestine and other countries in the Middle Eastern region, which is why many turned to social media or news organizations such as Al Jazeera to stay informed about this region (Raza et al., 2021; Schranz et al., 2018). Additionally, the strong feelings participants have concerning news coverage on Palestine, signifies how they might feel a certain sense of belonging to a global community, the *Ummah*, apart from their identities as Moroccan and Dutch (Prins et al., 2013).

The last theme that was identified, offered surprising results that had not been anticipated. Local news tends to be an important part of participants' news consumption patterns and participants more actively engage with local news by sending news articles to others or messaging local media when they experience issues with housing corporations. Besides, participants' perceptions of local media were found to be more positive compared to national media sources (Nielsen, 2015).

6.1 Implications for future research

By adding these findings to the existing body of literature on media perceptions and media trust, this research has offered important insights into a more specific context. One of the findings that adds a new perspective to the pre-existing literature is that local media are perceived as important and receive more positive judgments from Moroccan Dutch. However, more research needs to be done on the perceptions of and trust in local media, as this finding has not yet been highly supported by the literature. Moreover, most participants who discussed local media are living in Amsterdam, meaning that no well-founded indication can be given as to whether this also applies to local media in other regions.

More scientific research is also needed for the effects of more diversity in the workplace of media organizations. According to Awad (2011), no connection has yet been established between diversity and media trust, whereas some participants in this study mentioned the positive effects of diversity on media trust. These statements should be taken seriously within academics, which is why more large-scale research should be done among the Moroccan Dutch community, as well as other minority groups in different contexts.

6.2 practical recommendations

As participants were asked what they thought was missing in the current Dutch media landscape, this research has useful insights to offer for media organizations. It should be acknowledged that some of these organizations are making considerable efforts for more

diverse and inclusive workplaces and content. News organizations like NOS have developed a weekly news journal called *Nieuws van de Week* (News of the Week) that is suitable for those experiencing difficulties with the Dutch language and a well-known social media page posting news updates directed at youth called NOS Stories. Still, some participants felt that news directed at youth was missing in mainstream media content, while news organizations benefit considerably from youth showing an interest in their content (Schranz et al., 2018). Therefore, they argued that media organizations should make an effort to become more appealing to younger generations so that they will also be well-informed about what is happening in the Netherlands and around the world.

Two participants would like to see more room for debate and discussion in mainstream media. They want to see content of how individuals with opposing (world)views discuss these views with each other for a considerable amount of time. Omar mentioned a British university that uploads these kinds of videos and believes that it could lead to more knowledge, nuance and mutual understanding.

The need for more local news has been mentioned before, but is once again stated here, as this research showed the importance of high-quality local media for the engagement of audiences and media trust. Another way of putting out more local news is for national (news) media to incorporate local news or topics in their content, by for instance collaborating with local media.

The last recommendation is that it media should explain more about how media works and show audiences more of what is going on ‘behind the scenes’. Participants were often skeptical about individuals in high positions within media organizations and felt that these individuals could influence published content to a significant extent. Besides, a lot of them do not have a lot of knowledge about the workings of media, which seemed to affect their media trust levels. Therefore, it is suggested here that when audiences have a general understanding of how media works, journalistic practices and media organizations, their trust in media organizations is likely to be improved.

6.3 Limitations

Although this research offers important insights into media perceptions and media trust, it also has some limitations that need to be discussed. Firstly, as this research took a qualitative approach by using semi-structured interviews, only a very limited number of people could be recruited. Therefore, these results are difficult to generalize (Boeije, 2009). This has a lot to

do with the idea of variation-based generalization, which refers to new cases being intentionally added to the sample until no new data is found (Boeije, 2009). As this is far beyond the scope of this study, not much can be said about other minority groups in the Netherlands or other contexts in a more general sense.

Another limitation is that the researcher has not been successful in recruiting older participants. The highest age in the sample is 36, meaning that the results are likely to only apply to younger Moroccan Dutch. This point is further strengthened by participants that told the researcher about the media practices of their parents, who generally consumed much more tv media and news from Moroccan or Middle Eastern sources. Therefore, it is recommended that similar research will be conducted among older Moroccan Dutch to also gain knowledge of their media perceptions and media trust.

Lastly, Myllylahti and Treadwell (2021) and Schranz et al. (2018) advocate for the incorporation of political trust in research on media trust. The findings in this study also show that there is a strong connection between political interest and media trust. This connection had not been anticipated prior to conducting the interviews, which is why political trust has not been incorporated. However, in a time when media trust is declining, thorough research is needed to shed more light on this connection, which this research has not succeeded to do.

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Appendix A – interview guide

Topic	Questions
Introduction	Discuss ethics and interview procedure, introduce yourself, ask participants to introduce themselves
Media practices	<p>Welke soorten mainstream media gebruik je? (nieuws, reality shows, informatieve programma's, radio, talkshows) Which kinds of mainstream media do you consume? (news, reality shows, informational programs, radio music, talk shows)</p> <p>Hoe vaak kijk of lees je Nederlands nieuws? How often do you watch or read the Dutch news?</p> <p>Hoe kies jij welk nieuws je consumeert? How do you choose which news to consume?</p> <p>Hoe weet jij of een bepaald nieuwsartikel accuraat is? How do you know if a certain news article is accurate?</p> <p>Krijg je weleens nieuws toegestuurd van vrienden of familie? Do you ever receive news from friends or family?</p> <p>Stuur je anderen weleens nieuwsartikelen of videos? Do you send others news articles/videos?</p> <p>Zijn er ook media die je liever vermijdt? Are there any media you'd rather avoid?</p> <p>Gebruik je ook media van andere landen dan Nederland? Do you also consume media from other countries than the Netherlands?</p> <p>Heb je een voorkeur voor publieke of commerciële media? Do you have any preference for public or commercial media?</p>

Heb je nieuws of media apps op je telefoon?
Do you have any news or media apps on
your phone?

Vind je dat deze apps je content geven van
goede kwaliteit?
Do you think these apps provide you with
content of good quality?

Vertrouw je deze apps?
Do you trust these apps?

Heb je abonnementen die gerelateerd zijn
aan Nederlandse media? (abonnement op
kranten, NPO Start Plus, Videoland). Zo ja,
waarom?

Do you have any subscriptions related to
Dutch media? (Such as newspapers, NPO
Start Plus, or Videoland). If so, why?

Zijn er bepaalde bronnen of kanalen die je
het liefst gebruikt?

Do you have any preferences for a certain
media source?

Check je weleens bronnen of statements?
Hoe doe je dat?

Do you ever check sources or statements?
How do you do that?

Hoe weet jij of een bepaald medium
betrouwbaar is?

How do you determine whether a certain
medium is trustworthy?

Heb je weleens een bericht gestuurd naar
een medium wanneer je het niet eens was
met iets dat ze zeiden of wanneer je iets
wilde corrigeren?

Did you ever send a medium a message
when you do not agree/want to correct
something in an article?

Heb je het idee dat je goed op de hoogte
bent van de dingen die gebeuren in
Nederland en de rest van de wereld?

Do you feel that you are well-informed
about the things happening in the
Netherlands and in the world?

<p>Media perceptions</p>	<p>Welke woorden komen er bij je op als je denkt aan het woord ‘media’? What words come to mind when you think about the word ‘media’?</p> <p>Kan je beschrijven wat je mening is over commerciële media? Can you describe how you feel about commercial media?</p> <p>Kan je beschrijven wat je mening is over publieke media? Can you describe how you feel about public media?</p> <p>Vind je media belangrijk? Do you think media are important?</p> <p>Vind je dat media veel macht hebben? Do you think media are powerful?</p> <p>Is er iets waarvan jij vindt dat het ontbreekt in het Nederlandse medialandschap? Is there anything you think is missing in the Dutch media landscape?</p> <p>Kan je iets vertellen over hoe je denkt over mensen die jij bij naam kan noemen die in de mediaindustrie werken? (zoals journalisten, columnisten, nieuwspresentatoren, weermannen/vrouwen) Can you tell me what you think about any individuals you know that work in the media industry? (such as journalists, columnists, news presenters, weathermen)</p> <p>Waar zou jij jezelf plaatsen op het politieke spectrum? Where do you put yourself on the political spectrum?</p> <p>Denk je dat jouw politieke standpunten invloed kunnen hebben op hoe jij naar de media kijkt? Do you think your political standpoints might affect how you view the media?</p> <p>Denk je dat je politieke standpunten invloed kunnen hebben op welke media je gebruikt?</p>
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Do you think your political standpoints might influence the media sources that you use?

Heb je het idee dat de media jouw ideeën delen?

Do you feel that media supports your views?

Mensen zeggen vaak dat nieuws heel negatief is. Hoe denk jij hierover?

People often say news is so negative, what are your thoughts on this?

Denk je dat media objectief kunnen zijn?

Do you think media can be objective?

Denk je dat media objectief zijn?

Do you think media are objective?

Denk je dat media hun best doen om zoveel mogelijk de waarheid te vertellen?

Do you think media make serious efforts to tell the truth as much as possible?

Heb je het idee dat media bevooroordeeld is tegenover jouw sociale groep of andere groepen waar je betrokkenheid mee voelt?

Do you feel that media are biased against your social group or other groups/topics you have affiliation with?

Voel je je gerepresenteerd in de media?

Waarom is dat?

Do you feel represented in media coverage?

Why is that?

Hoe wordt jouw sociale groep gerepresenteerd?

How is your social group represented?

Denk je dat er genoeg Marokkaanse Nederlanders werkzaam zijn binnen de media?

Do you think Moroccan Dutch are well enough represented in the employees working in media?

Denk je dat het nieuws over deze groepen kan veranderen als er meer mensen met een

	<p>andere achtergrond binnen de media gaan werken? Do you think that more people with a migration/Moroccan background working in the media industry could change the news coverage on these groups?</p> <p>Heb je het idee dat media content over Marokaanse Nederlanders of Nederlandse moslims de beleving en kennis van deze groepen meeneemt? Do you feel that media content about Moroccan Dutch or Dutch Muslims takes into account the views or knowledge of these groups?</p>
Media expectations	<p>Kan je beschrijven wat jij denkt dat het voornaamste doel is van mainstream media? Can you describe what you think is the main purpose of mainstream media?</p> <p>Kan je vertellen wat jij persoonlijk verwacht van de media? Can you tell me what your personal expectations are from media?</p> <p>Kan je vertellen wat jij denkt dat de algemene samenleving verwacht van media? Can you tell me what you think society in general should expect from media?</p> <p>Tot in hoeverre voldoen media aan jouw verwachtingen? To what extent do media live up to your expectations?</p> <p>Vind je dat Nederlandse mainstream media informatie en entertainment van goede kwaliteit levert aan de Nederlandse samenleving? Do you think Dutch mainstream media do a good job in providing Dutch society with information and entertainment?</p>
Stereotypes	<p>Kan je iets vertellen over je opvoeding? Can you tell me a little bit about your upbringing?</p> <p>Kan je iets vertellen over wat jouw ouders je hebben meegegeven over media?</p>

	<p>Can you tell me about what your parents taught you about media?</p> <p>Kan je iets vertellen over je sociale leven? Met wie spendeer je je tijd? Can you tell me a little bit about your social life? Who do you spend your time with?</p> <p>Kan je me iets vertellen over hoe het is om op te groeien als Marokkaanse Nederlander in Nederland? Can you tell me a little bit about what it is like to be Moroccan Dutch in the Netherlands?</p> <p>Welke stereotypen heeft de samenleving volgens jou over Marokkaanse Nederlanders? Which stereotypes do you think society has about Moroccan Dutch?</p> <p>Hebben deze stereotypen invloed op jou en je gedrag? Do you think these stereotypes affect you and your behavior?</p> <p>Heb je ooit ervaringen gehad met media content dat een negatieve houding leek te hebben jegens Marokkaanse Nederlanders? Have you ever had any experiences with media content that seemed to have a negative attitude towards Moroccan Dutch?</p> <p>Zijn er bepaalde stereotypen van Marokkanen of Marokkaanse cultuur die jij terugziet in mainstream media representaties? Are there any stereotypes of Moroccans or Moroccan culture that you see reflected in mainstream media representations?</p>
Elicitation	<p>Kan je me vertellen wat je van het artikel vind? Can you tell me what you think about this article?</p> <p>Heb je het idee dat het artikel de waarheid vertelt? Do you feel that this article is telling the truth?</p>

	<p>Is er iets dat je opviel aan het artikel? Is there anything that stood out to you?</p> <p>Is er iets waarvan jij vindt dat het ontbreekt in het artikel? Is there anything you think is missing in this article?</p> <p>Vind je dat er iets weggelaten had moeten worden? Do you think they should have left something out?</p> <p>Wat voor gevoel krijg je bij het lezen van het artikel? How does reading it make you feel?</p> <p>Denk je dat dit soort artikelen de beeldvorming over Marokkaanse Nederlanders/moslims kunnen veranderen? Do you think articles like this can change the perception of Moroccan Dutch/Muslims?</p>
Ending	<p>Ask if they have any additional questions/things to add. Thank participant for their time, tell what is going to happen now. Ask if you can contact them in case of more questions. Tell them they can contact you at any time.</p>

Appendix B – Overview of articles for elicitation

1. Nederlanders met migratieachtergrond stierven vaker aan corona (Dutch citizens with a migration background died of corona more often). NOS.
<https://nos.nl/artikel/2423012-nederlanders-met-migratieachtergrond-stierven-vaker-aan-corona>
2. Meer parkeerboetes voor Marokkaanse Nederlanders: Onderzoekers zien institutioneel racisme bij boa's in Utrecht (More parking fines for Moroccan Dutch: Researchers notice institutional racism at BOA's in Utrecht). Trouw.
<https://www.trouw.nl/binnenland/meer-parkeerboetes-voor-marokkaanse-nederlanders-onderzoekers-zien-institutioneel-racisme-bij-boa-s-in-utrecht~b7573d05/>
3. CBS-onderzoek: Oudere migranten zijn slechter af, maar niet allemaal (CBS-research: Older migrants are worse off, but not all of them). Haarlems Dagblad.
https://www.haarlemsdagblad.nl/cnt/dmf20220509_66407479?utm_source=accounts.tnet.nl&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=/
4. Moslims niet blij met naam Suikerfeest: 'Draait niet om zoetigheid' (Muslims not happy with name Suikerfeest: 'it is not about sweets'). RTL Nieuws.
<https://www.rtlnieuws.nl/editienl/artikel/5305766/moslims-niet-blij-naam-suikerfeest-ramadan-zoetigheid-islam>

Appendix C – Informed consent form

Project title	In Media We Trust? Mainstream media perceptions and media trust of Moroccan Dutch citizens in the Netherlands
Name of principal investigator	Kirsten Smink
Name of organisation	Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, Department of Media and Communication, EUR.
Purpose of the study	To gain insights into how Moroccan Dutch perceive Dutch mainstream media and how these perceptions relate to their trust in the media
Procedures	Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to be interviewed through Google Meet or in person. You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study.
Potential and anticipated risks and discomforts	There are no obvious physical, legal or economic risks associated with participating in this study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to discontinue your participation at any time. In that case, all information you shared will be deleted.
Potential benefits	Participation in this study does not guarantee any beneficial results to you. However, as a result of participating, you are contributing to understanding how Moroccan Dutch perceive the media and insights into their media trust.
Sharing the results	I will use the material from the interviews and workshop sessions exclusively for academic work (assignment) . The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except the main researcher (Kirsten Smink) will have access to your interview.
Confidentiality	Your privacy will be protected and no personally identifiable information will be reported in any research product.
Compensation	Your participation in this project is voluntary and does not involve a financial compensation.
Right to withdraw and questions	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in some of the research activities. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, please contact me on my personal phone number or send an e-mail to: 618765ks@student.eur.nl

Appendix D – Coding tree

Theme	Subtheme	Sample quote
Media trust	News consumption strategies and media skepticism	<p>“Usually, they all say the same thing, but sometimes a source does give a little bit more detail than another source. And sometimes that's just nice. But yeah, most of the time I trust public broadcasting just fine. I trust most of the major newspapers and journalists and so on. And what I usually always try to do is look for the sources that they use. I do think that's important. It's interesting to read about the climate on the NOS, but then I'm also curious about the sources they use to find more depth in what I'm reading.” (Omar)</p>
	Politics and media trust	<p>“I just notice that the FD [Het Financieele Dagblad] is a little bit more right-wing. GroenLinks is, of course, it's already in the name, relatively left. Uhm, so I have an opinion about that. I think well, what it says here, it's not that, black and white, of course. And I think that's a good thing. Because as a journalist you can't turn off your views and you can't be one hundred percent objective. You can try to remain factual. But you're always going to color that a little bit. And I think that's only healthy that as a human being, especially as a politician, to also consume news or consume information from people who have a different point of view than yourself.” (Anass)</p>
	The impact of COVID-19	<p>“Certain truths are not being told because it doesn't fit their alley. So those are left out. It's not that we are being lied to, it's just being left</p>

		<p>out. Just like how much effect the corona vaccine really has had on society and what has really changed and what has ensured that we don't have to quarantine anymore and that we don't have to wear a mouth mask anymore. Has everyone become a little bit immune to it and or has the vaccine really worked? Do you know what I mean? They make it seem like it's better than it really is.” (Soumia)</p>
<p>Media perceptions, media biases and representation of Moroccan Dutch</p>	<p>Representations and visibility of Moroccan Dutch in mainstream media</p>	<p>“There are women of Moroccan origin, who I also know for example, who just give everything. They have careers and are successful. You don't really see that. But the Moroccan woman who is saddled with five children at home, you don't really see that in the media either. So, for Moroccan boys, you could say that these negative articles are more common. And I think with Moroccan women there is nothing at all. Not an article at all. Not in a positive sense and not in a negative sense. I don't even think they are represented.” (Zakaria)</p>
	<p>Perceptions of diversity in Dutch mainstream media</p>	<p>“I mean if I should feel represented now then... Then we really need to live in a different time. That you think, ‘oh wow a woman with a hijab on television, wow!’ No, that's from another time. It must be normal now. Actually, I think it's just weird that it's still so little. I think I feel that more than feeling represented. Yes, I think it's too little.” (Kauthar)</p>
	<p>Perceptions of public and commercial media</p>	<p>“I think anyway those channels like RTL, SBS... They share news that creates as many viewers as possible. Which makes me think, would you share this if it didn't attract so many</p>

		people? And there are also other things that I care about but that I don't get to see here because it just doesn't make money.”
	The Palestinian issue	“Western media of course mainly write about things from a Western point of view. And the Arab media mainly from an Arab point of view. Perhaps the most visible example is the Palestinian issue, Palestine-Israel. Arab media structurally take the side of the Palestinians of course. And I think rightly so, to an extent. While the Western media, if it comes along at all, they try to remain sort of neutral. They don't mention certain things that are mentioned in the Arab media. For example, when Israel is carrying out certain actions. But the reverse is also true, that in the Western media for example, if Palestinian activists do something, it is mentioned, but perhaps less so in the Arab media. I've noticed that from time to time. So, they do seem to take sides.” (Anass)
The importance of local news	-	“Also, when we have problems somewhere, we often report them to AT5. For example, we had trouble with a lot of rats outside. In fact, we still do. But, you know, we've reported it more than once but the housing association didn't do anything about it. So, we sometimes say that if nothing is done about it, we'll tell AT5. And now they started handling the situation” (Dua)

Appendix E – Overview of participants

	Name	Gender	Age
1	Soumia	Female	22
2	Rumi	Male	26
3	Saloua	Female	30
4	Omar	Male	22
5	Layla	Female	29
6	Anass	Male	26
7	Kauthar	Female	26
8	Najat	Female	21
9	Yara	Female	36
10	Dua	Female	23
11	Zakaria	Male	22
12	Hamid	Male	21