

Towards multiperspectivity in history education?

Study of pupils' interest regarding primary history education in superdiverse Rotterdam

ABSTRACT

In larger cities such as Rotterdam the demographics are getting increasingly diverse. Consequently, questions about what histories should be taught in schools are asked in Dutch politics, in academics, amongst educational professionals, and in society. Previous research into the subject was conducted regarding history textbooks, teachers' perspectives and the opinion of (mostly high school) pupils. However, research into local diversity and surveying and interviewing primary school children is scarce in the Netherlands. For this reason, the opinions of primary school pupils regarding the subject were collected through questionnaires and interviews to answer the main research question: "What are the interests of pupils in the last grade of primary school regarding history education in diverse Rotterdam and can this be explained by the background features *migration background*, *gender*, and *religion*?" The results of this study show that *migration background*, *gender* and *religion* indeed have an influence on the interests of pupils in primary school. Furthermore, it shows that for Dutch children as well as children with a migration background, there is already an interest in topics discussed in primary history education through the Dutch Canon. However, they are also interested in other subjects and places in the world. They are thus also open to having multiple perspectives in history education. In addition, this study showed how children relate historical topics to the present. This gives the opportunity to approach the subject of history through events in today's society from multiple perspectives.

KEYWORDS: multiperspectivity; primary education; history; history education; diversity; identity; Rotterdam.

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1. Introduction

An innovative way of teaching will make a brand-new primary school in Rotterdam one of the best scoring schools – at least that is the goal. This school, The Epos, gets support from private funds and has the intention to make a change for children in a region of the city where the possibility of lagging behind is larger than average.¹ The general director of this school describes in an interview how it is strange that children in Hillegersberg (another area in Rotterdam) almost always receive a Havo/Vwo advice, the highest level of education, while the majority of children in the South of Rotterdam are advised to go to vmbo which is a lower level of education.² When the demographics of these two area's in Rotterdam are examined, the first thing that is noticeable is that in Hillegersberg 68% of the inhabitants is Dutch³, 12% is a child of (a) Western migrant(s) or a Western migrant themselves and 19% is a child of (a) non-Western migrant(s) or a non-Western migrant themselves.⁴ In Charlois, the area in which The Epos is situated, only 32% is Dutch, 19% is a child of (a) Western migrant(s) or a Western migrant themselves and 49% a child of (a) non-Western migrant(s) or a non-Western migrant themselves.⁵ In my opinion, this does not suggest that children in the South of Rotterdam are less clever, but that there is much more diversity to be reckoned with when teaching these children. Children of Rotterdammers with a colonial past, migrants, or children of (a) non-Western migrant(s) background experience that they must work harder to be successful than native Dutch people from the same social class.⁶

¹ Tenny Tenzer, "Deze nieuwe school wil met privaat geld kinderen op Rotterdam-Zuid een goede start geven," *Rijnmond*, November 29, 2021, accessed 29-11-2021, <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/1431886/Deze-nieuwe-school-wil-met-privaat-geld-kinderen-op-Rotterdam-Zuid-een-goede-start-geven>.

² Tenzer, "Deze nieuwe school," <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/1431886/Deze-nieuwe-school-wil-met-privaat-geld-kinderen-op-Rotterdam-Zuid-een-goede-start-geven>.

³ "CBS introduceert nieuwe indeling bevolking naar herkomst," Nieuws, CBS, accessed 17-02-2022, <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2022/07/cbs-introduceert-nieuwe-indeling-bevolking-naar-herkomst>. The Central Bureau for Statistics (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek) in the Netherlands made a new grouping in population by origin and published this on the 16th of Februari 2022. In 2022, CBS changed to another way of publishing what has up until now has been named the 'population with a Western or non-Western migration background'. From now on, with this change, it will be more relevant where someone was born themselves, and less where their parents were born. The term "migration background" is because of this not used anymore. Further, the main non-western/western division is also replaced by a parting based on common immigration countries and continents. I use these new terms in my thesis, but not in the questionnaires as these terms are too new and might cause confusion.

⁴ "Informatie wijk Hillegersberg-Schiebroek," Autochtoon of migratieachtergrond, AlleCijfers, accessed 29-11-2021 <https://allecijfers.nl/wijk/hillegersberg-schiebroek-rotterdam/#migratie>.

⁵ "Informatie wijk Charlois," Autochtoon of migratieachtergrond, AlleCijfers, accessed 29-11-2021, <https://allecijfers.nl/wijk/charlois-rotterdam/#migratie>.

⁶ Francio Guadeloupe, Paul van de Laar, and Liane van der Linden, "Inleiding," in *Rotterdam, een postkoloniale stad in beweging*, ed. Francio Guadeloupe, Paul van de Laar en Lianne van der Linden (Amsterdam: Boom, 2020), 14.

Since 2015, Rotterdam is not anymore a majority-minority city; the native Dutch people are a numerary minority. Moreover, there is a diversification of ethnic groups as well as a diversification within ethnic groups.⁷ Dealing with this complexity is called *superdiversity* and has caused fiery discussions in many countries, including the Netherlands. Special attention in these discussions goes to the question of what histories should be taught in history education.⁸ History is after all an important identity-determining aspect that can result in connection with a group or community, but your personal past also determines how you view history.⁹ As new primary schools such as The Epos are developing itself and are contributing to the discussion of equal opportunities for children¹⁰, the time has come to research what is important in history education in superdiverse cities. In this research the complex relationship between history education and superdiverse area's is investigated by using Rotterdam as a case-study. This relationship is after all dynamic and depends on specific contexts.

1.1. Historiography

History education is often linked to nationalism. This is not surprising as the discipline of history was brought to life by upcoming nation-states in the nineteenth century. Historians created a foundation to make gaining knowledge about the nation possible as well as institutionalisation and transmission of nationalistic values.¹¹ In their book about worldwide history education conflicts, Luigi Cajani, Simone Lässig and Maria Repoussi state that historical narratives are used by political actors and because of that, these constructions have been contested in controversies and public discussions. Throughout history many examples show how wide-ranging the use of history is for ideological and political aims.

One example regarding history education which has caused a lot of discussion because of its nationalistic, ideological, and political aims, is the Dutch Canon. The historical and cultural canon of the Netherlands was first introduced in 2006. It was implemented in the

⁷ Maurice Crul, Frans Lelie and Elif Keskiner, "The Second and Third Generation in Rotterdam: Increasing Diversity Within Diversity," in *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity: The Case of Rotterdam*, ed. by Peter Scholten, Maurice Crul en Paul van de Laar (Cham: Springer Open, 2019): 57-61

⁸ Robbert-Jan Adriaansen en Tina van der Vlies, "Discussiedossier: uitdagingen voor hedendaagse historische cultuur," *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 134, no. 1 (2021): 102-103.

⁹ Maria Grever and Kees Ribbens, "Gedeelde of verdeelde geschiedenis?," in *Nationale Identiteit en meervoudig verleden*, ed. Maria Grever and Kees Ribbens (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007): 137.

¹⁰ Tenzer, "Deze nieuwe school," <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/1431886/Deze-nieuwe-school-wil-met-privaat-geld-kinderen-op-Rotterdam-Zuid-een-goede-start-geven>.

¹¹ Maria Grever and Tina van der Vlies, "Why national narratives are perpetuated: A literature review on new insights from history textbook research," *London Review of Education* 15, no. 2 (2017): 286.

curriculum for primary and secondary education in 2010.¹² As Maria Grever writes, this cultural policy was based on two assumptions the advocates of the national canon had.¹³ First, a national identity is strengthened by creating a shared national past through the government. Second, a strong national identity causes social cohesion. However, Grever states that reinforcing and redefining a national identity through a historical canon is outdated.¹⁴ She acknowledges that a historical canon set down by the government unites knowledge and gives clarity to all Dutch people, including newcomers. But this canon is counterproductive for social cohesion. Different perspectives on the past of distinct groups in society are limited because of it. The social cohesion and historical awareness, according to Grever, benefit the most from not having governmental interference regarding the substantive treatment of the national past.¹⁵

Arie Wilschut also writes about this subject and claims that, to think in historical time is most important when it comes to a canon. To do this, it is important to have a clear framework. Teachers should thus provide an outline of namely western history with familiar historical figures and dates and names from the region or country in which they live.¹⁶ He gives some examples of how western developments and events can also be compared to those of other parts of the world. However, the familiarity with other historical figures, names, dates, and places pupils with a non-Dutch background might have, are not touched upon. But, Kees Ribbens points out that these pupils also participate in the historical culture and give it their own interpretation.¹⁷ He calls this a *multicultural historical culture* and identifies its three main components: memories of natives having influence on national history of the dominant culture, memories of newcomers of their country and/or culture of origin and shared memories involving both natives and newcomers.¹⁸ He argues that if it is accepted that the Netherlands is an immigration society and there is the assumption that the experience and memory of newcomers is not undoubtedly inferior to the national canon, further reflection on

¹² SLO nationaal expertisecentrum leerplanontwikkeling, *Geschiedenis: Vakspecifieke trendanalyse 2016* (Enschede, SLO, 2016), 15.

¹³ Maria Grever, "Nationale identiteit en historisch besef. De risico's van een canon in de postmoderne samenleving," in *Controversies rond de canon* ed. Maria Grever, Ed Jonker, Kees Ribbens and Siep Stuurman (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2006), 31.

¹⁴ Grever, "Nationale identiteit en historisch besef," 52-53.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Arie Wilschut, "Canonical standards or orientational frames of reference? The cultural and the educational approach to the debate about standards in history teaching," in *National History Standards: The Problem of the Canon and the Future of Teaching History*, ed. Linda Simcox and Arie Wilschut (Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age Publishing, Inc., 2009), 132.

¹⁷ Kees Ribbens, "De vaderlandse canon voorbij? Een multiculturele historische cultuur in wording," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 117, no. 4 (2004): 500.

¹⁸ Kees Ribbens, "De vaderlandse canon voorbij?," 509.

the *multicultural historical culture* is needed. This is even more important as history is seen as a transferring tool for *collective identity* and culture and this is structurally done through history education.¹⁹ The canon should thus have sufficient points of reference for natives as well as newcomers to make connections.²⁰ Marnix Beyen writes about the canon from a similar perspective. The classroom should according to him be a place where pupils can exchange and become acquainted with each other's *subcultural historical canons*. Teachers should seize the confrontation between differing stories, allowing them to be seen in the light of broader historical developments. It causes a revelation of the one-sided and selective character of these canons. Through that, pupils can share their own historical backgrounds and multicultural citizenship can be established.²¹

Yet, extending history to the history of non-western regions as well as western is often considered impossible. Many feel the subject would then become too broad, as Siep Stuurman writes.²² He provides a counter-argument for this opinion. Stuurman argues that there being “too much” history is not just a problem of world history. In fact, there is always “too much” of history, also when it entails just one nation. This means that the problem of a world-historical canon is not the “excess”, but there not being agreement on the selection requirements.²³ By approaching world history through well-defined themes²⁴, Stuurman advocates that students are introduced to facts, stories, and developments and simultaneously learn something essential; the formulation of historical questions and to what insights answering these can lead. Through the well-defined themes and a chronology, there is still a base for the learning process – it is just a world historical instead of a national one.²⁵

It is clear that many critiques come down to the canon being too nationally oriented. Was there then not any effort to put Dutch history in a broader perspective at all through the canon? Careful attempts were made to reconstruct a broad national story. It was placed in a European perspective, with a “pinch of *world history*” and some space for migration stories and colonialism as Gert Oostindie writes.²⁶ However, the history about slavery was

¹⁹ Ibid., 520.

²⁰ Kees Ribbens, “De vaderlandse canon voorbij? Een multiculturele historische cultuur in wording,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 117, no. 4 (2004), 520.

²¹ Marnix Beyen, “Canons in Dialoog,” *BMGN: Low Countries Historical Review* 121, no. 1 (2006): 97.

²² Siep Stuurman, “Van nationale canon naar wereldgeschiedenis,” in *Controverses rond de canon*, ed. Maria Grever, Ed Jonker, Kees Ribbens and Siep Stuurman (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2006), 68-69.

²³ Stuurman, “Van nationale canon naar wereldgeschiedenis,” 68-69.

²⁴ Ibid., 73-77: Stuurman gives three examples of themes which can be approached from a world-historical perspective. These are: technology, travels, travelers and travel stories and the history of democracy.

²⁵ Ibid., 77-78.

²⁶ Gert Oostindie, *Slavernij, canon en trauma*, (Leiden: Faculty of Arts, Leiden University, 2007), 11.

simplified²⁷ and mostly still from a Dutch perspective.²⁸ Indonesia, slavery, the VOC, Srebrenica; it is good that these subjects are discussed in the fifty windows according to Grever, Ed Jonkers, Ribbens en Stuurman. But just providing these windows in the canon is not sufficient to teach students critical distance.²⁹

Since 2020, there is a reassessed canon. As the commission writes in a review of the reassessment of the Dutch canon, the focal points for the new canon were opportunities for diversity, multivoicedness and internationalization and (better) chronological and geographical distribution.³⁰ They wanted the new canon to entail connections between the past and present, room for telling a "good story" and new stories and diversity so that it appeals to all children in Dutch classrooms. To name a few examples of changes made: the window about slavery was rewritten. A window for Anton de Kom, a Surinamese anti-colonial writer was added, and the WIC (West Indian Company) was added to the VOC (United East India Company). Further, more women can be found in the canon (and not just in modern times) and in most texts, there is a reference to international developments.³¹ However, coming to a consensus remains difficult. As the commission writes, the criticism it has received of both the window choices, and the reassessed canon comes down to these being too "politically correct". The question is whether a more inclusive canon is good or not and whether you can exchange the familiar heroes of Dutch history for a black man or a woman.³² A canon thus can never appeal to everyone.

Usually, canons are prescribed, and the process is all about the power of definition. Who decides what the *identity* of the community should be?³³ Institutions and individuals who produce such public historical knowledge create narratives that are sometimes considered "closed"; meaning they establish a specific structure of the subject rather than urge

²⁷ Oostindie, Gert Oostindie, *Slavernij*, 11-12: Gert Oostindie writes that there is a relationship between the WIC (West Indian Company) and the VOC (United East India Company) that is not seen. The colonial history in the West is equalized to a history with slavery and slave trade while this is not correct. Over half of the people in Suriname descend from contract labourers. Furthermore, the VOC is more so remembered as a trading company while it was involved in slave trade and slavery just as much as the WIC.

²⁸ Ibid., 11: Oostindie also states that there is still a tendency to focus on ourselves (as Dutch people), as was apparent from the very Dutch completed final exam theme: "Dutch Indies".

²⁹ Maria Grever, Ed Jonker, Kees Ribbens and Siep Stuurman, "Het behouden huis. Een commentaar op De canon van Nederland," in *Controversies rond de canon*, ed. Maria Grever, Ed Jonker, Kees Ribbens and Siep Stuurman (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2006), 109.

³⁰ Hanneke Tuithof, James Kennedy and Kayleigh Goudsmit, "Nabeschouwing op de herijking van de Canon van Nederland," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 134, no. 2 (2021): 306.

³¹ Ibid., 307-208.

³² Ibid., 311.

³³ Maria Grever, Ed Jonker, Kees Ribbens and Siep Stuurman, "Het behouden huis," 107.

questioning about interpretation and selection.³⁴ This complicates the possibility of *multiperspectivity* which refers to the subjective and interpretational character of history. When it comes to *multiperspectivity* in history education, it is often regarding a historical phenomenon, figure or event that is viewed in multiple ways by multiple subjects.³⁵ Even though Bjorn Wansink, Sanne Akkerman, Itzél Zuiker and Theo Wubbels state that there is an appeal for *multiperspectivity* especially in history education, operationalisation of *multiperspectivity* seems to be missing.³⁶ Furthermore, history teachers have to deal with the “re-nationalization reminiscent of the Cold War Era” in Michael Lovorn, Patrick Manning, and Molly Annis Warsh’s wording.³⁷ All across Europe, Asia and America hyper-nationalists gain power. With this again comes the promotion of feelings such as national pride and patriotism; all self-serving ways to create an identity. It causes history teachers to ask themselves how they should deal with this revival of nationalism and what the possibilities of moving forward with teaching about common backgrounds, global community, and shared histories are.³⁸ It is thus difficult to decide on what the focus should be regarding history education as it is impossible to come to an agreement in this discussion. This is because in selecting topics there is always an underlying political or ideological view. This further complicates the topic, as not dealing with the differences at all is undermining the historical discipline in which critical thinking is a crucial element.³⁹

What histories should be taught is consequently a question that has daunted textbook authors and historians for a long time. Therefore, much research of history textbooks has been done.⁴⁰ But, these are not the only sources through which pupils have access to history anymore. “Young people are exposed to formal history as well as myths and stories from a

³⁴ Stephan R.E. Klein, “Teaching History in the Netherlands: Teachers’ Experiences of a Plurality of Perspectives,” *Curriculum Inquiry* 40, no. 5 (2010): 614.

³⁵ Bjorn Wansink, Sanne Akkerman, Itzél Zuiker, and Theo Wubbels, “Where Does Teaching Multiperspectivity in History Education Begin and End? An Analysis of the Uses of Temporality,” *Theory and Research in Social Education* 46, no. 4 (2018): 497.

³⁶ Wansink, Akkerman, Zuiker and Wubbels, “Where Does Teaching Multiperspectivity,” 496.

³⁷ Michael Lovorn, Patrick Manning, and Molly Annis Warsh, “Entering a New Era in World History Education,” *The History Teacher* 50, no. 3 (2017): 321.

³⁸ Lovorn, Manning and Warsh, “Entering a New Era in World History Education,” 321.

³⁹ Maria Grever, “The Netherlands,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Conflict in History Education*, ed. Luigi Cajani, Simone Lässig and Maria Repoussi (Cham: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2019), 385.

⁴⁰ See for example: Stuart Foster, “Dominant traditions in international textbook research and revision,” *Education Inquiry* 2, no. 1 (2011): 5-20.

Maria Repoussi and Nicole Tutiaux-Guillon, “New Trends in history textbook research: issues and methodologies toward a school historiography,” *Journal of Educational Media, Memory and Society* 2, no. 1 (2010): 154-170.

Marc Kropman, Carla van Boxtel and Jannet van Drie, “Narratives on Multiperspectivity in Dutch Secondary School History Textbooks,” *Journal of Educational Media, Memory and Society* 12, no. 1 (2020): 1-23.

variety of sources including schools, their families, and the media” Peter Seixas writes.⁴¹ Family is a crucial aspect within the process of historical meaning making for young people. Further, Seixas states that we know that students, because of this knowledge gained from family, subgroups, and media, find school history less relevant for them. Before students even start history education, they already received lively historical orientations and narratives from their family, friends, and the media.⁴² So, students take variants of the past that are important to the memory of their own group. Because of this, students might completely disregard school history by only internalising the believed history instead of the official history.⁴³ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen’s research also had a similar result. Through good and bad experiences, occasions of clashes and peace, bonds of respect and obligation, through feelings of togetherness and distance with certain people, respondents of their research also saw their families as the base for finding their own identity.⁴⁴ This is not a surprise as in our visions of the past, Eviatar Zerubavel argues, a distinction is made between what is historically significant to us and consequently collectively remembered and what is considered unimportant and thus can be forgotten.⁴⁵ As Zerubavel writes:

[...] collective memory is more than just an aggregate of individuals’ personal memories, and such inevitably personal relief maps cannot possibly capture what an entire nation, for example, collectively considers historically eventful or uneventful.⁴⁶

He further explains that the way in which we construct our ethnic, familial, and national identity, tells us about how the connection with past generations is often described in relation to biological terms.⁴⁷ This explains why national history is important for *national identity*. On the other hand, it also raises the question if the history taught in national history education is suitable for a diverse city such as Rotterdam. People from different backgrounds probably consider different historical narratives significant and consider themselves to have different identities. Hence, *identity-building* and *identity* are concepts that are linked to *nationalism*,

⁴¹ Peter Seixas, “Historical Understanding among Adolescents in a Multicultural Setting,” *Curriculum Inquiry* 23, no. 3 (1993): 301.

⁴² Peter Seixas, “Student Identities and World History Teaching,” *The History Teacher* 33, no. 2 (2000): 186.

⁴³ Seixas, “Student Identities,” 185-187.

⁴⁴ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of The Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York, N.Y. : Columbia University Press, 1998), 50.

⁴⁵ Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 27.

⁴⁶ Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, 28.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.

gender, class, race and ethnicity and so one could say to *diversity*.⁴⁸ Chris Lorenz writes that one's identity or self intrinsically implicates the idea of an other. This means, according to Lorenz, that there is no absolute other, because the concepts other and self are related.⁴⁹ The same accounts for *collective identity*. The "in-group", the group that is perceived as "we" can only exist if there is also an "out-group", the group we perceive as "them".⁵⁰ National history being the main objective in history education could thus mean that children who do not feel represented by this history, do also not feel included. Moreover, it could cause children who feel the history does not represent other children, creating this in- and out-group within classes. When the strong dominant perspective meets a strong opposing perspective from a minority in a classroom in which the pupils do not recognize the possibility of more than one perspective, clashes are inevitable, Geerte Savenije argues. In addition, mutual understanding between teachers and pupils is hard to achieve.⁵¹ Although the government thus reckons that history encourages citizenship, integration and unity, historians working in education (or museums) get to see the reality and results of pupils that live in "information bubbles" according to Robbert-Jan Adriaansen and Tina van der Vlies. Some historical topics cannot be or are hard to discuss. Moreover, being critical about one's own presumptions is often challenging.⁵²

Marijke Huisman also acknowledges that the connecting power of history and heritage that has been high on the agenda for many years now, is in practice difficult to achieve. Particular heritage, especially in relation to the colonial past, leads to division and debates.⁵³ According to Huisman it is important to be radically open and be willing to question all parts of one's own perspective.⁵⁴ How this radical openness and willingness can be achieved is however not touched upon by Huisman. Identification is thus often constructed through the way we see some common origin or shared characteristics with an ideology, someone else or

⁴⁸ Peter Scholten, Maurice Crul and Paul van der Laar, "Introduction," in *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity: The Case of Rotterdam*, ed. Peter Scholten, Maurice Crul en Paul van de Laar (Cham: Springer Open, 2019), 4.

⁴⁹ Chris Lorenz, "Representations of Identity: Ethnicity, Race, Class, Gender and Religion. An Introduction to Conceptual History," in *The Contested Nation: Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories*, ed. Stefan Berger en Chris Lorenz (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 25.

⁵⁰ Lorenz, "Representations of Identity," 25.

⁵¹ Geerte Maria Savenije, "Sensitive History under Negotiation, Pupil's historical imagination and attribution of significance while engaged in heritage projects," (PhD diss., Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2014), 21.

⁵² Robbert-Jan Adriaansen and Tina van der Vlies, "Discussiedossier: uitdagingen voor hedendaagse historische cultuur," *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 134, no. 1 (2021): 102-103.

⁵³ Marijke Huisman, "'Er missen kanten.' Multiperspectiviteit in erfgoededucatie over slavernij," *Cultuur + Educatie* 19, no. 55 (2020): 112.

⁵⁴ Marijke Huisman, "'Er missen kanten,'" 126.

another group.⁵⁵ Sharon McDonald writes that historically, *heritage* is also often used to form and keep homogeneous and bounded identities, in particular of the nation-state.⁵⁶ Especially as a result of the recognition of heterogeneity within nations, questions have been raised if *heritage* is capable of conforming to other identities within a nation as well.⁵⁷

So, because of the difficulty in coming to a consensus about the topics that need to be discussed from a top-down approach (the government, teachers, historians et cetera), a few have taken up the challenge to research the pupils themselves in the Netherlands. For instance, a study into what significance pupils give to certain histories regarding contested or sensitive heritage has been done by Geerte Savenije, Carla van Boxtel and Maria Grever.⁵⁸ The researchers used individual interviews and questionnaires which were conducted in 2010 in Amsterdam. The pupils who participated in the study engaged in a project about the history and ‘heritage’ of slavery. 55 second-year pupils in Amsterdam participated in the research from two classes of secondary high school. To get more insight into the pupils’ ideas regarding their perception of the significance of heritage of slavery, they were asked how important they found the preservation of historical remains of slavery. The pupils did this by evaluating 11 reasons for this kind of preservation on a four-point scale, but they could also add their own reasons.⁵⁹ Further, Savenije, van Boxtel and Grever investigated how interesting pupils found it to learn about slavery. To measure this, they used eight items on a four-point scale. Based on the results of the questionnaire, a selection of 13 pupils was made to take individual interviews with. These were selected on the different answers they gave to the questionnaire and were of different cultural backgrounds. This made it possible to understand the variation of perspectives that pupils could bring to the classroom. It also made it possible to see whether the differences could be tied to the pupils’ perceived ethnic identity as the students had to describe their own ethnic identity and indicate if this could have influenced the answers they gave.⁶⁰ Although this study was quite small and limited because it was conducted at one school, the research could be seen as a first analysis of the relation between pupils’ attribution of significance to heritage of slavery and their identity.⁶¹

⁵⁵ Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?", in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed., Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans and Sean Nixon (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2013), 2.

⁵⁶ Sharon McDonald, *Memorylands: heritage and identity in Europe today*, (London: Routledge, 2013): 162.

⁵⁷ McDonald, *Memorylands*, 162.

⁵⁸ Geerte Savenije, Carla van Boxtel and Maria Grever, "Sensitive 'Heritage' of Slavery in a Multicultural Classroom: Pupils' Ideas Regarding Significance," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 62, no. 2 (2014): 127-148.

⁵⁹ Savenije, Van Boxtel, Grever, "Sensitive 'Heritage' of Slavery," 131-132.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 133-134.

⁶¹ Ibid., 144-145.

Research was also done by Marjan de Groot-Reuvekamp, Anje Ros, Carla van Boxtel and Frans Oort into how primary school pupils from the age of six to twelve perform when it comes to their historical understanding.⁶² The researchers split the group of pupils into two; one group of 6-9 years old and one group of 9-12 and gave them two paper and pencil tests and took think-aloud interviews in pairs to research their emergent, initial and continuing understanding of historical time. In this research other aspects that could cause pupils to perform differently, like the level of education of their parents, gender and reading levels, were also used to verify the validity.⁶³ The research took place on different schools in bigger and smaller cities in the south-east of the Netherlands. In total there were 1479 pupils who participated and the divide between boys and girls was more or less equal.⁶⁴ The results made clear that the pupils' performances for each of the three stages saw an increase through the grades and that for all objectives the children in higher classes very steadily performed better than children in lower grades. Pupils' performances were also influenced by the parents' education, reading levels and gender.⁶⁵ This research gives insight into how performances and understandings of young children regarding historical time develop. However, it could not give clear insight into the reason that caused the development.

Lastly, another interesting research investigated the pupils of high schools in the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and France. This research, done by Grever and Ribbens, gives insight into how students view themselves and how this relates to their view of history and history education.⁶⁶ The research made clear how self-presentations are closely tied to the ethnic background of the students.⁶⁷ Furthermore, these ethnic backgrounds were also related to the interests of the students.⁶⁸ In addition, it gave some information about how gender and education level can cause differences in the interests regarding certain historical topics.⁶⁹ However, the case-study of the three countries also came with difficulties. The group of native Dutch respondents for example, was largely heterogeneous. Another aspect that is important to mention, is that the organization of (history) education is very different in all

⁶² Marjan de Groot-Reuvekamp, Anje Ros, Carla van Boxtel and Frans Oort, "Primary school pupil's performances in understanding historical time," *Education* 3, no. 13 (2017): 231.

⁶³ De Groot-Reuvekamp, Ros, Van Boxtel and Oort, "Primary school pupil's performances," 231.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 233.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 239.

⁶⁶ Maria Grever and Kees Ribbens, *Nationale Identiteit en meervoudig verleden* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007).

⁶⁷ Maria Grever and Kees Ribbens, "Andere Tijden: Geschiedenissen als bron van identiteit," in *Nationale identiteit en meervoudig verleden*, ed. Maria Grever and Kees Ribbens (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 109.

⁶⁸ Grever en Ribbens, "Andere Tijden," 132-133.

⁶⁹ Grever en Ribbens, "Gedeelde of verdeelde geschiedenis?," 150.

three countries. In addition, the groups of immigrants that were non-western in France and the UK were very small.⁷⁰ Also important is that Grever and Ribbens did not use a statistically significant sample and worked with profiles of which some could not be used in France.⁷¹ Lastly, the questions in the survey they used were quite nationally focussed, which is logical as they used three nations as a starting point and wanted to compare them.⁷² The national identity is however not the only identity one has, and I hope to get more information also about interests not related to the nation or children's ethnicity or nationality. The three forementioned studies, as well as similar research done in other countries,⁷³ give a great incentive for further research into local diversity and primary school children because no such studies have been done recently.

1.2. Research Question

It is evident that deciding what to teach when it comes to history education has always been, and still is, very challenging. To come to a solution for this problem, teachers have been interviewed and textbooks have been studied. Comparisons between different cities, different areas and even different countries have already been made and the main conclusions were that there are in fact differences in the appreciation of history because of background characteristics such as gender and ethnicity.

In this research the focus is on local diversity and history education as this has not been researched much. Research in which pupils have been surveyed or interviewed are still scarce in the Netherlands. Hence, the primary sources for this research are primary school children in Rotterdam themselves. The pupils are in their last year of primary school. The aim is to give educational professionals and policy makers insight into how differing the interests

⁷⁰ Maria Grever and Kees Ribbens, "'Ik beschouw mezelf als ...' identiteitskaders en zelfpresentaties," in *Nationale identiteit en meervoudig verleden*, ed. Maria Grever and Kees Ribbens (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 102-103.

⁷¹ In the Netherlands there were 189 respondents, in the United Kingdom 65 and France 149. It is difficult with such small and differing samples to indicate if the results can be seen as something that counts for a lot of pupils of higher education in the three countries: Grever and Ribbens, "Gedeelde of verdeelde geschiedenis?," 138-139.

⁷² Grever and Ribbens, *Nationale Identiteit en meervoudig verleden*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 179-185.

⁷³ See for example:

Sohyun An, "Learning US history in an age of globalization and transnational migration," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 41, no. 6 (2009): 763-787.

Peter N. Stearns, "Student Identities in World History Teaching," *The History Teacher* 33, no. 2 (2000): 185-192.

Maria Grever, Ben Pelzer and Terry Haydn "High school students' views on history," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 43, no. 2 (2011): 207-229.

Arja Virta, "Whose history should be dealt with in a pluricultural context – immigrant adolescents' approach," *Intercultural Education* 27, no. 4 (2016): 377-387.

of pupils can be within one city. The case-study in this research is Rotterdam because of its diversity. Because of the scope of this research, the choice was made to focus on three variables that might influence the interests of the pupils. These three variables are: (1) *migration background*, (2) *gender*, (3) *religion*.

The main research question is: “What are the interests of pupils in the last grade of primary school regarding history education in diverse Rotterdam and can this be explained by the background features *migration background*, *gender*, and *religion*?” To answer this question, it is crucial to know how history education is currently organised in the Netherlands. Hence, in the second chapter, an answer is given to the subquestion: “How is the organisation, what are the goals and recent developments in Dutch primary history education?” In the third chapter, the results of the research will be presented by answering two subquestions: “What do pupils in the last grade of primary school in Rotterdam find most interesting regarding history subjects?” and “Can the results be explained by the background features *migration background*, *gender*, and *religion*?” In the fourth chapter, the conclusion, an answer is given to the main research question.

2. Research design

2.1. Sources

For this research the children in the last grade of primary school were used as sources of information. In total, 123 children filled in our questionnaires. This research depended on Rotterdam primary schools willing to participate. Over 50 schools were contacted, but in the end only 10 participated. In map 2.1. the distribution of the participating schools is shown. As can be seen, there is a good spread of schools in Rotterdam that participated. The Elisabethschool, the Emmausschool, the Bavokring, the Mr. van Eijkschool and the Hildegardisschool are catholic schools. The Minister Marga Klompéschool is also catholic, but provides Dalton education in addition⁷⁴. Verbazisschool WOW is roman-catholic and a school where new, natural, and conceptual learning is central.⁷⁵ Montessori school Tuinstad and OBS de Mare both work through the education concept of Montessori.⁷⁶ Lastly, Vrijeschool Vredenhof works through the principle of Waldorf Education.⁷⁷ Even though most of the schools were catholic, it does not mean that most children that participated adhere to catholic religion as can be seen in table 2.2. Out of the 60 children that were religious only 14 were catholic.

Table 2.1. shows the composition of the neighbourhoods where the schools are situated. As already stated in the introduction of this master thesis, people with a Dutch origin are a minority in Rotterdam. This is in line with the last column of table 2.1. where the percentage of people with a migration background (western and non-western) was calculated. Only in three out of nine neighbourhoods, people from Dutch origin were dominant. This is also reflected in our research: more children with a migration background (90) participated in

⁷⁴ Dalton education means that students learn to be responsible, to cooperate, to be effective, to be independent and to reflect. They mainly learn this by being able to plan schoolwork independently and work with deadlines, do this together with classmates and reflect on this work. See: <https://www.onderwijsconsument.nl/wat-dalton/#:~:text=Op%20een%20daltonschool%20krijgen%20leerlingen,voor%20henzelf%20en%20hun%20omgeving> for more information on Dalton education.

⁷⁵ Their education is shaped by 3 pillars: target time, personal development, project-based work. See: <https://www.verbazisschoolwow.nl/#verbaasdag> for more information about the education provided by Verbazisschool WOW.

⁷⁶ Schools that work with Montessori education believe that a child has an urge for self-development. The intention is that the teacher or pedagogical employee follows this development and offers the right materials and environment to stimulate it. The child then learns as much as possible at his own pace. Often students at a Montessori school are in a class with children from different grades. See: <https://www.onderwijsconsument.nl/montessori/> for more information on Montessori education.

⁷⁷ The Waldorf schools provide high-quality education based on anthroposophy. Rudolf Steiner is the founder of anthroposophy: a world view in which man is seen as a whole of body, soul and spirit. See: <https://www.onderwijsconsument.nl/vrijeschool/> for more information on Vrijeschoolonderwijs (Waldorf education).

this research than without (33, see table 2.4). In the former group of children, there were also children who were three quarter, half or one quarter Dutch. In table 2.2. the gender of the participants is shown while table 2.3. presents the religion of the participant. The number of participants with a migration background is represented in table 2.4. Regarding gender, the amount of girls and boys was more or less equal, also in the category of Dutch participants and participants with a migration background (table 2.4). The same goes for religion. There were 60 religious children and 52 non-religious children that participated. Four children stated they believed in God but did not mention what religion they adhere to; these are under “Religion unknown”. Seven children did not fill in the question about religion and therefore are under the category “Missing”.

Map 2.1. Map of Rotterdam with the schools that participated in the questionnaires.



Source: Map made through MyMaps: www.google.com/maps/d/ by author.

Table 2.1. *Origin of the population in neighbourhoods where the participating schools are situated, as of January 1, 2022.*

Schools	Neighbourhoods	Dutch	Western migration background	Non-Western migration background	Total	Percentage population with migration background of total
Verbazisschool WOW	Terbregge	2.434	381	535	3.350	27,3%
Marga Klompé	Ommoord	16.783	2.514	6.398	25.695	34,7%
Tuinstad	Schiebroek	9.898	1.765	5.273	16.936	41,6%
Mr. Van Eijck	Groot-IJsselmonde	13.847	3.183	11.858	28.888	52,1%
OBS de Mare	Vreewijk	7.093	1.867	5.938	14.898	52,4%
Bavokring & Vrijeschool Vredenhof	Kralingen-West	7.226	2.426	6.209	15.861	54,4%
Hildegardis	Oude Noorden	6.129	2.262	8.760	17.152	64,3%
Emmaus	Nieuwe Westen	6.310	2.693	10.494	19.497	67,6%
Elisabeth	Carnisse	3.344	3.822	4.672	11.838	71,6%

Source: Data used from <https://onderzoek010.nl/jive> by author. Own calculations.

Table 2.2. *Gender of the participants who filled in the questionnaire.*

	Frequency	Percent
Girl	65	52.8
Boy	57	46.3
Genderfluid	1	.8
Total	123	100.0

Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *Dataset questionnaire interests in history of primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

Table 2.3. *Religion of the participants who filled in the questionnaire.*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No religion	52	42.3	44.8
Islamic	35	28.5	30.2
Catholic	14	11.4	12.1
Christian	11	8.9	9.5
Religion Unknown	4	3.3	3.4
Total	116	94.3	100.0
No answer	7	5.7	
Total	123	100.0	

Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *Dataset questionnaire interests in history of primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

Table 2.4. *Amount of Dutch participants and participants with a migration background.*

	Frequency	Percent
Migration background	90	73.2
<i>Girl</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>39.0</i>
<i>Boy</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>33.3</i>
Dutch	33	26.8
<i>Girl</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>13.8</i>
<i>Boy</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>13.0</i>
Total	123	100.0

Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *Dataset questionnaire interests in history of primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

To gather information from the pupils, a questionnaire was developed and group interviews with 10 children were conducted. The surveys were first given to a test group. This group consisted of ten children from Dutch, Surinamese, Indonesian, and Moroccan descent to see if the questions were not too complex for children with different backgrounds. One younger child aged 10 and one older child aged 13 were added to the test group. This choice was made because sometimes children skip a grade or have to redo a year. The questionnaire consisted of one page with questions about the background features *migration background*, *gender* and *religion*. The rest of the questionnaire consisted of three small tasks. In the first task the children had to make a drawing or a word web about the historical theme or event that is most important to them. In the second task, they were asked to make a top three out of images about subjects in history they find the most interesting. The subjects in task 2 were chosen by looking into a history book, *Brandaan*⁷⁸, used in the last class of one of the participating schools. A divide was made between subjects in history already discussed in school and a couple “new” subjects⁷⁹. Lastly, in the third task, the children could write down the history of which city, country, or part of the world they find it important or would like to learn (even) more about. An explanation was added to all the tasks. Our questionnaire that was used can be found in Appendix 1. The questionnaires were more qualitative than quantitative. However, a dataset was created through the program SPSS to interpret certain aspects of the filled in questionnaires.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Katrui ten Barge, Wilfried Dabekaussen, Juul Lelieveld, Frederike Pals and Jacques van der Pijl, *Brandaan lesboek groep 8*, (Malmberg: 's Hertogenbosch, 2008), 6-111.

⁷⁹ These were not always completely new but they are not discussed very extensively in history lessons such as: “the history of the environment and climate,” “the history of sports and games,” “the history of film, tv, music and theatre” and “the history of the common people.”

⁸⁰ For the choices that were most popular in task two and if children with a migration background chose cities, countries or parts of the world related to this background.

The questions of the interviews were based on the surveys filled in by the children. The interviews were held with children from the Elisabethschool and the Mr. van Eijkschool. These schools were chosen as they participated the earliest in the research and there was enough time to send permission letters to the parents and to prepare the interviews. Both schools are in diverse neighbourhoods. Especially the Mr. van Eijkschool is in an average and very very diverse neighbourhood. In the interviews participated: one Dutch non-religious, one half Dutch-half Chinese non-religious, one Pakistani Islamic, one Turkish Islamic, one Polish Catholic, one half Surinamese-half Bolivian Catholic girl, one Aruban non-religious, one Syrian Islamic and one half Latvian half-Russian Catholic boy. Interviews with children from very white neighbourhood are missing. However, the Rotterdam neighbourhoods in which the interviews were taken reflect the multi-ethnic, multicultural, and diverse population of this urban area. That was most important for this research. The methodology and limitations of this research are further explained in the next paragraphs.

2.2. Research with children

Throughout history, interviewing children and their families was not done because there was a general understanding that children and young people did not have the capability to memorise reliable accounts of things they experienced. Moreover, there was a restraint in doing this kind of research because of the difficulty of interviewing young(er) participants.⁸¹ It is now recognized in most of the Western world that children have a voice and, because of that, should have a say.⁸² As Michelle O'Reilly and Nisha Dogra write:

Contemporary research has an emphasis on doing research *with* children, treating them as agentive subjects in the process and this perspective has led to interviews with children and young people becoming more commonplace.⁸³

Now, children are recognised as active participants in the decisions they make.⁸⁴ This research tries to contribute to this rather new child-centred way of doing research. While children in previous times were not included into aspects that did concern them and they were *being*

⁸¹ Michelle O'Reilly and Nisha Dogra, "The importance of Interviewing Children for Research," in *Interviewing Children and Young People for Research*, ed. Michelle O'Reilly and Nisha Dogra (California: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2018), 4.

⁸² Natacha Borgers, Edith de Leeuw and Joop Hox, "Children as respondents in survey research: cognitive development and response quality," *Bulletin de Méthodologie Sociologique* 66, no. 1(2000): 61.

⁸³ O'Reilly and Dogra, "The importance of Interviewing Children," 4.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

silenced, I will *be* (mostly) *silent* to give voice and power to the children so they can express their opinions.⁸⁵

Even though the importance of involving children in research is clear, this does not necessarily make it easier to conduct research with children. Alice Bell has written about the aspects researchers must consider when designing and testing questionnaires for children.⁸⁶ She writes that it is important to see that children and adolescents could also be affected by the context or content of the questions. There is a general agreement though, that children from the age of seven and up are appropriate for survey research.⁸⁷ However, the questionnaire design is very important. Bell writes that “simplicity is key to designing good questionnaires for children” and her advice is thus to keep the questions short and with a clear syntax.⁸⁸ With regard to the questions, she also mentions to keep the sentences simple, to use unambiguous, straightforward language as children sometimes take things more literal than they are, to make the questions specific to the participant, and to particularly not make the questions complex, hypothetical double-barrelled and negatively formulated.⁸⁹ Furthermore, she writes that questions should be based on the here-and-now because memory-tasks are quite complex as the child has to compile different elements of information. This makes that they give less valid information about everyday situations. Short reference periods are thus best for working with children.⁹⁰

Bell also mentions an important point of children wanting to please adults. Children have a tendency to agree with adults or give them the answer they think the adult would like to hear.⁹¹ This thus makes it also crucial to not create a list with suggestively-worded or -phrased questions and to really be careful with the ordering of the questions as this might also seem suggestive to the child.⁹² When giving options in questionnaires, Bell states that the differences between them should be extremely clear. Overall, it seems that children can deal with four to five options the best. Yes/no questions might even be better, so that the children don't get bored.⁹³ Children also tend to just choose the first option in a survey, or the last thing mentioned in an interview. So, when making a survey, the answer expected to be the

⁸⁵ Robyn Fivush, “Speaking silence: The social construction of silence in autobiographical and cultural narratives,” *Memory* 18, no. 2 (2010): 91-92.

⁸⁶ Alice Bell, “Designing and testing questionnaires for children,” *Journal of Research in Nursing* 12, no. 5 (2007): 461-469.

⁸⁷ Bell, “Designing and testing questionnaires,” 462.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 463.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 463-464.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 464.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*, 465.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

most popular should be stated last and, in an interview, named first.⁹⁴ Using a scale is of course also an option, but again, the scale should be very clear and easy for children to understand. The best option is to have fully-labelled scales when using scales to question children adjoining verbal or visual labels (smiley faces for example).⁹⁵ In questionnaires there are sometimes the options “I don’t know” or “no opinion,” but as children are pleasers, a researcher can choose to not have a midpoint, or the beforementioned options.⁹⁶ All the important points mentioned by Bell are taken into account in this research.

Natacha Borgers, Joop Hox and Dirk Sikkel have also written about the response effects in surveys with children and adolescents. They researched three characteristics of surveys and investigated how reliable these were. The three characteristics were: negatively formulated questions, the number of response options and offering a neutral midpoint.⁹⁷ They found out that children can respond stable within a scale and over time, while they respond different on questions that are formulated negatively. The interpretation of the questions that are negatively formulated is thus stable but do differ from those positively formulated.⁹⁸ The most consistent result of their study was the effect of the number of responses with the accuracy of the answers. The stability of the answers increased up until six options, when there were seven or more the stability went down. The writers also concluded that four options in a survey was the best option, just like Bell stated in her research.⁹⁹

In another article Borgers, Hox and Edith de Leeuw write about the specifics of children in different developmental stages derived from Jean Piaget’s (1929) theory of cognitive growth.¹⁰⁰ The age group that is investigated in my research is in the developmental stage of *formal thought*. The writers describe this developmental stage to be a phase in which children are cognitively functioning well but are still very *context-sensitive* and this should be kept in mind. However, they also state that questionnaires like those for adults have been implemented successfully in this developmental stage.¹⁰¹ Context is everything though, and the researcher should keep in mind that parents, siblings, teachers, and classmates can all influence the answers provided. Furthermore, there can also be a lack of motivation or

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 466.

⁹⁷ Natacha Borgers, Joop Hox and Dirk Sikkel, “Response Effects in Surveys on Children and Adolescents: The Effect of Number of Response Options, Negative Wording, and Neutral Mid-Point,” *Quality & Quantity* 38, no. 1 (2004): 29.

⁹⁸ Borgers, Hox and Sikkel, “Response Effects in Surveys on Children and Adolescents,” 30.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 30.

¹⁰⁰ Borgers, De Leeuw and Hox, “Children as respondents in survey research,” 62.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 66.

boredom that can influence the outcomes.¹⁰² There has been critique on this theory of Piaget, mainly because it makes a sharp distinction between stages while some argue that child development is a continuous process. Furthermore, there is the question of cultural and social contexts which might also have an influence on learning and development.¹⁰³ It seems that making the tasks as clear and interesting as possible, so the possibility of distraction is minimal, is the way to go when interviewing or surveying children.

Debra Poole makes some interesting points about interviewing children.¹⁰⁴ In the first chapter of her book, she describes a conversation between a parent and child about what activities the child participated in at school on Friday. It was a very parent-dominated conversation in which the mother mostly decided in what way the conversation developed.¹⁰⁵ Even though it is, according to Poole, not surprising that in conversations between children and parents the parents are dominant, this directive style also infiltrates professionals in their work. Poole refers to an example where the mother did not wait for the child to finish talking before asking a new question, asked for a lot of details, posed multiple questions at the same time, filled in the questions for her daughter and guessed what the answer would be.¹⁰⁶

As I am someone the children do not know and many children are not comfortable around strangers or just very restrained, I feel this is important to keep in mind. Dominating the conversation will probably not help my research. Furthermore, what Poole calls open-ended recall prompts seem the most fitting for this research as she writes that these invite children to just talk about a subject.¹⁰⁷ However, there will also be a couple of focused questions. While using focused questions, the attention should really be on the wording as in these questions there are a lot of words, concepts and grammatical structures that confuse children and causes them to respond to a question that was not even asked by the interviewer.¹⁰⁸ Even though asking a couple of basic questions¹⁰⁹ is important, too many of these in the beginning of the interview tend to make children think they will get a lot of (these

¹⁰² Ibid., 66-67.

¹⁰³ Michelle O'Reilly and Nisha Dogra, "The Interview Encounter – Child and Researcher Factors that Warrant Consideration and their Interaction," in *Interviewing Children and Young People for Research*, ed. Michelle O'Reilly and Nisha Dogra (California: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2018), 153.

¹⁰⁴ Debra A. Poole, "The Science of Interviewing Children," in *Interviewing Children: The Science of Conversation in Forensic Contexts*, ed. D.A. Poole (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2016), 8-10.

¹⁰⁵ Poole, "The Science of Interviewing Children," 10.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 10.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹⁰⁹ For example: "How old are you?", "Where do you live?", "What is your name?". All questions with very short answers.

kind of) questions and that they should provide short answers. This type of questioning declines the chance of children being extensive in their answering¹¹⁰ and this is exactly the opposite of what I want for my research.

The interviews for this research will elaborate on answers given in the questionnaires. We conducted group interviews in a conversation style. The choice was made to do the interview with a group, because the children can interact with each other and engage together in talking about their interests and the filled in questionnaires without focussing too much on me as a researcher. This approach also has similarities with focus groups in a phenomenological way. The goal of an approach like that is to grasp the problem or subject from everyday knowledge and perceptions of specific respondent subgroups.¹¹¹ It is a way to gather a lot of information in a short period of time.

In this research, the choice was made to work with tasks/participatory methods because it was not clear if I could be present while the children filled in the surveys at every school¹¹².¹¹³ There is a text explaining what each task entails. But through tasks, number of questions and concepts were limited. The descriptions were not very short, especially in task one (see Appendix 1). However, they resembled small school assignments children were already familiar with (drawing and looking at images).

2.3.Limitations of this research

As with every research, this study also had its limitations. First, the COVID-19 pandemic brought many uncertainties. Even when the corona measures were lifted, some schools still wanted the children only to fill in the questionnaires when they had time for it. This meant teachers wanted to plan it themselves. For this reason, I was not present at some schools during the filling in of the questionnaires to explain and help if there were any questions. However, I informed all the teachers through an instruction sheet and stressed that they could

¹¹⁰ Poole, "The Science of Interviewing Children," 21-22.

¹¹¹ Sharon Vaughn, Jeanne Shay Schumm and Jane Sinagub, "Application of Focus Group Interviews for Educational and Psychological Research," in *Focus Group Interviews in Education and Psychology*, ed. Sharon Vaughn, Jeanne Shay Schumm & Jane Sinagub (California: Sage Publications, 1996), 4.

¹¹² When I started this research, the corona pandemic was still in full swing. Because of this I was not sure if I could be in class and give the children the surveys. Even when the corona measures were let go, I found out that because the schools were very busy with catching up on work that was left behind because of the pandemic, some of the schools appreciated it if the teachers could just plan filling in the surveys themselves. So, after all it was a good choice making the questionnaire in this way because I was indeed not present by a couple of schools. Of course, with the schools who wanted me to be present, I was.

¹¹³ Michelle O'Reilly and Nisha Dogra, "The Use of Participatory Methods," in *Interviewing Children and Young People for Research*, ed. Michelle O'Reilly and Nisha Dogra (California: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2018), 105.

always contact me if there were any questions. I thus believe the surveys were conducted in a good manner. As aforementioned, I first tested the questionnaires in a test group and emphasized that the children should first try to fill in the questionnaires on their own. They could only ask questions if something was unclear or too difficult. The feedback I received was that all the children filled in the surveys themselves quite easily and that there were not any difficulties or questions. This feedback made me more assured that the questionnaires speak for themselves quite good and could be filled in without too much trouble.

I did however make some changes in the questionnaires after receiving feedback from the test group. In the last version of the questionnaire the option of making a drawing or a word web was added to the first task. Furthermore, it was changed to one question about *what* they had drawn (or made a word web about) and one question about *why* they found that subject important. This was adjusted to make sure that if the drawing or writing of the child was unclear, it was at least explained through these questions. In the second task the question was changed from “Explain why this was your first/second/third pick” to “Give *two reasons* for picking your first/second/third subject.” This was done to get more extensive explanations. Lastly, I changed sentence “About the history of what city, country or part of the world do you think it is *fun* to learn more about” into “About the history of what city, country or part of the world do you think it is *important/interesting* to learn more about” in the third task. This was changed to get more history related answers and less answers related to vacation destinations.

Second, I quickly found out that finding schools willing to participate was extremely difficult because of the many requests they get from students and others for researchers. This became even more a burden for them because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in little reaction and a lot of rejections. Over 50 schools were contacted and only 10 participated. Most of them did so because of people in my network that helped me get into contact with these schools. Another difficulty was that parent permission was required for the children to participate. I immediately got the message from almost every school participating that parents rarely react to letters and that if I got a couple back, that would already be great. I would have preferred to have a large(r) sample of children, and I would have had one if every child from every school could participate. However, because of the low response rate of the parents, the sample was brought down significantly. There were 289 letters sent to the parents, but only 123 got permission. My research thus completely depended on the response of schools and more importantly of the parents. This was by far the most challenging aspect of this research.

Third, the methods I chose for the surveys might not appeal to every child. This was also an aspect that a teacher from one of the schools pointed out to me. He told me that it was a good idea to make the first task of the questionnaire a choice, because some children find it difficult to make a drawing.¹¹⁴ I thus changed task one after this tip and a similar experience with the test group.¹¹⁵ Even though this is something that children do on a regular basis in school as well as at home, this does not mean that every child enjoys making a drawing or mind map. However, I do also realize that when developing questionnaires like this, you cannot appeal to every child.

Fourth, what should be kept in mind is that I am a stranger to the children, and they can be intimidated or might give me the answers they think I would like to hear. Of course, I did my best to be as friendly and welcoming as possible and give the children the feeling that they can tell me whatever they like. I believe that approaching the interviews in a phenomenological manner also lessens the chance of children giving answers they think I would like to hear. In addition, doing it in a conversation style with multiple children at the same time gives the children the opportunity to discuss with their peers with whom they are (hopefully) more comfortable.

Fifth, I have a non-Dutch appearance as I am half Dutch and half Surinamese and have heard from many who do not know me personally that I appear Arabic (mainly Moroccan). While this might be more comforting for children of migrants, this might have the opposite effect on children of Dutch descent. If it comes to discussing certain topics (like, for example slavery or Islam), especially during the interviews, Dutch children might have thought I wanted to hear that they were really interested in that topic. Furthermore, the presence of classmates can also interfere with the answering of the questions. However, this also has advantages as it lessened the focus on me and gave children the opportunity to discuss the questions together.

Seventh, as the scope of this research is not very large, I could not conduct multiple surveys or interviews with the pupils even though this might be beneficial. The children could have become more comfortable over time and I could have gotten better at developing the questionnaires or coming up with more fitting interview questions. However, the time frame of my master thesis was limited.

¹¹⁴ Many thanks to Bert Cuypers from De Hildegardisschool for confirming the thought that I already had and giving me the tip to also add the option to make a mind map for the children who are better with words.

¹¹⁵ One girl in the testgroup made a word web without the option given to her in the task description.

Lastly, although I will try to be as unbiased as possible in my questioning and interpretation of the results, no researcher is completely unbiased. I conduct this study knowing and keeping this in mind and strive to not let personal matters influence my results.

3. The organisation and goals of Dutch primary history education

History should be a course for all pupils in secondary education again, Tom van der Geugten and Maria Grever argue in an article in the NRC. To do this, historical skills and subject knowledge should have more priority through for example paying more attention to

multiperspectivity.¹¹⁶ We agree with Van de Geugten and Grever, however why not start with making history mandatory for every pupil in primary school? This is after all the first place where pupils get familiar with history education. Furthermore, it is the first time they can form an opinion on history being a subject for them or not.

In the previous chapters the relevance and methodology of this research were explained. Before going into the results of this research, the focus in this chapter will be on Dutch primary history education. Particularly on how it is organised, what the goals are and what developments took place in recent years. The emphasis is put on the current status as the aim of this research is to find out how children feel about history education *today*. Going into depth about the developments in history education throughout history is interesting, but not relevant for this study. The question answered in this chapter is: “How is the organisation, what are the goals and what are recent developments in Dutch primary history education?” To answer this question, we mainly use sources from educational institutions, commissions and foundations in the Netherlands who conduct research into education and policy documents.

3.1. What one must know and be able to do after Dutch primary history education

All kinds of developments in society, historiography and in current history education have influence on, or should have impact on the development of the history curriculum. While in the past the subject of history was designed around promotion of patriotism and national pride¹¹⁷, today the historical skills that pupils require are considered as most important. This is not only the case in the Netherlands, but it is something that is regarded important for all European societies. The Council of Europe for instance aims to accomplish a greater harmony between its members.¹¹⁸ The emphasis in primary education in the Netherlands remains mostly on Dutch history and on regional and local history. However, if and when possible, connections are made with European and world history.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Tom van der Geugten and Maria Grever, “Geschiedenis moet weer een vak zijn voor alle leerlingen,” *NRC*, February 13, 2022, <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2022/02/13/geschiedenis-moet-weer-een-vak-zijn-voor-alle-leerlingen-a4088484>.

¹¹⁷ Grever, Maria. “The Netherlands.” In *The Palgrave Handbook of Conflict in History Education*, edited by Luigi Cajani, Simone Lässig and Maria Repoussi (Cham: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2019), 387.

¹¹⁸ *Council of Europe*, “The Committee of Ministers to member states on intercultural dialogue and the image of the other in history teaching,” Accessed on December 30-04-2022, <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016805cc8e1>.

¹¹⁹ Commissie Kennisbasis Pabo, *Een goede basis*, (Den Haag: Vereniging Hogescholen, 2012), 30.

The most important goal of history education in the Netherlands is learning how to think and reason historically through historical interests and knowledge.¹²⁰ What pupils need to learn through history lessons is how to deal with aspects such as continuity and change, facts and opinions and time- and location-relatedness (sense of time). Furthermore, they learn the difference between intended and unintended consequences of actions (cause and effect) of people and for events. Lastly, they learn about developments and structures on a national, European, and global level.¹²¹ History is about citizenship education through orientating oneself in and reflecting on the current diversified society from the point of view of one's own location, and personalization through learning to understand people from a different time or culture and not judging them.¹²² It is about reflecting on your own values and norms and developing a critical perspective. Some of these historical reasoning and thinking abilities are inherent of what *twenty-first century skills* are described as. These are skills like problem-solving, critical analytical thinking, digital literacy, and civic competences.¹²³ The unique contribution of the history subject to the development and education of pupils is to provide overview and insight into a comprehensive world. This world is behind us and at the same time part of our current everyday culture.¹²⁴

The Primary Education Act (WPO¹²⁵) indicates that, besides subjects such as Dutch language, mathematics, physical and sensory exercise, primary education also includes several knowledge areas. In the Netherlands, every knowledge area¹²⁶ in primary and secondary education has *kerndoelen* which can be translated to *core objectives*.¹²⁷ In addition, the law also declares to what, in these knowledge areas, attention must be paid.¹²⁸ The subject of history falls under the knowledge area *Orientation on yourself and the world*¹²⁹ in primary education. This knowledge area is divided into *people and society* (mostly social relations and

¹²⁰ Cees van der Kooij and Ton van der Schans, "Inhoud en didactiek van het vak geschiedenis," in *Kennisbasis Lerarenopleiders: Katern 3: Inhoud en Vakdidactiek op de lerarenopleidingen*, ed. Gerda Geerdink and Ietje Pauw (Eindhoven: Vereniging Lerarenopleiders Nederland (VELON), 2017), 95.

¹²¹ Van der Kooij and Van der Schans, "Inhoud en didactiek," 95-96.

¹²² Ibid., 96.

¹²³ Vereniging van docenten geschiedenis en staatsinrichting in Nederland (VGN), *Bij de tijd door het schoolvak geschiedenis: een visie van geschiedenisdocenten op hun vak*, (Utrecht: VGN, 2016), 10.

¹²⁴ Vereniging van docenten geschiedenis en staatsinrichting in Nederland (VGN), *Bij de Tijd 2 geschiedenis* (Utrecht: VGN, 2017), 11.

¹²⁵ The Dutch translation is: *Wet op het primair onderwijs*.

¹²⁶ The Dutch translation is: *leergebied*.

¹²⁷ "Kerndoelen," primair onderwijs, *SLO*, October 29, 2021, <https://www.slo.nl/sectoren/po/kerndoelen/>.

¹²⁸ Inspectie van Onderwijs, "Themaonderzoek Wereldoriëntatie - De stand van zaken in het basisonderwijs," (2015): 17.

¹²⁹ The Dutch translation is: *Oriëntatie op jezelf en de wereld*.

policy aspects¹³⁰), *nature and technic* (mostly biology), *space* (mostly geography) and *time* (mostly history).¹³¹ If and when possible, the four subjects are related to each other and to other subjects such as *artistic orientation* or *mathematics*.¹³² Within this *knowledge area* pupils put emphasis on themselves, on the interaction of people, on problem solving and giving meaning to their being. Within the learning area of *Orientation on yourself and the world*, there is a divide made between *on nature* and *on the world*. Regarding *orientation on nature*, it is about yourself, plants and animals and natural occurrences. *Orientation on the world* (or *world orientation*) then encompasses the construction of a view on the world through the frames of reference *time* and *space*.¹³³ History education in Dutch primary school starts in the lower years with a first look towards *daily time* and *biological time* and a glimpse into *historical time*. As off grade 5, pupils begin to grasp the aspect of historical time more and focus on *historical awareness* and the *orientation of past, present and future*.¹³⁴

History falls for the most part under the frame of reference *time* and has in primary education three *core objectives*: 51, 52 and 53. *Core objective 51* states that children learn how to use simple historical sources and with this how to deal with time and the division of time.¹³⁵ *Core objective 52* adds that pupils are expected to learn about *the ten time frames*¹³⁶ and their *characteristic aspects*.¹³⁷ The 50 windows of *the Dutch Canon* serve to illustrate *the ten time frames*. More about the contents of *the ten time frames* and *the Dutch Canon* later on in this chapter. The part about *the canon* has been added to this core goal since 2010¹³⁸ when it was implemented into primary and secondary education.¹³⁹ Pupils learn through examples about eminent historical figures and events in history and their connection to global history according to *core objective 53*.¹⁴⁰ At first, it was believed that *core objectives* should contain specific formulations and enable uniform learning results. This view was later changed to

¹³⁰ Anton Bakker en Matthijs Driebergen, *Mens en maatschappij in het basisonderwijs: Domeinbeschrijving ten behoeve van peilingsonderzoek*, (Enschede: SLO, 2020), 9.

¹³¹ SLO nationaal expertisecentrum leerplanontwikkeling, *Kerdoelen primair onderwijs 2006. Overduik uit het kerndoelenboekje dat verscheen bij de introductie, inclusief latere wettelijke aanvullingen op deze kerndoelen*, (Amersfoort: SLO, 2020), 18-22.

¹³² SLO, *Kerdoelen primair onderwijs 2006.*, 18.

¹³³ Ibid., 18.

¹³⁴ Commissie Kennisbasis Pabo, *Een goede basis*, 25.

¹³⁵ SLO, *Kerdoelen primair onderwijs 2006*, 22.

¹³⁶ The Dutch translation is: *de tien tijdvakken*.

¹³⁷ The Dutch translation is: *de kenmerkende aspecten*.

¹³⁸ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, *Staatsblad van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 2010*, no. 37.

¹³⁹ SLO nationaal expertisecentrum leerplanontwikkeling, *Geschiedenis: Vakspecifieke trendanalyse 2016* (Enschede, SLO, 2016), 15.

¹⁴⁰ SLO, *Kerdoelen primair onderwijs 2006*, 22.

stimulate freedom of organization of the curriculum of schools.¹⁴¹ However, the term *core objectives* is defined as the goals of what pupils should be capable of doing and have knowledge of when leaving primary school.¹⁴²

So, how do these *core objectives* lead to the desired results? The Education Inspection did a study into the situation of *world orientation* in 2015. This study stated that in another research done by Cito the standards which were being set (also through the *core objectives*) in 2003 were not even close to being reached in 2008.¹⁴³ The standard minimum is only tested for two subjects of history. However, more than 80 percent of the students at least achieves the level of the standard minimum for other subjects. When it comes to achievement of the standard pass, the learning results for history are according to this study unsatisfactory to say the least. Of the pupils, 70-75 percent are not able to pass for any historical subject.¹⁴⁴ The best results were achieved on the topics “prehistory”, “awareness of time” and “20th century”. This was where the sufficient standard was achieved by at least 50 percent of the pupils. In three subjects – “Medieval Ages”, “Modern History: The Republic” and “Modern History: 19th Century” – the sufficient standard is achieved by less than 40 percent.¹⁴⁵ Language is deemed as a reason for the low results for the subject history and very important for *world orientation*. As mentioned in a brochure created by the Educational Inspection, especially children of whom the language at home is not Dutch are at risk of finding *world orientation* more challenging.¹⁴⁶ This is thus partly the reason for children to not excel in this knowledge area. Differences in interests, gender or (migration) backgrounds and the possibility of those differences influencing the performance of children, are ignored in this brochure.

However, earlier research done by Scula and referred to in the trend analysis of SLO, the Curriculum Development Foundation, has also shown that there is a difference between how boys and girls perform. The largest differences are observed in the subjects of *topography* and *history*.¹⁴⁷ However, this does not necessarily have to do with the intelligence of girls or boys, as is also stated in the analysis. It could for instance be because of their

¹⁴¹ Orhan Ağırdağ et al., *Doel en ruimte: Tussenadvies 2 Wetenschappelijke Curriculumcommissie*, (Amersfoort: Curriculumcommissie, 2021), 18.

¹⁴² Theo Beker et al., *De canon in het primair onderwijs*, (Enschede: SLO, 2009), 11.

¹⁴³ Inspectie van Onderwijs, “Themaonderzoek Wereldoriëntatie,” 43.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 43.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 43-44.

¹⁴⁶ Inspectie van Onderwijs, “Wereldoriëntatie in de kijker: De huidige praktijk, met voorbeelden en vragen ter inspiratie,” (2016): 17.

¹⁴⁷ SLO, *Geschiedenis*, 28.

anxiety, skills or interests. Overall, the most substantial differences are found between children individually.¹⁴⁸

3.2. Recent developments towards *multiperspectivity* in the Netherlands

In May 2020 SLO was given the task to draw up an advice about *the core objectives* for the frames of reference *time* and *space* for primary and secondary education. In April 2022 the final advice was given, and the emphasis seems to be on *multiperspectivity* in this document.¹⁴⁹ Several discussions had already been started in relation to this subject in Dutch politics. In 2020, for example, the House of Representatives passed a motion regarding the subject. This motion stated that in the curriculum there was a need for including proposals on how discrimination, racism, anti-Semitism, migration history and the colonial past could be firmly embedded in the Dutch curriculum. This should be up for discussion when the core objectives for primary and secondary education are determined.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, a new commission started in 2021 because it was deemed important to strengthen the knowledge among all Dutch citizens about the former Dutch East Indies.¹⁵¹ The Advice Dialogue Group Slavery Past “Chains of the Past” also concluded in 2021 that the Netherlands should proceed to first of all recognize the slavery past, apologize for it and make amends.¹⁵² More attention to the slavery past and discrimination in Dutch education, especially in pedagogic studies, was one of the recommendations in this report.¹⁵³ In addition, in articles VI and VII was added in the law that imparting respect for and knowledge about differences in political opinion, belief, religion, gender, origin, sexual orientation or disability are part of the basic values at school. This was done to provide more clarity on citizenship values. Even though these differences

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 28.

¹⁴⁹ Werkgroep Referentiekaders Ruimte en Tijd, *Eindadvies referentiekaders Ruimte en Tijd*, (Amersfoort: SLO, 2022), 6.

¹⁵⁰ K.A.E. van den Hul, Lisa Westerveld and Lammert van Raan, *Gewijzigde motie van het lid Van den Hul c.s. over de uitwerking van de kerndoelen ten aanzien van racisme, discriminatie, antisemitisme, koloniaal verleden en migratiegeschiedenis*, kamerstuknummer: 31293-540, Den Haag: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2020.

¹⁵¹ “Nieuwe commissie aan de slag met vergroten kennis over geschiedenis Nederlands-Indië,” Nieuws, Rijksoverheid, 25-10-2021, accessed on 03-05-2022,

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2021/10/25/nieuwe-commissie-aan-de-slag-met-vergroten-kennis-over-geschiedenis-nederlands-indie>.

¹⁵² “Advies Dialooggroep Slavernijverleden ‘Ketenen van het Verleden’,” Ministerie van Binnelandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties: Documenten, Rijksoverheid, accessed on 03-05-2022, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2021/07/01/adviescollege-dialooggroep-slavernijverleden-presenteert-eindrapport-ketenen-van-het-verleden>.

¹⁵³ Adviescollege Dialooggroep Slavernijverleden, “Ketenen van het Verleden: Rapport van Bevindingen,” (2021), 8.

exist, according to the law people should be treated equally in equal situations.¹⁵⁴ Even in the coalition agreement of 2021 it was mentioned that the government wanted to have more attention to the shared history of the Netherlands. Hence, the government is now contributing to a Slavery Museum and a National History Museum.¹⁵⁵ It was also stated that leading up to the slavery commemoration year 2023, the government would pay additional attention to conversation regarding the slavery past, but also to racism today.¹⁵⁶ The aforementioned developments are only a few examples which show the importance of *multiperspectivity* within (history) education and society. This is however seen from a top-down perspective – politics in this case. As it is stated in the final advice of SLO, it shows that what is politically sought after and what is achievable and desirable at schools to be established, does not always match.¹⁵⁷

In the final advice from SLO regarding for the frame of reference *space* in primary education, it is stated that multiple perspectives should be studied. This means that multiple experiences, points of view and interests of (groups of) people and organizations are discussed.¹⁵⁸ Within the frame of reference *time*, there is reference to studying historical developments as much as possible from multiple dimensions and perspectives. This could be done through looking at perspectives and experiences of different historical figures and through comparing historical perspectives and experiences of historical figures to people in the present. It could also be done through looking at various dimensions (population, governance, culture, religion et cetera), different scales (locally, regionally, nationally, continentally, and globally) and various stories about developments in history.¹⁵⁹

History thus seems to be important for the pupils' personal development and the acquirement of certain (twenty-first century) skills. Furthermore, there is a desire for *multiperspectivity* within (history) education from the government. Yet, the question is how much of these skills the children acquire and how much time there is for various perspectives during their primary education, because even though most educators teach history as a separate subject, the time spent on history in primary schools is only around one hour per

¹⁵⁴ Tweede Kamer, *Wijziging van een aantal onderwijswetten in verband met verduidelijking van de burgerschapsopdracht aan scholen in het funderend onderwijs*, kamerstuknummer: 35 352-29, Den Haag: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2021.

¹⁵⁵ Ministerie van Onderwijs Cultuur en Wetenschap, *Uitgangspunten cultuurbeleid 2021-2024*, 23. <https://open.overheid.nl/repository/ronl-20e8457f-f019-40b4-a8d7-8a658fc59a9c/1/pdf/Uitgangspunten%20Nieuw%20Cultuurstelsel%20.pdf>

¹⁵⁶ VVD, D66, CDA and Christenunie, "Omzien naar elkaar, vooruitkijken naar de toekomst: Coalitieakkoord 2021 – 2025," (December 15, 2021): 32.

¹⁵⁷ Ağirdağ et al., *Doel en ruimte*, 6.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 9.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 11-12.

week.¹⁶⁰ In addition, half of the teachers think the curriculum is overloaded which might not leave enough room to really work on practicing these skills.¹⁶¹

3.3. The organisation of primary history education in the Netherlands

The ten time frames

Primary schools are free to determine how they give form and content to the subject matter that is aimed at achieving *the core objectives*. They can choose from a variety of methods.¹⁶² However, the structure of the course history is defined by *the ten time frames*.¹⁶³ *The ten time frames* today are:

1. Tijd van jagers en boeren; (time of hunters and farmers)	up until 3000 BC
2. Tijd van grieken en Romeinen; (time of Greeks and Romans)	3000 BC – 500 AD
3. Tijd van monniken en ridders; (time of monks and knights)	500 – 1000
4. Tijd van steden en staten; (time of cities and states)	1000 – 1500
5. Tijd van ontdekkers en hervormers; (time of discoverers and reformers)	1500 – 1600
6. Tijd van regenten en vorsten; (time of regents and monarchs)	1600 – 1700
7. Tijd van pruiken en revoluties; (time of wigs and revolutions)	1700 – 1800
8. Tijd van burgers en stoommachines; (time of citizens and steam engines)	1800 – 1900
9. Tijd van wereldoorlogen en Holocaust; (time of world wars and Holocaust)	1900 – 1950
10. Tijd van televisie en computer (time of television and computer)	1950 – ¹⁶⁴
(Author translation)	

All these time frames have two *characteristic aspects*¹⁶⁵. The aspects in general refer to the characteristics of developments and the way of life in a certain time frame. For example, in the time frame “discoverers and reformers” the characteristic aspects are: “the beginning of the overseas European expansion” and “the Dutch Revolt and the emergence of an independent Dutch state.”¹⁶⁶ *The ten time frames* were introduced by the commission The Rooy to stimulate the most important outcome of historical education: having historical awareness. Historical awareness is not the same as chronological insight or chronological awareness. Yet, a chronologically correct framework was useful for the formation of a historical-social reality, as written in the trend analysis of the SLO. In conjunction with the, to

¹⁶⁰ SLO, *Geschiedenis*, 19.

¹⁶¹ Cito, *Balans van het geschiedenisonderwijs aan het einde van de basisschool 4: uitkomsten van de vierde peiling in 2008*, (Arnhem: Uitgave Stichting Cito Instituut voor Toetsontwikkeling, 2010), 45.

¹⁶² Inspectie van Onderwijs, “Themaonderzoek Wereldoriëntatie,” 18.

¹⁶³ Inspectie van Onderwijs, “Themaonderzoek Wereldoriëntatie,” 97.

¹⁶⁴ SLO, *Kerdoelen primair onderwijs 2006*, 22.

and Beker et al., *De canon*, 13.

¹⁶⁵ The Dutch translation is: *kenmerkende aspecten*.

¹⁶⁶ Beker et al., *De canon*, 9.

most, now very familiar pictograms which can be seen in figure 3.1, pupils could (learn to) use *the ten time frames* as a tool to order developments, phenomena, events and people in a historical way.¹⁶⁷ This is in addition to the way of ordering the past in certain periods, namely: prehistorie (prehistory), oudheid (antiquity), middeleeuwen (middle ages), nieuwe geschiedenis (early modern history) and nieuwste geschiedenis (modern history).¹⁶⁸

Figure 3.1. The pictograms of the *ten time frames*.



Source: “Uitleg leren kenmerkende aspecten 10 tijdvakken geschiedenisexamen havo vwo,” Tijdvakken Geschiedenis: tools online leren, Marlin, accessed 03-05-2022, <https://www.burkunk.nl/tv/>.

The trend analysis of SLO also mentions the critiques given about this approach to history. Some critics stated that this new way of ordering the past did not make it easier to create an approach that stimulates international interchangeability of the curriculum. Further, there were critiques on the ordering of the time frames and it not being scientific. The individual names of *the ten time frames*, were also under attack for being too childish. Further critiques were about the emphasis only being on the west and the reproachment of Eurocentricity.¹⁶⁹ Despite these critiques, *the ten time frames* were implemented in primary and secondary education. The commission explained that the goal was to make the historical periods graspable for the children, and the time frames were thus not chosen on scientific grounds. Moreover, the names were chosen to make it more appealing for children in primary school.¹⁷⁰ The critique about Eurocentrism was refuted by the very limited time there is available for history education. Hence, discussing *global history* would be too complex. The commission also rejected the critique of this approach not appealing to migrant children or

¹⁶⁷ SLO, *Geschiedenis*, 11-12.

¹⁶⁸ Beker et al., *De canon*, 12.

¹⁶⁹ SLO, *Geschiedenis*, 13.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

children with (a) migrant(s) parent(s) or them not recognizing themselves in this education. It was, according to them, not necessarily the case that these children identify with the country of their parents or grandparents. The same applies to Dutch children who do not automatically like subjects like the Dutch Revolt or Christianity. This seems to be somewhat contradicting though. Because if Dutch children just like children with a migration background do not necessarily like topics related to Dutch history; why then put the emphasis so much on national history? But as the commission stated, all children must function in Dutch society and that was most important.¹⁷¹

However, with the recent developments, *multiperspectivity* is high on the agenda. This can also be noticed in the final advice of the SLO wherein it is illustrated how *multiperspectivity* can be implemented in the reference frames *space* and *time*. Pupils should, for instance, be able to localize current migration patterns and learn about China, the Middle East, America, Iraq, and Syria in the time frame “hunters and farmers”. In addition, children should learn about varying theories regarding the causes of the agricultural revolution. The life of the enslaved and what slavery meant for enslaved people is also discussed. And how there are different stories about the “discovery” of America and the differences in views on slavery in different times throughout history and current times is addressed.¹⁷² The “classical” time periods in this document are described as: prehistorie (prehistory), oudheid (antiquity), middeleeuwen (middle ages), vroegmoderne tijd (early modern times) and moderne tijd (modern times). They also suggest new names for almost all the time frames and brought them back to only six (two being in the same time period) instead of ten. The advice for the new time frames is as follows¹⁷³:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Tijd van jagers en boeren; (time of hunters and farmers) – | up until
approx. 3000 BC |
| 2. Tijd van oude rijken; (time of ancient empires) | 3000 BC – 5000 AD |
| 3. Tijd van standen en steden; (time of classes and cities) | 500 – 1500 |
| 4. Tijd van pakhuizen en plantages; (time of warehouses and plantations) | 1500 - 1800 |
| 5. Tijd van burgers en stoommachines /Tijd van Wereldoorlogen en mensenrechten .
(time of citizens and steam engines/time of World Wars and human rights) | 1800 - present ¹⁷⁴
(Author translation) |

They also propose changes in a lot of the *characteristic aspects*. Almost all the time frames, except the first one, have more than two of these *characteristic aspects* and all kinds of

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Werkgroep Referentiekaders, *Eindadvies referentiekaders*, 6.

¹⁷³ The time frames with new names are bold.

¹⁷⁴ Werkgroep Referentiekaders, *Eindadvies referentiekaders*, 15-16.

historical terms have been adjusted or added. Noticeable is also that in these *characteristic aspects* the wording is more general than in the one that is now implemented in which quite a few times, words such as “European”, “in the Netherlands” or “east and west” are used.¹⁷⁵ For example, to name a few *characteristic aspects* which we perceive as “general”: “nieuwe ideeën over de mens” (new ideas about mankind), “groeiende belangstelling voor wetenschap en uitvinding van technieken” (growing interest in science and invention of new techniques), “opkomst en toepassing van totalitaire ideologieën” (emergence and application of totalitarian ideologies) and “groei van welvaart en diversiteit” (growth of prosperity and diversity).¹⁷⁶ These are all neutral in their formulation and can be treated in class from multiple perspectives. They are thus working hand in hand with the political desire of stimulating more *multiperspectivity*. Because this final advice was only recently presented (April 2022), there is no clarity yet on whether it will be implemented in this way.

The Dutch Canon

The historical and cultural Canon of the Netherlands was first introduced in 2006 at the request of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science Maria J.A. van der Hoeven¹⁷⁷ to strengthen the cultural-pedagogic function of education,¹⁷⁸ and was implemented in the curriculum for primary and secondary education in 2010.¹⁷⁹ In the institutional decision is written that the minister considered that there was not enough shared knowledge about history, culture, and society. Therefore, it was desirable to have a canon developed. This canon required the input of science, culture and education.¹⁸⁰ *The Dutch Canon* was created to give the future generations the valuable parts of the culture and history of the Netherlands through education. This was needed because many, according to the Education Council, but especially the youth did not have enough knowledge about these valuable parts of Dutch history.¹⁸¹ The integration problems and an increasing amount of children following Dutch education not being of Dutch descent, also played a role in the idea that there was a need to

¹⁷⁵ Beker et al., *De canon*, 13.

¹⁷⁶ Werkgroep Referentiekaders, *Eindadvies referentiekaders*, 15-16.

¹⁷⁷ Maria J.A. van der Hoeven, *Taakopdracht voor de Commissie Ontwikkeling Nederlandse Canon*, ons kenmerk: ASEA/DIR/2005/23876, Den Haag: OCW, 2005.

¹⁷⁸ Maria J.A. van der Hoeven, *Advies en beleidsreactie canon*, ons kenmerk: MT/OCW 2006/39745, Den Haag: OCW, 2006.

¹⁷⁹ SLO, *Geschiedenis*, 15.

¹⁸⁰ Maria J.A. van der Hoeven, *Instellingsbesluit Commissie Ontwikkeling Nederlandse Canon*, kenmerk: MT/OCW 2006/39745, Den Haag: OCW, 2006.

¹⁸¹ Commissie Ontwikkeling Nederlandse Canon, *Canon van Nederland* (Den Haag: Ministerie van OCW, 2006), 14.

educate well regarding the Dutch culture and history.¹⁸² Hence, *the Canon* was developed to brush up the knowledge of the youth and to make sure that the Netherlands revalued its own identity. It was also created to prevent the feeling of a loss of own culture because of unification of countries in Europe and to allow newcomers to integrate better.¹⁸³ *The Dutch Canon* is a cultural-historical one which means that it carries a responsibility for the whole of education in the Netherlands. Even though most would be discussed in history, a great amount could also be addressed in other subjects.¹⁸⁴ The fifty windows of the canon were there as a bundle that everyone should become familiar with who goes through education in the Netherlands. Yet the windows themselves do not compose a detailed curriculum and it should also not be seen as separate school subject. Further, the content of the windows was not intended to be limiting or restrictive.¹⁸⁵

As of today, there is a reassessed canon with seven new outlines, ten new windows and all texts belonging to them adjusted. This new canon was created by the Kennedy commission after being asked to reassess the canon in 2019. Just like in the years 2005-2006, the aim for this reassessment was to achieve shared (cultural) historical knowledge and broader social and cultural knowledge regarding the Netherlands in an especially European context.¹⁸⁶ The Minister of Education, Culture and Science, Ingrid van Engelshoven, emphasized that the Kennedy commission needed to pay attention to the breadth of the canon, the perspectives and stories of different groups within society and the dark sides of Dutch history –again emphasizing *multiperspectivity*.¹⁸⁷ Due to the sometimes fiery discussions regarding the Dutch identity, the minister deemed it extremely important that the commission did its work without any political interference. The part about “attention to the dark sides of Dutch history”¹⁸⁸ was for this reason later removed from the task description.¹⁸⁹

The first canon gained criticism mainly on its contents. The critiques are similar to the ones about *the ten time frames*. The focus of the canon is specifically Dutch, and it has a nationalistic character. Worries were about the dominant position of white men and the canon being quite political. Furthermore, teachers struggle to connect *the Dutch Canon* with *the ten*

¹⁸² Commissie Ontwikkeling, *Canon*, 14.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 18-19.

¹⁸⁴ Beker et al., *De canon*, 9.

¹⁸⁵ Commissie Ontwikkeling, *Canon*, 43-44.

¹⁸⁶ Ingrid van Engelshoven, *Opdrachtbrief herijking Canon van Nederland*, (Den Haag: Ministerie van OCW, 2019), 1.

¹⁸⁷ Van Engelshoven, *Opdrachtbrief herijking Canon*, 1.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 1. Author translation.

¹⁸⁹ Lenny Geluk-Poortvliet, Thierry Aartsen, Martin Bosma, Roelof Bisschop, Thierry Baudet, *Motie van het lid Geluk-Poortvliet C.S.*, Den Haag: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, kamerstuknummer: 32 820-296.

time frames and the fragmented character (50 separate windows) are also causing difficulties.¹⁹⁰ The Kennedy commission, however, chose to maintain the overall idea of a canon in windows, also keeping the underlying fundamentals. Four windows kept their icon but got a new name or a new point of view. Ten windows are completely new, thirty-six remained the same and ten did not make their return¹⁹¹. However, all fifty texts about the windows were recomposed.¹⁹² They also introduced seven new *outlines*¹⁹³, but this is a relatively unknown aspect of *the Canon* and will not be discussed further.¹⁹⁴

From the ten new windows, four are women: *Trijntje*, *Maria van Bourgondië* (Mary of Burgundy), *Sara Burgerhart* and *Marga Klompé*.¹⁹⁵ The commission claims to, through these additions, make clear and visible that women not only played a part in modern history, but throughout Dutch history.¹⁹⁶ The place of religion was also broadened through the window of *Maria van Bourgondië*.¹⁹⁷

Two completely new windows *Anton de Kom* and *De gastarbeiders* (The guestworkers) are regarding slavery history and Dutch citizens with a migration background. Two other windows in relation to this subject changed names: *De VOC* became *De VOC en de WIC* (United East India Company and West India Company) and *Suriname en de Nederlandse Antillen* (Suriname and the Dutch Antilles) were changed into *Het Caribisch Gebied* (The Caribbean).¹⁹⁸ The commission argues that there is now more attention to minority groups such as marrons through the windows of *Slavernij* (slavery) and *De gastarbeiders* guest workers.¹⁹⁹ According to the commission *the Dutch Canon* was however already quite balanced in putting so-called “black pages” on the agenda with separate windows for *Slavernij* (slavery), *Max Havelaar*, *Anne Frank*, *Indonesië* (Indonesia) and *Srebrenica*.²⁰⁰

They did strive for sufficient insight into multivoicedness to show the complexity of the past and to shed light on different perspectives within a window. They claim to do this

¹⁹⁰ Commissie Herijking Canon van Nederland, *Open vensters voor onze tijd: De Canon van Nederland Herijkt*, (Utrecht: Stichting entoen.nu, 2020), 15-19.

¹⁹¹ Commissie Herijking Canon, *Open vensters voor onze tijd*, 24: The ten windows that did not make their return in the new canon are: “Floris V, Karel V, De Republiek, Grachtengordel, Buitenhuisen, De Stijl, Willem Drees, Crisis Jaren, Veelgekleurd Nederland and De gasbel”

¹⁹² Commissie Herijking Canon, *Open vensters voor onze tijd*, 27-28.

¹⁹³ The Dutch translation is: *hoofdlijnen*.

¹⁹⁴ For more information on this, see: *Ibid.*, 21-22.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁹⁶ Tuithof, Kennedy and Goudsmit, “Nabeschouwing,” 307-308.

¹⁹⁷ Commissie Herijking Canon, *Open vensters voor onze tijd*, 25.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

through the new window of *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt*; how they do it however is not mentioned.²⁰¹ The commission also writes about the incorporation of “the common people” and religion in the new texts and in the new window *Jeroen Bosch* (Hieronymus Bosch) where the poor, travellers and pilgrims are discussed. The “common people” are also mentioned in the new window *Kolen en Gas* (Coal and Gas) of which miners are the icon. *Verzet tegen kinderarbeid* (Resistance against child labor) became *Het Kinderwetje van Van Houten* (Van Houten's Children's Act) and here again the common people, factory children in this case, are discussed.

Het Oranjegevoel (The Dutch royalist feeling) is the last new window. The commission claims that in recent years, it has been the women's teams in sport that kept this feeling alive, thus again referring to the role of women.²⁰² At the same time, the role that is given to sport in the Dutch Royalist feeling window shows according to the commission that participation is possible for many groups and individuals who themselves or whose ancestors came from other parts of the world.²⁰³ The last name change was *De Beeldenstorm* (The Iconoclasm) that became *De Opstand* (The Revolt) but still departs from the Iconoclasm and has kept the associated icon.²⁰⁴ The commission states also creating multivoicedness through creating room for more than one name in a window. For example, they added Wilhelmina Drucker in the text about *Aletta Jacobs*, Tula in the *Slavernij* window, Murat Isik in the *De gastarbeiders* window and de Bataafse Republiek (the Batavian Republic) in *De patriotten* (the patriots) window.²⁰⁵

The aim of *the Dutch Canon* is thus mainly to strengthen the shared knowledge of the history and culture of the Netherlands. Consequently, the focus not prominently being on *multiperspectivity* is not unexpected. However as in the previous part described, changes have been made to create possibilities towards *multiperspectivity*. Earlier research has shown that pabo students do embrace the ideal of multiperspectivity in education. However, they do not necessarily see it as a possibility to create a complete narrative when combining all these perspectives.²⁰⁶ Furthermore, for reasons like having too little time or fearing fiery discussions in class, history teachers regularly quickly discard the exchange of perspectives and rely on a mainly one-dimensional way of teaching through textbooks²⁰⁷ (and their earlier

²⁰¹ Ibid., 24.

²⁰² Ibid., 25.

²⁰³ Tuithof, Kennedy and Goudsmit, “Nabeschouwing,” 308.

²⁰⁴ Commissie Herijking Canon, *Open vensters voor onze tijd*, 27.

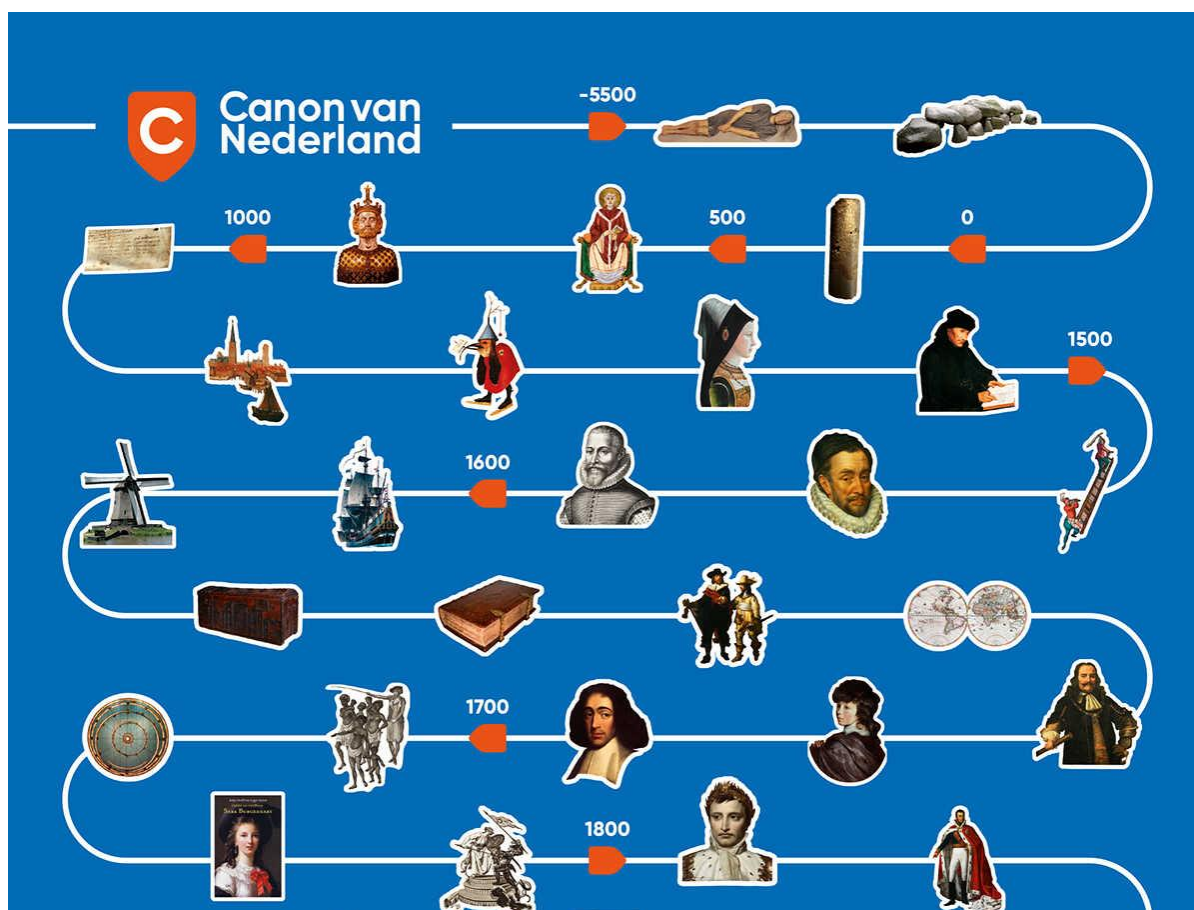
²⁰⁵ Tuithof, Kennedy and Goudsmit, “Nabeschouwing,” 308.

²⁰⁶ Huisman, “Er missen kanten,” 114.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 114.

mentioned methods). Especially with subjects which are sensitive, teachers tend to emphasize on transmission of own interpretations and values that are dominant. This leaves little to no room for sources of pupils or *multiperspectivity*.²⁰⁸ Research into how this new canon is utilized by teachers has not been done yet, but it would be interesting to see if the new canon is also used to create more *multiperspectivity*.

Figure 3.2. Part of *The Dutch Canon* since 2020.



Source: “NIEUWE-CANON-VAN-NEDERLAND,” boekrecensies en leestips voor de bovenbouw, Leesbevordering in de klas, <https://leesbevorderingindeklas.nl/geschiedenis/attachment/nieuwe-canon-van-nederland/>.

In this chapter, it has become clear that the recent developments are focussed on creating more opportunities for integrating multiple perspectives. Dutch history education, however, is based around *core objectives*, *the ten time frames* and *the Dutch Canon*. *The core objectives* are there to help the children acquire so-called twenty-first century skills. *The ten time frames*

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 114-115.

make history more appealing and tangible. *The Dutch Canon* is there to illustrate *the ten time frames* and promote knowledge about Dutch culture and history. *The ten time frames* as well as the canon have mainly received critiques of their approach being too nationally orientated. Developments can be seen towards *multiperspectivity* though. In a recent advice from SLO about the *frames of reference space and time*, the focus was already directed at *multiperspectivity*. Whether it will be implemented in this way is not clear yet. *The Dutch Canon* has been reassessed in 2020, but overall, the emphasis is still on the Netherlands and the European context. There are however, if the canon is studied, opportunities to link windows to international (historical) events and multiple perspectives. Despite this multiperspective outlook being the desire from Dutch politics, it does not always fit within the curriculum. Teachers feel the curriculum is overloaded which leaves them with little to no room for in-depth discussions in history lessons. In addition, they sometimes feel uncomfortable discussing topics that are emotionally charged and struggle with leaving their own dominant views behind to incorporate others. In short: there are developments towards creating *multiperspectivity* in history education, but the implementation still proves to be difficult.

4. The interests of primary school pupils in Rotterdam

It has become clear in the previous chapter that *multiperspectivity* being stimulated through education is an important topic in Dutch politics, but also concerns many in Dutch society. Most of the time decisions that are made about how education should be organised, are from a top-down approach. This causes the children in primary school, in this case, not to be involved in the decisions that are made. The children in the last grade of primary school were given the chance to give their opinion on something in this study that concerns them but in which they are seldom included – developing new (history) education.

The main research questions of this chapter are: “What do pupils in the last grade of primary school in Rotterdam find most interesting regarding history subjects?” and “Can the results be explained by the background features *migration background*, *gender*, and *religion*?” The questions are answered mainly through the interpretation of the individual answers given in the questionnaires and during the interviews. However, some of the results are answered by using a dataset composed of the quantitative results of the questionnaire. We use quotes directly from the questionnaires, but in English translation. If they made spelling, language or grammatical mistakes we correct these. However, we will not change the order of sentences to keep it as close to the original answer as possible.

4.1. The results regarding *migration background*

The results from task 1 regarding *migration background*

In task 1, the children were asked to make a drawing or word web about a subject in history that is most important to them (see Appendix 1). The question was open, so there were no options given in this task. This was done to get a sense of what children would choose if it was completely up to them to decide about subjects. As there were 123 children participating in the research and they all filled in their own interests, the answers are consequently very diverse. It is impossible to discuss all questionnaires in this section even though a lot are very interesting. To study the results from task one, the choice has been made to first look into the subjects from *the Dutch canon* that were chosen. Out of the 33 Dutch children without a migration background, 25 (75.6%) selected a topic related to the canon. Out of the 90 children with a migration background, 65 (72.2%) chose a topic which is in the canon. However, 18 (27.7%) children out of the latter group selected multiple historical topics from which the others were not in the canon. To get a better sense of which topics are popular amongst the children regarding the canon, table 4.1 was made.

Table 4.1. *Children choosing topics out of the Dutch canon divided in with or without migration background.*

	Dutch children without migration background	Percentage of topic chosen within subgroup	Children with a migration background	Percentage of topic chosen within subgroup
WWII	18	72.0	24	36.9
Slavery/VOC/WIC	1	4.0	12	18.5
WOI	1	4.0	3	4.6
Science/technology	-	-	2	3.1
Golden Age	1	4.0	4	6.2
Rights	-	-	1	1.5
Labour	-	-	1	1.5
Knights/Middle Ages	1	4.0	2	3.1
Romans	3	12	2	3.1
Europe	-	-	1	1.5
Terrorism 9/11	-	-	1	1.5
Religion	-	-	12	18.5
Total	25	100.0	65	100.0

Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *questionnaires interests in history of primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

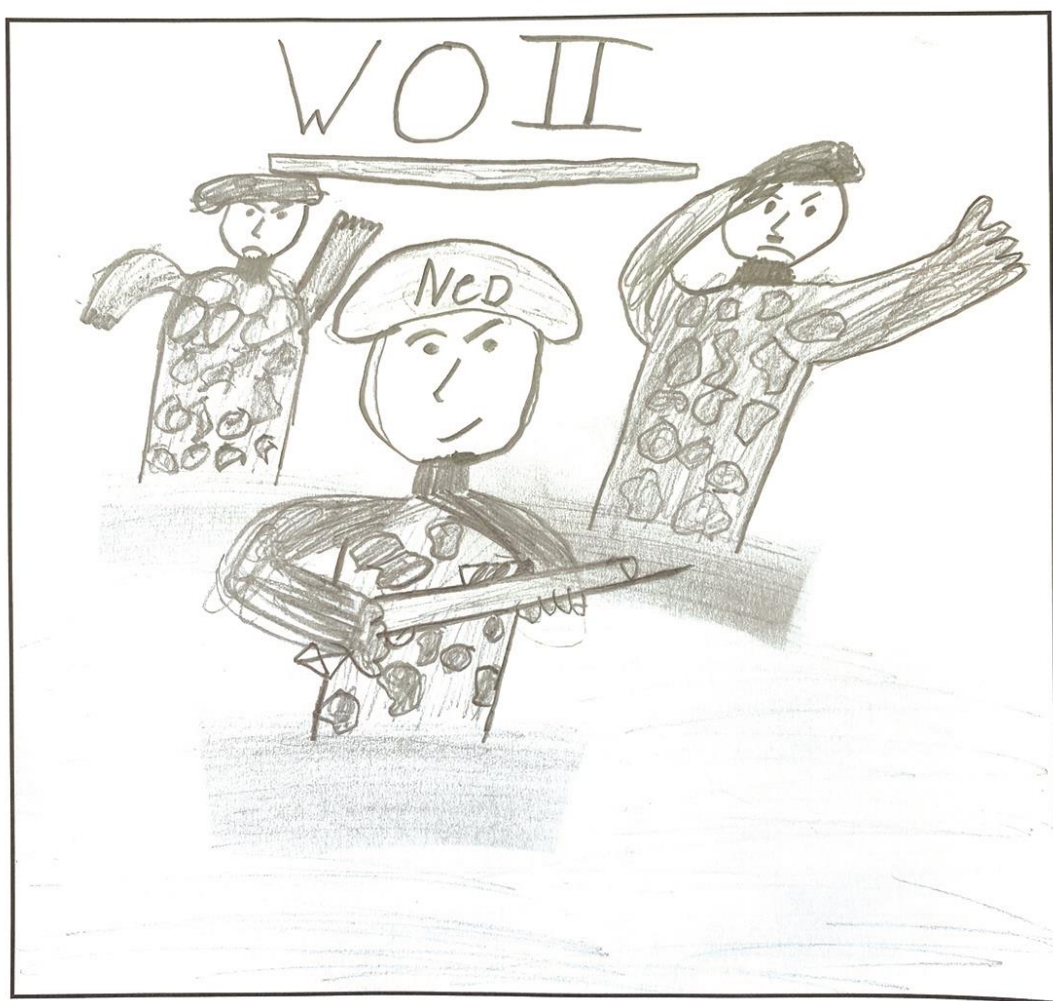
The results from task 1 regarding Dutch children without a migration background

Table 4.1 shows the subjects that were chosen out of the Dutch Canon amongst Dutch children in absolute numbers and percentages in the first two columns. It is clear that *The Second World War* is the subject chosen the most. However, these children do not only relate this subject to the school curriculum. They also relate it to family members, as can be read in the following explanation:

I especially find the Second World War important and interesting. Also, because there are a lot of interesting stories written about it. For example, about Anne Frank, The boy in the striped pyjama and others. The war was also so close actually, my own grandfather and grandmother were born in the Second World War, however they do not remember anything about it anymore.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ Questionnaire number 37, task 1.

Figure 4.1. Example of drawing made about The Second World War in task 1.



Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *questionnaires interests in history of primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

A Dutch girl also referred to a family member being part of the reason why she chose this subject in task 1 during the interviews:

And what do you find so interesting about the First and Second World War?

Fleur²¹⁰: Well, everything that happened.

Uhu.

Fleur: Because you have never experienced that yourself.

That is true

Fleur: So, you know now... well I have a great-grandmother who also experienced the World War...

Oh.

Fleur: So now I know things about the Second World War

And has she ever told something about it herself or other people in the family?

Fleur: Yes, that people had to hide in the basement...

Uhu.

²¹⁰ All names have been changed to keep the identity of the children who participated in the interviews anonymous.

Fleur: And that bombs just fell and stuff. Yes, it was really intense.²¹¹

They also mention how they already know quite a lot about it. Because of this knowledge, they find it an important subject. The following quote is an example of a child writing explanations along the lines of this:

The Second World War and about Hitler and about Anne Frank and about the Jews who were gassed. Because I have seen a movie about it and read books about it and I see that people had a very hard time and that we are lucky that we did not live in that time. Because that would have been very hard even though I am not Jewish and if I were I would not be ashamed of it.²¹²

In this quote, the girl makes clear that she knows something about The Second World War. Furthermore, she mentions that she has seen a movie about it, read books about it and she knows that “we are lucky” to not live during this war.

The second most popular subject is *The Romans*. This is chosen by three children and again seemed to be chosen because of the knowledge these children already had about the subject. For example, one child wrote down: “I find it very interesting, and they were very smart. I also gave my presentation about it once and they had already invented a lot of modern inventions.”²¹³ Other topics from the Canon, like *Knights and the Middle Ages*, *The Golden Age*, *The First World War* and *Slavery/VOC/WIC*, were also chosen as can be seen in table 4.1. However, these were all only chosen just once and are thus insignificant.

The results from task 1 regarding children with a migration background

Table 4.1 also shows the topics related to the canon which children with a migration background chose in task 1 in the last two columns. As is immediately clear, there is more variety than in the topics chosen by Dutch children without a migration background. However, what should be kept in mind is that there were also a lot more children with a migration background than without (see table 2.4 in chapter 2). The first similarity noticeable, is that *The Second World War* is a popular topic. This is in accordance with the study done by Grever and Ribbens which showed that students still experience The Second World War as important – with or without a migration background.²¹⁴ Again, it seems that the children with a migration background selected the subject, because they had already gained

²¹¹ Reza Cheuk-Alam, “Second interview Mr. Van Eijkschool Rotterdam,” 09-05-2022.

²¹² Questionnaire number 32, task 1.

²¹³ Questionnaire number 61, task 1.

²¹⁴ Grever and Ribbens, “Andere Tijden,” 109.

knowledge about it. For instance, they wrote explanations like: “Rotterdam has been through a lot, also with the Second World War and I would like to know what Rotterdam had to do with it,”²¹⁵ and “I think WW2 is an important topic because many people suffered because of it. 6 million Jews have died, just because of some kind of discussion, this is not ok! So, I think we need to talk more to prevent WW3.”²¹⁶ In addition, the latter quote also relates the past to the present.

Some also related it to family members just like Dutch children. They gave explanations such as: “My grandmother sometimes told stories about this, and I found that very interesting. This history about this war has done something to my family. I find my family history very interesting but also other things such as the history of the Romans or the Middle Ages.”²¹⁷

In contrast to Dutch children, the two most popular subjects after *The Second World War* are *Religion* and *Slavery*. *Religion* was not once mentioned in answers Dutch children gave in task 1. *Slavery* was only named once amongst the latter group. These subjects thus appear to be of bigger importance or interest to children with a migration background than without. They often related both subjects to their own background. They gave answers regarding the subject of *Slavery* such as: “Cape Verde, because I'm from there. Because I am interested in the slavery past, and Cape Verde played a role in it,”²¹⁸ and “Because it's not fair that white people got everything, and non-white people got nothing and became slaves. They didn't get any food. And I'm glad that's no longer the case in the Netherlands. People should just be treated fairly. And my kind of people were treated that way too. And that is not good.”²¹⁹ These quotes make clear that the topics are of interest, because the children feel like it concerns them personally. They descent from countries and people that have dealt with slavery. Earlier research has also shown that pupils that children from, for example a Surinamese or Antillean background, tend to find the heritage of slavery significantly more important than others.²²⁰

²¹⁵ Questionnaire number 27, task 1.

²¹⁶ Questionnaire number 40, task 1.

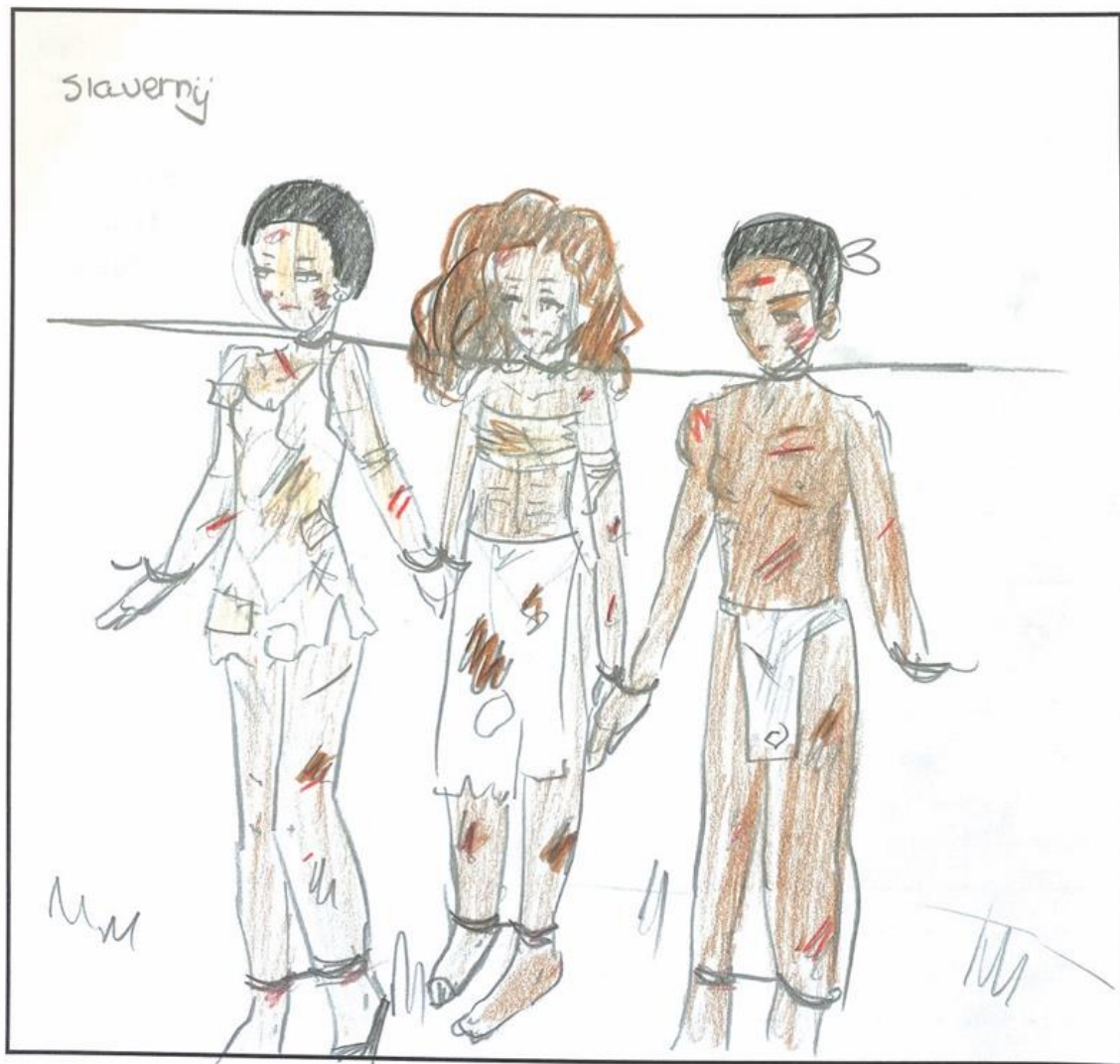
²¹⁷ Questionnaire number 42, task 1.

²¹⁸ Questionnaire number 16, task 1.

²¹⁹ Questionnaire number 98, task 1.

²²⁰ Savenije, Van Boxtel, Grever, “Sensitive “Heritage” of Slavery,” 144.

Figure 4.2. Example of drawing made about slavery in task 1.

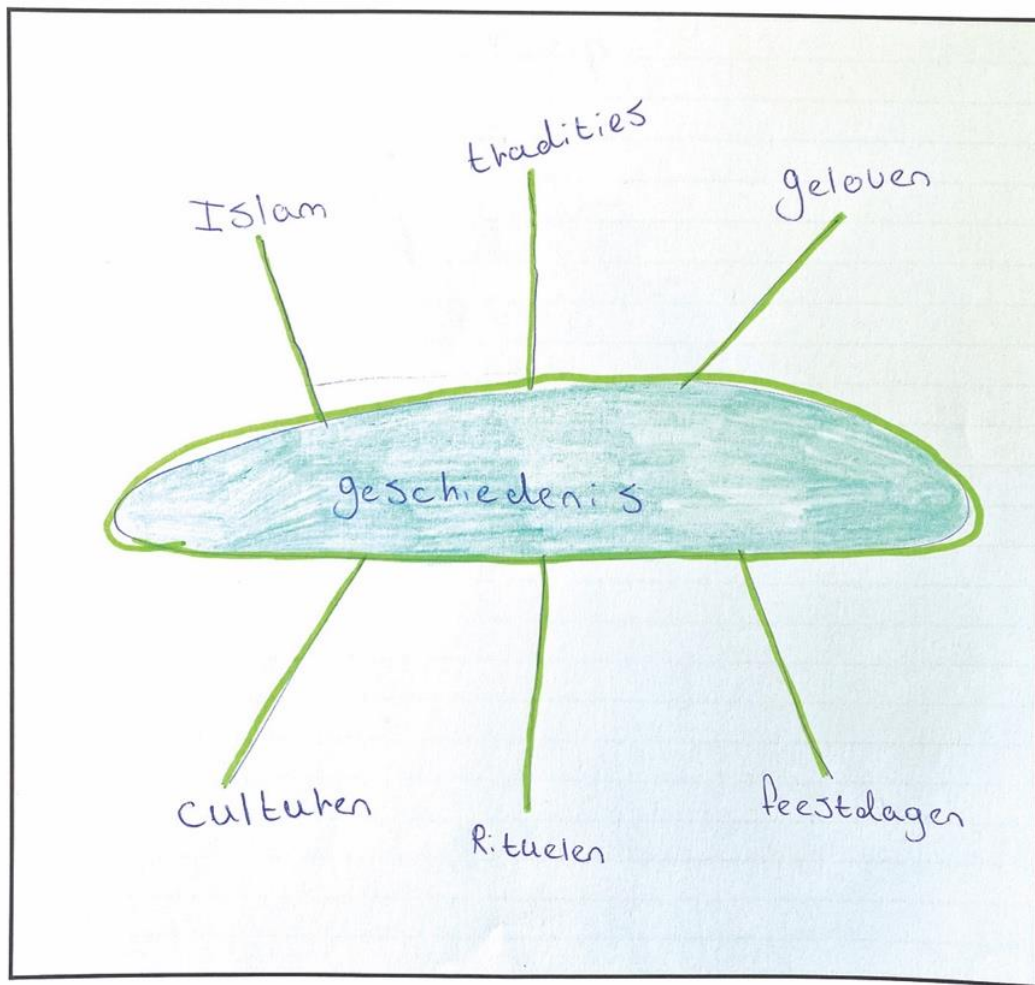


Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *Questionnaires interests in history of primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

As mentioned, *Religion* is also often related to the children's own background. They for example write down: "It's important to me, my faith. I have a strong faith. My family is Turkish so that's why I am Turkish. My parents are important to me. Turkish food is my culture. My city is Kayseri."²²¹ *Slavery* and *Religion* being chosen so often in relation to the background of the children shows that these children are interested in things that concern them closely. While Dutch children more often chose *The Second World War* in relation to their family, children with a migration background do this more regarding the subjects of *Slavery* and *Religion*.

²²¹ Questionnaire number 118, task 1.

Figure 4.3. Example of a word web made about religion in task 1.²²²



Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *Questionnaires interests in history of primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

In quite a few cases, children's own background is also written down in combination with subjects out of *the Dutch Canon*. These are answers such as: "Fenerbahçe 2009 because I am a Fan of Fenerbahçe, and I wrote 2009 because they were good then and the same as Galatasaray. I wrote Golden Age because I find it interesting. Second World War of Turkey because I am Turkish myself and I find it very interesting."²²³ Here, two things out of the canon are mentioned (The Golden Age and The Second World War), but in combination with this boys' Turkish background. These kinds of mixed answers were given 18 times. As can be seen in table 4.1, some other topics from the canon were also chosen. However, the number of times these were chosen was insignificant.

²²² In the middle of the word web, is written: History. On the top of the word web from left to right the words written are: "Islam," "Traditions," and "Religions." At the bottom of the word web, the words written are "Cultures," "Rituals," and "holidays."

²²³ Questionnaire number 81, task 1.

From task 1 with regard to *migration background* it can be concluded that Dutch children without and children with a migration background find *The Second World War* an interesting topic. The Dutch children without a migration background relate this topic to their own background and family members. Children with a migration background do this more regarding the topics of *Slavery* and *Religion*. A few other topics are also chosen in relation to the canon; however, these were insignificant. More about what other topics were chosen in task 1 will be discussed later in this chapter.

The results from task 2 regarding *migration background*

In task 2 the children were asked to make a top three out of fifteen subjects (see Appendix 1). The subjects provided in task 2 were based upon a history book, *Brandaan*²²⁴, used in the last class of one of the participating schools. A divide was made between subjects in history already discussed in school and subjects which were not offered in this handbook²²⁵. About all topics except for *Sports and games*, *Film, tv, music and theatre*, *Clothes and fashion*, *Environment and climate*, *The common people* something could be found in this handbook. However, this does not mean that all these other topics are discussed equally. Some, for example *War and conquest* and *Rulers*, are more delved into than other topics such as *Rotterdam* or *Art and architecture*.

It is interesting to look into a correlation between migration background and the choices children made in task 2. For this reason, a table has been drawn up to compare Dutch children without a migration background with children with a migration background. In table 4.2, the chosen history topics with the biggest difference between these two groups have been made bold. *Religion and beliefs* is the subject with the largest difference between the two groups. This is the most popular topic for children with a migration background and is one of the two least popular topics for Dutch children without a migration background. The children who chose the subject, give explanations like: “I like to know things about beliefs, I am a Christian myself.”²²⁶ and “I think faith is very important and because I am Catholic myself, I want to know more about it.”²²⁷ This is not surprising, as there was only one Dutch religious child, and it did not choose religion in task 2. All other religious children thus had a migration

²²⁴ Katrui ten Barge, Wilfried Dabekaussen, Juul Lelieveld, Frederike Pals and Jacques van der Pijl, *Brandaan lesboek groep 8*, (Malmberg: 's Hertogenbosch, 2008), 6-111.

²²⁵ These were not always completely new but they are not discussed very extensively in history lessons such as: “the history of the environment and climate,” “the history of sports and games,” “the history of film, tv, music and theatre” and “the history of the common people.”

²²⁶ Questionnaire number 6, task 2.

²²⁷ Questionnaire number 7, task 2.

background. Only one Dutch non-religious child chose religion in its top three. The other three non-religious children that chose religion had a migration background. As almost all Dutch children were not religious, they tended to not choose religion in their top three. However, it is clear that religion is very much a part of the identity of children with a migration background as it is the most chosen topic out of all.

The next topic in which the largest difference is found, is *Politics*. It is much more popular amongst Dutch children without a migration background. It is not the most popular topic for these children; however, for the group of children with a migration background it is amongst the least popular. The children that choose this subject, give reasons such as: “I find politics very interesting and without rights, girls could do much less than men, for example,”²²⁸ and “I think everyone should have the same rights.”²²⁹ Why Dutch children without a migration background chose the subject more, could not directly be derived from the answers. However, it could have to do with another subject related to rights which was selected more by children with a migration background. This is the subject of *Slavery, slavetrade, colonialism and abolitionism*. Here, there were also answers given that related to people having rights, such as: “Because I think the slave trade and everything after that, is the most important because I don't like that they had no choice but to work,”²³⁰ and “Because it wasn't fair that people were treated by color. Because they didn't get anything, not how hard they had worked.”²³¹ These answers describe peoples' inability to do whatever they please because of their limited rights caused by slavery, slave trade and colonialism. This subject was not only chosen by children who descent from countries that have dealt with slavery. Quite a lot of children with other backgrounds (Morrocan or Turkish for example) also chose the topic. They gave answers such as: “I really hate slavery, especially brown people were used as slaves,”²³² and “It is terrible that the black people had to work in slavery.”²³³ Here, these children thus seem to see it as significant for a particular group of people. This is in accordance with a study done by Savenije in which she found out that children tend to find certain sensitive history and heritage significant for certain groups of people. Furthermore, they see slavery as an example of inequality.²³⁴

²²⁸ Questionnaire number 61, task 2.

²²⁹ Questionnaire number 53, task 2.

²³⁰ Questionnaire number 103, task 2.

²³¹ Questionnaire number 98, task 2.

²³² Questionnaire number 70, task 2.

²³³ Questionnaire number 115, task 2.

²³⁴ Savenije, “Sensitive History under Negotiation,” 134.

Another topic in which quite a difference can be seen, is the topic of *Film, tv, music and theatre*; it was much more popular amongst Dutch children without a migration background. These children gave reasons such as: “I chose this one because I like playing theater and want to be in a movie myself and I want to learn more about that subject,”²³⁵ and “I like TV and music and I'd like to know more about the history of it as well.”²³⁶ This topic was thus mostly chosen out of personal interest. Again, why the children with a migration background chose this topic more could not be derived directly from the explanations. However, it could have to do with them choosing topics more related to their own personal identity, such as religion and slavery (the two most popular topics for this group). These children did choose another topic more though that they mostly related to personal interests: *Sports and games*. They gave reasons for choosing this topic such as: “I also do a lot of sports myself and sport is healthy, and I want to know how they came up with the idea of sport in the past.”²³⁷

²³⁵ Questionnaire number 34, task 2.

²³⁶ Questionnaire number 44, task 2

²³⁷ Questionnaire number 27, task 2.

Table 4.2. Amount of Dutch children and children with a migration background picking the history subjects in task 2 in percentages of the own subgroup.

	Frequency Dutch children	Percentage of Dutch native children choosing this topic out of own subgroup	Frequency children with migration background	Percentage of children with migration background choosing this topic out of own subgroup
Politics	7	7.2	8	2.9
Rotterdam	14	14.4	32	11.8
Women	9	9.3	21	7.7
Sports and games	4	4.1	21	7.7
War and conquest	15	15.5	30	11.0
Religion and beliefs	2	2.1	39	14.3
Slavery, slave trade, colonialism and abolitionism	8	8.2	35	12.9
Science and technology	8	8.2	24	8.8
Film, tv, music and theatre	11	11.3	18	6.6
Environment and climate	5	5.2	10	3.7
Art and architecture	3	3.1	8	2.9
The common people	2	2.1	6	2.2
Clothes and fashion	6	6.2	13	4.8
Rulers	3	3.1	7	2.6
(Labor) migration and migrants	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	97	100.0	272	100.0

Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *Dataset questionnaire interests history primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

As can be seen, *Rotterdam* and *War and conquest* were amongst the popular topics in both groups. However, it was more popular amongst the group of Dutch children without a migration background. This could have to do with them relating it more to their own background in the same way as children with a migration background regarding the topics of *Slavery* and *Religion*. The answers given by both groups for the topic of *Rotterdam*, were along the lines of: “Because I live in Rotterdam and because I think it's a beautiful city,”²³⁸ and “Rotterdam: it's my city.”²³⁹ Explanations given for the topic of *War and conquest* were also similar in both groups. These were answers such as: “I want to know how most wars started. It's interesting,”²⁴⁰ and “I find it interesting because in World War II, Hitler wanted

²³⁸ Questionnaire number 30, task 2.

²³⁹ Questionnaire number 50, task 2.

²⁴⁰ Questionnaire number 49, task 2.

conquest and power. I like history.”²⁴¹ As can be observed in table 4.3, in the rest of the topics there was not a significant difference between the two groups.

The reasons for choosing certain topics in task 2

To get more insight into the reasoning behind the topics, two pie charts have been made wherein the categories in which the reasons fit are shown. These are found in figure 4.4 and 4.5.

As can be seen, both Dutch children and children with a migration background chose most of the topics in their top three out of *personal interest*. This is logical, as this was the question. For this reason, we will not go into the category of *personal interests* as the answers are too diverse. Furthermore, the categories of *origin* and *place of residence* are all in relation to the topic history of Rotterdam. Children wrote down that they chose the subject because they live in Rotterdam or were born there. This was more often chosen by Dutch children without a migration background than with, as could already be seen in table 4.2.

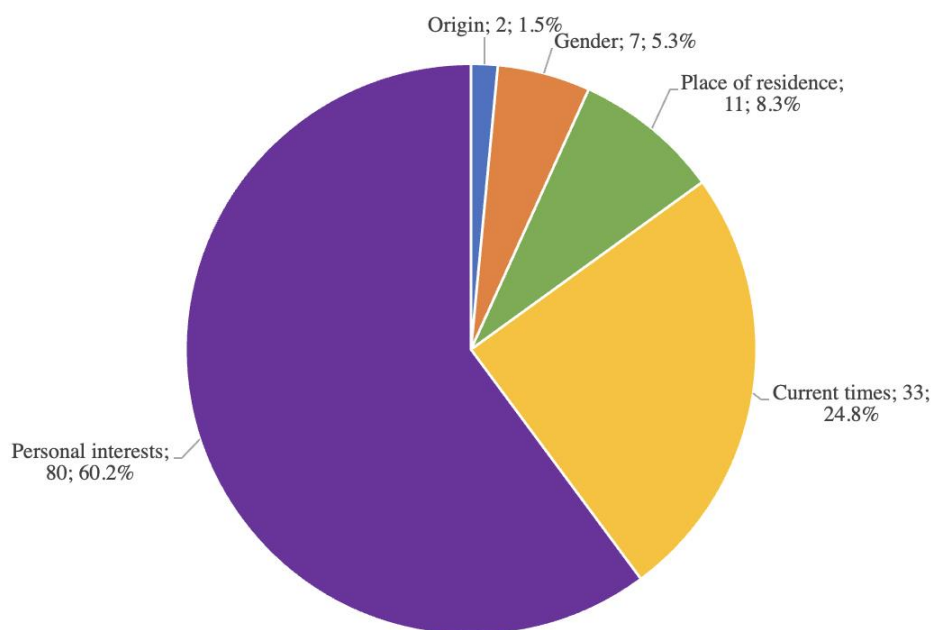
However, as can be seen, a couple of other categories in which their answers fit could also be established. The category *gender* refers to girls who chose *Women's history* and specifically mentioned that they chose it because they are a girl themselves. They gave answers like: “I want to know more about all women because I am a woman myself and what all women have meant to us and about their rights.”²⁴² Others gave more general answers and because of that, they were put in the category of *personal interests*. These were answers like: “Women have a very interesting development in power and in doing things.”²⁴³

²⁴¹ Questionnaire number 100, task 2.

²⁴² Questionnaire number 39, task 2.

²⁴³ Questionnaire number 44, task 2.

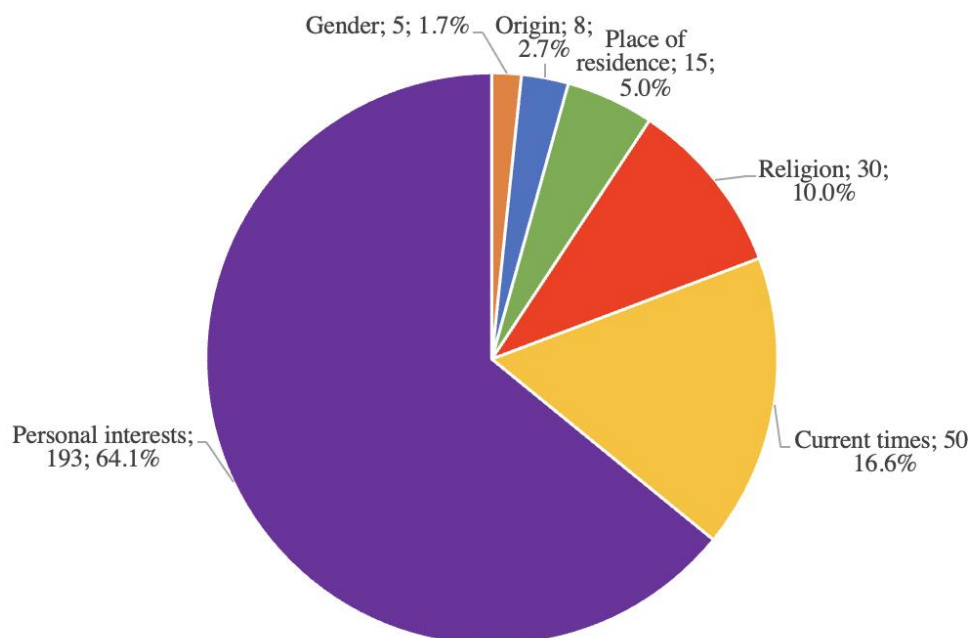
Figure 4.4. *Reasons for choosing a topic amongst children with a Dutch origin.**



Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *questionnaires interests history primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

*Some children did not fill in an explanation. These have been left out. Others gave answers that fit in two categories or more. In these instances, they have been counted more than once.

Figure 4.5. *Reasons for choosing a topic amongst children with a migration background.**



Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *questionnaires interests history primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

*Some children did not fill in an explanation. These have been left out. Others gave answers that fit in two categories or more. In these instances, they have been counted more than once.

Additionally, some related this subject to *current times* through answers like: “I find it interesting that women are allowed less, and I wonder how that used to be.”²⁴⁴ This was also touched upon during the interviews a few times:

You had written down on the next page, “because you find the women’s theme interesting because people should know that women should be treated the same as men,” right?

Victoria: Oh yes, because when a man does exactly the same work as a woman, a man would still get paid more.²⁴⁵

Here, Victoria links *Women’s history* to things that are happening today. As figures 4.4 and 4.5 show, the category of *current times* is in both groups quite big. Another popular subject to be linked to *current times* was slavery history, for example. Children then wrote down things like: “I think it’s very important that you do not treat people different with another skin color.”²⁴⁶ and “I find slavery, slave trade etc. very bad and sad. Slavery was also a big problem and actually still is, so that’s why I want to know more about it.”²⁴⁷ This subject was also discussed during the interviews and linked to the present:

Let’s see, then we will go to the first task, the drawing you know, because you had made a beautiful drawing, I saw, about slavery. Can you explain why you find that such an important topic?

Victoria: I don’t like that people with a different colour are treated differently, uhm yes then they were abused...

Uhu.

Victoria: Because of their colour and I just find it mean...

Yes.

Victoria: And not nice, because they are the same people inside but because they look different, they are treated different.

Yes, yes, I understand. And why do you find it important then that people still learn about the subject, or do you find it important to learn about the subject yourself?

Victoria: That they know how people have suffered because they are different.

Yes, and you think that that should not happen anymore?

Victoria: Yes, because it still happens a lot with police who, if there is just a man with a different colour running, that they think immediately that he is doing bad things.²⁴⁸

Here again, Victoria relates slavery to things she feels are the result of it in today’s society.

The subject that was linked the most to current times, was the topic of *Environment and climate*. In this subject, almost every child that chose it related it to *current times*. They wrote things down like: “My first choice is the history of the environment, because I find that it is

²⁴⁴ Questionnaire number 51, task 2.

²⁴⁵ Reza Cheuk-Alam, “First interview Mr. Van Eijkschool Rotterdam,” 09-05-2022.

²⁴⁶ Questionnaire number 32, task 2.

²⁴⁷ Questionnaire number 53, task 2.

²⁴⁸ Cheuk-Alam, “First interview,” 09-05-2022.

not going well in the world. And we have to do something about it!”²⁴⁹ and “Because I care a lot about the nature and animals, that is why I am vegan. And we have to protect the planet and not destroy it!”²⁵⁰ A couple of times, this could also be found in other subjects, these were answers like: “Ordinary people, people are also important because without them everything that is now would not be”²⁵¹ and “War, well I think it is important to learn something about the second world war and yes we are now in something like Ukraine and Russia and yes maybe it will be our turn after that.”²⁵²

There were no huge differences in the reasons given by children with or without a migration background. Furthermore, they related the same kind of answers to the same kind of choices. In both groups, mostly *Women’s history*, *the history of Slavery* and *the history of the Environment and climate* were linked to current times. Furthermore, *the history of Rotterdam* was linked to their origin or place of residence. The only big difference was regarding *Religion*, which was not a reason given by Dutch children. The religious children often stated they wanted to know more about the topic because they were religious themselves. However, as previously mentioned, there was only one Dutch child, and this child did not choose it in its top three. It was thus not expected that the group of Dutch children would relate their choices to religion.

The results from task 3 regarding *migration background*

In task 3, the children were asked about the history of which city, country or part of the world they would like to learn more (see Appendix 1). They could choose two. By looking at the results of this task, the variable *migration background* can be studied. This is done through looking at categories created in which the children’s explanations fit. The results of the Dutch children without a migration background and children with a migration background can be compared through table 4.3.

²⁴⁹ Questionnaire number 38, task 2.

²⁵⁰ Questionnaire number 42, task 2.

²⁵¹ Questionnaire number 65, task 2.

²⁵² Questionnaire number 67, task 2.

Table 4.3. *Reasons given by children for choosing cities, countries or parts of the world.*

	Percent children with a Dutch origin	Percent children with a migration background
Friends	1.5	2.7
City or country of residence	-	6.7
Current events	6.1	10.6
Family members	3.0	17.8
Origin*	21.2	23.9
Personal interests	62.1	32.8
Total	93.9	94.4
No answer	6.1	5.6
Total	100.0	100.0

*For the Dutch children without a migration background, origin also refers to place of residence, because the country of birth and country of residence is the same.

It can be observed in the table that origin is chosen around the same percentage in both the subgroup of Dutch children and in the group of children with a migration background. Dutch children gave reasons such as: “The Netherlands, I think it is important to know a whole lot about my country,”²⁵³ and “Rotterdam, I live in Rotterdam, so it is fun to learn the history about the place you live. Rotterdam was of course also bombed; I find that interesting as well. And I like to see how Rotterdam looked in the past.”²⁵⁴ Children with a migration background gave explanations like: “Syria, I was born in Syria and want to know more information,”²⁵⁵ and “Cape Verde, my roots are there.” City or country of residence was also chosen by the children with a migration background. They then gave reasons such as: “Rotterdam, I live in Rotterdam and was born in Rotterdam, so for this reason Rotterdam,”²⁵⁶ and “Netherlands, because I live there, I want to know.”²⁵⁷ Both groups chose the Netherlands more often than they chose Rotterdam in task 3. Europe was also chosen in relation to origin/place of residence; however this was only done by Dutch children without a migration background.

During the interview we also asked one boy who was half Latvian and half Russian why he chose the Netherlands as his number one pick in the third task. His answer was:

Ok, and you, why did you choose the Netherlands?

Alexander: Because I am from another country myself and I actually want to know more about this country because I don’t know much about it yet.²⁵⁸

²⁵³ Questionnaire number 78, task 3.

²⁵⁴ Questionnaire number 37, task 3.

²⁵⁵ Questionnaire number 64, task 3.

²⁵⁶ Questionnaire number 6, task 3.

²⁵⁷ Questionnaire number 11, task 3.

²⁵⁸ Cheuk-Alam, “Second interview,” 09-05-2022.

We asked a similar question to a half Dutch-half Chinese girl during the interviews:

Yes, and what would you say, do you think the history of China is more important or that of the Netherlands, for example?"

Chelsea: The Netherlands.

That of the Netherlands and why is that?

Chelsea: Because I was born here.²⁵⁹

However, as can be seen in table 4.3 for the children with a migration background the reason that it was their *city or country of residence* was not chosen nearly as much as it being related to their *origin* or *family members*.

Reasons given related to *family members* were thus more often given by children with a migration background. Important to mention is that all these answers were also in relation to their own migration background. These were answers like: "I find Poland a fun country, my family lives there and I am Polish,"²⁶⁰ and "Morocco, because my parents were born there."²⁶¹ Many of the children with a migration background seem to consider the country where their parents or even grandparents are born as their own country. This also was mentioned by a Dominican girl during the interviews:

And you wrote down, let's see, oh yes, about the Dominican Republic and can you explain why you want to know more about that?

Victoria: Uhm my parents, yes, they are from there and then I want to know more about my country.²⁶²

When Dutch children gave *family members* as reasons for choosing a country, the reasons were more along the line of: "Guinea, my dad goes there very often for work and it is an extremely poor country,"²⁶³ and "Spain, because my stepmother is Spanish, so want to know about it."²⁶⁴ This was thus more because they heard about it through family members and not necessarily related to their own background or origin.

Countries chosen because of *personal interests* was much more done by the group of Dutch children. They gave various reasons for choosing these topics, such as: "Brazil/Sao Paulo/South America, the history of Sao Paulo seems fun for football and how it has become

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Questionnaire number 6, task 3.

²⁶¹ Questionnaire number 69, task 3.

²⁶² Cheuk-Alam, "First interview," 09-05-2022.

²⁶³ Questionnaire number 61, task 3.

²⁶⁴ Questionnaire number 78, task 3.

so infamous and so on,”²⁶⁵ and “Svalbard (Norway): “I want to learn a bit about this because it's a huge place and you never hear about it. And it's all the way up north.”²⁶⁶ They chose places they have heard, but do not know much about, but also related it to interests such as football. Children with a migration background did the same, they gave reasons like: “Japanese art/anime/manga, I think it is interesting and a nice subject to know more about and I like art myself and also like to draw anime/manga but also watch myself I want to become an animator and I want to make my own anime,”²⁶⁷ and “Australia: “Because black people used to live there and I want to know more about that.”²⁶⁸ This last quote, however, could also be seen as having to do with *origin*. Some other children also wrote down similar reasons for their choice, for example: “United States, because I know that NL [the Netherlands] used to go to the United States. And I know there are “normal” Americans and African Americans and that has to do with slavery.”²⁶⁹

Sporadically *friends* are also given as a reason for the children's' choices. Within the group of Dutch children this is only once. This girl wrote down: “Canada, I want to know what happened in Canada in the past and because some of my friends are from Canada.”²⁷⁰ In the group of children with a migration background, reasons are given like: “Turkey, because I want to know about the history and one of my girlfriends is Turkish,”²⁷¹ and “Pakistan, because my girlfriend is Pakistani and it seems interesting to learn about.”²⁷² During the interviews, I also asked the children if they found learning about the history of family or friends important. A Dutch girl and a half Dutch-half Chinese girl gave an answer:

Why did you say that you find it important to know about the history of friends?

Fleur: Well, you just want to know about your family, because I also have family that is Moroccan.

Yes.

Fleur: my niece and my aunt and stuff, but you also have friends who are, for example, German or Antillean.

Yes.

Fleur: about that culture you then also want to know something.

Yes, and why do you find that important to learn also get to know something about that culture?

²⁶⁵ Questionnaire number 31, task 3.

²⁶⁶ Questionnaire number 38, task 3.

²⁶⁷ Questionnaire number 63, task 3.

²⁶⁸ Questionnaire number 18, task 3.

²⁶⁹ Questionnaire number 16, task 3.

²⁷⁰ Questionnaire number 77, task 3.

²⁷¹ Questionnaire number 5, task 3.

²⁷² Questionnaire number 9, task 3.

Fleur: Well, you have friends who speak that language or are from that country, then I find it important that you know what it is about.²⁷³

And you? Do you also find that important?

Chelsea: Yes, because, for example my friend is Polish, and I have been to Poland with her.

Oh, that's fun.

Chelsea: And we are going again this summer vacation.

Ok, that's nice, so you find it important to know something about that?

Chelsea: [nods in agreement]²⁷⁴

These children thus think it is important to know about the history, because you then also learn about the person they are. In the other interview, this was also touched upon:

But, if I'm right, you three or two, you also wanted to know something about each other's countries I saw. That was fun to read, but why do you find that so important? To, for example, learn about countries of friends and family? Why do you think it's important?

Malika: Uhm, I find it fun to learn about it and for example when that country has a holiday, then you can say something to them on that holiday.

Yes, and you?

Nadia: Then I can learn more about their cultures.²⁷⁵

Learning about each other's cultures thus seems interesting to the children. Also because of social aspects. You can, as Malika states in the interview, say something to a person when he or she is celebrating a certain holiday related to their background.

Lastly, there is the category of *current events*. With this is meant that children relate their choices to things that are happening in the world right now. This is more so done by children with a migration background. They write down answers such as: "Russia, why does Russia necessarily want that piece of land from Ukraine?,"²⁷⁶ and "Hong Kong, my mother and family are from Hong Kong and of course in the news everyone talks about Ukraine and Russia, but there is also something going on in Hong Kong."²⁷⁷ The last comment can again also be related to the migration background. This child relates current events to something happening in the country where his parents are from which he also finds very important. Dutch children wrote down explanations like: "The North and South Poles have a lot of ice and that melts because of the factories, etc. and then more water comes in and a country can flood."²⁷⁸

²⁷³ Cheuk-Alam, "Second interview," 09-05-2022.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Reza Cheuk-Alam, "Interview Elisabethschool Rotterdam," 13-04-2022.

²⁷⁶ Questionnaire number 88, task 3

²⁷⁷ Questionnaire number 73, task 3.

²⁷⁸ Questionnaire number 60, task 3.

Categories with high percentages within both groups thus have to do with the children's own backgrounds. This is more so for children with a migration background than without. The children with a migration background relate their choices to their *origin* and *family members*. In the answers about *family members*, the *origin* is however always related. Therefore, it can be concluded that 41.7 percent (the categories of *origin* and *family members* together) is related to the roots of the children with a migration background. In that case, that is the biggest percentage out of all reasons given. This could be because they do not hear a lot about these cities, countries or parts of the world in school and the media but feel closely related to them because of their migration background and family members. The category of personal interests would then be the second largest category for children with a migration background. Even though they are interested in their own (family) history the most, they would also like to get information about other places in the world not at all related to their own background.

On the other hand, the biggest percentage for Dutch children is within the category of *personal interests*. A reason for this could be that Dutch children already know quite a lot about the Netherlands through Dutch education and because of that are interested in other countries as well. When looking at the results of task 3, Dutch children seem very open to *multiperspectivity* and diving into the history of other countries as well.

4.2. The results regarding religion

The results from task 1 regarding religion

Whether religion influences the interests of children, could mostly be observed through task 1 and 2. In task 1 the children had to make a drawing or word web about the history most important to them, and in task 2 they had to make a top three out of topics in history. In task 1, we investigated how many times something related to religion was drawn or was named in the word web. As can be seen in table 4.4, out of all religious groups that participated in this study, there were some children that made a drawing or word web related to religion. However, for Islamic children, this amount of times this was done, was the most. Out of 35 Islamic children (see table 2.3 in chapter 2), 11 (31.4%) related task 1 to their religion. Out of the 11 Christian children, one related task 1 (9.1%) to its religion. Two (14.3%) out of the group of 14 Catholic children related task 1 to their religion.

Table 4.4. *Religious children making a drawing or word web about religion.*

	Frequency drawing/ word web about religion
Islamic	11
Christian	1
Catholic	2
Religion unknown	0
No religion	0

Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *Questionnaire interests in history of primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

The results from task 2 regarding religion

To know if religion also influenced the choices made in task 2, the number of times religious children chose the subject of religion in their top three was investigated. The results can be seen in table 4.5. In chapter 2 it was already mentioned that there were 60 religious children who participated in this research. Within this group, 34 chose religion in their top three. Out of these children 55.9% (Christian + Catholic + Islamic) chose religion as their first choice. Further, 35.3% (Catholic + Islamic) religious children chose it as their second choice and 8.8% (Christian + Islamic) chose it as their third pick. This means that out of the 60 religious children, over half chose it in their top three. In addition, out of the religious children choosing it in their top three, over half chose it as their first pick and over a third as their second.

Table 4.5. *Religious children choosing religion in their top three.*

Religion subgroups	Total Frequency	Frequency religion in top three	Percentage of religion subgroup choosing religion in top three
Religion Unknown	4	2	50
Christian	11	4	36.4
Catholic	14	8	57.1
Islamic	35	22	62.9
No religion	52	4	7.7
Total	116		

Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *Dataset questionnaire interests in history of primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

Table 4.5 also shows the differences between the number of times children adhering to a certain religion chose religion in their top three in the last column. As can be seen, out of the

subgroup Islamic children, 62.9 percent chose religion in their top three. This is the highest amount compared to the other two religious groups. This is in accordance with a study done by the SCP²⁷⁹ into Muslims in the Netherlands which made clear that for people of Turkish and Moroccan descent especially, the identification with religion is very strong.²⁸⁰ It also coincides with the study done by Grever and Ribbens, from which the results were that Dutch children without a migration background find religion significantly less important than children with a migration background.²⁸¹ However, the Catholic subgroup has 57.1 percent of these children choosing religion in their top three which is not far off. Christian children chose religion the least out of the total amount of children in their subgroup.

To the question why the topic was much more popular amongst children with a migration background, there is a simple answer. There was only one Dutch boy that was religious, and he did not choose religion in his top three. All other religious children thus had a migration background. Only one Dutch non-religious girl chose religion in her top three. The other three non-religious girls had a migration background. So even though there were much more non-religious Dutch children (51), still out of the non-religious children with a migration background (33) more chose religion in their top three.

A last noteworthy comment to make about the children choosing religion, 25 out of 40 gave reasons for choosing it which were not specifically related to their own religion. They wrote reasons down like: “There is not so much history of beliefs and religion”²⁸² and “Religion is important. I want to learn more about it.”²⁸³ Others specifically mentioned also wanting to learn about other religion. They gave reasons like: “I find it interesting to learn about other faiths. I want to look at what other people believe,”²⁸⁴ and “Because I would like to learn more about beliefs/religion. I do not know a lot about other religions. (I do know about Islam). That is why it is my first choice. I find religions interesting.”²⁸⁵ This shows that these religious children do not only care about the religion that they adhere to but are interested in other religions as well. Even about others’ point of view, which is in simple terms *multiperspectivity*. I also discussed this with two religious children during the interviews:

²⁷⁹ The SCP is the Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau (Social Cultural Planning Bureau).

²⁸⁰ Mieke Maliepaard and Mérove Gijsberts, *Moslim in Nederland, 2012*, (Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2012), 13-14.

²⁸¹ Grever and Ribbens, “‘Ik beschouw mezelf als ...’,” 92.

²⁸² Questionnaire number 112, task 2.

²⁸³ Questionnaire number 116, task 2.

²⁸⁴ Questionnaire number 111, task 2.

²⁸⁵ Questionnaire number 5, task 2.

Let's see, you had religion as your first choice.

Soufian: Yes.

Yes that's right and can you explain why that was your first choice?

Soufian: It is actually very important I think, yes.

And why do you find it so important?

Soufian: I want to get more information because I don't know that much...

Uhu.

Soufian: And I think it is very important, just for everybody

Yes, and why do you think it is important, do you find it important for everybody?

Soufian: Uhm, because almost everyone maybe has a belief... believes in something, you should just know more about it.

And would you then also... Are you religious?

Soufian: Yes.

Uhu, and what is your religion?

Soufian: Islamic.

Ok, so you would like to learn about Islam or something about all religions?

Soufian: general.

So you actually want to learn something about all religions?

Soufian: Yes.

[...]

Soufian: The most Islam, that is what I want to know most about.²⁸⁶

And if you know something about other religions, because you were interested in that, what is the use of that?

Alexander: Uhm, then you can understand people of that faith or something better.²⁸⁷

These children both made statements about wanting to know more about religion in general. They also explained that we should know about other people's religion because it is important to them, but also because we can then understand other people better.

4.3. The results regarding gender

The results from task 1 regarding gender

To see if gender also influenced the interests of children, for task 1 table 4.6 has been made where a divide between the genders can be observed. When task 1 is studied with regard to gender, it can be seen that the topic of *The Second World War* is more popular amongst Dutch girls than amongst Dutch boys without a migration background. However, some boys did choose the Romans and related this to war as well. They, for example, gave explanations such as:

Romans, great leaders, good army, they were rich, they could build very well, they were very hygienic for that time and the army was very organised. Because I find it very interesting, and

²⁸⁶ Cheuk-Alam, "First interview," 09-05-2022.

²⁸⁷ Cheuk-Alam "Second interview," 09-05-2022.

I also learned a lot from it at the pre-gymnasium and I think it is super special that they were so hygienic for that time. It is important that the information is preserved, so they should never bomb Pompeii or anything like that. It is super special that an army before that time was so organized compared to the Germans, who started fighting like half-soles²⁸⁸. They also had a huge empire and if they had not quarrelled among themselves, I think they would still exist today.²⁸⁹

Other topics from the Canon, like *Knights and the Middle Ages*, *The Golden Age*, *The First World War* and *Slavery/VOC/WIC*, were also chosen by Dutch children without a migration background as can be seen in table 4.6. However, these were all only chosen just once and are thus insignificant.

So, what other topics were chosen then by Dutch children? As can be seen in table 2.4 in chapter 2, there were 17 Dutch girls without a migration background that participated. Table 4.6 shows that 14 out of these girls chose the *Second World War*, one selected *Knights and the Middle Ages* and one chose *Slavery* in task 1. This means that 16 girls (94.1%) chose a topic related to the canon and there was only one girl who chose something not related to The Dutch Canon. This girl chose the topic: “Dino’s and the Big Bang.” Her explanation was: “Well I think of it when I think of history.”²⁹⁰

There were 16 Dutch boys without a migration background that participated in this research (see table 2.4 in chapter 2). Figure 4.1 shows that four boys chose *The Second World War*, three chose *The Romans*, *The First World War* and *The Golden Age* were both chosen by one boy. This means that 11 (68.8%) out of the 16 Dutch boys without a migration background chose something related to the canon. This leaves five boys choosing something not related to the Dutch Canon. Two of these boys wrote about family related topics, three about their own personal history and one about Feyenoord.²⁹¹

²⁸⁸ “Half soles” translated to Dutch is “halve zool.” It is something Dutch people say when they think weird character or idiot. It is a kind of swear word.

²⁸⁹ Questionnaire number 46, task 1.

²⁹⁰ Questionnaire number 47, task 1.

²⁹¹ The main soccer club in Rotterdam.

Table 4.6. Children choosing topics out of the Dutch canon divided in with or without migration background.

	Dutch children	Percentage of topic chosen within subgroup	Children with a migration background	Percentage of topic chosen within subgroup
WWII	18	72.0	24	36.9
<i>Girls</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>56.0</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>20.0</i>
<i>Boys</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>16.0</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>15.4</i>
<i>Genderfluid</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.5</i>
Slavery/VOC/WIC	1	4.0	12	18.5
<i>Girls</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>7.7</i>
<i>Boys</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>10.8</i>
WOI	1	4.0	3	4.6
<i>Girls</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3.1</i>
<i>Boys</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.5</i>
Science/technology	-	-	2	3.1
<i>Girls</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>Boys</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3.1</i>
Golden Age	1	4.0	4	6.2
<i>Girls</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3.1</i>
<i>Boys</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3.1</i>
Rights	-	-	1	1.5
<i>Girls</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.5</i>
<i>Boys</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
Labour	-	-	1	1.5
<i>Girls</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.5</i>
<i>Boys</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
Knights/Middle Ages	1	4.0	2	3.1
<i>Girls</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.5</i>
<i>Boys</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.5</i>
Romans	3	12.0	2	3.1
<i>Girls</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.5</i>
<i>Boys</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>12.0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.5</i>
Europe	-	-	1	1.5
<i>Girls</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>Boys</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.5</i>
Terrorism 9/11	-	-	1	1.5
<i>Girls</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.5</i>
<i>Boys</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
Religion	-	-	12	18.5
<i>Girls</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>10.8</i>
<i>Boys</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>7.7</i>
Total	25	100.0	65	100.0

Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *Questionnaires interests history primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022

It is clear that for Dutch girls especially, topics within the Dutch canon were seen as interesting. This is not in accordance with the study done by Grever and Ribbens, where the Dutch girls without a migration background were significantly less often interested in Dutch history.²⁹² Over half of the Dutch boys also chose a topic that is related to the Dutch canon, however there were also a few choosing other topics of personal interest.

The divide between gender in the topics chosen by children with a migration background is not big. Some were chosen only once and those chosen more often were chosen around the same amount by boys and girls out of this group. There were also topics chosen by the children with a migration background that cannot be found in *the Dutch Canon*. Out of 48 girls with a migration background, 34 (89.5%) chose a topic that could also be related to *the Dutch Canon*. It leaves 14 girls choosing something else. Out of these girls, 11 chose a subject related to their own background or culture. They gave answers such as: “About Poland ☺ , because I'm Polish and I like to learn more about Poland, I already know a lot about Poland, but I don't think everything,”²⁹³ and

The Moroccan culture, I think it is important because there is almost never a conversation about Morocco and usually when there is a conversation, it is not about Morocco itself but about the whole of Africa and it would also just be nice to know more about Morocco.²⁹⁴

One girl made a word web about the war in Eritrea, one made a word web about her family and one about current events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Putin. However, as already mentioned there were also children that picked other topics in addition to one related to the canon – that should be kept in mind.

Out of the 41 boys that participated, 31 (75.6%) chose a topic related to a window in *The Dutch Canon*. It leaves 10 boys choosing a topic which cannot be found in this canon. One boy chose the Vietnam War, one chose to make a word web about important towers and buildings with meaning, one made a word web about music and his hobbies, four about family history, one made a drawing about soldiers, two about soccer history in general. Again, here there were boys that picked other topics in addition to one related to the canon.

²⁹² Grever and Ribbens, “Gedeelde of verdeelde geschiedenis?,” 143.

²⁹³ Questionnaire number 6, task 1.

²⁹⁴ Questionnaire number 84, task 1.

It is clear that within the subjects chosen that were not related to the canon, most girls with a migration background related it to their own background or culture. This is in accordance with the study done by Grever and Ribbens, where the results were that for girls, history of their religion, world history and history of the country of origin of the parents come first.²⁹⁵ Boys with a migration background also related it to family history, but also to personal interests. Overall, children with a migration background related subjects in the canon more to topics that personally concern them than Dutch children. They also did this more with the subjects they chose that cannot be found in the canon. Girls even more so than boys.

The results from task 2 regarding gender

To see if gender had an influence on the childrens' interests in task 2 where they had to make a top three out of fifteen subjects in history, a couple of tables were made. In table 4.7 it is shown which and how many times subjects in history were chosen by the different genders. When looked at the total amounts, the topics *Rotterdam*, *War and Conquest*, *Slavery*, *slave trade*, *colonialism*, and *abolitionism* were chosen the most as they together make up 47.5 percent of the total amount a topic was chosen in the top three.

Table 4.7. History subjects chosen by boys, girls and the genderfluid children.*

	Boys	Girls	Genderfluid	Total	Percentage of total
Rotterdam	20 (5.4)	26 (7.0)		46	12.5
War and conquest	28 (7.6)	17 (4.6)		45	12.2
Slavery, slave trade, colonialism, and abolitionism	18 (4.9)	25 (6.8)		43	11.7
Religion and beliefs	13 (3.5)	28 (7.6)		41	11.1
Science and technology	23 (6.2)	9 (2.4)		32	8.7
Women	1 (0.3)	28 (7.6)	1 (0.3)	30	8.1
Film, tv, music and theatre	14 (3.8)	14 (3.8)	1 (0.3)	29	7.9
Sports and games	12 (3.3)	13 (3.5)		25	6.8
Clothes and fashion	7 (1.9)	12 (3.3)		19	5.1
Environment and climate	9 (2.4)	6 (1.6)		15	4.1
Politics	10 (2.7)	5 (1.4)		15	4.1
Art and architecture	4 (1.1)	6 (1.6)	1 (0.3)	11	3.0
Rulers	6 (1.6)	4 (1.1)		10	2.7
The common people	6 (1.6)	2 (0.5)		8	2.2
(Labor) migration and migrants	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)		0	0.0
Total	171	195	3	369	100.0

Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *Dataset questionnaire interests in history of primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

²⁹⁵ Grever and Ribbens, "Andere Tijden," 114.

*Percentages are between the brackets.

However, we can see that *Rotterdam* and *Slavery* were topics chosen more often by girls and *War and conquest* being chosen more often by boys. Other topics were also popular, however an even bigger difference between genders can be seen. For instance, the history of *Women* and *Religion and beliefs* were chosen a lot, but much more by girls than boys. *Science and technology* was a very popular topic for boys in contrast to girls. In other less popular subjects, a difference can also be seen between genders. For example, *Clothes and fashion* was chosen by girls almost twice as much as by boys. They gave reasons along the lines of: “I do want to know how fashion has changed. I like nice clothes.”²⁹⁶ *Politics* was chosen twice as much by boys as by girls. Reasons for choosing this topic, were along the lines of: “I think rights are important because it is a good subject and everyone deserves rights.”²⁹⁷ *The common people* was chosen three times as much by boys as by girls. Here, the children gave reasons such as: “Because I often see things from rich people and I want to know what happened to the normal people.”²⁹⁸

Some topics which are already discussed in primary history education were thus popular. These were topics like: *War and conquest*, *Slavery* and *Science and technology* which can be found in different windows in *the Dutch Canon*.²⁹⁹ In the new canon, *Women* are also more represented as described in the previous chapter.³⁰⁰ However, other topics such as *Religion and beliefs*, *Film, tv, music and theatre*, *Sports and games* and *Clothes and fashion* are less clearly visible in the canon but are quite popular choices amongst children. *Rotterdam* has the greatest number of children choosing it in their top three. Even though *Rotterdam* is in the canon, it is only regarding *Rotterdam* being the most important trading hub in the Netherlands.

It is interesting to further look into a correlation between migration background and the choices children made. For this reason, tables have been drawn up for boys and girls within which a divide between Dutch boys/girls and boys/girls with a migration background have been made. What should be kept in mind is that there were only 16 boys with a Dutch origin who participated and 41 with a migration background (see table 2.4 in chapter 2). Therefore, only looking at absolute numbers gives a distorted picture. Calculating how much

²⁹⁶ Questionnaire number 94, task 2.

²⁹⁷ Questionnaire number 18, task 2.

²⁹⁸ Questionnaire number 24, task 2.

²⁹⁹ See: <https://www.canonvannederland.nl/> for all the windows.

³⁰⁰ See: <https://www.canonvannederland.nl/> for all the windows.

of the Dutch boys and boys with a migration background chose the topic out of their own subgroup is more interesting. This has been done in table 4.8.

Table 4.8. *History topics chosen by boys with and without migration background.*

	Percentage choices Dutch boys of own subgroup	Percentage choices boys with migration background of own subgroup
Politics	15.2	2.4
Rotterdam	15.2	10.4
Women	0.0	0.8
Sports and games	2.2	8.8
War and conquest	19.6	15.2
Religion and beliefs	2.2	9.6
Slavery, slave trade, colonialism and abolitionism	8.7	11.2
Science and technology	13.0	13.6
Film, tv, music and theatre	8.7	8.0
Environment and climate	2.2	6.4
Art and architecture	2.2	2.4
The common people	2.2	4.0
Clothes and fashion	4.3	4.0
Rulers	4.3	3.2
(Labor) migration and migrants	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *Dataset questionnaire interests in history of primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

In this table the percentages of the Dutch boys and boys with a migration background choosing the topic out of their own subgroup can be compared. We can then see that *War and conquest* is still the most popular subject in both subgroups. Also, *Science and technology* is very popular and chosen around the same percent in both subgroups. However, a big difference can be seen in the topic of *Politics* wherein the group of Dutch boys this topic was much more popular than amongst boys with a migration background. Amongst Dutch boys, the topic of *Rotterdam* was also more popular than in the group of boys with a migration background. The opposite accounts for *Sports and games*, *Religion and beliefs*, *Environment and climate* and *Slavery, slave trade, colonialism and abolitionism*; these topics were more popular in the subgroup of boys with a migration background.

For girls, the same calculations were made. There were also much more girls with a migration background (48) than without (17) (see table 2.4 in chapter 2). So, a calculation in percentages of the number of Dutch girls and girls with a migration background choosing the topic out of their own subgroup have been made. These are shown in table 4.9.

Table 4.9. *History subjects chosen by girls with and without a migration background.*

	Percentage choices Dutch girls out of own subgroup	Percentage choices girls with migration background out of own subgroup
Politics	0.0	3.5
Rotterdam	13.7	13.2
Women	17.6	13.2
Sports and games	5.9	6.7
War and conquest	11.8	7.6
Religion and beliefs	2.0	18.8
Slavery, slave trade, colonialism and abolitionism	7.8	14.6
Science and technology	3.9	4.9
Film, tv, music and theatre	13.7	4.9
Environment and climate	7.8	1.4
Art and architecture	3.9	2.8
The common people	2.0	0.7
Clothes and fashion	7.8	5.6
Rulers	2.0	2.1
(Labor) migration and migrants	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *Dataset questionnaire interests in history of primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

If we compare the results shown in this table, we can see that in both subgroups, *Rotterdam* was a popular topic. Especially the topics *Environment and climate*, *Women* and *Clothes and fashion* were significantly more popular amongst Dutch girls than girls with a migration background. The topics of *Religion and beliefs*, *Slavery, slave trade, colonialism and abolitionism* and *Politics* were more popular in the group of girls with a migration background.

Lastly, the gender of the participants has also been considered in regard to religion in table 4.10. As can be seen, in all religious groups, girls have chosen religion more often in their top three than boys. The biggest difference is seen in the group of Christian children. None of the Christian boys chose religion in their top three. So out of all Christian children choosing religion in their top three, 100 percent were girls. In the group of Islamic and Catholic children, religion is chosen a third more by girls. In the group of religion unknown³⁰¹ there is an equal divide between the number of girls and boys choosing the subject. However,

³⁰¹ This is a group wherein the children stated they believed in God, but did not mention to which religion they adhere.

in the group of non-religious kids, again only girls chose the subject in their top three. This is again in accordance with the study done by Grever and Ribbens, where the results were that for girls, history of their religion comes first.³⁰²

Table 4.10. *The total amount of time religious children chose religion in their top three divided into their religious and gender subgroups.*

Religion and gender subgroups	Total Frequency	Frequency religion in top three	Percentage of religion subgroup choosing religion in top three	Percentage of gender subgroup out of subgroup choosing religion in top three
Religion Unknown	4	2	50	Total = 100
<i>Boy</i>	1	1	25.0	50.0
<i>Girl</i>	3	1	25.0	50.0
Christian	11	4	36.4	Total = 100
<i>Boy</i>	5	0	0.0	0
<i>Girl</i>	6	4	36.4	100.0
Catholic	14	8	57.1	Total = 100
<i>Boy</i>	5	3	21.4	37.5
<i>Girl</i>	9	5	35.7	62.5
Islamic	35	22	62.9	Total = 100
<i>Boy</i>	17	9	25.7	40.9
<i>Girl</i>	18	13	37.1	59.1
No religion	52	4	7.7	Total = 100
<i>Boy</i>	25	0	0.0	0.0
<i>Girl</i>	26	4	7.7	100.0
<i>Genderfluid</i>	1	0	0.0	0.0
Total	116	40		

Source: Reza Cheuk-Alam, *Dataset questionnaire interests in history of primary school children Rotterdam*, May 2022.

³⁰² Grever and Ribbens, “Andere Tijden,” 114.

5. Conclusion

In this master's thesis, the history education of pupils in primary school was the central focus. Through questionnaires and interviews conducted with children in the last grade of primary school in Rotterdam, a case study chosen because of its *diversity*, an answer was sought to the question: “What are the interests of pupils in the last grade of primary school regarding history education in superdiverse Rotterdam and can this be explained by the background features *migration background*, *gender*, and *religion*?” Much research had already been done into the topic. However, in this research the emphasis was on local diversity and history education as this had not been researched much as discussed in chapter 1. The studied sources offer a glimpse into the complex relationship between superdiversity and history education – a topic of fiery discussions within politics, academics and amongst educational professionals.

The latter became clear in chapter 3 where the organisation, goals and recent developments in Dutch history were analysed. *The ten time frames*, *The Dutch Canon* and *the core objectives* are most important regarding Dutch history education but have also come with difficulties and received critiques. *The core objectives* for instance are seen as goals of what every pupil should be able to do and should have knowledge of when leaving primary school, but results of achieving *the core objectives* are unsatisfactory. *The ten time frames* and *The Dutch Canon* have received critiques for only emphasizing the west and being Eurocentric. Furthermore, *The Dutch Canon* might be far away from the world of children with (a) migrant(s) (grand)parent or those who are migrants themselves. *The ten time frames* in addition, received critiques for not being scientific and the names being too childish. These critiques were also refuted as the goal was not to be scientific, but to make history tangible for children and the names were created to be more appealing for children in primary school. *The Dutch Canon* has had a revision, but not a lot of changes were made. However, windows were created and revised to create the possibility to look at history through multiple perspectives. The SLO brought out a final advice regarding the *frames of reference space and time* and here, the *ten time frames* were quite different and more neutral in wording, making it more suitable for multiple perspectives. However, this final advice was only recently published so it remains unclear whether the new time frames will be implemented or not. It could be however, that they will be implemented as in society, as well as politics, there is currently a desire to move towards more *multiperspectivity* within education. Even though *multiperspectivity* seems to be high on the agenda, the implementation of it seems difficult as

there is not a lot of time for the subject of history. In addition, discussing emotionally laden and triggering topics is challenging and hardly done by teachers.

If we want to know if notions such as *multiperspectivity* are relevant or of interest to children as well, it is important to get their opinion on the matter. In chapter 4, the results of the questionnaires and interviews were presented. First, the results regarding *migration background* were discussed. Amongst Dutch children and children with a migration background, the most popular subject in task 1 related to the canon is *The Second World War*. The greatest differences in the subjects chosen between Dutch children and those with a migration background are regarding the subjects *Religion* and *Slavery*. *Slavery* was chosen much more, and *Religion* was only chosen by children with a migration background. Both of these subjects are related to the background of these children.

When looking at task 2 with regard to *migration background* and the absolute numbers, *Rotterdam*, *War and Conquest*, *Slavery*, *slave trade*, *colonialism*, and *abolitionism* are overall most popular with boys and girls. However, as there were much more children with a migration background than without, calculating the popularity of subjects in relative numbers of the own subgroup was more telling. It showed that there are indeed differences in the popularity of certain topics amongst Dutch boys and boys with a migration background (such as *Politics*, *Religion* and *Slavery*). The same accounts for the girls. When all Dutch children and all children with a migration background were put together, a difference between the popularity of certain subjects could also be seen. Within the group of Dutch children without a migration background as well as in the group of those with a migration background, personal interest was the main reason for choosing topics in task 2. In addition, many times a connection was made between the past and the present within both groups.

In task 3, the children were asked to choose a city, country or part of world of which they wanted to know more about the history. Consequently, namely the variable *migration background* was studied through this task. In both groups, choices related to the children's own background are high. However, it is higher for those with a migration background than without. When they chose a place in the world because of, for example, their family living there, this was most of the time also in relation to their own background. This makes the origin of children with a migration background the most given reason for their choices in task 3. The second largest category for the latter group is *personal interests*. For Dutch children, this is the other way around. For them, *personal interests* is the reason given the most and after that *origin*. Children with a migration background are thus more interested in their own personal history than Dutch children. However, both chose a lot of answers out of personal

interests and these places in the world are mostly not related to the children at all. That provides an opportunity for *multiperspectivity*. A last noteworthy comment about task 3 is that again a link between the past and the present is made quite a few times.

The discussion of *migration background* is followed by the results of *religion* being discussed. This was mostly done through the investigation of task 1 and 2. In the first task, out of each religious subgroup that participated a few children made a drawing or word web wherein their religion was mentioned. It was clear however, that Islamic children chose to make task 1 about their religion the most. Out of the religious children (all but one being Dutch) over half chose *religion* in their top three. Out of this group, over half chose it as their first pick. It made clear how much of an important aspect religion is of these children's lives. The results showed that overall, Islamic children find religion most important. Interesting were the reasons the religious children gave for their choices. Out of the 40 children choosing religion, 25 gave general reasons for choosing it (not relating it to their own religion) or explicitly stated they wanted to know about other religions as well. This is them stating they are not only interested in their own religion, but also in discussing multiple perspectives on multiple religions.

Lastly, the aspect of *gender* was discussed again through task 1 and task 2. In task 1, all Dutch girls without a migration background except for one, chose subjects related to the Dutch canon. They did it more often than Dutch boys without a migration background. The differences between boys and girls with a migration background were little. However, girls with a migration background that chose topics outside of the canon mostly related these to their own background and culture. Boys with a migration background also related it to family members for instance, but just as with Dutch boys without a migration background, also to personal interests.

When looking at the absolute numbers in task 2 regarding *gender*, *Rotterdam*, *War and Conquest*, *Slavery*, *slave trade*, *colonialism*, and *abolitionism* were overall most popular with boys and girls. However, as there were much more children with a migration background than without, calculating the popularity of subjects in relative numbers of their own subgroup was more telling. It showed that there were indeed differences in the popularity of certain topics amongst Dutch boys and boys with a migration background (such as *Politics*, *Religion* and *Slavery*). The same accounts for the girls. When all Dutch children and all children with a migration background were put together, a difference between the popularity of certain subjects could also be seen.

To conclude, the interests of the children are quite diverse as expected. It is however evident that *migration background*, *gender* and *religion* do have an influence on the interests of children in the last grade of primary school in Rotterdam. Even though it is impossible to adhere to every child's interest, it seems like bringing the past into the present can be very interesting for many children. Furthermore, it has become clear that many already like topics discussed in primary education, such as *War*, *Slavery* and *Science*. If these topics were to be linked to different countries, cultures, and people all over the world, more children might recognize themselves in it and feel proud of their own (migration) background as well as the Dutch history. It could be a way to move towards *multiperspectivity* in history education. *Rotterdam* was a very popular topic amongst all children. With or without *migration background*, this could be a topic where children come together. Whether they all have the same opinion about who a person from Rotterdam is (or should be), was not made clear by this research. It would be interesting to do further research into the differences between neighborhoods in the same city to get a more complete picture. Because of the scope of this research, that was unfortunately not possible. However, it would be a good addition to this research, especially since it seems that the discussion regarding *diversity*, *multiperspectivity* and history education are far from over.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Questionnaire interests in history pupils last grade primary school Rotterdam.

303

Vragenlijst over jouw achtergrond

Hieronder staan vragen over **jouw achtergrond**. Er zijn geen goede of foute antwoorden. Het is wel belangrijk dat je **eerlijk** antwoord geeft op de vragen. Als je een vraag niet begrijpt, vraag dan aan je juf of meester om hulp!

1. Mijn naam is: _____

Omcirkel het jouw antwoord bij vraag twee:

2. Ik ben een: Meisje / Jongen / Wil ik niet zeggen / Anders namelijk: _____

3. Hoe zou jij **jezelf omschrijven**?

Bijvoorbeeld: Ik ben half Nederlands en half Surinaams en zou mezelf omschrijven als: Surinaams, Nederlands, Nederlandse Surinamer, Surinaamse Nederlander, Europeaan, wereldburger, Katholiek, Moslim, Protestants, etc... Je mag zoveel dingen opnoemen die je denkt dat bij jou passen.

4. In **welk land** ben jij geboren?

5. Waar zijn jouw **ouders** geboren?

Land moeder: _____

Land vader: _____

6. Waar zijn jouw **opa's en oma's** geboren?

Als je het antwoord niet weet op deze vraag zet je een vraagteken op de lijntjes.

Land opa van moeders kant: _____

Land oma van moeders kant: _____

Land opa van vaders kant: _____

Land oma van vaders kant: _____

7. Ben jij **religieus**? Zo ja, om welke religie gaat dit? _____

303 Translations

Below are questions about **your background**. There are no right or wrong answers. It is important that you answer the questions **honestly**. If you don't understand a question, ask your teacher for help!

1. My name is:

Circle your answer for question two:

2. I am a: Girl / Boy / I don't want to say / Other namely:

3. How would you **describe yourself**?

For example: I am half Dutch and half Surinamese and would describe myself as: Surinamese, Dutch, Dutch Surinamese, Surinamese Dutch, European, citizen of the world, Catholic, Muslim, Protestant, etc... You can name as many things that you think you have. fit.

4. In **which country** were you born?

5. Where were your **parents** born?

Country mother:

Country father:

6. Where were your **grandfathers** and **grandmothers** born?

If you don't know the answer to this question, put a question mark on the lines.

Country Grandpa on Mother's Side:

Country Grandma on Mother's Side:

Country Grandpa on Paternal Side:

Country Grandma on Paternal Side:

7. Are you **religious**? If so, what religion is this?

OPDRACHT 1: TEKENING / WOORDWEB

Het doel van geschiedenis is om erachter te komen wat er in het **verleden (vroeger)** is gebeurd. We begrijpen daardoor beter waarom de wereld nu zo is. Om de geschiedenis te onderzoeken, maken we gebruik van **bronnen** zoals: **dagboeken, schilderijen, foto's, video's, posters, gebouwen, brieven, kunstwerken** en nog veel meer!

Jij hebt zelf ook een eigen geschiedenis. Als persoon hoor je bij **meerdere groepen** die jou maken wie je bent. Zo woon je bijvoorbeeld in een bepaald gedeelte van de **wereld (Europa)**, in een **land (Nederland)** en in een bepaalde **stad, dorp of plaats**. Daarnaast heb je ook een **familie**, een bepaalde **cultuur, achtergrond, afkomst** en misschien een **gelof, religie** met bepaalde **tradities, feestdagen en rituelen**. Verder zit je op een bepaalde **school**, hoor je misschien bij een **sportclub** of **beespeel je een muziekinstrument** en ben je een **jongen of meisje**. Iedere groep waar je bijhoort heeft weer een eigen geschiedenis en jij dus ook!

Maak een tekening OF een woordweb met steekwoorden in het vlak hieronder van wat voor jou de belangrijkste geschiedenis is. Het is belangrijk dat dit je eigen mening is. Kijk dus niet bij anderen en vraag niet om hulp bij het kiezen van je onderwerp.

De tekening of het woordweb mag, maar hoeft niet, te maken te hebben met iets dat je op school hebt geleerd tijdens de geschiedenisles. Het kan dus ook over de geschiedenis van je eigen land, stad, familie, geloof/religie, cultuur, hobby's of iets anders gaan dat je belangrijk vindt en waar je al iets over weet.

Schrijf als je klaar bent op de volgende bladzijde waarover je een tekening of woordweb hebt gemaakt!

Als je de opdracht niet begrijpt, vraag dan aan je juf of meester om hulp!

Leg op de volgende bladzijde **waarover** je een tekening of woordweb hebt gemaakt!

Pagina 1/5

Graag netjes en leesbaar schrijven!

Van **wat** heb je een tekening of woordweb gemaakt op de vorige pagina?

Leg goed uit **waarom** je dit onderwerp zo belangrijk vindt.

Pagina 2/5

304 **Translation first page:**

The purpose of history is to find out what happened in the past (past). As a result, we better understand why the world is the way it is. To study history, we use sources such as: **diaries, paintings, photos, videos, posters, buildings, letters, artworks** and much more!

You as a person also have your own history. As a person you belong to **several groups** that make you who you are. For example, you live in a certain part of the **world (Europe)**, in a **country (the Netherlands)** and in a certain **city, village or district**, each with its own history. You also have a family, certain culture, background, origin and maybe faith/religion with certain **traditions, holidays, and rituals**. Furthermore, you attend a certain **school**, you may belong to a **sports club**, or you play a **musical instrument**, and you are a **boy or girl**. Every group you belong to has its own history and so do you!

Make a drawing OR a word web with keywords in the area below of what is the most important history to you. It is important that this is your own opinion. So do not look to others and don't ask for help in choosing your topic.

The drawing or word web may, but does not have to, be related to something you learned in history class. So, it can also be about the history of your own country, city, family, faith/religion, culture, hobbies or anything else that you find important and that you already know something about.

When you're done, write on the next page about what you made a drawing or word web!

If you don't understand the assignment, ask your teacher for help!

Translation second page:

About what did you make a drawing or word web?
Explain clearly **why** you find this topic so important.

OPDRACHT 2: PLAATJES

Hieronder staan **15 plaatjes over geschiedenis**. Onder ieder plaatje staat aangegeven over wat voor **onderwerp uit de geschiedenis** het plaatje gaat. Kies de **3 plaatjes** uit die jou het leukst lijken om iets over te leren. **Bekijk eerst alle plaatjes voordat je een keuze maakt!!**

Maak een top 3 door rechtsonder in het vakje bij het plaatje dat je het allerleukst vindt een 1 op te schrijven, bij je tweede keuze schrijf je een 2 in het vakje en bij je derde keuze schrijf je een 3 in het vakje. Beschrijf daarna op de lijntjes onderaan de opdracht waarom je deze 3 plaatjes hebt gekozen.

Er zijn geen goede of foute antwoorden, het gaat alleen om **jouw mening**. Het is wel belangrijk dat je **eerlijk antwoord** geeft.



Geschiedenis van
politiek en rechten



Geschiedenis van
Rotterdam



Geschiedenis van
vrouwen



Geschiedenis van
sport en spel



Geschiedenis van
oorlog en veroveringen



Geschiedenis van
religie / godsdienst /
geloof



Geschiedenis **slavernij**,
slavenhandel,
kolonialisme en
afschaffing slavernij

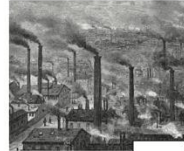


Geschiedenis van
wetenschap en
technologie



Geschiedenis van
film, tv, muziek en
theater

Pagina 3/5



Geschiedenis van
het milieu en klimaat



Geschiedenis van
kunst en architectuur



Geschiedenis van
(arbeids)migratie en
migranten



Geschiedenis van
de gewone mens



Geschiedenis van
kleding en mode



Geschiedenis van
machthebbers

Waarom heb je deze plaatjes/onderwerpen gekozen?

Noem 2 redenen van jouw eerste keuze

.....

.....

Noem 2 redenen van jouw tweede keuze

.....

.....

Noem 2 redenen van jouw derde keuze

.....

.....

Is er nog een onderwerp waarover je het leuk lijkt om te leren bij geschiedenis, maar die niet tussen de plaatjes staat?

.....

.....

Pagina 4/5

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305 Translation first page:

Below are **15 pictures about history**. Under each picture is indicated what **subject from history** the picture is about. Choose the **3 pictures** that you think are the most fun to learn about.

View all pictures before you make a choice!!

Make a top 3 by writing a 1 in the bottom right of the box next to the picture you like the most, with your second choice you write a 2 in the box and with your third choice you write a 3 in the box. Then write on the lines at the bottom of the assignment why you chose these 3 pictures.

There are no right or wrong answers, it's just **your opinion**. It is important that you **answer honestly**.

Options given:

History of politics and law, History of Rotterdam, History of women, History of sports and games, History of war and conquest, History of religion/belief, History of slavery, slave trade, colonialism and abolition of slavery, History of science and technology,

Translation second page:

History of the environment and climate, History of art and architecture, History of (labour) migration and migrants, History of the common people, History of clothing and fashion, History of rulers.

Why did you choose these images/topics?

Name 2 reasons for your first choice

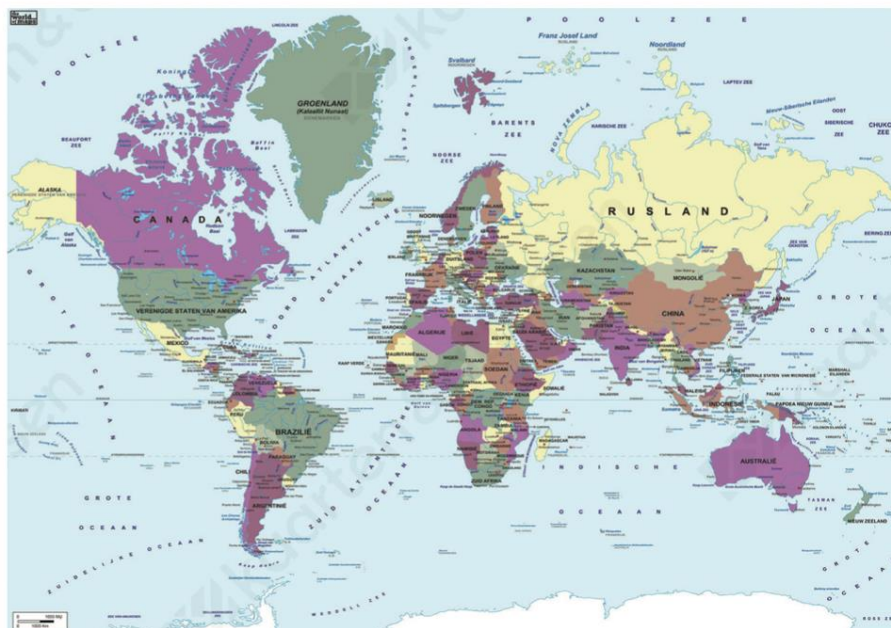
Name 2 reasons for your second choice

Name 2 reasons for your third choice

Is there another topic that you would like to learn in history, but is not listed in the pictures?

Naam _____ Schrijf op iedere bladzijde je naam!

OPDRACHT 3: WERELDDEEL OF LAND



Hierboven zie je de wereldkaart. Over de geschiedenis van welke **stad**, welk **land** of welk **werelddeel** vind jij het belangrijk/interessant om meer te leren? Je mag er twee kiezen. Schrijf eerst de stad, het land en/of werelddeel op en leg daarna uit waarom je deze hebt gekozen!

Jouw land/stad/werelddeel eerste keuze

Leg uit waarom je het belangrijk/interessant vindt om meer te leren over de geschiedenis hiervan

.....

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.....

.....

Jouw land/stad/werelddeel tweede keuze

Leg uit waarom je het belangrijk/interessant vindt om meer te leren over de geschiedenis hiervan

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Pagina 5/5

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Translation:

Above you see the world map. About the history of which **city**, **country** or **part of the world** do you find it important/interesting to learn more? You may choose two. First write down the city, country and/or continent and then explain why you chose it!

Your first choice of country/city/continent:

Explain why you find it important/interesting to learn more about its history:

Your second choice of country/city/continent:

Explain why you find it important/interesting to learn more about its history: