

Master Thesis

Research Master Sociology of Culture, Media and the Arts

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Title:

‘Cornered in your own country’ or ‘enrichment of your whole life’?

Higher and lower educated natives’ positions on cultural diversity

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Research on ethnocentrism, individual liberty, immigration and law enforcement typically shows that the higher and lower educated are pitted against each other on these aspects. These issues are held to go together in a broader opposition between authoritarianism and libertarianism, one that has led to a ‘new political culture’ that has increased in salience in the last decades. But apart from their mutual association, it is not exactly clear how attitudes on these diverse topics are coherently united. Employing a focus group method, this study analyzes the way higher and lower educated natives talk about ethnic/cultural diversity, which results in two empirically informed ideal typical worldviews. It shows that attitudes regarding the new political culture are grounded in more fundamental differences pertaining to what culture is and how cultural differences are to be dealt with. The results are discussed in the light of the debate about the ‘causes’ of contemporary cultural conflict.

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Research on ethnocentrism, individual liberty, immigration and law enforcement typically shows that the higher and lower educated are pitted against each other on these aspects. These issues are held to go together in a broader opposition between authoritarianism and libertarianism, one that has led to a ‘new political culture’ that has increased in salience in the last decades. But apart from their mutual association, it is not exactly clear how attitudes on these diverse topics are coherently united. Employing a focus group method, this study analyzes the way higher and lower educated natives talk about ethnic/cultural diversity, which results in two empirically informed ideal typical worldviews. It shows that attitudes regarding the new political culture are grounded in more fundamental differences pertaining to what culture is and how cultural differences are to be dealt with. The results are discussed in the light of the debate about the ‘causes’ of contemporary cultural conflict.

1. Introduction

Differences in values and attitudes concerning ethnocentrism (Hello et al., 2004), individual liberty (Inglehart, 1977) and social order (e.g. Lipset, 1959) and immigration (Semyonov et al., 2006; Minkenberg, 1992) are widely found to be explained by differences in levels of education. The lower educated are, more often than the higher educated, found to be more ethnocentric, more inclined to prefer social order over the rights of individuals, resist immigration and prefer cultural homogeneity. This is not considered a coincidence; these different attitudes are assumed to be interrelated.

This assumption that attitudes concerning these different issues are interrelated

has been empirically validated with the construction and subsequent successful use of scales measuring authoritarianism (Adorno et al., 1950) and libertarianism/postmaterialism (Inglehart, 1977; Flanagan, 1982; Houtman, 2003), also referred to as cultural progressivism or noneconomic liberalism (Houtman, 2003: 12). These scales capture attitudes around conformity, social order and resistance to deviance and statistical analyses show they belong to a single factor. Although both concepts have been in use for quite some time, the recognition that they are two sides of the same coin has come only (relatively) recently (Flanagan, 1987; Houtman, 2003).

Research has shown that in the last decades, this fault line has become increasingly salient in political debates in late modern societies (Achterberg, 2006), as can be illustrated with the rise of the new left in the 1970s (Inglehart, 1977, 1990) and the new right from the 1980s onwards (Ignazi, 1992, 2003; Minkenberg, 1992; Kitschelt, 1995). The increased importance of these libertarian/authoritarian issues has been termed ‘the new political culture’ (Clark & Hoffman-Martinot, 1998; Achterberg, 2006). But despite the fact that attitudes concerning this new political culture are interrelated and that positions in the debate are explained by level of education (Houtman et al., 2008), it remains unclear exactly how and why these are connected at the empirical level, ie. how attitudes concerning one aspect of the new political culture —e.g. immigration— presuppose certain attitudes on other aspects — e.g. law and order— of the new political culture. This study aims to provide an insight into how the positions of higher and lower educated concerning these issues can be coherently understood.

This study addresses the differences between the lower and the higher educated over the issues that comprise the new political culture. In Western Europe especially, these issues have become increasingly manifest in recent debates over the integration of immigrants. Often, discussions on this topic will touch upon the issue of law enforcement (and vice versa: discussions on law enforcement often come to address ethnic minorities). This debate is thus at the center of the issues concerning the new political culture because it captures all these issues (rights of minorities vs. national identity, cultural homogeneity vs. cultural diversity, individual liberty vs. conformity). This particular topic can thus be seen as a strategic case in which the polarization over these new issues between higher

and lower educated (natives) is most salient. The focus of this study will thus be to come to an adequate understanding of the differences between higher and lower educated natives' attitudes on these interrelated issues. The research question that will guide this study is

How can the differences between higher and lower educated natives' attitudes pertaining to issues that are central to the new political culture be logically understood?

An adequate way of coming to such an understanding is to focus on how people talk about, and make sense of issues concerning immigration, (ethnic) minorities and law enforcement in their everyday lives. Such a focus requires an in-depth methodology that allows for the complexities and negotiations by means of which people may come to, or substantiate, their opinions. Qualitative methods are typically suited for such a focus.

So in this study, a qualitative methodology will be applied to gain insight into the differences between higher and lower educated natives' attitudes pertaining to the topic that can be broadly described as 'the integration of ethnic minorities' or 'living in an ethnically diverse society'. And to allow for the complexities, such as negotiations and motivations, higher and lower educated natives are selected for comparison. This way each group's way of making sense of the topic, as well as the attitudes they express and the arguments they use in the discussion, can be explored.

2. Method and data

2.1 Focus groups

In this study, the focus thus lies on everyday ways of talking about cultural diversity of both higher and lower educated natives. Underlying this focus is the assumption that 'people's knowledge and attitudes are not entirely encapsulated in reasoned responses to direct questions. Everyday forms of communication may tell as much, if not more, about what people know or experience' (Kitzinger, 1995: 299). In order to come to a data collection that allows for a comparison of higher and lower educated natives' ways of discussing cultural diversity, this study employs the method of focus groups.

A focus group is 'a small group discussion focused on a particular topic and facilitated by a researcher' (Tonkiss, 2004: 194). The value of focus groups as a social scientific research method is characterized by Tonkiss as the method's ability 'for exploring the attitudes, opinions, meanings and definitions *on the participants' own terms*' (2004: 206, emphasis added). Indeed, as Ann Cronin (2008) says, 'the main goal of a focus group is to gain insight and understanding by hearing from representatives from the target population' (2008: 234), in the case of this study: higher and lower educated natives.

The focus group method has been off the radar of sociological research methods for a long time since its initial heydays in the (post-) WWII era, when it was used to study the reception of propaganda (Morgan, 1997: 4). However, since the 1990s the method has been reclaimed bit by bit from the field of marketing studies, where it had not lost popularity (cf. Peek & Fothergill, 2009; Jowett & O'Toole, 2006).

2.2 *Group size*

Ann Cronin, in a text book chapter on focus groups, states that '[i]deally, focus groups should consist of between six to ten people' (2008: 235). Peek and Fothergill (2009), who have a lot of experience with the method conclude that 'groups that included between 3-5 participants ran more smoothly than the larger group interviews we conducted,' and that 'managing the larger focus groups, from anywhere from 6- 15 participants, was difficult (2009: 37-8). Cronin agrees that managing groups of more than ten is difficult and, in addition, that such focus groups 'result[...] in data lacking both depth and substance' (2008: 235). Also, in larger groups participants might rely on others to do the talking, a phenomenon termed 'social floating' by Latané et al. (1979, in Cronin, 2008: 235).

The aim of this study is to form an understanding of how both the lower and the higher educated natives make sense of 'living in an ethnically diverse society'. Therefore, both depth and substance are important. Moreover, since the focus is on the participants' everyday ways of talking, we wanted to use a 'low' moderator style (cf. Morgan, 1997), meaning a modest role for the moderator in the discussion. Such a style is manageable only if the groups aren't too large. Combining this need for both depth and manageability

of the groups, it was decided to limit the size of the groups to six participants.

2.3 Data collection

The goal was to recruit six higher educated natives and six lower educated natives from the Rotterdam area. 'Higher educated' was defined as university level and 'lower educated' was defined as not more than secondary education. The research team recruited the participants for the focus groups with the help of their (in)formal networks by contacting people from their networks and asking them if they knew any higher/lower educated natives that might be willing to join a discussion about living in an ethnically diverse society, after which the research team contacted the potential participants. For the higher educated focus group 3 men and 3 women were recruited, of which 1 man signed off on the very last moment, leaving 5 participants. For the lower educated focus group 2 men and 4 women were recruited. All respondents were between 30 and 65 years old.

Location of the group discussions was a conference room on the campus of Erasmus University in Rotterdam. The discussion was moderated by a senior researcher, who introduced himself and the goal of the project before the discussion. He told the participants that we wanted to hear about how they think and feel about living in an ethnically/ culturally diverse society. The participants were invited to speak freely by arguing that there are no right or wrong answers or opinions in this type of research. They were also assured of their anonymity in the use of the collected data. The only rules stated were that the participants let each other finish, for both the clarity of the discussion and to not make transcription (and thus analysis) impossible. Both focus group discussions were held in the summer of 2009. On a practical level, coffee, tea and water was provided for the focus group participants and all received 50 Euros to cover expenses made on transport, parking and food (the sessions were around dinner time). The discussions were between 1,5 and 2 hours long, were (audio) recorded and transcribed.

2.4 Data analysis

Analysis of the data will take place using thematic analysis. 'A theme,' Boyatzis (1998: 4) says, 'is a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organizes

the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon. A theme may be identified at the manifest level (directly observable information) or at the latent level (underlying the phenomenon)'. A thematic analysis of the focus group data thus involves reading and rereading the transcripts, coding the distinctive themes in each discussion, comparing the themes with those found in the transcript of the other discussion, and finally coming to a (limited) amount of analytically distinctive themes with which the lower and higher educated natives can be compared.

In the analysis of the focus group data both levels of thematic (manifest descriptive and latent interpretive) analysis have been employed. The former to describe the differences between the higher and lower educated natives' attitudes concerning the integration of ethnic minorities and the latter to interpret these differences in terms of the worldviews underlying these attitudes. All should become clear from the following sections that report on the results of this study.

Before dealing with the empirical results of this study, it should be noted that the author has chosen to present the empirical data with both quotes from individual participants as well as with excerpts of the discussions between the participants. The idea is that this way of presenting makes the results into a more valid reflection of the empirical data. Not just because the goal of the study is to focus on the participants' everyday ways of talking, should the results (at least partly) consist of 'ways of talking', but, more importantly, because the data show that people sometimes come to certain opinions *while in discussion* with others. This is also considered one of the strengths of the focus group method: while talking amongst each other people 'say things that they may have not disclosed in an individual interview' (Peek & Fothergill, 2009: 46; cf. Morgan, 1997: 2).

The excerpts from the discussions will be marked 'HE focus group' or 'LE focus group' to refer to the higher educated (HE) or lower educated (LE) focus group from which they were taken. These codes are also used to link quotes from individual participants to the appropriate focus group when this is not clear from the context. In addition, the original Dutch quotes/ excerpts are presented in the notes to compensate for possible confusions arising from my translations.

3 Descriptive results

The analysis of the focus group data has resulted in four analytically distinctive themes on which the higher and lower educated natives in this study differ. These are presented in section 3, which deals with descriptive (manifest) differences in attitudes. Section 4 will focus on two interpretive (latent) themes by means of which the former can be understood.

But before dealing with the differences between higher and lower educated natives' attitudes towards living in an ethnically diverse society, it is best to begin with what both groups have in common, because these similarities will turn out to be a dividing force in later sections.

3.1 Similarities

The most striking similarity between both of the discussions is that both groups stress the importance of so-called 'Western values', pertaining to the rights of women and homosexuals, to be respected. For instance, participant Angelique from the focus group with lower educated natives says

'Of course having an own identity is important, but when other things come in the picture, like hatred of gays and other things, then you're coming to a country, but you're not respecting that country'.²

And in the same focus group, participant Jannie agrees with Angelique:

'If you come to live here, you should be informed that there are gays here and that that's allowed and okay. And that a woman has just as many rights and is worth just as much as anyone. Isn't that right?'³

In the focus group with higher educated natives, participant Jan Willem states that

'We live in a Western society and have certain Western ideals: democracy, freedom of speech, equal rights for people, women, men, gays etcetera. We should stand for that.'⁴

It is thus clear that for both the higher and the lower educated participants in this study the rights of women and homosexuals are beyond doubt. Both groups of participants clearly seem to agree on this issue.

3.2 Unequal gender relations in practice

However the similarity between the two focus groups in their attitudes towards gender relations and the rights of homosexuals, they start to diverge when the question rises of what to do when these values are not respected. For instance, when the group of lower educated natives comes to discuss the (Islamic) practice of men and women not shaking hands, the conversation unfolds as follows:

Richard: *If I enter a conversation with somebody and I introduce myself, I expect that person to introduce herself as well and you shake hands out of civility. I think it's civil to shake hands and if the reaction is like 'no, I'm a woman, I'm not touching you. Well, I think that's rude.*

Jannie: *I think it's disgusting.*

Richard: *Very rude and insulting.*

Jannie: *I think it's humiliating, it's a lack of respect for the person in front of you. I think that's not right.(..) Then you shouldn't live in such a country. If you don't support such things, then you shouldn't choose to live in a country like that. Then there are enough other countries to flee to.⁵*

[LE focus group]

So the lower educated in this focus group feel that not shaking hands is a sign of lack of respect which is absolutely incompatible with life in Dutch society. On the same topic, the focus group with higher educated natives discusses this issue very differently:

Caro: *The question of course is how much assimilation you demand of people. I mean, the fact that the relation between men and women is different among Turks and Moroccans, should not be an objection.*

Jan Willem: *Unless...*

Caro: *Of course, unless it leads to excesses. That's when you have to intervene. But consider the example of the hand shake. Do you mind that? In public life I might consider that troublesome. I have had to deal with that in my work as well. That when there was an application for a subsidy someone would shake hands, and when the application got turned down he stuck to the 'no hand shake'. But I live in an environment in which I don't shake hands with lots of men, because it's not customary.*

Maartje: *But do you mind that? Because I think things are sometimes turned into an issue. (..)*

Caro: *But that was against me. If you're in another position, if you're in public office and you don't get a hand shake, then it will probably be a very blown up issue. In that case a*

*communications officer has been asleep. It should have been clear on beforehand. So when it happens in public life I think this is not right, but when Turks and Moroccans do it amongst each other and there are agreements about it.*⁶

[HE focus group]

So while the lower educated participants judged the 'no-hand-shaking' practice as an absolute violation of highly valued principles, the higher educated participants relativized the importance of shaking hands, as well as the importance some Muslims attach to (not) shaking women's hands.

Other practices that are common topics of discussion in the 'integration debate' include marrying off and the headscarf or burqa. It is therefore no surprise that these issues are also discussed in both the focus groups. In the lower educated natives' focus group, participant Marjo asks the others if marrying off is still happening nowadays. In the conversation that follows, Jannie and Angelique are quite clear in how they think about that:

Jannie: *If you come to a country where gays can get married...*

Angelique: *Or walk down the street...*

Jannie: *And where women do not get married off and where women have freedom of speech and are emancipated. If you don't support that, then you don't come to such a country, then you don't come to live here.*⁷

As can be seen from these statements, for the lower educated participants, practices like marrying off and disrespectful attitudes towards homosexuality are seen as absolutely unacceptable. At another point in the discussion, participant Jannie states that she thinks marrying off should be prohibited in the Netherlands. Participant Richard, responds by saying that

'I think the practice of marrying off should not be bad by definition, if it's customary for a certain people. I just think that, when you come to the Netherlands, or in another country where there are other rules and regulations and where other moral or social rules apply that belong to that specific culture and place, you should ask yourself if you shouldn't adapt to those.'

Jannie: *Yes, and if you can not adapt, you shouldn't come here. What are you doing in a country if you can not adapt to the culture and if you're not okay with that?*

Richard: *Yes, I agree with that.*⁸

[LE focus group]

The participants are thus quite clear in their claim that immigrants and ethnic minorities, in their gender-related practices, should adapt to the ‘moral or social’ rules of the ethnic majority. So for the lower educated natives, the position women have in ‘Islamic’ cultures in the Netherlands is simply unacceptable. This is considered a legitimate basis for not letting immigrants into the country. And when the moderator mentions the burqa, these participants are quick to express their opinions concerning that garment. Participant Jannie (LE) states that she thinks ‘that is not done in our country’, with which Angelique agrees: ‘absolutely not’. Jannie continues by saying that ‘there have been lots of discussions about this but I consider someone only showing this [points at her eyes] as dangerous (..). You don’t know what’s under it.’ This shows that for the lower educated natives, the burqa is a security risk, not (in the first place) a problem for the position of women.

The higher educated natives, in their focus group discussion, express rather different views of these same topics. For instance, on the topic of headscarves and burqas the discussion unfolds as follows:

Maartje: *I think that it’s a problem when women don’t get to choose themselves, but I think that there are lots of women who do choose to wear a headscarf.*

Jan Willem: *Yes.*

Caro: *A headscarf is fine, but I think a burqa is just outright eh, you know, if you can only see someone’s eyes.*

Maartje: *I don’t like that at all either.*

Jan Willem: *A burqa is something different from a headscarf. I don’t have any problems with a headscarf.*

Henk: *One woman wears a burqa and then it’s oppression and for another woman it isn’t. You just don’t know. (..)*

José: *I know completely white women who had become a Muslim and began wearing a burqa completely voluntarily. And they have grown up here. A very conscious, own decision.⁹*

[HE focus group]

As can be seen from both discussions, both the lower and the higher educated natives agree that a burqa is (at least) not desirable. However, they differ in what discourse they use in legitimating their claims. The lower educated refer to security risks, arguing that burqas are dangerous ('you don't know what's under it'), while the higher educated refer to importance of the women's own choice. So for the lower educated the burqa is seen as a (possible) threat to the social order, while the higher educated see it as a (possible) threat to the women's individual liberty. Therefore, the lower educated state that a burqa is 'unacceptable', while the higher educated are inclined to 'discourage' wearing burqas:

'Of course I understand that the Dutch government cannot forbid people to wear burqas. That it's constitutionally impossible. But I think that a government should have a public awareness campaign to at least discourage it. This is a very important aspect of the emancipation of Muslim women.' (Jan Willem, HE) ¹⁰

And when discussing the practice of marrying off the higher educated argue for individual freedom, but they also relativize it, arguing that it happens in Dutch communities as well:

Maartje: *But a lot of fathers don't want to marry off their daughters anymore, because those girls don't want to be married off. Of course, there's always a certain group, but then I think, in Staphorst [Dutch orthodox Christian village] you're also not allowed to decide who you marry.*

Jan Willem: *Well, I think that's horrible as well.*

Maartje: *It sure is.*

(..)

Henk: *Of course you can say that marrying off isn't good. But what you see nowadays in the Netherlands with people marrying too quickly or heaving a promiscuous lifestyle. That's not really splendid either.* ¹¹

[HE focus group]

So the moral consensus pertaining to the rights of women and homosexuals that the higher and lower educated natives had in common (3.1) appears to be a dividing factor when it comes to the question of what to think about (groups of) people that do not support these values. When comparing the two groups of participants, the lower educated natives argue that these typical expressions of gender inequality are an absolute violation of our common principles and social order, while the higher educated natives tend to

relativize these practices and emphasize individual liberty.

3.3 Valuing diversity

Another theme in which the higher and lower educated natives differ concerns the value each group attaches to ethnic diversity as such. The latter, for instance, express their views on cultural differences as follows:

'I try to convince myself that differences are not necessarily bad. But I think that if I would visit a tribe in the bush, as you sometimes see on TV, I would be sent off within a week. Just because I don't do things that I'm not used to doing, because it's not normal for me. But it is normal for them, so you can't correct them on that. Unless they come, here, become my neighbors and start annoying me. That's when I will become very angry. I think that's only reasonable.' (Richard, LE)¹²

The above quote shows that for the lower educated cultural relativism is not a strange concept, since they accept that different people around the world (*internationally*) may do things differently. However, they seem to reject this relativism when it pertains to (*intra-*) national situations and when the clarity of the social order is obscured. When the moderator asks the participants if ethnic minorities should be allowed to keep their own cultures, they respond like this:

Richard: *I think they should.*

Angelique: *To a certain degree, yes.*

Esther: *Yes, that's what I wanted to say.*

Jannie: *Yes, partly, yes.*

Richard: *As long as they don't cause a nuisance and let others be free.*

Marjo: *I think they can.*

Esther: *As long as they adapt a bit.*

Jannie: *As long as they don't wear any burqas.*

Esther: *As long as you don't see too much of those garbage bags.*

Jannie: *And no marrying off in the Netherlands...*

Esther: *Yes, but then you'll start changing them.*

Jannie: *...mandatory circumcisions, it just doesn't fit in Dutch culture.*

Richard: *The Netherlands has some rules and regulations. If you come to the Netherlands, you will have to abide the laws. But if you prefer rice over a Dutch cauliflower meal, then you can eat rice. Who cares? If you believe in the almighty sun and people in the Netherlands believe in the moon, then you're free to believe in the sun.*

That's up to you. As long as..

Esther: *As long as you're not bothered by it.*

(..)

Then you should have a questionnaire at the border with these things. You don't agree?

*Then you're not allowed in. As a matter of speech. (Angelique)*¹³

[LE focus group]

This excerpt from the lower educated natives' discussion shows how an initial approval of a statement concerning ethnic minorities' rights to 'keep their own cultures' turns into a discourse that can perhaps be best summarized in 'as long as they don't bother me or others'. The lower educated participants' appreciation of ethnic/cultural diversity thus largely consists of 'not minding' that people from other ethnic backgrounds do some things differently, as long as they don't bother other people with it. And from the point they do bother others, they should assimilate. One participant, Jannie, even suggests that since her neighbors 'don't bother' her, they have probably assimilated: 'Of course there are also normal families. And they have children that are properly raised. But perhaps those children are raised somewhat more according to our culture.'¹⁴

The higher educated participants, however, have a wholly different perspective. Participant Caro says that cultural differences 'make life more lively'. And when they come to discuss ethnic minorities' contributions to society, participant Henk talks about an 'enrichment of your culture' and Maartje adds 'but also an enrichment of your whole life', by which she means 'talking to people who have wholly different perspectives'. Talking about some encounters she has had with people with an ethnic minority background, she concludes that 'I've had some really nice insights because of that and I consider that a very valuable contribution to my existence.'¹⁵ José expresses a similar view when she talks about refugees who have 'whole histories behind them': 'When you are in a conversation with them you notice that they have thought about things in a more conscious and deeper way'. Because of this, José says, 'you notice that they have a firmer position in life and therefore have a clearer view on people and society'¹⁶. Participant Peter argues 'the more cultural differences, the better. Because if you're confronted with different people, you'll start thinking about yourself more so you'll be challenged to

develop yourself¹⁷. He thus sees diversity as a mirror with which one can look at, and improve oneself.

The higher educated natives' appreciation of ethnic/cultural diversity can thus be seen as an intrinsic appreciation of diversity, an appreciation *because of its difference*. They tend to see diversity as enrichment to their lives, as something that offers them the opportunity to take a different perspective on things. So whereas the lower educated participants (at most) *tolerate* difference, the higher educated actually celebrate difference.

3.4 *Ethnic concentration*

A topic of discussion that is related to the previous theme of the appreciation of diversity, is concerned with both groups' attitudes towards the concentration of ethnic minorities in (specific) neighborhoods. When the lower educated natives talk about ethnically concentrated neighborhoods, they argue that things should be done about that. Here, participant Angelique starts to talk about this 'ethnic mixing':

Angelique: *I thinks that's a good idea, to contrast poor and rich with each other, so to say. That way it can, well, you can't say adjust each other, but still it's something different than putting everything together. I think that has been a big mistake, with the schools as well. Because they should spread groups.*

Jannie: *Those youth form groups because they live close to each other. And they're going to stand on the corners of the streets in the evening, by which a lot of people can feel threatened.*

(..)

Angelique: *People that have just come here, will join the rest that is already here and they will still try to keep their own culture and thus won't respect the Netherlands.¹⁸*

[LE focus Group]

This excerpt shows that these participants consider ethnic concentration problematic. Forming ethnically segregated groups, they argue, will prevent ethnic minorities from integrating in Dutch society. That's why these lower educated natives say that ethnic minorities should rather be 'blended in' with the native population. That way they can learn to adapt to life in the Netherlands.

The participants in the higher educated focus group, however, have a different

perspective on the issue of ethnically segregated neighborhoods. First, they express that they understand that immigrants who come here, cluster together. For instance, participant Henk talks about a block of houses in his neighborhood that is mainly inhabited by ethnic minorities: 'If you're all from the same group, then you're not going to integrate and you'll stay in the same neighborhood'¹⁹. And participant Maartje refers to her parents, who have a house in the south of France, where also other Dutch people reside: *'It was very cosy to just stick together. That way you can just talk Dutch'*. Participant Henk, in turn, responds by saying: *'You see that all the time. If Dutch or other people go abroad, they always stay with a group. They like sticking together.'*²⁰ So basically, these higher educated natives are saying that people who are (ethnically) alike tend to stick together. Subsequently, the higher educated also state that they would not mind seeing this concentration culminate in ethnically distinct neighborhoods. Participant Caro says: 'What would be wrong about people choosing to live in Little Italy? Or Little Casablanca?' And participant Jan Willem sees 'no problem at all with a new Chinatown or Little Italy. Why wouldn't people with a certain ethnicity be able to live together? Unless when it's a group that already fall behind socially, (..) because then you're putting together people who fall behind'²¹. So while the lower educated see ethnic segregation as an illustration of how things can get out of hand, the higher educated tend to see this segregation as a way in which certain cultural heritages, which allow them to take a different perspective from time to time (3.2), have the chance to flourish.

These different attitudes regarding ethnically segregated neighborhoods also shine through when both groups talk about what they foresee for the future. When the higher educated discuss their prospects for the future of the Netherlands as an ethnically diverse society, they say that antagonisms between native and non-native groups ('autochtones' and 'allochtones') will eventually disappear, because that distinction itself will disappear:

Jan Willem: *Globalization is going so fast. The world is becoming smaller and smaller. In a hundred years there won't be any allochtones anymore.*

Maartje: *By that time everyone will be an allochtone.*

Jan Willem: *Right, everyone will be an allochtone.*

Henk: *Indeed.*²²

[HE focus group]

These higher educated participants thus see contemporary problems around immigration as merely temporary issues that will go away as time goes by.

The lower educated participants, however, already see the current situation as problematic. Their image of the future, if no action will be taken quickly, is thus rather grim. This is how their discussion on the future of ethnic diversity in the Netherlands unfolds:

Richard: (..) *It's not that all immigrants are bad all of a sudden.*

Jannie: *But I think that if nothing will change, it's going to get worse and worse in this country.*

Angelique: *I agree.*

Richard: *I know that for certain.*

Jan: *I think it has already started.*

Jannie: *Yes, but it's going to get worse. And how will things be in fifteen, twenty years time? Maybe we will be walking around wearing headscarves.*

Moderator: *But Jannie, what do you think of when you say 'if nothing will change'?*

Jannie: *If nothing will change? Well I think that if nothing will change, that we as the Dutch are going to get cornered in our own country.²³*

[LE focus group]

The above excerpt shows that the lower educated natives only foresee current problems getting worse in the future; some even feel they might get 'cornered' in their own country. This is a sharp contrast with the higher educated natives' perspective, who expect frictions to disappear.

In sum, the higher educated, because of their appreciation of ethnic diversity, understand that like-minded people group together and wouldn't mind seeing ethnically concentrated neighborhoods turning into Little Casablanca's, in analogy to the many Chinatowns and Little Italy's that are commonplace in big cities around the world. The lower educated, on the other hand, tolerate diversity in a limited way, but oppose ethnically segregated neighborhoods, because, they argue, when living in ethnically concentrated neighborhoods, immigrants and ethnic minorities will not adapt to Dutch life. And because they already see the current situation as highly problematic and in need

of action to be taken, for the future they foresee things getting only worse.

3.5 Role of the government

The last analytically distinctive theme on which the higher and lower educated participants in this study differ concerns the suggested role of the government. In the focus group with the lower educated natives, a recurring theme in the discussion concerned safety, criminality and the government's inability to stand up against it. When the moderator asks about what the government should do concerning ethnic mixing policies in education, the discussion shifts to upholding law and order:

Moderator: *But how do you feel about that, what should the government do in education? Try to mix it as much as possible?*

Richard: *Be more strict, I think. I think our idea of a free country has become a bit overstretched. Anything goes nowadays.*

Jan: *But anything is possible, right?*

Richard: *Yes, that's it. It's just out of control. I think the Netherlands have gone backwards in that sense very fast. Everything is meddled with, just to be as tolerant as possible. To a degree that, I think, as a native Dutch you can run into trouble. That's just my experience. You have to be nice to people and people have to be free (...) Respect can no longer be enforced, because there's always this or that. And things should always be talked about. But unfortunately there are situations in which talking doesn't work and that's when a police officer should be able to say 'that's enough!'*

(..)

Angelique: *There's just too little authority. It has gone so far that now we're in a real mess.(..) I think there's just not enough action being taken. They should monitor things much better.(..) They're letting things go too far.²⁴*

[LE focus group]

According to these participants, the idea of freedom has gone out of hand and has caused the boundaries to become blurred as well as the loss of respect for authorities. Therefore, these lower educated natives thus advocate a stricter enforcement of law and order and for authorities to be asserted more. Another striking aspect is the way the lower educated identify a 'them' (or in the above quote: they), a group of people that let things go out of hand and 'who are always talking and thus not enforcing the law'.

The participants in the higher educated focus group are also not satisfied with the

way the government manages situations concerning multicultural issues. At one point in this session the government's policies concerning minorities' organizations becomes the topic of the discussion:

***Maartje:** But I also think that it's very Dutch to try and lay everything down in regulations and be organized. We have a Moroccan organization in our street. (..) One day their subsidy was stopped (..). It's not even a big grant, but that man was not able to fill out the Dutch application form properly. So the grant was stopped. And that's when I ask myself why it is turned down 'because it does not meet the standards'. That's when we at our school have taken a look and we said like well, if you fill out this here and that there, then it's fine. Then you will get that grant. That's when you think...*

***José:** But that also counts for autochtones [natives].*

***Maartje:** That counts for everyone. But it means that there can be very good initiatives that will be called off just because they don't fit within the rules, or within the target population or within who knows what.*

***Moderator:** You mean that the government isn't flexible enough?*

***Maartje:** Yes.*

***José:** I just laugh, because I agree.*

***Maartje:** Things should be talked over and there we go again. Pfff...*

***Jan Willem:** This will only get worse in the future, you know. With Europe for example,(..) The Netherlands is integrating in Europe more and more. And soon things will be decided upon in Brussels that will have all kinds of consequences in the Netherlands.²⁵*

[HE focus group]

These higher educated participants also have their doubts about government policies, but complain about the government enforcing rules and regulations too strictly and that this rigid bureaucracy does not take the people involved into account. So both the lower and the higher educated criticize the role the government currently plays, but they differ widely in what they see going wrong. This sharp contrast consists of the lower educated natives wanting a stricter maintenance of the social order and want the respect for authorities to be restored, while the higher educated, on the other hand, criticize bureaucratic regulations and suggest deregulation.

4 Interpretive results

Having discussed the most manifest (descriptive) themes of difference between the higher and lower educated natives in the former sections, this section will discuss a theme that is more latent in the sense that it does not become apparent on first or second reading of the focus group transcripts. Rather, it has become clear only after the analysis of the themes described so far. This more latent theme, however, does provide a more fundamental difference by means of which the former, more manifest differences can be understood. This more fundamental difference between the higher and the lower educated natives in this study concerns both groups' understandings of what 'culture' is and how individuals relate to it.

4.1 *Cultural determinacy and cultural constructionism*

These differences in the understandings of what culture is first of all become clear considering what both groups of participants see as culture in their ways of talking about it. Throughout the focus group session the lower educated participants talked about 'culture' only in the context of ethnicity or aspects that relate to that. Participant Jannie, for instance, might say that 'culture can mean lots of things', but her enumeration of 'you know (...) [c]ooking, the way they visit each other' still relates to ethnicity. In the rest of the discussion among the lower educated 'culture' has been related mostly to ethnicity and religion. So for the lower educated natives the concept of culture seems to refer to ethnicity, religion, cuisine and 'visiting habits', thus all more or less related to ethnicity.

For the higher educated participants culture has more dimensions than that. As an illustration of this point, participant Maartje, when she talks about the different cultural backgrounds of her friends and her, says that *"If you consider the political discussions we [she and her friends] should be very different, because one is Surinamese, the other is Moroccan and the third is Dutch. And I'm also from a village. So that's another culture altogether"*²⁶. So here Maartje identifies, in addition to ethnicity, rural life as cultural. This is a typical way in which this group of participants identifies 'culture' in ways that go beyond ethnicity. Throughout their focus group session, they identify age cultures, vocational cultures, rural life (versus urban) as culture and city (versus other cities) cultures in this way²⁷.

This relatively broad understanding of culture of the higher educated natives' group also becomes clear when the relation between a culture and individuals is considered. For instance, when participant Jan Willem (HE) is talking about culture, he says that

*'too often people think about culture as a sort of prison in which you're trapped, can't get out of and that determines you. I don't believe that. (...) Cultures are no all-encompassing structures. They're products of individuals who live together and shape their lives together.'*²⁸

So according to Jan Willem, and his understanding seems to be in accordance with the other participants in the group with higher educated natives, cultures should not be seen as 'defining' the individuals that are part of it, meaning that the general norms and values that are seen as characteristic of a culture do not have a one-on-one correspondence with the individual members of that cultural group. Relating this to the 'content' of culture theme discussed above, it can be said that the higher educated natives see the individual as inspired by many of his/her social identities and that none of these is all-encompassing or defining.

For the lower educated natives, this relation between culture and individuals is seen quite differently, as becomes clear from the following discussions:

Jannie: *I think that in a lot of ways we are too liberal and that the Muslims are too rigid.*

Esther: *But what do you mean with too liberal?*

Jannie: *In the eyes of the Muslim religion.*

Esther: *But do you yourself believe we are too liberal? Because you bring it up, but...*

Jannie: *No, I don't believe we are too liberal, but from the perspective of the real Muslim, I think we are.*

Moderator: *But what will happen, if we are too liberal in the perspective of Muslims? What are the consequences of that?*

Jannie: *We all know that it has happened a lot of times that a Moroccan didn't want to shake hands with a woman. It's not allowed. That sort of things.*

Marjo: *I know the case of Muslims beating up gays. That's a real problem, yes.*²⁹

[LE focus group]

And when they talk about how Turks and Moroccans bring up their children:

Esther: Their upbringing is also very different.

Marjo: Yes, it's very limited.

Esther: Yes, with regards to the upbringing I think that is very different from our upbringing.

Moderator: In what ways?

Esther: Well, there is of course the fact that boys are very important and girls are not important at all.

Marjo: Marrying off...

Esther: Yes, there are so many differences from us.

(..)

Jannie: I think that bringing up children in those kinds of countries consists of the Quran, so they're brought up from faith. And that's just very different with us.³⁰

[LE focus group]

It is clear that these participants tend to see culture as something that defines the individual members of that cultural group, an understanding that is actively rejected by the higher educated natives referred to above. Implicit in the assumption that a culture defines individuals is the assumption that culture is something static that resists change. Another point that can be derived from the above excerpts, is the fact that these participants tend to discuss things in terms of 'us and them' and 'ours and theirs'. The higher educated participants do not do this. This can be understood because the lower educated tend to equate culture with ethnicity and see culture as something that defines the individual. Thereby, for the lower educated participants ethnic groups are identifiable groups (them) that are determined by their ethnicity and thus very different from any other ethnic group ('us'). For the higher educated participants, on the other hand, culture comprises a wide range of identities that do not determine the individual. Therefore, speaking of 'us' and 'them' would not make any sense for these participants.

4.2 *The problematization of culture*

Subsequently, this difference in their views of the relation between a culture and the individual members of that group also causes the two groups to have different views on whether culture can be problematic. In the higher educated natives' focus group, participant Maartje says 'I think problems often have more to do with poverty than with people's cultural backgrounds'³¹. And Jan Willem, who agrees with that, says that certain

politicians deliberately turn economic problems into cultural problems:

'For instance, the reason why Moroccan youth are causing trouble so often is because they don't have anything else to do. Because they can't find good jobs. That's because they're at the bottom of the social economic ladder. I can imagine that one would be a nuisance. But it is turned into a cultural difference by certain politicians'³².

Participant José supports that statement by saying that '[i]n fact, every problem is viewed from a cultural background instead of from the actual problem. (...) To the point that everything is larded with cultural background'³³. Because they don't equate culture with ethnicity and don't see culture as determining individuals, the higher educated participants reject the idea that culture can be problematic and rather tend to refer to 'more real' economic issues as sources of problems.

The lower educated participants do see cultures as defining individuals, and therefore have fewer problems in seeing culture as problematic. This is most typically illustrated by the following discussion:

Jannie: *I don't think it has anything to with culture in the sense of what you eat or what I eat. I really think it has a lot to do with that religion.*

Angelique: *I think so too.*

Jannie: *And that because of that, we're having troubles with some allochtones [non-natives] and the other way around.*

Moderator: *And what do you think Richard, having heard these views?*

Richard: *I agree that a lot of friction is caused by something like religion.³⁴*

[LE focus group]

So these participants do see culture (in this case religion) as a problem. Because they tend to see individuals as more or less defined by their culture, and culture as ethnicity-related, cultures can be seen as problematic and those problems can be seen as difficult to overcome.

4.3 Synthesis

The foregoing sections have shown that the higher and lower educated natives in this

study agree on the rights of women and homosexuals (3.1), but differ substantially in their attitudes toward non-adherence to these values (3.2), how they value ethnic/cultural diversity (3.3), their evaluation of ethnically segregated neighborhoods and how they foresee the future (3.4), and in their assessment of the government's functioning (3.5). Finally, it has been shown that the higher and lower educated natives in this study diverge in their understandings of what culture is, how it relates to individuals (4.1) and whether or not culture can be a problem (4.2).

This section aims to synthesize the differences found in the sections above into a broader opposition (/distinction) between two different 'worldviews'. It is important to note that these worldviews are ideal types in the sense of Max Weber. Weber explains these by stating that '(..) just because of the impossibility of drawing sharp boundaries in (..) reality we can only hope to understand their specific importance from an investigation of them in their most consistent and logical forms' (Weber, 1958 [1902]: 98). In the context of this study, this means that the two worldviews do not (necessarily) have a one-on-one correspondence with the actual participants in this study, but rather serve the goal of an analytical distinction in which the relevant differences between the higher and lower educated natives in this study have been accumulated.

For the lower educated natives, culture consists of a relatively limited range of aspects that revolve around ethnicity. In addition, they tend to see culture as something static, unchangeable, which determines the individual members of that group. So cultures define individuals and resist change. This turns cultural differences into distances that can not be bridged and subsequently facilitates talk of 'us' and 'them'. From this perspective, culture (or religion) can be seen as a threat and a source of deviance that makes individuals do things that are absolutely incompatible with the values that are held in the Netherlands. This (perceived) deviance should be countered with stricter law enforcement by the authorities for whom respect should be restored.

For the higher educated natives, culture comprises of a relatively wide range of aspects. Individuals are seen as being influenced by many cultural heritages, derived from their many social identities, none of which necessarily determines them. For this group, culture is also open to change and therefore much more 'flexible' to adapt to changing

circumstances. Talking in terms of 'us' and 'them' would thus not make any sense for the higher educated participants. From this perspective, culture can hardly be problematic, so existing problems should be ascribed to more real (e.g. economic) problems. Rather, they consider people who frame issues as cultural a problem.

Since they see culture as comprised of many sources of influence or inspiration, the higher educated natives see ethnic/cultural diversity as enriching, because it provides opportunities to take different perspectives on things. And because diversity is appreciated so much, cultural heritages should have a chance to flourish into areas such as a *Little Casablanca*. The lower educated natives, however, basically say that immigrants should adapt to the native majority, but that they are willing to tolerate some deviations. However, if immigrants will only live in ethnically segregated neighborhoods, they will never integrate the way they should, according to these participants. Ethnic concentration should thus be countered with active mixing policies, in both housing and schools.

The lower educated natives tend to see deviance as violations of an absolute moral order and hence see the maintenance of that order and the restoration of authority as a fundamental prerequisite if things are to get better in the future. Because 'Western' and 'Islamic' culture are seen as incompatible, the best option for them would be if Muslims living here would adapt and take on the Western culture. If ethnic minorities do not assimilate, and the government will not increase its efforts to uphold order, then the lower educated see things get worse very fast, even to the point where they feel 'cornered in their own country'. The higher educated natives, on the other hand, see deviance as merely other ways of living life and therefore possibly complementary to their own. Because of this, they argue that ethnic minorities should be given more room, without restricting their existence with bureaucratic rules. Because of this 'unproblematic' perspective, and their suggestions that the integration of ethnic minorities is going quite fast, they foresee a future in which ethnic troubles belong to the past.

4 Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to gain insight into how higher and lower educated

natives coherently unite different attitudes concerning the new political culture, that is, attitudes relating to law and order, cultural diversity and the rights of minority groups. These two groups have often been found to be on opposing ‘teams’ concerning these issues, but it has remained unclear how attitudes on these different issues are interrelated on an empirical level. Therefore, the focus of this study has been on how people talk about, and make sense of, these issues that pertain to the new political culture. This has been studied by conducting two focus groups, one with higher educated natives and one with lower educated natives, in which the participants have discussed their opinions on living in an ethnically diverse society.

The focus group method that has been employed here, has allowed for an analysis of the (latent) understandings that underlie the (manifest) attitudes that are often found among higher and lower educated. First and foremost, this study has found that both groups of participants agree that the rights of women and homosexuals should be respected. The ‘moral consensus’ on this aspect can be interpreted in the context of a growing acceptance of homosexuality. Indeed, data from 2008 show that no less than 91% of the population in the Netherlands accepts homosexuality, making it the most tolerant of the European countries (SCP, 2010: 34).

Focusing on the differences between the two groups under study, this investigation resulted in the (common) finding that the higher educated participants support issues like individual liberty, cultural diversity and the rights of minorities, while the lower educated participants advocate law and order, cultural homogeneity and assimilation. In terms of the interpretation of this relation, the results show that higher and lower educated natives in this study differ fundamentally in how they understand both what culture is as well as its relation to individuals. This analysis has resulted in the construction of two ideal typical worldviews from which the differences between the higher and lower educated natives’ attitudes pertaining to ethnic diversity can be understood.

These results empirically substantiate Howard Gabennesh’s notion of ‘breadth of perspective’ (1972). A broader perspective, this study has illustrated, allows for more tolerance towards unconventional lifestyles. Drawing on Berger and Luckmann (1966),

Gabennesh draws an ‘ideal picture’ of the authoritarian world view by relating it to a ‘reified view of social reality’(1972: 863). As he explains:

When social reality is viewed in dereified terms, that is, as an ongoing human product, it is seen as legitimately subject to human efforts to participate in its construction and deconstruction. Reification, in contrast, discourages or obviates any activity which would tamper with a social world that is superordinate and infused with transcendental authority. (..) Reified institutions admit of no legitimate compromises, deviations, or alternatives. They are established, absolute, and external to man in origin and character’ (Gabennesh, 1972: 864).

Both Gabennesh’s ‘dereified’ as his ‘reified’ worldview can be found in this study. The higher educated participants insisted on seeing culture as socially constructed, thereby resembling the dereified worldview. The lower educated, on the other hand, saw ‘culture’ as a static and possibly problematic force that defines individuals. Adding to this their strong inclination to maintain social order, this view in turn strongly resembles the reified, authoritarian worldview.

In a review article on different conceptualizations of culture anthropologist Ralph Grillo (2003) distinguishes an 'essentialist' or 'culturalist' conception from a *'dynamic, anti-essentialist'* conception. The former of 'which stresses that the culture to which I am said or claim to belong defines my essence. Cultures [thus] determine individual and collective identities and (..) cultural membership is thus virtually synonymous with ethnicity (..)' (2003: 160). For the latter, '[t]he emphasis is on multiple identities or identifications whose form and content are continuously being negotiated' (Ibid.). He concludes that '[t]here is an obvious mismatch between these two visions, one intellectual, academic, and postmodern, the other popular, common-sense and traditional' (Grillo, 2003: 160).

The same reification or essentialist mechanism found among the lower educated in this study, has also been found by Maykel Verkuyten (1997) in his study —which also employs focus groups— of attitudes towards immigrants among inhabitants of ‘old neighborhoods’ of Rotterdam. His results equally showed this ‘reification’ mechanism by means of which his participants saw other cultures as ‘incompatible’. However, his study did not, as this study has, distinguish between higher and lower educated, and therefore

did not provide insight into how the differences between these two categories can be understood.

The fact that both the higher and the lower educated natives agree about the rights of women and homosexuals, indicates that they feel individuals should not be bound by a traditional Christian morality. However, higher and lower educated differ when it comes to the individual's relation to (a) culture. The higher educated stress that individuals are not determined by culture, while the lower educated are inclined to equate individuals with culture. This seeming individualistic 'value incoherence' of the lower educated (Achterberg & Houtman, 2009) might be understood as a combination of the (post-Christian) moral consensus on the rights of women and homosexuals (SCP, 2010) and the cultural insecurity that is typical for lower educated (Achterberg & Houtman, 2009). So whereas the higher educated see the individual as free from tradition as well as from cultural determinacy, the lower educated combine this 'detraditionalized' (Heelas et al., 1996) view with a sense of cultural essentialism (Grillo, 2003).

Concerning the interrelatedness of the issues that make up the 'new political culture' (Clark & Hofman-Martinot, 1998) —attitudes towards ethnocentrism, immigration, rights of minority groups, civil rights, social order and conformity—, this study has provided insight into how this can be understood. The idea of what culture is, how individuals relate to it and how cultural differences should be dealt with provides a basis (worldview) that presupposes the positions people have on such issues.

5 Discussion

The results of this study show that attitudes towards the different aspects of the new political culture are not only intertwined, but are based in more fundamental ideas about what culture is and how cultural differences should be dealt with. Here, I will discuss two implications of this insight. In the first place, the idea that the contemporary polarization over cultural issues in late modern societies is caused by 'objective' circumstances like 'dramatic' changes 'in the demographic structure of many European countries' due to 'the growing number of immigrants and ethnic minorities that took up residence' (Hello,

2003: 101) there³⁵ can be put into question. After all, attitudes concerning immigration and ethnocentrism are the (manifest) surface of (latent) underlying ideas about cultural difference that also become manifest in ideas about social order and the rights of (other) minorities. So identifying immigration as the (sole) cause of cultural conflict means not doing justice to the latent worldviews of which attitudes concerning this are part of. Subsequently, putting an end to immigration is not likely to put an end to the polarization of higher and lower educated over cultural issues, since this polarization is likely to continue on issues that have nothing to do with immigrants.

Moreover, these findings suggest that polarization between higher and lower educated over cultural issues is not only unlikely to go away, the higher and lower educated will probably come to oppose each other more. The lower educated natives indicated they had become increasingly dissatisfied with the lack of law enforcement by authorities and with those ('them', in 3.5) who give too much space to ethnic minorities, topics that are typically advanced by the higher educated. The higher educated, on the other hand, stated their dissatisfaction with people who (too easily) equate cultures with individuals, something that is typically done by the lower educated. And given the increased salience of 'cultural issues' in the last decades (Achterberg, 2006) it is not unlikely that this is an indication of a social divide that will become even more manifest in the future (cf. Grillo's (2003:160) notion of a 'mismatch' referred to above). Indeed, in contemporary discussions in the Netherlands discourses of 'hardworking Dutch' on the (supposedly pathological) 'grachtengordelelite' typically seem to oppose discourses on (supposedly pathological) 'Wilders voters'. This suggests new formations of 'us' and 'them' are being (/have been) constructed. Future research might focus on this reciprocal 'scapegoating' in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

As any study, this study has its limitations. Because of practical considerations, this study has relied on the data of only two focus groups. The limited size of this study provides the largest obstacle to making broad generalizations from its results. Therefore, this research should be seen as an explorative study to understand the differences between higher and lower educated on cultural issues. Future, larger, studies that make use of the data of more focus groups may also assess within-group differences (so

between different groups of higher/lower educated). Such studies would then also be able to address the explanation of the differences, ie. how the different worldviews of the groups can be explained.

And because this study has aimed at comparing the higher and lower educated, less attention was paid to such internal differences. This is not to say that data presented here are not valid. The research question that has guided this study explicitly focused on comparing the higher educated with the lower educated in order to understand their differences on the issues that comprise of the new political culture. Such a comparative focus obviously emphasizes some aspects more than others. Research focusing on differences *among* higher/lower educated should therefore be guided by another type of research question.

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² *'Eigen identiteit is natuurlijk best belangrijk, maar zodra er andere dingen in het geding komen, zoals homohaat en andere dingen, dan kom je wel in een land, maar je respecteert niet dat land.'*

³ *'[A]ls jij hier komt wonen, dan moet jij geïnformeerd zijn dat homo's hier rondlopen en dat dat mag en kan. En dat een vrouw hier net zo veel recht heeft en net zoveel waard is als wie dan ook. Zo is het toch?'*

⁴ *'Wij zijn een westerse samenleving en hebben bepaalde westerse idealen: democratie, vrijheid van meningsuiting, gelijke rechten voor mensen, vrouwen, mannen, homo's cetera. Daar moeten we echt voor staan.'*

⁵ **Richard:** *Als ik met iemand in gesprek ga en ik stel me voor, dan verwacht ik dat die persoon zich ook voorstelt en uit beleefdheid geef je een hand. En ik vind, (...) van nou dat is beleefd, even een hand geven (...) en het is dan van nee ik ben een vrouw, ik raak u niet aan. Ja, dat vind ik aso.*

Jannie: *Ik vind het walgelijk.*

Richard: *Puur asociaal en beledigend.*

Jannie: *Ik vind het vernederend, ik vind het totaal geen respect voor degene die tegenover je staat. Ik vind dat niet kunnen. (...) Dan moet je niet in een land gaan wonen waar eh, als je niet achter dat soort dingen staat, moet je niet voor zo'n land kiezen. Dan zijn er nog genoeg andere landen om heen te vluchten.*

⁶ **Caro:** *Maar het is de vraag natuurlijk in hoeverre je eist dat mensen zich aanpassen.. Ik bedoel dat bij Turken en Marokkanen de relatie tussen mannen en vrouwen anders is, dat moet volgens mij geen bezwaar zijn.*

Jan Willem: *Tenzij.*

Caro: *Tenzij het inderdaad natuurlijk tot uitwassen leidt. Dan moet je gaan ingrijpen. Bijvoorbeeld het voorbeeld van de handdruk. Vind je dat erg? Wellicht in het openbare leven zou ik dat bezwaarlijk vinden. Daar heb ik op mijn werk ook mee te maken gehad dat op het moment dat er subsidie gevraagd werd een hand gegeven werd. En op het moment dat duidelijk werd dat er een afwijzing kwam dan werd er vastgehouden aan die 'geen handdruk'. Maar goed ik bedoel ik leef zelf in een omgeving waar ik tal van mannen geen hand geef en zij mij niet, omdat dat niet gebruikelijk is.*

Maartje: *En vind je dat erg? Ik denk vaak worden van dingen zo item gemaakt. Bij ons op school.*

Caro: *Maar dat is tegenover mij. Zit je in een andere positie, zit je in een openbare functie en je wordt dan geen handdruk gegeven dan denk ik dat een hele opgeblazen zaak wordt. Daar is dan een communicatiemedewerker die heeft zit suffen. Dat had van te voren duidelijk moeten zijn. Maar als het in het openbare leven gebeurt dan denk ik van dat hoort niet, maar als Turken dat onderling doen of Marokkanen en er zijn enige afspraken over.*

⁷ **Jannie:** *[A]ls je naar een land komt waar homo's gewoon met elkaar kunnen trouwen..*

Angelique: *Of over straat lopen...*

Jannie: *En waar vrouwen niet uitgetrouwde worden en waar vrouwen gewoon vrije meningsuiting hebben, geëmancipeerd zijn. Als je daar niet achter staat, dan kom je niet naar zo'n land, dan kom je hier niet wonen.*

⁸ *'Het uithuwelijken zelf, ik denk niet dat het per definitie slecht hoeft te zijn als het voor een bepaald volk normaal is. Ik vind alleen wel, dat als je dan in Nederland komt, of in een ander land komt waar andere wet- en regelgeving is en een andere morele en sociale wetgeving is die bij die cultuur en die plaats hoort, zou je je kunnen afvragen of je je daar niet aan zou moeten aanpassen.*

Jannie: *Ja, als je je niet aan kan passen, moet je hier niet komen. In een land waar je je niet aan de cultuur kan aanpassen en daar geen vrede mee hebt, wat doe je dan in zo'n land.*

Richard: *Ja, daar ben ik het wel mee eens.*

⁹ **Maartje:** Ik denk op het moment dat vrouwen daar niet voor kiezen dan is het een probleem, maar ik denk ook dat er zat vrouwen zijn die er wel voor kiezen om een hoofddoek te dragen.

Jan Willem: Ja.

Caro: Hoofddoek prima, maar ik vind een burka dus echt, dat je alleen maar de ogen van iemand ziet.

Maartje: Ik vind dat ook helemaal niks.

Jan Willem: Een burka is wat anders dan een hoofddoek. Met een hoofddoek heb ik geen problemen.

(..)

Henk: De ene heeft wel een burka aan en dan is het onderdrukking en bij een ander niet. Dat weet je niet.

(..)

José: Ik ken volkomen blanke vrouwen die op een gegeven moment moslima geworden zijn en volkomen vrijwillig een burka zijn gaan halen. Die zijn gewoon hier opgegroeid, een hele bewuste eigen keus.

¹⁰ 'Ik snap ook wel dat de Nederlandse overheid het niet kan verbieden, om een burka te dragen. Dat het grondwettelijk gewoon niet mogelijk is. Maar ik vind wel dat je als overheid bij wijze van spreken postbus 51 spotjes over kan maken om een soort ontmoedigingsbeleid daarover te voeren. Dat is denk een heel belangrijk aspect van emancipatie van moslimvrouwen.' (Jan Willem, HE)

¹¹ **Maartje:** Maar een hoop vaders willen ook hun meiden niet meer uithuwelijken, want die meiden willen ook niet meer uitgehuwelijkt worden. Er is altijd een groep ja inderdaad, maar ja dan denk ik van in Staphorst kan jij zelf ook niet bepalen met wie jij zelf gaat trouwen.

Jan Willem: Nou, dat vind ik ook vreselijk.

Maartje: Ja, dat is het ook.

(..)

Henk: Je kan zeggen dat uithuwelijken is niet goed. Maar wat je in het ogenblik hebt in Nederland vind ik persoonlijk dat je veel te snel trouwt of een losbandig leven. Dat is ook niet echt jofel.

¹² 'Ik probeer er voor mezelf wel rekening mee te houden dat verschillen niet altijd slecht hoeven te zijn. Maar ik denk dat als ik naar een stam in de rimboe toe ga, zoals je wel eens op tv ziet, ik denk dat ik daar binnen een week weggestuurd word. Omdat ik gewoon bepaalde dingen niet doe die ik hier niet gewend ben, omdat het voor mij niet normaal is. Maar voor hun wel, dus hun kun je daar niet op corrigeren. Tenzij ze hierheen komen, mijn burens worden en mij gaan irriteren. Dan ga ik heel erg boos worden. Dat is denk ik heel normaal.' (Richard, LE)

¹³ **Richard:** Dat denk ik wel.

Angelique: In zekere mate wel.

Esther: Ja, dat wilde ik precies ook zeggen.

Jannie: Ja, gedeeltelijk denk ik hé?

Richard: Zolang ze geen overlast vormen en anderen ook vrij laten.

Marjo: Van mij mag dat wel.

Esther: Zolang ze zich een beetje aanpassen.

Jannie: Zolang ze maar niet van die burka's rondlopen.

Esther: Zolang er niet te veel van die vuilniszakken rondlopen..

Jannie: En geen uithuwelijken in Nederland..

Esther: Ja, maar dan begin je ze al helemaal te veranderen.

Jannie: .. verplichte besnijdenissen, het past gewoon niet in de Nederlandse cultuur.

Richard: Nederland heeft wel een aantal wetten en regelgevingen. Als je dan naar Nederland komt, zul je sowieso aan de wetten moeten houden. Maar heb je liever rijst dan een prakkie bloemkool, dan kook je toch lekker rijst? Lekker belangrijk. Geloof jij in de almachtige zon en in Nederland gelooft men in de maan, dan blijf je toch lekker in die zon geloven? Dat moet je zelf weten, zolang..

Esther: Zolang jij er geen last van hebt.

(..)

'Dan zou je eigenlijk bij de grens een vragenlijstje moeten hebben met oké dit en dat. Nee, ben je het er niet mee eens, dan kom je er niet in. Bij wijze van spreken.' (Angelique)

¹⁴ *Dus dat bestaat ook natuurlijk, normale gezinnen. En die hebben ook kinderen en die worden keurig netjes opgevoed. Maar misschien worden die kinderen wat meer met onze cultuur opgevoed'.*

¹⁵ *'ik heb daardoor ook hele leuke inzichten gekregen en dan denk ik dat vind ik nou een hele waardevolle bijdrage aan mijn bestaan.'*

¹⁶ *'Je merkt op het moment dat je het gesprek met ze aangaat dat ze ook veel bewuster en veel diepzinniger over dingen nagedacht hebben'. 'je merkt dat ze veel steviger en duidelijker in het leven staan en daardoor een duidelijkere visie hebben op mensen en op de samenleving'.*

¹⁷ *'hoe meer cultuurverschillen er zijn tussen mensen hoe beter, want als je geconfronteerd wordt met verschillende mensen ga je meer over jezelf nadenken en word je uitgedaagd om jezelf te ontwikkelen'.*

¹⁸ **Angelique:** *Ik denk nou prima, het contrast van zeg maar arm en rijk bij elkaar, dan kan dat zich een beetje, ja corrigeren kun je niet zeggen, maar toch iets anders dan alles bij elkaar te zetten. Ik denk dat dat toch wel een foute indeling is geweest, ook met scholen. Terwijl ze alles moeten spreiden.*

Jannie: *Omdat ze bij elkaar wonen, gaan die jongens groepen vormen en die gaan 's avonds op de hoeken van de straten staan, wat voor heel veel mensen bedreigend aanvoelt.*

(..)

Angelique: *[A]ls mensen net nieuw komen, die gaan zich aansluiten bij de rest die er al is en die gaan toch proberen om hun eigen cultuur te behouden en dan eigenlijk Nederland niet respecteren.*

¹⁹ *'Als het allemaal dezelfde groep is dan ga je toch niet integreren en blijf je allemaal in dezelfde wijk.'*

²⁰ *Dat heb je altijd hé. Als Nederlanders of andere groepen naar het buitenland toegaan, heb je altijd een groepje bij elkaar. Allemaal klitten ze lekker weer bij elkaar.'*

²¹ *'geen enkel probleem met waarom geen nieuwe Chinatown of Little Italy. Ja, waarom zouden mensen met een bepaalde etniciteit of een cultuur niet met elkaar kunnen leven. Behalve dan als dat een groep is die al een maatschappelijke achterstand heeft, (..) want dan zet je allemaal mensen met een achterstand bij elkaar'.*

²² **Jan Willem:** *De globalisering gaat zo snel. De wereld wordt steeds kleiner. Over honderd jaar zijn er geen allochtonen meer.*

Maartje: *Dan is iedereen allochtoon.*

Jan Willem: *Dan is iedereen allochtoon.*

Henk: *Nee, inderdaad.*

²³ **Richard:** *(..) Het is niet zo dat alle buitenlanders of alle allochtonen ineens verkeerd zijn.*

Jannie: *Maar, ik denk, als er niet iets gaat veranderen dan wordt het steeds slechter in dit land.*

Angelique: *Dat denk ik ook wel.*

Richard: *Dat weet ik wel zeker.*

Jan: *Dat is al begonnen denk ik.*

Jannie: *Ja, maar het wordt alleen maar slechter. En hoe staan we er over vijftien, twintig jaar voor? Misschien lopen wij dan wel met een hoofddoekje om.*

Moderator: *Jannie, waar denk je dan aan als je zegt 'als er niets verandert'?*

Jannie: *Als er niets gaat veranderen? Nou ik denk dat als er niets verandert, dat we dan toch als Nederlander in ons eigen land toch wel in een hoekje gedreven gaan worden.*

²⁴ **Moderator:** *Maar hoe kijken jullie daar tegenaan, wat zou een overheid moeten doen in het onderwijs, gewoon proberen om het zo veel mogelijk met elkaar te mengen?*

Richard: Strenger worden denk ik. Ik denk dat ons idee van een vrij land een beetje doorgesloten is. Alles moet maar kunnen.

Jan: Alles kan toch?

Richard: In principe alles kan inderdaad, ja. (...) Het is echt niet normaal meer. Wat dat soort dingen aangaat, vind ik Nederland echt heel erg hard achteruit gaan. Overal wordt mee bemoeid, om maar zoveel mogelijk tolerant te zijn, tot op een hoogte, naar mijn idee, dat je als autochtoon daar nog wel eens in de problemen mee kan komen. Dat is mijn ervaring gewoon. Je moet maar lief zijn tegen mensen en mensen moeten vrij zijn, (...). [R]espect kan niet meer afgedwongen worden, want het moet allemaal maar dit en dat. En je moet allemaal maar praten. Maar er zijn helaas situaties waarin praten niet werkt en dan moet je als agent ook een keer kunnen zeggen van nou ben ik het zat.

(...)

Angelique: Er is gewoon weinig gezag, veel te weinig gezag. Het is eigenlijk zo ver doorgeslagen dat ze nu met de gebakken peren zitten. (...) Maar ik denk gewoon dat er te weinig wordt ingegrepen zeg maar. Ze moeten er toch meer zicht op hebben, al heel vroeg op school. (...) Ze laten het gewoon veel te ver gaan.

²⁵ **Maartje:** Maar ik denk dat het ook heel erg Nederlands is om alles in regels te willen vatten en georganiseerd te hebben. In de straat hebben wij een Marokkaanse vereniging (...). Op een gegeven moment werd de subsidie stopgezet. (...) Het gaat niet eens om een heel groot bedrag, maar die meneer is niet in staat om het Nederlandse subsidie aanvraag formuliertje goed in te vullen. Dus krijgt hij geen subsidie meer. En dan denk ik van ja waarom wordt het dan hup afgewezen en 'want het voldoet niet meer aan de regels'. Toen hebben wij op school even gekeken en toen zeiden we van maar als je dat nou invult en dat ook dan klopt het opeens weer wel. Dan krijg je wel subsidie. Dan denk je toch...

José: Dat geldt ook voor autochtonen.

Maartje: Dat geldt voor iedereen, maar op een gegeven moment zijn er dus dingen, goede initiatieven die dan niet doorgaan, omdat het niet binnen de regels valt, binnen de doelgroep, binnen weet ik veel wat.

Moderator: Dat de overheid niet flexibel genoeg is?

Maartje: Ja.

José: Ja, ik lach alleen maar, want ik ben het met je eens.

Maartje: Er moet weer eerst gepraat worden en dan gaan we weer eens. Pffff.

Jan Willem: Het wordt in de toekomst alleen maar erger, denk ik. Met bijvoorbeeld Europa. (...) Nederland gaat steeds meer op in Europa. En straks wordt in Brussel allemaal dingen besloten, die in Nederland allemaal gevolgen hebben.

²⁶ [A]ls je dan naar de politieke discussies gaat kijken dan moeten wij [zij en haar vrienden] dus heel veel verschillen hebben, want de één is Surinaamse, de ander is Marokkaanse en de derde is Hollands en dan kom ik nog uit een dorp. Dus dan is dat ook weer een andere cultuur.'

²⁷ This point is empirically grounded, but because the remarks of the participants are more or less scattered throughout the focus group transcript, it is impossible to reflect this in the text of this thesis.

²⁸ [er] vaak over cultuur wordt nagedacht als een soort van gevangenis waar je in zit, waar je niet uit kan en waar je door bepaald wordt. Daar geloof ik niet in.' (...) 'Culturen zijn geen allesbeheersende structuren waar je in zit. Het is een product van individuen die samenleven en samen vormgeven aan hun leven.'

²⁹ **Jannie:** Ik denk dat wij in heel veel opzichten te vrij zijn en dat de moslims in mijn of onze cultuur toch wat te strak in elkaar zit.

Esther: Wat bedoel je dan met wij zijn te vrij?

Jannie: In de ogen van het moslimgeloof.

Esther: Maar vind je dan zelf ook dat wij te vrij zijn? Want je komt er mee, maar..

Jannie: Nee ik vind niet dat wij te vrij zijn, maar vanuit het oogpunt van een échte moslim bekeken, denk ik het wel. (...)

Moderator: Maar wat gebeurt er, als wij te vrij zijn in de ogen van moslims? Hoe uit zich dat, wat voor gevolgen heeft dat?

Jannie: We weten zelf ook dat het regelmatig gebeurd is dat een Marokkaan een vrouw geen hand wilde geven. Dat mag niet. Dat soort dingen.

Marjo: Ik weet wel het geval van moslims dat ze dan ook homo's in elkaar gaan slaan. Dat geeft denk ik wel echt problemen ja.

³⁰ **Esther:** Hun opvoeding is ook heel anders..

Marjo: Ja, heel beperkt.

Esther: Ja, van die opvoeding denk ik ook dat dat heel anders is dan onze opvoeding.

Moderator: In welke opzichten?

Esther: Nou, natuurlijk dat de jongens heel veel betekenen en dat de meisjes heel weinig betekenen.

Marjo: Uithuwelijking...

Esther: Ja, er zijn zoveel verschillen met ons.

(..)

Jannie: Ik denk dat opvoeden van dat soort landen bestaat uit de Koran, dus ze worden uit het geloof opgevoed. En dat is bij ons toch gewoon anders.

³¹ 'ik denk dat problemen vaak veel meer met armoede te maken hebben dan met de culturele achtergrond van mensen'

³² 'Bijvoorbeeld waarom Marokkaanse jongens zo vaak rotzooi trappen is omdat ze verder niks te doen hebben. Omdat ze geen leuke baantjes kunnen vinden. Ja, ze zitten aan de onderkant van de sociaal-economische ladder. Dan kan ik me voorstellen dat je gaat lopen klieren. Maar er wordt een cultuurverschil van gemaakt door bepaalde politici.'

³³ 'Ieder probleem wat er is wordt eigenlijk bekeken vanuit een culturele achtergrond in plaats van puur naar het probleem. (..) Alles wordt op een gegeven moment doorspekt van culturele achtergrond.'

³⁴ **Jannie:** Ik denk niet dat het echt met cultuur te maken heeft van wat jij eet of wat ik eet of wat jij eet, maar ik denk dat echt een hoop in dat geloof zit.

Angelique: Dat denk ik ook wel.

Jannie: En dat we daardoor met sommige allochtonen problemen hebben en andersom ook.

Moderator: En wat denk jij Richard, de standpunten gehoord hebbend?

Richard: Ik denk dat religie inderdaad een punt is waar inderdaad een hele hoop strubbelingen over ontstaan. Daar ben ik het wel mee eens.

³⁵ Or rising crime rates, for that matter.