

Role Models, Realistic Representatives or Stereotypes?

**Master Thesis International Development Studies on
Representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch Media**

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1. Introduction

'They look at me, like I flew into the Twin Towers. [...] I still remember how they used to call me, I was a bit smaller; Kutmarokkaan, that's what they called me. [...] They want to scapegoat us when they are talking about us. We didn't do anything to them, and still they want to hate us. They want to scapegoat us when they are talking about us. It is about time that this is going to change, don't you notice?'

-Raymzter¹

In 2002, the Moroccan Dutch rapper Raymzter wrote a protest song called 'Kutmarokkaanen?!'. 'Kutmarokkaan' is a sobriquet for Moroccan Dutch troublemakers coming from the streets. The name became very popular, even among Dutch politicians. The Netherlands have a multicultural society in which immigrants with a Moroccan decent are second biggest after the Turks. In 2010 the total amount of Moroccan Dutchmen (both first and second generation) covered 2.1% of all Dutch citizens (CBS 2010). Although the total number of Moroccan Dutch citizens is not very big, the media coverage of topics on this minority in proportion is much bigger. 'Kutmarokkaanen' are a hot topic in Dutch media. For her Master thesis, Sibon in 2001 investigated the representation of four Dutch minorities in comparison to ethnic Dutchmen, regarding criminal reports in four Dutch newspapers². It turned out that Moroccan Dutchmen were overrepresented as they were involved in 22.93% of all investigated crimes, but were mentioned by the four newspapers in 45.13% of the criminal reports (Sibon 2005: 38). Sibon further concluded that although the percentage of criminal reports in which the Moroccan ethnicity is mentioned has declined between 2001 and 2004, the way in which the articles are edited and placed has become more prominent (idem 2005: 63).

Several other studies have been carried out on the topic of representation of minorities in the media, and the overall conclusions are that the reporting on minorities is often negative and with lot of references to criminality (Hussain 2000; Klein & Nacaratto 2003; Shadid 2005). According to Shadid, Western media all together fail in their coverage on Muslims and other immigrants. He argued that the media are even contributing to the stigmatizing of these minorities and therefore strengthen and affirm the negative images that are already present in

¹ All Dutch quotes in this research are translated by the author.

² The four newspapers were 'Algemeen Dagblad', 'NRC Handelsblad' and 'de Volkskrant' which are so-called quality papers and 'De Telegraaf', which is a more popular newspaper.

society (Shadid 2005). Van Dijk (2005) contributed that almost everything people know about non-western countries, immigrants and minorities, stems from their media consumption.

Concerning the topic of minorities in the media, there are two central points: the way in which minorities are represented in the media, and the participation of minorities in the media (Haghebaert 2005). Dutch media are quite 'white'; Dutch television mainly shows white faces bringing white news and entertainment. The 'Stichting Moslim Omroep Nederland'³ (SMON) for example, will get a transmit license in September 2010 for only 58 hours television a year (Groen & Kranenberg 2009). And according to Bilkes (2006) and Bink (2002) just one to three percent of Dutch journalists on the news redactions have a non-ethnic Dutch origin, while eight percent of all inhabitants of the Netherlands have a non-ethnic Dutch origin. As Sibon (2005) showed, Dutch newspapers write excessively about Moroccan Dutchmen and crime, while success stories are often ignored. Besides that, ethnic minorities are not very often approached as individuals. A homogeneous image is created as members of minorities appear anonymous or in groups in the media, which leaves little space for the individual differences inside the minority groups. In the visual media, minority members are approached as a group in more than half of the cases of the criminal reports. And in more than half of the newspaper articles in which minorities are main subject, native Dutchmen form the interviewees (Devroe 2007). Minorities often play the role of silent actors, and therefore often lack the possibility to express themselves and their opinions (Maneri & Ter Wal 2005). Van Dijk contributed by finding that news topics in the Dutch news media are hardly ever written from the perspective of the minorities. And due to the excessive use of words as 'would', 'state', 'probably' and 'according to', journalists renounce the reliability of a source and therefore subvert the value of the statements of minority members in the media (Van Dijk 1983: 59-66).

As a reaction to this mistreatment in the media, minority groups have initiated multicultural or ethnic media (Fleras 2009: 726). Ethnic media maintains a healthy balance between news from the new country and the country of origin and therefore not only helps the first generation immigrants, but also the later generations which are often more concerned about ethnic news in the new country than distant news from the country of their (grant)parents origin (Lin & Song 2006: 382). These ethnic media provide room for cultural expressions which support the survival of folklore and languages from minority groups and pay attention to events that concern the minority community the medium is working for. The

³ Foundation Muslim Broadcasting Netherlands

use of language in the mother tongue, the cultural expressions and the community based reports, give people a sense of belonging. On the other hand, ethnic media can also cause severe tensions, as minority groups are off course not homogeneous, and therefore journalists representing the community are unable to reflect all community people's ideas (Ojo 2006: 351-352).

However, there are also some positive multicultural outbursts in conventional Dutch media. There are a few television series dealing with multiculturalism, several minority broadcastings exist and the 'Stichting Multiculturele Televisie Nederland'⁴ (MTNL) brings journalistic television in an intercultural perspective, while using a lot of journalists with a minority background.

The media is providing an image of Dutch minorities, willingly or not, and this image might be more negative than reality would dictate. Given this hypothesis I feel my research concerning the perception of both Moroccan Dutchmen and Dutch media concerning the topic of representation of Moroccan Dutchmen is a very interesting and "hot" topic. The claim of the Moroccan Dutch respondents of experiencing difficulties in finding jobs and internships due to the negative image of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media, underscores the importance of this research as well. There have been lots of studies on the topic of *how* minorities are represented, but I want to investigate how Moroccan Dutchmen *feel about* their representation in Dutch media and how Dutch media *feel about* their role in representing this minority. The main research question thus is:

"To what extend do Moroccan Dutchmen feel themselves represented in Dutch media and how do Dutch media think about their role in this representation?"

This thesis is the result of a research using semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions and incorporates relevant information from previously written papers on related topics. It consists of nine chapters, the introduction being the first one.

After the introduction, the next two chapters will contain the theoretical framework in which I will deal with the two core notions of this research; framing and representation. Chapter two contains three paragraphs on news selection, framing, and the 'problematic' frame. Chapter three consists of two sections, the first one discusses the creation of reality through media and the second one discusses alienation through misrepresentation.

⁴ Multicultural Television Foundation Netherlands.

In the context chapter that follows, I will discuss the context in which the research took place. I will elaborate on the multicultural Dutch society, Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch society and on several theories that clarify some of the issues of a multicultural society.

After the context chapter, a chapter follows that discusses the research populations, the research methods and the analysis of this research.

Subsequently the empirical chapters follow. Chapter six will elaborate on the perceptions of Moroccan Dutchmen regarding their representation in Dutch media. This chapter consists of two main sections: the first discusses ideas about representation, in four different subsections on frames and stereotypes, the mentioning of ethnicity, the reactions to this representation and the desired changes in this representation, while the second section discusses the ideas of the Moroccan Dutch respondents about media and media workers. There are two subsections in this section; one on the considered work methods of journalists and one on ethnic media.

The second empirical chapter deals with the ideas which are present in Dutch media regarding the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen. This chapter also consists of two parts. The first part discusses the role of the Dutch media in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen, by the subsections of frames and stereotypes, the mentioning of ethnicity, the responsibility of news media workers and the responsibility of entertainment television. In the second subsection I will shed light on the idea of the image of the imaging.

As an example of how both empirical chapters are intertwined, a chapter follows, that discusses a column written by Salaheddine Benchiki who criticises a Moroccan Dutch character of a Dutch children's soap opera. Some reactions to this column are presented as well as the response of Gemma Derksen, the head of drama at the NCRV⁵ and therefore responsible for the criticised character, is discussed.

Finally, the conclusion and the references follow.

⁵ Nederlandse Christelijke Radio-Vereniging, Dutch Christian Radio-Association. One of the public broadcastings which make television and radio programmes.

2. Theory of framing

This first of two theoretical chapters, in which I will discuss the theoretical framework, is dedicated to the theory of framing. Framing is commonly used among media workers to present events and people in a manageable way to their consumers. This however often leads to a misrepresentation of groups of people. This chapter consists of three sections that together clarify how framing works. I will start to discuss news selection in the first section, as news selection turned out to be an important factor in the decision on which topics people form opinions. Once the importance of the news selection is clear, I will deepen the knowledge on the notion of frames itself in order to clarify how they work and which frames are often present regarding Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media. In the third section I will shed light on one specific frame, the ‘problematic’ frame, as this is the frame Moroccan Dutchmen are mostly framed in, in Dutch media.

2.1 News selection: dominant values, the ‘agenda-setting theory’, key-events and the ‘white-sells approach’

What is news? When does something become news? And who decides what’s newsworthy and what’s not? News selection is a very important actor in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch society, as news selection has the power of stressing one subject over another. I will try to find the answers to these questions posed above, with help of the notions of ‘dominant news values’, the ‘agenda-setting theory’, ‘key events’ versus ‘real-world developments’ and the ‘white-sells approach’.

First of all, the selection of news is based upon dominant news values; the implicit or explicit criteria adopted by the media in the selection and framing process of events. Important news values are for example the negativity and accuracy of events and the consonance of actions with public stereotypes, which subsequently leads to a biased image of minorities in news coverage (Maneri & Ter Wal 2005: 5; Fleras 2009: 726; Van Dijk 2005).

Lang and Lang and Cohen in McCombs and Shaw (1972) contributed that this selection by the media forces attention to issues they choose. Therefore (mass) media suggest what individuals should think about, know about and have feelings about. This idea that the amount of attention on certain issues in the media is influencing the significance the people accord to it, is called the ‘agenda-setting theory’. From this theory the assumption arises that much media attention for a minority group brings along a high accreditation of significance to

the topic. This significance is called 'salience' (Van Atteveld et. al. 2005). It turns out that the content of the media attention is not as important as the quantity and intensity of the coverage.

Furthermore Vliegthart and Boomgaarden (2007) discovered the importance of 'key-events' happening in the world. They researched the effects of (political) 'key events' and 'real-world developments' on the prominence of immigration and integration of minorities in the Dutch media. Their results show a limited direct influence of 'real-world developments', such as the increase in number of asylum seekers in the Netherlands, while 'key-events', such as the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001, generally have a stronger direct impact, though temporary. These types of 'key-events', also called 'crisisnews' (Haghebaert 2005), are not capable of permanently changing the selection and prototyping processes of journalists. But they are more likely to pass the news threshold than 'real-world developments' and might indeed function temporarily as journalistic prototypes (Vliegthart and Boomgaarden 2007: 308-309).

The success of public actors in getting attention for their opinions in the media depends on different kind of factors and dynamics (Koopmans 2004), which makes it very difficult to explain why some messages penetrate the public debate while others do not. When more moderate right-wing parties enter the government, they seem to be capable of influencing media attention towards immigration and integration of minorities permanently, by putting them high on their priority list. To conclude, unpremeditated events have an abrupt and temporary or slowly declining impact, while effects of most institutional events take longer to capitalize, but have a more permanent nature (Vliegthart and Boomgaarden 2007: 308-309).

Finally, Ojo, who did research in Canada, mentions the 'white-sells approach'. This approach assumes that due to the fact that white citizens have, at least in Canada, more market share in the media and in general have more money to buy media products, the media focuses on white people, especially in advertisement. Besides that, the Canadian media is a monopoly in hands of a few rich, white men, which causes the end product to be a homogenization of the media landscape (Ojo 2006: 345-348).

Now it is clear how news is selected, and how big the influence of news selection is, I will expand on the notion of frames in the following section.

2.2 *Frames*

In this section I will elaborate on the notion of frames. What are frames exactly and how do they work?

Framing means “selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation and/or solution” (Entman 2004: 5). A frame in which news facts are being presented and interpreted, works in two ways. Firstly, the media producer places his facts inside a frame, and by doing so gives a meaning to these facts. This giving of meaning is also seen as reality creation, I will discuss this idea in the following theoretical chapter. Secondly, the media consumer interprets these facts according to the offered frame (De Boer & Brennecke 1999). Journalists frame their representations of reality in order to transmit events in an accessible way for a broad public. This framing often implies a simplification of information by use of popular images, also known as stereotypes, which impose an identifiable frame, in order to let the audience more easily consume the information (Fleras 2001: 318; Valkenburg et. al. 1999).

In the introduction of this thesis the homogeneous image of minority groups that is created in the media and the role of silent actors minority members usually play in the media was already mentioned. If minority members do speak in the media, it is mainly as a layman and almost never as an expert (Haghebaert 2005). This idea is in accordance with the ‘invisible’ frame of Fleras (2001: 318). Usually Moroccan Dutchmen do not really speak for themselves, but are spoken for or about. Furthermore Moroccan Dutch experts are completely invisible, unless they are experts on a minority-related subject. Fleras filtered a total of five different frames in which minorities are being framed in the media. Next to the ‘invisible’ frame, she found the ‘problematic’, the ‘stereotypes’, the ‘adornments’ and the ‘whitewashed’ frame (Fleras 2001: 318).

The ‘whitewashed’ frame of Fleras corresponds to the idea of Brants. He argued that when a minority member plays an important role in society, being a successful sportsman or politician for example, his success is almost always being disconnected from his ethnic origin (Brants 1998), as this star status does not fit the usual minority frame. This seemingly negative minority frame, Brants talked about, is also recognised by Smis, a lecturer at the ‘School voor Journalisme’⁶ in Utrecht. Smis argued that Dutch media is emphasising the negative effects of the problems that Moroccan Dutch youngster cause, but that the mainly

⁶ School for Journalism

white, ethnic Dutch journalists have a blind spot for the enrichment of Dutch language, history and culture, as an outcome of the multiculturalisation of the Netherlands (Smis 2000).

The simplification that is used in frames in order to transmit news in an accessible way, often leads to untruthful stereotyping of groups of people. This misrepresentation of people due to framing, can cause very strong associations. In the next paragraph I will shed light on one such a association of Moroccan Dutchmen with crime.

2.3 The ‘problematic’ frame

In this paragraph I will discuss a single frame discussed by Fleras (2001: 318) in which Moroccan Dutchmen are often placed; the ‘problematic’ frame. I actually prefer to call it the ‘criminals’ frame, but I will stick to Fleras’ frames, in order to prevent this section from becoming unnecessarily complicated. Later in this paragraph though I will discuss two new frames and two connected stereotypes.

In Dutch news media, the most frequent themes ethnical minorities are being associated with are crime, unemployment, deviance, integration and culture (Devroe 2007; Van Dijk 1983, 2005; Vliegthart & Boomgaarden 2005). According to Van Dijk, the mentioning of ethnicity as ‘objective information’ in criminal reports, could lead to the association of minorities with crime (Van Dijk 1983). According to Devroe, mentioning ethnical backgrounds in criminal reports is generally as (ir)relevant as mentioning income, gender or sexual preferences, unless the crime is connected to someone’s ethnical background (like honour killings could be for example) or in case a detection message is broadcasted (Devroe 2007: 123). Devroe (2007) shows that in only three percent of the Flemish news broadcastings and newspapers she investigated, the Flemish identity was mentioned. Notions like ‘Moroccan Fleming’ are very scarcely used. Keeping in mind that news tends to be negative, this negative biased image of minorities that arises from the media, is just connected to the minority identity and not to the Flemish identity, which makes it seemingly more easy to abdicate negative feelings to ‘the other’ instead of ‘the self’. Sibon (2005) showed that in the Netherlands especially Moroccan Dutchmen were overrepresented in criminal reports, while other minority groups were underrepresented. This indicates the presence of different frames in which news upon different minorities is being presented.

Another example of the ‘problematic frame’ is the following. Asylum seekers who have a failed procedure for residence, are being represented in the media as ‘illegal immigrants’, which sounds very negative. The term itself makes it seem as though they are

guilty of illegal actions, while their only crime is living in the Netherlands without a legal residence. Van Gorp discusses two types of frames in which illegal immigration and asylum seekers are being represented in the media; the 'intruder' frame and the 'victim' frame. In the 'intruder' frame, asylum seekers are being portrayed as a threat to cultural and economical acquisitions. While in the victim frame the asylum seekers are being portrayed as helpless and being subordinated to powers outside their own possibilities and responsibilities (Van Gorp 2005). So they are either dangerous or helpless, which fit both to the Fleras' frame of 'problematic'. d'Haenens (1996, in: Haghebaert 2005: 16) contributed to this with two stereotypes of ethnical minorities in Flemish news broadcastings, that fit these frames exactly: first, the stereotype of a '(semi) criminal' and second, the stereotype of a 'victim of the situation' in his country of origin or in the country of residence.

An example of the 'problematic' frame in Dutch media was shown in the Dutch television show 'De leugen regeert'⁷, in which journalist Van Jole analysed a remarkable shift in a news item. In the week prior to the broadcasting, an ethnic Dutch woman chased two Moroccan Dutch youngsters who stole a purse from her car and drove one of them to death. Van Jole shows how the media shift from 'a fatal accident' to the 'legitimate death penalty for the theft of a purse'. The reaction of extreme-right⁸ politician Wilders to this incident is a good example of generalisation, as the following quote shows:

'And I think that the numerous Moroccan criminals in the Netherlands, those street terrorists, that we should focus on them and that we should fiercely approach them and if possible deport them all from the country. In the Netherlands it happens almost every day that Moroccan youth terrorizes the people, kills and robs them, and we should finally take action against that.'

Van Jole concluded with that day's cover story of the biggest Dutch newspaper 'De Telegraaf'⁹ which was headed: '[Their] Own Fault' (Van Jole 2005).

From this example, the 'makeability of news' is apparent. Journalists can colour the news they bring according to their liking. Media normally use frames to make their messages understandable to their consumers. These frames are often a simplification of the situation,

⁷ The lie rules.

⁸ According to researchers of the Anne Frank Foundation and the University of Leiden, Wilders is an extreme-right politician, however Wilders himself disagrees with this research finding (Van den Brink 2008).

⁹ 'De Telegraaf' has the highest circulation of Dutch newspapers and could be seen as a more popular newspaper.

and people are often homogenised in these frames, as it is far less complicated to deal with the idea that all Moroccan Dutchmen have the same thoughts and ideas and the same problems and issues to deal with. However, these simplified images presented in those frames can lead to misrepresentations of people or groups of people in the media. In the empirical chapter that deals with the ideas of Moroccan Dutchmen regarding their representation in Dutch media, I will show that these issues are indeed experienced with the respondents. But first I will take a closer look at the notion of ‘representation’ in the following theoretical chapter.

3. Representation

In this chapter, which is also part of the theoretical framework, I will discuss the notion of representation. I divided this chapter in two sections. The first section is dedicated to the ideas of reality being constructed in the media, as to show how reality is makeable. The second section discusses alienation, which is a possible outcome of misrepresentation in the media.

3.1 The creation of reality through media

In this section I will discuss the ideas of reality being created through media. I will shed light on two different meanings of representation through media and I will give two examples of the creation of reality.

De Boer & Brennecke (1999) argued that although it seems that media present reality and actuality, it is just a construction of reality, and that the social construction of this reality takes place during the production as well as during the consumption of media. Chandler (1998) agreed that representation refers to the construction which is made by any medium of aspects of reality, like people, objects, places, events and cultural identities. Systems of representation position their subjects in a specific frame and make these representations seem 'natural'. Malik (2002: 24) argued that representation in this way plays a role in how social relations develop and how ideologies are constructed. Stuart Hall (1996) mentioned two meanings of representation through media. The first meaning is the conventional, mimetic notion of representation whereby media representations are assumed to be reproductions of the 'real world' outside. The second meaning is the radical, postmodern notion of representation whereby the assumption is valid that there is nothing outside the system of representations and discourse. In this line of thoughts it is believed that it is impossible to ever see the 'real world'.

As an example of the idea that reality is created by representation, one could read the book of Dutch journalist Luyendijk about his five-year term as a correspondent in the Middle-East. In the book he shows the discrepancy between what he saw with his own eyes, and what the rest of the world saw via the media. The way in which events are being presented appears to be really makeable. One of the examples Luyendijk gives, are the famous images of the Saddam Hussein statue being taken down on the Firdos square in Baghdad by the American army in 2003. CNN showed a delirious crowd smacking their shoes on the statue (a severe

Arabic insult) and shouting thank-you's to President Bush. Al-Jazeera on the other hand showed the same square where American soldiers laid an American flag over the face of Hussein's statue, followed by a heated discussion and a rapid removal of that same flag. The 'crowd' is also filmed, but from a distance making clear how few people were actually standing on the square, most of them quietly watching (Luyendijk 2006: 7-12). This example shows that events are interpretable in different ways. As mentioned in the previous chapter, journalists can apply different colours to their news in the media.

A second example of representation of reality comes from the Netherlands and took place in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. In the days after those attacks, almost all Dutch newspapers devoted a cover story to the celebrating Moroccan Dutchmen from Ede. On the 13th of September 2001 'De Telegraaf' wrote: *'Dozens of Moroccan youngsters from Ede have been out on the street cheering loudly, yelling and sounding their car horns to show their delight after the attacks on the United States of America'* (De Telegraaf 2001). The media based their story upon the statement of one local policeman and let the Netherlands believe the youngsters were celebrating the terrorist attacks. The story created a wave of consternation through the country. In the end it turned out that the nine guys were not aware of the shocking news, and were 'ordinarily' provoking the police. The policeman who brought out the story, regretted his words and although the papers rectified the story two weeks later, the damage had already been done (Heijmans 2001).

As evidenced by these two examples, media are a very strong factor in the representation of events, individuals and groups. One could say that reality is partly constructed by the media. Taking into account what Van Dijk (2005) mentioned, that almost everything people know about non-western countries, immigrants and minorities, hails from their media consumption, representations in the media are very much influencing people's idea's of reality on topics they are not very familiar with. In the next section I will discuss alienation, a possible outcome of misrepresentation.

3.2 Alienation through misrepresentation

In this section I will discuss the notion of alienation. Alienation in the social sciences context, means the state of feeling estranged or separated from society. Alienation is a common outcome of negative misrepresentation of a group of people. History shows multiple examples, some of which have led to horrible events like the Rwandan genocide and the Holocaust.

Ojo (2006), who did research upon ethnic media in the multicultural society of Canada, argues that despite the Broadcasting Act of 1991, which states all licensed broadcasting stations should reflect the racial and multicultural diversity of Canada in their programmes and employment, minorities are often misrepresented in the mainstream Canadian media. They are being portrayed as ‘others’ and those ‘others’ represent everything that Canada and Canadian values are not, and therefore form a ‘threat’ to the country. ‘Othering’ comes forth from feelings of *we* versus *them*, whereby *they* are associated with negative associations. All Canadian minorities seem to have another stereotype they are framed upon. By doing this, Canadian media sustain the discourse of ‘otherness’ (Ojo 2006: 345-348). Keshishian (2000) warns for the effect of negative stereotypes, which causes feelings of alienation and contributes to the social segregation of the immigrants.

Another example of such feelings of alienation is given by Ahmad (2006) in his research among Muslims after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre. He argues that after the attacks many Muslims felt that the ‘clash of civilizations’¹⁰ hypothesis was perpetuated by the media. Muslims felt the media were producing unsubstantiated, sensationalised reports and they were being scapegoated. In Ahmad’s research Muslims also declared they felt ‘othered’, the *we* versus *them* feelings were agitated directly after 9/11 (Ahmad 2006: 972-977).

These examples show how strong media can be in ‘othering’ people and cause feelings of alienation, which is quite dangerous to a healthy society. In the empirical chapter on the ideas of Moroccan Dutchmen regarding their representation in Dutch media I will describe to what extend second generation Moroccan Dutchmen feel represented in Dutch media, and to what extend they feel misrepresented, or even ‘othered’ or ‘alienated’. But first the context chapter and the chapter on research populations, research methods and research analysis follow.

¹⁰ This hypothesis of Huntington holds that conflicts after the Cold War will not be primarily ideological or economical, but based upon the great divisions among humankind and that the dominating source of conflict will be cultural (Huntington 1993).

4. Dutch Multicultural Society

In this chapter I will discuss the context in which this research took place. I will elaborate on the history and current Dutch multicultural society in the first section and I will draw special attention to the Moroccan Dutchmen in the second section. In the last section I will discuss some theories concerning the difficulties arising from a multicultural society. By drawing the context, I will show that a multicultural society does have its difficulties, and that those difficulties can be clarified. The fact that those difficulties are also discussed in Dutch media does not necessarily have to be ‘wrong’, as will be clarified later in this thesis by the arguments of Scheffer. In order to get an idea of what this multicultural situation is, Dutch media is representing, this chapter gives a brief overview.

4.1 From tolerance to fear

The Netherlands may be fortunate to call itself ‘tolerant’. This characteristic is a leftover from the Golden Age in which the Netherlands were flourishing in world trade and as a result of that, welcomed a lot of different nationalities into the country. Besides that, the Netherlands also became a residence for religious refugees, mainly Jews and Protestants, who fled the Spanish Inquisition. Nowadays the Netherlands is also seen as tolerant, especially regarding topics as abortion, euthanasia and drugs. But when it comes to immigration politics and hospitality towards new Dutchmen, the tolerance of the Dutchmen has decreased rapidly in the last few years. While multiculturalism was something positive until the eighties, in the 21st century the anti-immigration adherents have grown in proportion. According to the sociologist Bauman, immigrants, seen as waste from distant parts of the world, which are dropped in the backyard, often embody the presentiment of the own disposability (Bauman 2008: 56). Therefore immigrants often have to deal with a not so hospitable welcome and face prejudices and negative stereotypes.

The last two decades, integration has become a term which is extensively discussed in Dutch society. As early as in the late eighties problems with the multicultural society of the Netherlands were acknowledged by governmental advisory bodies and politicians, as it became clear that immigrants who came to the Netherlands as ‘guest labourers’ did not plan on leaving anymore. In the 1994 elections, the extreme right-wing political party ‘Centrum Democraten’¹¹ (CD) won two (of the 150) seats and in the 1998 elections, the liberal right

¹¹ Central Democrats.

political party ‘Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie’¹² (VVD) gained votes among the Dutch voters. Their leader, Bolkenstein, pled for courage to approach the integration process of immigrants in the Netherlands (Prins 2002). But only after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 real attention started to be paid to immigration and integration with the rise and fall of the Dutch extreme right politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002. In the recent elections of June 2010, the extreme-right and anti-Muslim political party ‘Partij voor de Vrijheid’¹³ (PVV) led by Wilders, won 24 of the 150 seats. In 2000, publicist Paul Scheffer, had already opened the debate on the Dutch multicultural society by publishing an article called ‘Het Multiculturele Drama’ which means the multicultural fiasco (Vliegthart and Boomgaarden, 2007). This article has had a tremendous influence on the debate, and in Scheffer’s own words:

‘The dust has not yet settled!’

This section showed how the Netherlands changed from a tolerant multicultural society into a society wherein almost a sixth of the seats in Dutch parliament are occupied by the extreme-right political party PVV. Their emphasis on the so-called islamisation of the Netherlands, leads to the fact that the Moroccan Dutch minority as a whole is scapegoated by this political party. In the next section I will briefly introduce this Dutch minority.

4.2 Moroccan Dutchmen in the Netherlands

In this section I will shed some light on the Moroccan Dutchmen living in the Netherlands. Almost 20% of Dutch inhabitants in 2009 was ‘allochtoon’. ‘Allochtoon’ is a non-translatable Dutch term for someone who has at least one parent who was not born in the Netherlands (CBS 2010). According to Sterk (2000) however, the term is usually meant to frame people who are recognizable as non-Western Europeans based on their features. A Dutchman with a German mother would never be framed as an ‘allochtoon’, while a third generation Moroccan with two officially Dutch parents, would still fit the picture.

The immigration of Moroccans to the Netherlands started in the sixties when the Netherlands needed cheap labourers (NIM). The labourers were called guest labourers as they were supposed to leave when the work was finished. However this did not happen, just a quarter of the 142,000 Moroccans who came to the Netherlands between 1972 and 2001

¹² People’s party for Freedom and Democracy.

¹³ Party for the Freedom.

returned to Morocco (CBS 2003: 27). In 2010 there are 349,270 Moroccan Dutchmen living in the Netherlands. That means that more than 10% of the Dutch 'allochtonen' is of Moroccan decent (CBS 2010). 93% of the Moroccan Dutchmen are Berber, 7% are Moroccan Arabs. From the Berber Dutchmen, 68% comes from the Rif, a mountainous area in the Northern of Morocco (Wikipedia 2010). The Rif has been subordinated for decades. After an uprising against the regime in 1959, which King Hassan II suppressed with napalm and killings, the Rif was neglected and impoverished (Riemersma 2009). According to the 'Nederlands Instituut Marokko'¹⁴ (NIM), both first and the second generation Moroccan Dutchmen have strong relations with Morocco and they strongly identify themselves with their religion and ethnical background

Immigration is one of the most difficult transitions in life, one could go through. Together with the difficulties coming forth from living in two cultures at the same time, it could lead to behavioural problems. In the next section I will discuss several theories that clarify some difficulties of a multicultural society.

4.3 Theories that clarify some of the issues of a multicultural society

In this section I will discuss four theories that declare some of the issues a multicultural society has to deal with. Those issues a multicultural society has to deal with, are for example, criminal behaviour of minority youngsters, difficulties in obtaining jobs or internships among minority members, a revival of feelings in accordance with Huntington's 'clash of civilisations', and therefore feelings of xenophobia among the ethnic Dutchmen and feelings of discrimination or even alienation among minority members. I will discuss the notion of bridging and bonding, inward and outward integration, the widening of the natural intergenerational gap in case of integration, and the theory of 'relative deprivation'.

The public perception on multiculturalism in the Netherlands became more negative the last two decennia. Problems arising from multiculturalism can among others be explained by the discrepancies between *bridging* and *bonding* forms of social capital. Putnam (2007) explains the difference between these two notions as follows. Bonding is the relationship with people who are in some important way like you, while bridging means to engage in a relationship with someone who is in some important way unlike you. Too much bonding and too little bridging in a multicultural society would lead to a fragmented society (Putnam 2007:

¹⁴ Dutch Institute Morocco

143-144). In the multicultural society of the Netherlands ideas and policies about bonding and bridging changed over the years.

Until the 1970's, due to the idea that the guest labourers were actually leaving the Netherlands, the Dutch political discourse favoured the differentialist approach of stressing bonding within ethnic minorities and preventing bridging to the larger society. In the 1980's when it became clear that the guest labourers were settling permanently, bonding within ethnic communities was reinterpreted as a positive condition for bridging with the surrounding Dutch society. As the Netherlands defined itself a 'de-facto multicultural society', the pillarist legacy¹⁵ of emancipation as integration with retention of one's own cultural identity revived. But then, in the 1990's, due to growing concerns that bonding would realise ethnic fragmentation in society and turn migrants into welfare state dependents, bonding and bridging were decoupled. From then, bonding belonged to the private sphere of minorities, while bridging was considered crucial for turning individual migrants into citizens of the Netherlands with equal chances as ethnic Dutchmen. Around the year 2000, the shift in bonding and bridging forms of social capital took its present form. Bonding within minority communities is now viewed as an obstacle or even a threat to bridging with the Dutch society. Bonding is even considered as a contribution to Huntington's 'clash of civilisations', and therefore bridging has become the central idea of the Dutch political discourse. The focus has shifted from bonding between minorities to bonding on the level of the Dutch society (Scholten & Holzacker 2009: 97). This shift in focus of the Dutch society indicates that Dutchmen value the idea of bridging, or even bonding on the societal level. By supporting this, they hope to diminish the problematic outcomes of the multicultural society.

However, Putnam warned for the idea that more bonding would directly imply less bridging and visa versa. He thought there is no such inversely correlation (Putnam 2007: 143-144). Elias and Lemish (2008) discussed two kinds of integration that are closely related to Putnam's bridging and bonding theory. They discussed outward integration (related to Putnam's bridging) whereby immigrants try to adapt to the host society and inward integration (related to Putnam's bonding) whereby immigrants try "to preserve the internal family unity and shared cultural heritage that is shattered due to immigration" (idem 2008: 21). Furthermore they emphasized the fact that the 'natural' intergenerational gap between parents and children becomes even wider due to the differential pace of cultural integration of

¹⁵ Until the early 1970's the Netherlands used to have a pillarist society, consisting mainly of four pillars, namely the Catholic, the Protestant, the Socialist and the Liberal pillar. Dutch society was organised via those pillars, which were operating as enclosed social groups which owned their own organisations in all areas of social life (Parlement 2010).

youth and adults in the new society, as adults normally have more difficulties adapting to the new society than children do. This brings along a lot of tension, especially for the second generation immigrants, who have to live up to two different standards. Their parents, born in the country of origin, still warrant the standards of the home country, while their friends and teachers live up to the standards of the host country (idem 2008). In a multicultural society a lot of second generation immigrants have to deal with these two standards. These youngsters are therefore more often engaged in trouble than peers who do not deal with these two different standards.

In Dutch literature the high percentage of crime among Moroccan Dutch youngsters is often dedicated to the conflicts inward and outward integration cause, as well as to the lower social-economical position of most Moroccan Dutchmen. According to Pels (2008) the following causes are most prominent: a lack of conventional capital, often due to low education of the parents, which blocks the participation in education and society; an uncertain image of the self; stigmatisation of their Muslim and/or Moroccan identity; a lack of recreation possibilities in the 'concentration' neighbourhoods in the big cities; generational conflicts which cause fathers often lack authority over their sons; and more bonding with other Moroccan Dutchmen instead of bridging with non-Moroccan Dutchmen.

Criminologist Bovenkerk is a supporter of the theory of 'relative deprivation' or 'strain'. Following this theory, criminal behaviour can be explained by the discrepancy between the societal aspirations and the factual possibility to satisfy those aspirations. When someone is promised to have equal chances to reach the top, but finds him- or herself subordinated due to arrears in areas of work, accommodation and education, and therefore factually unable to reach that top, one could get frustrated due to the comparison with the people who can reach that top (Bovenkerk 2003: 41).

To conclude, too much bonding within the own ethnic group and too little bridging with the broader multicultural society, too much inward integration and too little outward integration, the wider intergenerational gap between parents and children after migration, a lack of conventional capital, feelings of stigmatisation and the theory of relative deprivation, can all lead to some difficult issues in a multicultural society. After this chapter that discussed the context in which this research takes place, in which I discussed history and current Dutch multicultural society, Moroccan Dutchmen living in this society and some theories concerning some issues arising from a multicultural society, the next chapter will discuss the research populations, research methods and research analysis.

5. Research populations, research methods and analysis

In this chapter I will discuss both research populations, the research methods used and finally I will discuss the way I analysed the gathered data.

5.1 Research populations

In this section I will describe the populations which were involved in this research; the Moroccan Dutchmen and the media workers. The first subsection will be dedicated to the Moroccan Dutchmen. The second subsection will deal with the media workers.

5.1.1 Moroccan Dutchmen

In this subsection I will introduce the Moroccan Dutch respondents, though some of them preferred not to be recognisable in this research.

As stated in the context chapter, there are 349,270 Moroccan Dutchmen living in the Netherlands in 2010, which makes them the second biggest Dutch minority group after the Turkish Dutchmen (CBS 2010). From this big group of people I obviously interviewed just a small number of people. The complete Moroccan Dutch research population exists of twenty-nine people. So what I mean with *Moroccan Dutchmen* in my main research question is, the Moroccan Dutch respondents I talked to, as the group is far too small to generalise to all Moroccan Dutchmen in the Netherlands. Though, I did try to speak with both men and women, young and older people, high and low educated people, in order to try to get an as much as possible representative reflection of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch society.

The Moroccan Dutch respondents can be divided by ‘normal Moroccan Dutchmen’ meaning Moroccan Dutchmen who are consumers of media, do not work with or in Dutch media, and the ‘Moroccan Dutch media experts’, meaning those Moroccan Dutchmen who are experienced with media, as they have worked with or are working with/in media, by e.g. writing columns and making television programmes.

In the first group of ‘normal Moroccan Dutchmen’ I interviewed five men and twenty-one women, who participated in focus-groups. The female respondents were all living in Utrecht. They were divided in three focus-groups. The first two focus-groups belonged to the Al-Amal foundation, a foundation which is dedicated to improving the participation of multi-problem families, women, youngsters and children in the society of Utrecht. I found them through their website, which I got recommended by someone from the municipality of

Utrecht. I then contacted a woman who is in charge of a women's discussion group and she invited me to join the group. When I came there, part of the group was walking in the neighbourhood, so I started a small focus-group discussion with five women that were present in the building. Later, when the other women arrived, I had another focus-group discussion with twelve women. The third focus-group existed of four girls who were joining a girls club at the Doenja foundation, a foundation which is dedicated to helping children, youngsters and adults in Leidsche Rijn and Southwest Utrecht with big and small problems they can not handle themselves. I contacted the organisation via their website and was invited to take over one of the sessions of the girls club at the Doenja foundation.

The five men I interviewed, Rachid Azrout, Samir, Mohamed and the two others whose names I will not mention, I found via my own network. I hoped for a snowball effect, which brings a researcher in contact with relatives and friends of the respondents he or she already contacted, but this effect failed. I worked with Samir in a restaurant some time ago, he studies Economics on a MBO¹⁶ level. Mohamed works as a pizza delivery boy at the pizzeria I use to go buy pizzas, and studies MBO Administrative Assistant. I interviewed them both in Utrecht. I got in contact with Rachid Azrout, via dr. Vliegthart, with whom I talked among others about his research on the effects of 'key events' and 'real-world developments' on the prominence of immigration and integration of minorities in Dutch media. Drs. Azrout is a colleague of dr. Vliegthart, and is doing a PHD at the University of Amsterdam. The other two men I found via a friend of mine. They have both an academic background. The last three interviewees I interviewed in Amsterdam, as that is where they live. The educational levels from the men ranged from MBO to PhD.

In the second group of 'Moroccan Dutch media experts', I interviewed three people. I interviewed two of them together, as they are two of the three well-known sisters who made the former television programme 'Meiden van Halal'¹⁷; Esmā and Jihad. I contacted them via their manager, whose email address I found on their website. I interviewed them in Amsterdam, the city where they live. The other interviewee in this group was Salaheddine Benchiki, who is well-known among Moroccan Dutchmen from his columns, television performances and theatre show. I read about Benchiki in an article dedicated to him, published by Dagblad De Pers¹⁸, and I googled him afterwards. I found his website and left a

¹⁶ Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs, Vocational education.

¹⁷ Girls of Halal. Halal is an Islamic term which indicates what is allowed being a Muslim.

¹⁸ One of the free newspapers in the Netherlands, distributed in public transport and public buildings.

message in which I asked for an interview. He then called me back to make an appointment. I interviewed Benchiki in Dordrecht, right after he had done some recordings for television.

5.1.2 Media workers

In this subsection I will introduce the respondents who work in Dutch media. The total number of respondents I interviewed in this research population was nine. With *Dutch media* in the main research question of this research, I mean the respondents who work in Dutch media, as nine people can never represent the thoughts and ideas of all people working in Dutch media. Furthermore I focus in this research on Dutch television -both news and entertainment television- and Dutch newspapers only. Internet, radio and magazines are of course also part of Dutch media, but due to the time constraints of this research, choices had to be made and I chose television and newspapers because I expected the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen to be most visible here.

Five of the respondents worked in the writing press, among them Dorien Pels, journalist for ‘*Trouw*’¹⁹ and John Maes, journalist for ‘*Spits*’²⁰. I contacted both of them after I read an article of them on the topic of Moroccan Dutchmen which triggered my attention and I interviewed them both in Amsterdam.

Three respondents worked for television; Arnout Vallenduuk as a scriptwriter for ‘*ONM*’²¹, Sandra Beerends as the head of drama at the NPS²² and Gemma Derksen as the head of drama at the NCRV. I found Vallenduuk via an old-colleague who did an internship with the scriptwriters of ‘*ONM*’ and the latter two respondents I found respectively via the websites of the NPS and the NCRV. I interviewed Vallenduuk in Amsterdam and Beerends and Derksen in Hilversum. The last respondent of this research population is Paul Scheffer, author of ‘*Het Multiculturele Drama*’, who worked both in the written press and for television as editor for the political television programme ‘*Buitenhof*’. Via email we set a date for the interview which took place in his house in Amsterdam.

In the next section on research methods, I will discuss my choice for focus-groups discussions and semi-structured interviews.

¹⁹ One of the so called Dutch quality newspapers, in this case with a Protestant Christian background.

²⁰ One of the free Dutch newspapers, distributed in public transport and public buildings.

²¹ A shortcut for the former title of the show ‘*Onderweg naar Morgen*’, roughly translated to ‘*On our way to tomorrow*’.

²² Nederlandse Programma Stichting, Dutch Programme Foundation.

5.2 Methods and techniques

In this section I will discuss the methods and techniques used in this research. I will start with placing the research in the right research tradition and then I will discuss the different methods of data gathering.

This research has been carried out following the qualitative or interpretative research tradition. To be more precisely, this is a research in the symbolic interactionist tradition, which has its base in the neo-phenomenological tradition. In phenomenology, researchers start with a specific case and broaden this to more common situations (Moustakas 1994). The symbolic interactionist tradition is an action theory in which the emphasis in the clarification of social phenomenon's is on interactions and symbols, like all forms of language and expression, and their meanings ('t Hart et al 1996: 102-103). This research clarifies the social phenomenon of the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media, by emphasising on the interactions of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media, the interaction of Moroccan Dutchmen with Dutch media workers and different forms of language and expression.

Most data was gathered by semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions. These focus-group discussions were solemnly carried out among the respondents of the Moroccan Dutch research population, as it is next to impossible to gather a meaningful group of journalists together.

The focus-groups discussions I carried out with Moroccan Dutch women were very interesting and eye-opening. I presented myself as a Master Student in International Development Studies together with the subject of this research and the main research question. I then posed the subjects I wanted to know more about, starting with the question: *'Do you recognise the Moroccan Dutchmen as you know them, in Dutch media?'* The Moroccan Dutch women discussed the issue of representation amongst themselves in their own words and perceptions. I tried to minimize my interaction in the discussions, limiting it to posing the preferred subjects of the discussions. I did this so as to limit my influence on the respondents and their thoughts, and to be able to gather their ideas as pure as possible.

I interviewed the Moroccan Dutch men with help of semi-structural interviews using only a topic list instead of a full list of questions, in order to let the respondents discuss topics presented, freely. In practise this resulted in deeper insights into the topics that were important to my respondents and thus for the research.

The interviews with the media workers were structured along the same lines of semi-structured interviews, though with an adapted topic list off course. Through the method of

semi-structured interviewing I was presented with a very interesting idea by Scheffer on the image of the imaging (see section 7.2), whereas with a structured list of questions this would have probably eluded me.

Furthermore I have included a chapter which deals with a column written by Benchiki in which he criticises a Moroccan Dutch character of the children's soap opera called 'SpangaS'. I collected some reactions on the column and asked Derksen, who is head of drama at the NCRV and therefore responsible for the Moroccan Dutch character, for a response to the critics of Benchiki.

At last, next to the qualitative methods of semi-structured interviewing and focus-group discussions used, there have also been a number of informal conversations on the topic. As these informal conversations were not giving any new insights, but just confirmed the outcomes of the interviews and group discussions, I will not discuss them separately here. In the next section I will discuss the way I analysed the gathered research data.

5.3 Analysis

In this section I will discuss the way in which I analysed the research data. I start to discuss the way of processing the gathered data and will then make a claim on the validity of this research.

All semi-structured interviews were taped on a voice-recorder, and written down directly after the interviews took place. The focus-group discussion with the four girls from the Doenja foundation I recorded by camera, in order to be able to recognise more easily who was talking, when I wrote down their comments afterwards. As the women of the Al-Amal foundation did not want to be recorded, I wrote down all interesting comments, during the focus-group discussion itself.

After all interviews and focus-group discussions had been carried out, I divided all data into two groups, in accordance with the two research populations. I then coded all documents with different labels according to the themes that turned out to be most important, and in the second stage of analysis I combined the data of the matching labels in order to write different sections and subsections. Hereby I constantly looked for a link with the theories I studied before starting the data gathering stage.

As this research is an interpretative research, in which my main research question asks for the *extend*, Moroccan Dutchmen feel themselves represented in Dutch media and the way Dutch media *think* about their role in this representation, it asks for an analysis in accordance

with the empirical phenomenological approach described by Moustakas, which involves according to him, “a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience” (Moustakas 1994: 13). As there are no standard measurements like little, reasonable or totally that indicate the same level of ‘feeling represented’, I can only suffice in the reproduction of words used by the Moroccan Dutch respondents and their measurements of representation.

I will never claim to hold the truth, as there were just 38 respondents involved in this research. Though I did try to improve this research’s validity by trying to get a representative reflection of the Moroccan Dutch inhabitants of the Netherlands by interviewing both men and women, young and older people and high and low educated people. Still, their sayings can never be generalised for the whole group of Moroccan Dutchmen. This applies as well to the research population of the media workers.

Now theory, context and methods are clear, in the following two chapters I will discuss the empirics of this research. The first empirical chapter will discuss the ideas of the Moroccan Dutch research population regarding their representation in Dutch media. The second empirical chapter discusses the ideas which are present among the media workers regarding their role in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen.

6. Perceptions of Moroccan Dutchmen regarding their representation in Dutch media

In this first empirical chapter I will discuss my research findings from the interviews and focus-group discussions conducted with Moroccan Dutchmen. In these I focussed on the views of the Moroccan Dutchmen on their representation in Dutch media. The chapter is divided into two sections, in the first section I will discuss the views of Moroccan Dutchmen regarding their representation in the media, whereas in the second section I will discuss the ideas Moroccan Dutchmen have about the way of working of Dutch media.

6.1 Ideas about representation

In this paragraph I will discuss the ideas the Moroccan Dutch respondents I spoke with, have on the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media. The first question I asked in every interview was the following: *'Do you recognise the Moroccan Dutchmen as you know them, in Dutch media?'* And the answer of every single respondent was 'no'. I will discuss the four subjects in four different subsections. I start with discussing typical frames and stereotypes Moroccan Dutchmen are familiar with. In the second subsection I deal with the highlighting of ethnicity in Dutch media. In the third subsection I discuss the reactions based on the media representation and in the last subsection I will shed some light on the desired changes in that same media representation.

6.1.1 Frames and stereotypes

In this subsection on frames and stereotypes, I will discuss which frames and stereotypes the Moroccan Dutch respondents are familiar with in Dutch media and how they feel about them. I will discuss their views on these frames and stereotypes and the discrepancies between media representation and their own view of reality. I will first deal with frames and stereotypes in news media and then with frames and stereotypes in the multicultural entertainment television.

All respondents agreed that the Moroccan Dutchmen portrayed in Dutch media, are not similar to the Moroccan Dutchmen they are familiar with. The Moroccan Dutchmen they see in Dutch media are usually portrayed as a nuisance to society, as criminals or

fundamentalists. As a start I would like to reproduce some kind of joke told to me by one of the women from the Al-Amal foundation.

'The editor in chief of one of the newspapers of The Hague hears that there has been a heroic rescue of a woman being attacked by a dog. He sends his best reporter to make a cover story for the next day. The reporter visits the woman and listens to the story of the horrible attack and her heroic rescuer. He asks her who her rescuer was and finally writes his story. The next day the newspaper opens with the headline: Moroccan beats up dog in broad daylight.'

Moroccan Dutchmen see themselves foremost portrayed via the 'problematic' frame also mentioned by Fleras. Often they are also portrayed as subordinated and non-communicative. The respondents complain that Dutch media time upon time report negatively about their group and that they feel like they are being portrayed as wrongdoers, or as one of the respondents articulated it:

'The Moroccans are always the ones that are to blame [...] I really feel I am the epicentre of what's wrong! Such a weird situation!'

Furthermore, the respondents felt Moroccan Dutchmen are often linked to crime, which underscores the theories discussed in the theoretical framework regarding the link between crime and ethnicity, and that crimes committed by Moroccan Dutchmen are more widely published about in Dutch media than crimes committed by ethnic Dutchmen. As an example, the women of the Al-Amal foundation argued that there are two differences between reports about ethnic Dutch and Moroccan Dutch criminals.

First of all, in case of an ethnic Dutch suspect, the media come up with various explanations of why the crime was committed. However, in the case of a Moroccan Dutch suspect this hardly ever happens according to the women. These last suspects are usually just urged to 'depart back home', meaning move 'back' to Morocco.

Secondly, the women felt there is much more attention for Moroccan Dutch criminals. They specifically mentioned the recent example of a murder committed by an ethnic Dutch police officer²³. Within days of the incident media attention dropped, whereas in their

²³ I refer here to the Milly Boele case.

opinions had a Moroccan Dutch police officer been the murder suspect, media attention would still be very vivid.

On the same topic of crime, other respondents mentioned that while a suspect is still unknown, a ‘suspect with a tinted skin’ often rapidly changes to ‘a suspect, probably of Moroccan decent’. The ‘(semi) criminal’ stereotype of d’Haenens fits perfectly here. I will further elaborate on this in the next subsection, where I will deal specifically with the explicit mentioning of ethnicity in crime reports.

Besides the most heard complaint of the link with crime and the ‘(semi) criminal’ stereotype Moroccan Dutchmen get labelled with, unemployment was mentioned as one of the themes which ethnical minorities are most frequently being associated with in the Netherlands. A lot of respondents talked about how difficult it is for Moroccan Dutchmen to find an internship or a job while being a Moroccan Dutchmen, and all of them saw a link with their representation in Dutch media. The ‘intruder frame’ of Van Gorp could be an explanation for the difficulties of the Moroccan Dutchmen on the labour market, as ‘*they steal our jobs*’ is an often heard statement in the Netherlands.

Furthermore the respondents feel there is a lack of diversity in Dutch media. In case Moroccan Dutchmen appear in the media, it is almost always connected to a few specific subjects: integration, religion or, as mentioned before, crime and criminal youth. The respondents miss the active contribution of Moroccan Dutchmen in the media, as most of the time they feel, media are talking *about* them instead of *with* them. They miss the successful Moroccan Dutchmen of Dutch society and their successes, which are almost never highlighted and remain in the limelight. The respondents miss Moroccan Dutch experts on all topics not related to their ethnicity. It seems as though the Netherlands has no Moroccan Dutch scientists, doctors, lawyers, business men or experts on any other topic, other than maybe Islam. The respondents would like to see more of these experts, as they obviously exist, and other successful Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media. This lack of active contribution of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media and Moroccan Dutch success stories in Dutch media, fits the ‘invisible’ frame of Fleras. One of the respondents mentioned in accordance with the ideas of Brants, that in case a Moroccan Dutchman rises in economic-social position, he is likely not to be seen as a Moroccan Dutchman anymore, somehow all of a sudden he transforms to being ethnic Dutch. This is in accordance with the ‘whitewashed’ frame of Fleras. The respondent clarified his idea as follows:

'News media tend to be negative. So news about Moroccans is mostly also negative. In case a Moroccan Dutchman becomes successful, at a certain moment he is not longer seen as a Moroccan Dutchman, because his image differs too much from the image that is being presented in the news. These two images can not be unified, because those Moroccan Dutchmen from the news are not the same as this successful Moroccan Dutchman. He is becoming ethnic Dutch, and we will not see him again. While the other Moroccan Dutchmen are presented as the real Moroccan Dutchmen, the ones we should be scared of.'

Next to all negative issues mentioned regarding the lack of successful stereotypes in Dutch media two of the respondents mentioned a source of some pride and positive representation. They stated they feel associated with the successful Moroccan Dutch soccer players, some of whom play in the national team and who are generally positively approached by Dutch media. These soccer players would fit the 'adornment' frame of Fleras, as they are an enrichment of Dutch society. Though this idea is contrary to the idea of Brants, who argued that when a minority member plays an important role in society, for example being a successful soccer player, his success is almost always being disconnected from his ethnic origin. In accordance with Brant, I have the feeling that even these soccer players as they become more successful are less frequently seen as Moroccan Dutchmen by Dutch media.

A stereotype which according to the respondents they would be better off without, is that of suppressed women. The women of the Al-Amal foundation mentioned they would like to see the stereotype of the suppressed woman with the headscarf disappear. They do not feel they are suppressed at all:

'It is not the headscarves, but it is about what is underneath the scarves, our brains, that matter. Are we being suppressed, sitting here until late in the evening talking with our girlfriends? Are the women in Lombok,²⁴ who run their own businesses, suppressed? They wear headscarves too!'

The 'Meiden van Halal' signalled this stereotype too, mentioning that they are often being told to be an exception, that they are so different than the other Moroccan, or Muslim girls, as they apparently do not fit to the generally accepted stereotype of a veiled girl. The 'Meiden van Halal' were wondering how many exceptions ethnic Dutchmen need before they can

²⁴ Multicultural neighbourhood in Utrecht.

break down the walls of the box they place veiled Moroccan women in. The fact that ethnic Dutchmen seem to think in recognisable stereotypes, is in accordance with the 'stereotype' frame of Fleras. The 'Meiden van Halal' felt you are only being accepted if ethnic Dutchmen can identify themselves with you. If you look more similar, it is easier to be accepted, like singer Ali B. for example. He does everything ethnic Dutchmen like; he sings nice songs, has a lot of humour, does not speak about the need to pray five times a day, he is just like the average ethnic Dutchmen. But if you do mention that praying five times a day is important to you, then you are less easy to identify with and therefore less easy to like, according to the sisters.

Now some specific comments on frames and stereotypes in multicultural entertainment television, in which roles and characters of Moroccan Dutchmen are being invented, will follow. According to Benchiki, who himself writes and makes television and theatre shows, the Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch television programmes are all but Moroccan Dutchmen. He said he sees artificial characters that in no way even resemble 'real' Moroccan Dutchmen. The 'Meiden van Halal' emphasised that there is no such thing as *the* Moroccan Dutchman, and therefore do not agree with Benchiki at this point. Benchiki elaborated on one example of a Moroccan Dutch character in a Dutch soap opera for children, who according to him is such an untrue representation of a Moroccan Dutchmen, that it almost becomes cult television. I will elaborate on his critics in chapter eight. Benchiki felt Dutch characters are created and subsequently filled up with Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch entertainment television, just to add a bit of colour in the show. Or in his own words:

'I never see anyone like the Moroccan Dutchmen I usually hang out with, on Dutch television. And that is kind of weird. Are they being converted or something? Like making an avi-file from a mp3? I do not understand why anyone would make this kind of conversion.'

However, most other respondents did feel Moroccan Dutch characters in entertainment television resemble 'real' Moroccan Dutchmen. One respondent mentioned he recognised two accurate images of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch entertainment television. The first image he recognised, is that of a Moroccan Dutchman like himself; a Dutchmen almost unrecognisable of Moroccan decent. This stereotype runs parallels with the 'whitewashed' frame of Fleras.

The second image he recognised, is that of the old father or mother who wears a djelabba²⁵ and who hardly speaks any Dutch.

The respondents did not agree with each other on whether Moroccan Dutch characters produced by ethnic Dutchmen are more realistic than characters produced by Moroccan Dutchmen. For instance, some find the character 'Moussie El Kandoussie', a character produced by Benchiki who would perfectly fit the stereotype 'Kutmarokkaan' hilarious, while others like the characters of the series 'Shouf Shouf'²⁶, an ethnic Dutch production, better. This indicates that there is no consensus on what a realistic reflection of a Moroccan Dutchman is, as the respondents did agree that the characters produced by ethnic Dutchmen are different than the ones produced by Moroccan Dutchmen. Most important here is to note that there seemingly is no typical Moroccan Dutchman who is designated most realistic.

One scenario recognised by all the female respondents was the home-situation of Dunya, the Moroccan Dutch protagonist in the ethnic Dutch production of the series 'Dunya & Desie'²⁷. The family matters and house rules are very representative for Moroccan Dutch family life. And this realistic and positive representation of Moroccan Dutch family life, shows ethnic Dutch people that Moroccan Dutch households can be cosy, instead of being seedbeds for criminals and fundamentalists. However, the girls from the Doenja foundation warned that it is not possible to watch the escapades of the ethnic Dutch protagonist Desie together with a Moroccan Dutch father.

All together most respondents approve of multicultural entertainment television, as the Moroccan Dutch characters are at least being positioned more positively than the Moroccan Dutchmen in news media. One respondent argued humour is a good way to bend the negative, and that this kind of entertainment could give a boost to the imaging of the group. The fact that the ethnic Dutch production of 'Dunya & Desie' is giving such a righteous image of the Moroccan Dutch home situation of the protagonist Dunya, is promising for the future. Important outcome of this subsection is, that there is no typical Moroccan Dutchmen who is designated most realistic in entertainment television programmes, due to the existence of different opinions.

Another important outcome of this subsection is that there are according to the respondents still many flaws in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media, due to the use of frames and stereotypes. The respondents mentioned they did not recognise

²⁵ Typical Moroccan garment.

²⁶ Dutch production of the NPS, a comedy series on Moroccan Dutchmen.

²⁷ Dutch production of the NPS, very successful series and movie on the friendship between the Moroccan Dutch Dunya and ethnic Dutch Desie, two adolescent girls living next to each other in Amsterdam North.

the Moroccan Dutchmen they are familiar with, in Dutch media. They felt Dutch media excessively report on criminal Moroccan Dutchmen, and that the vivid stereotypes of the suppressed veiled woman and the criminal Moroccan Dutchman, partly constructed in Dutch media, are really influencing their lives, as comes clear in the difficulties Moroccan Dutchmen have, finding a job or an internship. They furthermore mentioned the lack of diversity in Dutch media and the absence of Moroccan Dutch experts. In the next subsection I will discuss the ideas the Moroccan Dutch respondents had about the explicit mentioning of their ethnicity in Dutch media.

6.1.2 Ethnicity out loud

In this subsection I will elaborate on the thoughts of the respondents regarding the explicit mentioning of the Moroccan Dutch ethnicity in Dutch media.

All respondents were convinced that mentioning the Moroccan Dutch ethnicity in criminal reports does not contribute to a correct representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media. Respondents mentioned getting irritated by the fact that they have the feeling it is especially the Moroccan Dutch ethnicity which is being mentioned in criminal reports, while native Dutch ethnicity or another minority's ethnicity is mentioned less often. This idea had proved its right already in the research of Sibon (2005) who signalled an overrepresentation of the highlighting of Moroccan Dutch ethnicity in the criminal reports of four Dutch newspapers, while other minorities were underrepresented. Azrout gave a current example the issue of highlighting ethnicity, as a fight between school kids was reported in a local Amsterdam newspaper. No ethnicity was mentioned, but Azrout saw on AT5²⁸ that the kids who fought were of Surinam origin. Azrout was afraid that if it would have been Moroccan Dutch kids, their ethnicity would have been mentioned in the newspaper article. He stated:

'I can not substantiate this, but it is a feeling that stabs me. It were Moroccan Dutch youngsters who spit on bus drivers in Gouda, but this fighting was just between school kids.'

One respondent emphasised the unconscious association of crime with the Moroccan Dutch ethnicity, described as well by Van Dijk (1983), is contributing to the negative imaging of the group. And Esmaa mentioned that although to her a criminal called Mohamed is 'just a

²⁸ Local Amsterdam television transmitter.

criminal’, to her ethnic Dutch neighbour he might be ‘just a Moroccan Dutchman’. She does not see the added value of mentioning ethnicity in criminal reports.

Azrout was questioning in which case it would be important to mention ethnicity. He had the idea that the ongoing story Dutch media is broadcasting, is that Moroccan Dutchmen are scary. The foremost question is; is it really about this Moroccan Dutch ethnicity, or is it about the economic-social position of these youngsters who all come from disadvantaged neighbourhoods like Amsterdam-West? Is crime connected to ethnicity, or to the fact that the criminals live in decayed neighbourhoods, have very little opportunities in life and might have the feeling of being discriminated and subordinated in society? And would native Dutchmen under the same conditions not act the same?

Furthermore respondents were questioning where the highlighting of the Moroccan Dutch ethnicity was in positive stories in Dutch media. Why do Dutch media not report on *Moroccan* Dutch singer Hind²⁹? And in case Azrout will be a professor one day, and media ask him for advice, will they write about Moroccan Dutch professor Azrout? Probably not, and in my opinion, it is better not to frame people on the migration history of their (grand)parents. But this would count than for the negative linkages too. Because what happens now, is that only the negative stories are linked to the Moroccan Dutch ethnicity, and that people who are not familiar with Moroccan Dutchmen themselves, and therefore base their opinions mainly on media, are presented with this strong linkage between Moroccan Dutch ethnicity and solemnly negative events.

Several respondents mentioned they have the feeling that this negative focus on Moroccan Dutchmen is also established and maintained by extreme-right politician Wilders, who puts problems around Moroccan Dutchmen on top of his political priority list, and that key-events like the murder on Theo van Gogh³⁰ or the stories about Moroccan Dutch youngster terrorizing bus drivers in the city of Gouda, are as well contributing to the negative representation of Moroccan Dutchmen. This idea is in accordance with the ideas of Vliegthart and Boomgaarden (2007: 308-309) who argued that key-events are more influencing Dutch media than real-world developments and that some individuals in politics can focus media attention to a certain subject they prioritise.

There was one exceptional side note from Jihad. She argued that the Moroccan Dutchmen were guilty too of maintaining the highlighting of Moroccan Dutch ethnicity in

²⁹ Moroccan Dutch singer, who’s career was accelerated via the talent-show Idols, but of whom her Moroccan Dutch ethnicity is not widely known.

³⁰ Dutch moviemaker who got murdered in name of Islam, by a Muslim fundamentalist, in the centre of Amsterdam in broad daylight, because of insulting Prophet Mohammed.

criminal reports. As she said that she, and others with her, always wanted to know whether it was a Moroccan Dutchman committing the crime:

'It is the first thing I want to know when someone is stabbed. "Was it a Moroccan?" Or after a lit fire in the Bijlmer³¹. "Were they Moroccans?" We too maintain it!'

One could question if Moroccan Dutchmen indeed contribute to the maintenance of a negative image of their ethnic group in Dutch society. The 'curiosity' described here, at least contributes to the demand side of the highlighting of ethnicity in criminal reports in Dutch media. Though it can as well be an outcome of this frequent mentioning of ethnicity in criminal reports in Dutch media. One could question whether Moroccan Dutchmen would still be this curious, if ethnicity was not at all an issue in criminal reports. It is rather a chicken and the egg situation. There are two other contributions of Moroccan Dutchmen that maintain the negative image of their ethnicity in Dutch media. The first one is a reaction to the negative image presented in Dutch media, by living up to this image, which obviously contributes to the maintenance of the image. Another contribution is that when Moroccan Dutchmen become successful, they often do not identify themselves any longer as Moroccan Dutchmen, but prefer to be seen as solemnly Dutchmen. This off course contributes as well to the maintenance of the negative image, as it is purely the non-successful people who are being connected to the Moroccan Dutch ethnicity. I will discuss these two and some other reactions of Moroccan Dutchmen arising from the representation of their ethnic group in Dutch media, in more detail in the following subsection.

To conclude this subsection about the highlighting of ethnicity in Dutch media, it is clear that the Moroccan Dutch respondents do not like the fact that the Moroccan Dutch ethnicity is specifically mentioned in criminal reports. Moreover they have the feeling the Moroccan Dutch ethnicity is more often related to crime than the Dutch ethnicity or any other minority's ethnicity in the Netherlands. They state that this exaggerated link between crime and the Moroccan Dutch ethnicity is encouraged by politician Wilders and striking key-events that had something to do with Moroccan Dutch criminals or punks. The respondents themselves did not see the added value of the highlighting of ethnicity in crime reports and wondered why their ethnicity was only used in a negative correlation, and not in a positive one. One respondent even claimed the demonization of Moroccan Dutch ethnicity, which

³¹ Multicultural neighbourhood in Amsterdam.

indicates some feelings of alienation. In the second section of this chapter I will discuss the notion of alienation in more detail. But first, as said before, I will elaborate on the output of the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media in the following subsection.

6.1.3 Reactions regarding the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media

In this subsection I will discuss the reactions among Moroccan Dutchmen regarding the representation of their ethnicity in Dutch media. Respondents feel the effect of Dutch media in colouring the imaging of Moroccan Dutchmen is big. They talk about a consensus that calls for a negative association with their ethnicity. We have discussed both reactions of Moroccan Dutchmen and ethnic Dutchmen to this representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media. I will first discuss the reactions of the Moroccan Dutchmen, and then the reactions of the ethnic Dutchmen, according to the Moroccan Dutch respondents.

The overall reaction of the respondents on how they responded to the imaging of their ethnic group in Dutch media, was that although they did not like how they were represented, they were standing 'above' this representation. The girls from the Doenja foundation emphasized they like themselves the way they are and they are not willing to change in order to satisfy other people's feelings of how someone supposes to look or act. Moroccan Dutchmen do not really react anymore to the latest negative story, according to Benchiki, they have become saturated. But still Benchiki said you have to be careful not to get paranoid and think that everyone hates you. This is exactly the claim of Mohamed, he feels Moroccan Dutchmen are the most hated of all Dutch minorities. These remarks indicate that feelings of alienation are present among Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch society.

There are two main reactions coming from within the Moroccan Dutch group. The first one is to behave in accordance with the imaging outlined by the media. One respondent clarified that the image of the mass can be deterrent in creating this reaction. Mohamed explained in his own words:

'Look, they criminalise a boy. And then the boy thinks: "Well, they already criminalise me, so why not act accordingly too? Because even before I have done anything, they have already accused me of doing it. Better to finish it now, because I have already been found guilty anyway. I can not be found more guilty any way." That is why some boys get into trouble.'

And then there is the other reaction: trying to compensate the negative image of Moroccan Dutchmen. One respondent said only a relatively small group exhibit this reaction, yet all the respondents said they were part of this group. They do this in various ways, Benchiki for example claims he has become more friendly in order to compensate for all the bad things happening due to Moroccan Dutchmen. But he emphasizes he does not deny his identity:

'I do not want to set an example, but I want to show the ethnic Dutchmen, it is possible to be ánd a hardcore Moroccan, ánd still be considered a relaxed person. You do not have to be some Dutchified guy to get accepted. That is some sort of mini-mission for me.'

In accordance with Benchiki, Mohamed tried to live as exemplary as possible, and there are also numerous initiatives and projects that try to compensate for the negative image of Moroccan Dutchmen. The 'Meiden van Halal' used television when they got the opportunity, to broadcast their ideas and visions. They were sick of listening to 'some idiot' talking about their religion, whom they totally disagreed with. By being on television with their recognizable Moroccan, or at least Muslim appearance, they also wanted to get native Dutchmen to be more accustomed to Moroccan Dutch women who do have brains. They hoped that due to their performances on television, native Dutchmen would see that it is possible to be a good Muslim and a good Dutchmen at the same time and that Huntington's clash of civilisations is not the reality of current life in the Netherlands. What they and other respondents also mentioned that irritated them very much, was the constant state of being responsible for every other Moroccan or Muslim person's deeds, all over the world. Esmaa exemplified this with the following anecdote:

'Than my colleagues came in with the newspaper because something bad had happened with a Moroccan family, shoved it under my nose and asked: "What is this about? Are your people really this bad?" My people? Can you as a Dutch girl explain why other Dutch girls have "Breezer sex"?''

Benchiki currently works on his own totally Moroccan Dutch cinema movie. He deliberately does this without help and interference of the Dutch Film Fund. He wants to do this on his own, to show the Netherlands what the Moroccan Dutch community can do. He is not afraid of polarisation, he thinks this project will have a positive impact on the Moroccan Dutch group as a whole.

Azrouit agreed with Benchiki that it might be useful to collectivise more as a group, like the Turkish Dutchmen do. There are a lot less Turkish Dutch “street punks”, because they have to work in the restaurants of their fathers and uncles. If a Turkish Dutchman has a business, he will always get some Turkish Dutch interns. The Turkish Dutchmen help each other in many ways, whereas all respondents agree that Moroccan Dutchmen are much more individualistic. When a Moroccan Dutchman is successful, he almost directly ‘Dutchifies’ in all aspects of life. If this is true, the ‘whitewashed’ frame of Fleras and the idea of Brants that a minority member once he plays an important role in society, is being disconnected from his ethnic origin, are also maintained by the behaviour of those Moroccan Dutchmen themselves. Furthermore Azrouit argued that successful Moroccan Dutchmen often do not want their decent to be mentioned. I agree with the respondents that it would be useful when these successful people openly maintain their Moroccan Dutch identity, present themselves as successful Moroccan Dutchmen, and perhaps even create some chances for other Moroccan Dutchmen.

Except for one respondent who claimed he does not have the feeling he is treated any different due to the imaging of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media, all respondents do have the feeling that in superficial conversations with ethnic Dutchmen, they are treated differently due to their image in Dutch media. Examples that were given, were people looking afraid or away, people talking very loud and clear as if the respondent had some difficulties with the Dutch language and one respondent even told someone asked his ethnic Dutch girlfriend to translate her words, assuming a Moroccan Dutchman could not speak Dutch at all.

One respondent thought it would be difficult to influence the ideas of ethnic Dutchmen regarding the image of Moroccan Dutchmen, after they have become accustomed to a certain image, while another respondent thought that ethnic Dutchmen will always keep on updating their images of Moroccan Dutchmen. In accordance with the latter idea, Azrouit emphasized that multicultural entertainment television is good for the customisation of Moroccan Dutchmen to new Dutchmen, in order to acknowledge the fact that Moroccan Dutchmen are also people with thoughts and feelings, and nothing to be scared of.

Benchiki argued some ethnic Dutchmen are actually overfriendly as they do not want to be associated with extreme-right politician Wilders. But most of the respondents came up with stories about ethnic Dutchmen who were negatively influenced by the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in the media. The women of the Al-Amal foundation argued that due to the media, employers are unwilling to give any jobs or internships to Moroccan Dutchmen.

Mohamed mentioned he thought some old ladies in his neighbourhood did not dare to go on shopping anymore, because commentators on television had said that Moroccan Dutchmen were bad and randomly beating-up people. And Azrout even mentioned he read on forums about people who really believed Muslim immigrants were trying to found an Islamic State in the Netherlands.

In the establishment of these reactions of ethnic Dutchmen to the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen, media play an important role, according to Azrout. People built their ideas on own experiences, the experiences of relatives and friends and on the media. So, the less Moroccan Dutchmen you have in your surroundings, the more important media get.

How influential Dutch media actually are, can be shown in the outcomes of the June 2010 elections as well. Azrout mentioned that due to the media extensive reporting on Moroccan Dutchmen, people will have the idea that this is an important issue, where they have to form an opinion on. The outcome of the elections proved that people on the countryside, who do not have anything to do with minority problems due to a lack of minorities in their actual neighbourhood, do think that problems around Moroccan Dutchmen are the most important topic above local issues, as for example in almost the whole province of Limburg a majority voted for the extreme-right and one-issue³² party of Wilders. This idea, of media having the power to decide where people form an opinion on, is called the ‘agenda-setting theory’, earlier discussed by Lang and Lang and Cohen in McCombs and Shaw (1972).

A very illustrative example of how strong the influence of media is, especially when there is a lack of own experiences with a certain topic, is the following. Azrout stated:

‘I have an ethnic Dutch girlfriend. She comes from a small village in Drenthe³³, called Hollandscheveld. When I met her grandmother for the first time, she just knew her granddaughter was seeing a Moroccan Dutchmen. She shook my hand and told my girlfriend: “Can you tell him...” I actually forgot what she wanted her to tell me, I was so startled. Probably she just did not think of the idea that a Moroccan Dutchman might actually speak Dutch. I can not even speak Arabic! But, it is probably just because most people over there do not have any personal contact with Moroccan Dutchmen, so everything they know comes from the media.’

³² The issue of immigration and the so-called islamisation of the Netherlands.

³³ Province of the Netherlands.

Dutch media apparently made this grandmother believe that Moroccan Dutchmen do not speak any Dutch. According to the respondents Dutch media are a strong factor in the imaging of Moroccan Dutchmen. Especially for people who do not have much own experiences with Moroccan Dutchmen. As a reaction to this, according to the respondents, too negative image, Moroccan Dutchmen are either behaving in accordance to the image, as they will however be accused of suiting the image, or they precisely do the opposite and try to compensate the negative. The respondents encountered as well different reactions on the site of the ethnic Dutchmen. Benchiki met people who were acting overfriendly, but most respondents felt a more negative output of their image among ethnic Dutchmen. In order to change this image in Dutch media, Azrout en Benchiki mentioned that a collectivisation of Moroccan Dutchmen could contribute. This and other desired changes that would lead to a more righteous image of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media according to the respondents, I will discuss in the next subsection.

6.1.4 Desired changes

In this subsection I will elaborate on the changes that are needed in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media, according to the respondents. Many different things were mentioned, regarding the way of representation, the unilateral composition of Dutch media workers and offer of multiculturalism in Dutch media.

First of all, the women of the Al-Amal foundation said they would like the subject ‘allochtonen’ to be abolished. They emphasized the Netherlands is a mixed society, full of individuals, and that the centre of attention should be around what those individuals achieve, instead of where they come from. This is in line with what another respondent said; profile individuals instead of communities, because as Devroe (2007) emphasized as well, the homogenisation of minority groups leaves little space for individual differences inside the group. She mentioned the fact that in visual media, minority members are approached as a group in over half of the cases of criminal reports. In that case, in line with a remark of the girls from the Doenja foundation, a single criminal could scapegoat a whole community.

Therefore respondents argued a better balance should be struck between positive and negative coverage. Ethnicity should no longer be mentioned every time something bad happens. Though according to Mohamed, the media will lose customers if they change in such a way that Muslims are no longer discriminated. According to him, that is the key to success in media nowadays.

That is why the respondents made a case for more Moroccan Dutchmen working in the media. Azrout argued that this is just a matter of time, as the children from the guest labourers are now finishing their studies. Their parents were low skilled labourers, who often did not speak the Dutch language and were not very prosperous. So a generation of highly educated Moroccan Dutchmen will eventually come, but it just takes some time. He emphasized that with the arrival of more Moroccan Dutchmen at the editorial offices, there will be more positive news on Moroccan Dutchmen, and Moroccan Dutchmen acting in Dutch media will not merely be asked for their opinions about ethnic-related news but about all kind of subjects, as Azrout is convinced that Dutch journalists use mostly Dutch sources and Moroccan Dutch journalists use mostly Moroccan Dutch sources.

The ‘Meiden van Halal’ emphasized their urge to change the tunnel vision of current Dutch journalists. Jihad who worked for the Amsterdam television station AT5 discovered the following about her ethnic Dutch colleagues:

‘It was a group of people who all have the same cultural and social-economical background. The kind of people who like to drink Prosecco on the terrace of Strand Zuid³⁴. When they make a report, they go at it with just one vision, because everyone agrees as they all have the same thoughts. They share the same framework of references. So I think, journalists should start looking broader than their own tunnel. And if you broadcast so much about one particular group, like Muslims or Moroccan Dutchmen, you should at least take some course on Islam for example. It is like when you want to sell a product, you do a marketing study. If you want to write about something, you should be able to place stories in the right context. To prevent that nonsense coming from a punk on the streets is taken for the common truth.’

According to Benchiki, Hilversum³⁵ is still too white. He said it is hard to find people who are open to renewal. And the enlightened souls inside this media hub that are open to change, are being opposed by more influential and conventional people. According to him it is only possible to make very Dutch multicultural television, like the Moroccan Dutch character he criticised in his column, which I will discuss in chapter eight. The fact that the NOS³⁶ has a Moroccan Dutch news reader, yields hope and pride among the respondents.

³⁴ A hip restaurant in the Southern part of Amsterdam.

³⁵ The city that houses the Mediapark where most television stations are housed.

³⁶ Nederlandse Omroep Stichting, Dutch Broadcasting Foundation.

Although Samir thought there has already been a huge increase in multicultural entertainment programmes, the ‘Meiden van Halal’ would like to see more television that fits Moroccan Dutch youngsters, like the show ‘Ab&Sal’ of Benchiki. They do not plead for ethnic television, but they see these youngsters as a target group, and therefore would be in favour of more television programmes for them specifically. They also urged for a change on the side of the consumers. Jihad emphasised that consumers have to change their demands in order to get journalists to cover more diverse stories.

In case all these desired changes would be implemented, the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media would be more righteous according to the respondents. In this section I have dealt with the thoughts of the Moroccan Dutch respondents on frames, stereotypes, the mentioning of ethnicity, the reactions to their representation and the desired changes in order to achieve a more righteous representation. In the following section I will discuss the ideas on the functioning of current Dutch media, according to the Moroccan Dutch respondents. What are their thoughts about Dutch media and what about the alternative of ethnic media?

6.2 Ideas about media

In this section I will discuss the ideas of the Moroccan Dutch respondents about the role of Dutch media in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen. I have divided this section in two subsections of which the first one will discuss the ideas present regarding the job of journalists, actors, directors, and other kind of media workers. The second subsection will be dedicated to ethnic media as an alternative for conventional Dutch media.

6.2.1 Why do Dutch media represent Moroccan Dutchmen the way they do?

In this subsection I will discuss the ideas of the Moroccan Dutch respondents about the positive and the negative points of current Dutch media workers and about Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media. The respondents felt the role of Dutch media workers is very big in the imaging of Moroccan Dutchmen. As became clear from the previous section, the respondents think that Dutch media outlines something else than the truth; Moroccan Dutchmen are presented far more often negatively in the news, than positively, petty crimes are publicized widely, suspects with light tinted skin are often appointed as ‘probably Moroccan Dutchmen’, etcetera. To conclude their overall idea in the words of one of the women from the Al-Amal foundation:

'Somehow there is always something negative sticking to Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media.'

But how can this negative imaging on behalf of the Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media be explained through acting of the media workers?

One of the first things mentioned by the Moroccan Dutch respondents was, that Dutch media workers too often talk *about* Moroccan Dutchmen, instead of *with* Moroccan Dutchmen. This is in accordance with the idea of Maneri & Ter Wal (2005) who argue that minorities often play the role of silent actors, and therefore often lack the possibility to express themselves and their opinions. This indicates that the respondents think an increase in Moroccan Dutchmen who out speak in Dutch media would contribute to a more righteous image.

In line with the previous statement, respondents claimed there are also too few Moroccan Dutchmen working in Dutch media, which indicates a lack of expertise and interest in their culture. Moreover, due to the idea of the 'white-sells approach' (Ojo 2006: 345-348) the respondents felt there is no much will to invest in innovative media forms, which would suit Moroccan Dutchmen. According to Benchiki, this is a shortcoming in their thoughts, as there is a whole 'fishpond' full of consumers, which is not targetted at all by current Dutch media. Dutch television stations are way too conservative for something innovative, according to him. The 'Meiden van Halal' agreed with Benchiki that although there is more variety among media workers, big decisions are still made by boards of conservative ethnic Dutchmen.

So the general idea among the respondents is that media covers negative stories about Moroccan Dutchmen, because it sells. But according to the 'Meiden van Halal' you can not solemnly judge Dutch media for this attitude, as their selling point will not change, unless the consumers change their demands as well. It is a trend, Dutchmen want to read negative stories about Moroccan Dutchmen. On the other side, the 'Meiden van Halal' did emphasize that they think journalists should get some additional training on the subjects they are writing about, in order to be able to place the stories in a proper context, as they are too often solemnly working out of their own point of view, which is creating a tunnel vision.

However there were as well some credits given to the acting of Dutch media workers. Most respondents liked for example the effort ethnic Dutch entertainment productions put in trying to change the current image of Moroccan Dutchmen into a more positive one.

Especially the home-situations outlined in series as ‘Dunya & Desie’ were experienced as very authentic. Furthermore the ‘Meiden van Halal’ argued a scene as the one in which the Dutch girl Desie comes to visit her Moroccan Dutch friend Dunya on her holidays in Morocco, and lies down in her bikini on the beach next to the father of Dunya, could help create understanding among ethnic Dutch citizens, that this is an uncomfortable situation.

The ethnic Dutch production of ‘Shouf Shouf!’ was mainly seen as a programme made for ethnic Dutchmen, but which was also valued by the respondents as the series enlarge the prejudices about Moroccan Dutchmen that are present in Dutch society in such a humoristic way. The women from the Al-Amal foundation complimented the ethnic Dutch producers for the accent on Moroccan Dutchmen and ethnic Dutchmen coexisting in Dutch society and the series articulating aspects from both cultures, without discriminating one or the other. According to Samir, it is the only series that succeeds in putting down a righteous image of Moroccan Dutchmen.

However Mohamed thought ‘Shouf Shouf!’ is contributing to the negative feelings around Moroccan Dutchmen. He thought Dutchmen, when watching the series, would be worried about their own Moroccan Dutch neighbours, as they might do the same bad stuff as the characters from the series. And also Benchiki did not agree on the positivism of the other respondents regarding the characters of ‘Shouf Shouf’ and other Moroccan Dutch characters in ethnic Dutch entertainment programmes, though for another reason than Mohamed. Benchiki thought those Moroccan Dutch characters in ethnic Dutch entertainment productions were not authentic at all. He thought ethnic Dutch screenwriters who write storylines for Moroccan Dutch characters are unworldly. He clarified that those exemplary Moroccan Dutch characters they produce, are probably invented to create a more positive image of Moroccan Dutchmen, but he does not think it is representative at all. The characters he produces, being a television maker himself, are more representative according to him. Benchiki did not start with these characters as an alternative to ethnic Dutch produced characters. I will discuss his productions in the next subsection on ethnic media.

Some more critics were mentioned concerning the role of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch entertainment programmes. First of all Esmaa argued there are too few Moroccan Dutchmen who host a programme or play a really big role. Next to this, Moroccan Dutchmen often play a typically Moroccan Dutch character, while there are so many different kinds of individuals among Moroccan Dutchmen, according to the respondents. This is contributing to the stereotyping of Moroccan Dutchmen. And the fact that it stands out if there is a Moroccan

Dutchmen on television at all, is not a good sign. The respondents would like to see them more often.

To conclude this subsection, the respondents both criticise and compliment the working of Dutch media. They especially accuse media workers of being too blunt in handling stories about Moroccan Dutchmen, and also being too ignorant to place the stories in the right context. The idea of media reporting negatively about Moroccan Dutchmen due to a trend is in accordance with the ‘agenda-setting theory’ and the ‘white-sells-approach’. Therefore it is important, as Jihad also mentioned, to realise that change does not merely rely on the supply side. Media consumers too have to adjust their demands in order to change the stories being broadcasted. The trend of reporting negative stories about Moroccan Dutchmen could as well be broken from the demand side, which would change the ‘white-sells approach’ into the ‘diversity-sells approach’. The respondents would also like to see more Moroccan Dutchmen working in Dutch media, as they expect that with them a more truthful image of their ethnic group will come into being.

There were also a few compliments for the media workers in Dutch entertainment. Most respondents did like the effort ethnic Dutch entertainment productions put in trying to contribute to a more positive image of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media. But still, altogether, at this moment the respondents do not feel righteously represented in present Dutch media, and blame media workers for this. In the next subsection I will shed some light on the alternative to conventional Dutch media: ethnic media.

6.2.2 Ethnic media

As an alternative to the media produced by ethnic Dutchmen, there are ethnic media which are produced by minority groups themselves. According to Ojo, the use of language in the mother tongue, the cultural expressions and the community based reports, give people a sense of belonging (Ojo 2006: 351-352). Although I can imagine ethnic media are highly valued by minority groups, I doubt its positive influence on the multicultural society. I fear that ethnic media discourage minority members to consume conventional media. And as long as the consumers are all ethnic Dutchmen, in accordance to the ‘white-sells approach’, conventional media will as well produce for ethnic Dutchmen. While if more minority members would consume conventional media, it would be interesting to change media production into a more appealing offer for them too, which on the other hand would trigger young minority professionals to start a career in journalism or entertainment television too.

I think that ethnic media do not have a very big influence on the imaging of Moroccan Dutchmen, as ethnic media are mostly consumed by the minority members themselves, in this case Moroccan Dutchmen, and they are not the ones who are negatively influenced by an unrighteous image of their minority group. But as it is an outcome of this unrighteous representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in conventional media, I will discuss the two examples of ethnic media which were created by three of the respondents, namely 'Meiden van Halal' and 'Ab & Sal'.

The three Moroccan Dutch sisters who form the 'Meiden van Halal' started their programme partly out of social engagement. Jihad did an internship at the local Amsterdam television station AT5, and there met their future manager. The sisters felt other people were incorrect in their reporting on them, on their religion and on their culture, and therefore wanted to share their own opinions regarding these topics. They wanted to show the Netherlands a different image of Moroccan Dutch women. They wanted to show that it is possible to be Islamic, emancipated, intelligent, academically literate, Moroccan and Dutch, that there is no such thing as the clash of civilisations in the Netherlands anno 2010.

Benchiki did not start his television programme out of a disagreement with Dutch media. He actually did not want to be on television at all, as he liked it better to write. But then he got a financial offer he could not refuse, and nowadays he does enjoy his television and theatre performances. He now co-hosts the series 'Ab&Sal' wherein he plays this character 'Moussie El Kandoussie' that would totally fit the stereotype 'Kutmarokkaan'. Among Moroccan Dutch youngsters, these series are very popular, according to the respondents. The women of the Al-Amal foundation that were familiar with Benchiki, thought he was ridiculous though funny. And the girls from the Doenja foundation said they had been waiting for someone like him. They felt there should be more television shows like the ones Najib Amhali³⁷ and Benchiki make. Though as always, there are also different opinions. Samir thought 'Ab&Sal' were trying too hard to be Dutch, but they were failing in doing so and Mohamed thought the character of 'Moussie El Kandoussie' was contributing to the negative image of Moroccan Dutchmen. The 'Meiden van Halal' did not like the humour of 'Ab&Sal' so much themselves, but did understand why Moroccan Dutchmen like it:

'It is not some kind of universal humour. I think they unconsciously have Moroccan Dutch youngsters as a target group. The jokes they make are very recognizable for them. A guy

³⁷ Najib Amhali is a very popular Moroccan Dutch comedian among both ethnic and Moroccan Dutchmen.

dancing with his socks up high and a cap on his head, funny. But we think: “On their way to Morocco! Boys who look awful during the trip, but will be all dressed up once they have arrived”. That kind of stuff. It is recognisable to those boys. They see themselves, they are laughing out loud!’

According to Benchiki another medium than television, something like Youtube³⁸, where you could spread Moroccan series and television, would be very successful.

The respondents did not mention any other examples of ethnic media, apart from the ones mentioned above and websites on the internet like Maroc.nl and Maghreb.nl which are very popular websites among Moroccan Dutchmen, where they share news, events, pictures, forums, etc. It seems like ethnic media in the form of television and newspapers do not play an important role in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen, as the respondents did not mention any other examples of ethnic media themselves. I can not substantiate my hypothesis that media is normally exclusively or at least mainly consumed by minorities themselves, as I did not have any ethnic Dutch respondents whom I asked if they consumed any non-ethnic Dutch media and if this consumption did influence their ideas about Moroccan Dutchmen. Though, I think it is obvious conventional Dutch media have a much stronger influence on the imagine. In the following chapter I will discuss the ideas present in conventional Dutch media about their role in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen.

³⁸ A video-sharing website, where you can upload, share and view video's for free.

7. Ideas in Dutch media concerning the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen

When I opened on Monday morning my inbox I saw I had a reply from the journalist I wanted to interview. She works for a so-called Dutch quality newspaper and seemed very enthusiastic. She told me to keep in contact until after the elections, as she thought the research I was carrying out was very interesting. However, when I tried to settle a date for the interview, she instantly pulled back her invitation. I responded by asking her for before the reasons of this sudden change mind, assuring her, I just wanted to ask her some questions regarding her ideas on the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media, without accusing her of anything. She responded with the following email:

'Dear Mirte,

I am just a reporter who reports upon what is happening. My opinions do not matter. I do not have a role in the representation process of Moroccan Dutchmen in the media. I do not know what I could be accused of. I just write articles. In these you can read what I have to say.

Greetings X'

Fortunately I found other people more willing to talk to me. In this second empirical chapter I will discuss the ideas of the second research population, consisting of people working in Dutch media. I will discuss their ideas regarding a numbers of topics. In the first section I will discuss the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media through the eyes of the media workers. The second section is dedicated to the idea of the image of the imaging, an idea presented to me by Paul Scheffer.

7.1 Representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media

In this section I deal with the ideas of the media workers regarding the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media. In different subsections I will discuss the following topics: frames and stereotypes, the mentioning of ethnicity, the responsibility of news media workers and the responsibility of the entertainment television.

7.1.1 Frames and Stereotypes

This subsection is dedicated to the ideas of the media workers regarding the use of frames and stereotypes.

All interviewees said they were familiar with the frames Fleras presented. Pels, who works for 'Trouw', a Dutch quality newspaper, confessed she uses frames a lot. She argues it is a characteristic of journalism, as consumers need to be able to position the story. According to her, journalists always use frames, also for Catholics, Frisians, etcetera. Yet she did not know any stereotypes of Dutchmen that she uses in her daily work. Her image of ethnic Dutchmen is much more diffuse, than her image of Moroccan Dutchmen. Simplified, she said she sees Moroccan Dutchmen as the empowered, highly educated girls, the low educated 'Kutmarokkanen' or as someone like Aboutaleb.³⁹ Pels said journalists could be blamed for this. I presented her with one of her articles which contains a beautiful stereotype of first generation Moroccan Dutch women: 'Benmoussa, just 1 meter 45 high, in appearance is not different from her first generation Moroccan contemporaries: headscarf, floral dress.' Pels exemplified:

'She was so exceptionally emancipated, while she looked like someone whom you normally just pass by without noticing. But maybe I should have realised that there are plenty of 'headscarf-floral-dresses' who have an interesting story. That they might always be much more interesting than I presumed. I should wonder: "How often did I actually speak to such a woman?" I can see the pitfall now.'

Pels is actually very active in trying to prevent herself from generalised writing or using simplified stereotypes. She emphasized that she tries to write more about 'allochtonen' on non-'allochtonen' topics. She pleaded for more Moroccan Dutchmen and other new Dutchmen in the editorial offices. According to her, new Dutchmen have to go through the emancipating process, like women did as well. They are a new stream and have to invent their own situation, while being aware of the danger of becoming an excuse-'allochtoon'.

Scheffer, the author of among others 'Het Multiculturele Drama', argued that there is a positive change going on in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media. According to him there are much more Moroccan Dutchmen in the media, both working and being asked for their opinions. He pleaded for an abolishment of the distinction between

³⁹ First generation Moroccan Dutch immigrant, who is now the mayor of Rotterdam.

‘allochtonen’ and ‘autochtonen’⁴⁰, as he wonders how long we keep account of the migration history of parents or grandparents of people. According to Scheffer it would be more convenient to emphasize the communal instead of the differences. He thinks, it is only a matter of time before minorities in Dutch media become experts on other than minority-related subjects.

The frames journalists use, are used because of ignorance. Journalists should broaden their knowledge, as Scheffer criticises diversity policies which stimulate people with a certain ethnic background, to write exclusively about ethnicity-related subjects. He thinks this encourages stereotyping and stigmatising. He concluded to say that journalists have to see through the groups, as every individual is always more interesting than the smallest common denominator of the group to which they belong.

In the visual media the trend seemed to be skewed towards creating a positive image of Moroccan Dutchmen, but without creating a ‘happy-ever-after-fairytale’. Vallenduuk, who is a former⁴¹ scriptwriter of ‘ONM’, a Dutch soap opera, claimed that he and his colleagues were trying to avoid writing into familiar frames. He stated that ‘ONM’ differs from other Dutch soap operas through the choice for specific societal issues and due to the fact that it takes place in the real city of Amsterdam, instead of a fictive city. ‘ONM’ had just one Moroccan Dutch character. This character, called Yousef, according to Vallenduuk started as a typical example of a ‘Kutmarokkaan’, who fitted the clichés. However, through interpretation the scriptwriters tried to show where the clichés were coming from, and by doing so they tried to transcend above these clichés. In Vallenduuk’s words:

‘We tried to show that the ‘Kutmarokkaan’ is just the top of the iceberg. We wanted to show not solemnly this little top, but the whole iceberg underneath it, as well.’

Beerends, head of drama for the NPS, a public broadcasting⁴² organisation emphasizing their open, independent, licentious, impartial and objective character, said that in the production of ‘Dunya & Desie’ they wanted to show a different picture than the one portrayed in the newspapers. The NPS did not want to follow the image of a pathetic or evil group of people, but wanted to show the humour and energy of this group. The ethnic Dutch members of the

⁴⁰ The Dutch translation for ethnic Dutchmen.

⁴¹ Arnout Vallenduuk had just started to look for new jobs, as ‘ONM’ was finishing the recordings of the last episodes, that were obviously already written.

⁴² Publieke Omroep. Public broadcastings make programmes with a societal relevance, in stead of a commercial goal, and are funded partly by the Dutch government.

test panel that criticised the series during the production process, said they were surprised to see that a Moroccan Dutch family could function so well, that they were having fun together, that it was cosy. And that the mother of the Moroccan Dutch protagonist Dunya was wearing sexy lingerie instead of being beaten-up by her husband. This indicates some vivid stereotypes in Dutch society upon Moroccan Dutchmen. The ethnic Dutch members of the test panel felt they were unconsciously influenced by Dutch media.

According to Beerends' colleague Derksen, head of drama for the NCRV (another public broadcasting focussed on socially responsible programmes from their core promise: 'Inspire to coexist') and responsible for the characters of 'SpangaS'⁴³, severely criticised by Benchiki, it is important to show another image of Moroccan Dutchmen. An image countering the currently prevailing views in Dutch media. She did not create 'Knuffelmarokkanen' in her productions. She chose to let them struggle with more than the typical Moroccan Dutch problems. She did give her characters ethnic specific thoughts, but she also wanted to show the multitude of characters from the Moroccan Dutch group, in order to break loose from the public stereotypes. She hoped that these characters will serve as positive role models for the target group, children between nine and twelve years old. In order to achieve this, she wanted to break with the 'invisible frame' of Fleras (2001: 318), by presenting these usually invisible Moroccan Dutchmen. Derksen felt this is important because, the greater and better part of the Moroccan Dutchmen are still invisible in most entertainment television. She recognised two stereotypes also mentioned by d'Haenens (1996, in: Haghebaert 2005: 16) in Dutch society, the stereotype of a (semi) criminal and the stereotype of a victim. She wanted to break with these stereotypes by showing that there are also different Moroccan Dutchmen, that 'the' Moroccan Dutchmen does not exist. She also emphasized the importance of spreading this message especially to children. Younger siblings of 'Kutmarokkanen' can be introduced to another role model and ethnic Dutch children can be introduced to a much more positive image of Moroccan Dutchmen than the image they get out of conventional Dutch media, The latter is especially important to native Dutch children who have no minority members in their lives.

To conclude, it is obvious the interviewees were aware of the stereotypes of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch society. They especially mentioned the stereotypes 'Kutmarokkanen', 'suppressed women' and '(semi) criminals'. The respondents from the writing press all said they try to present an objective image and stay clear of writing in specific frames or with use

⁴³ Dutch soap opera for children between the ages of nine to twelve years old, with a focus on multiculturalism.

of stereotypes. Yet, as news tends to be negative, their stories are often negative too. This automatically leads to more negative stories about Moroccan Dutchmen in the newspapers than positive stories. That is, in case ethnicity is mentioned at all, on which I will elaborate in the next subsection. To balance this negative/positive image of Moroccan Dutchmen in the newspapers, some respondents increase their effort to get Moroccan Dutchmen in the news more positively. Examples include incorporating them in non-specific Moroccan Dutch subjects, in order to break with public stereotypes and the 'invisible' frame described by Fleras. Others just try not to exclude them from those subjects.

In entertainment television of the public broadcastings there seems to be an obvious trend to improve the image of Moroccan Dutchmen to a more positive one. They do this in different ways. One is by trying to clarify Moroccan Dutch culture and patterns through realistic situations. Another way is to hide a positive message in entertaining television and the last one was by using positive or even exemplary role models. All this in order to break with the negative frames and stereotypes and offer an alternative to the image presented in the news media. In the next subsection I will discuss the ideas of the respondents regarding the mentioning of ethnicity.

7.1.2 Ethnicity out loud

In this subsection I will discuss the ideas among the media workers regarding the explicit mentioning of ethnicity of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media. According to Dorien Pels, journalist for 'Trouw', in the nineties the city of Amsterdam started explicitly mentioning the troublemakers as Moroccan Dutch youngsters. Two decennia later, this designation has led me to carry out this research regarding the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media.

Pels mentioned that back in the nineties journalists often used the term 'Moroccans' in their headlines, as it was innovative at that moment. But she used to have long discussions with her Ethiopian Dutch colleague, who has always been in favour of the term 'Moroccan Dutchmen'. Nowadays Pels only mentions ethnicity in cases where it matters. A good example would be that when she writes an article about chances on the labour market, she will mention ethnicity, as ethnicity does matter here, as was evidenced earlier on in this thesis. However when Pels interviews a fashion stylist about what to wear to the office, she prefers not to mention ethnicity. Yet she does like to subtly reveal the background of her interviewee with a name or even better by adding a picture.

John Maes, journalist for 'Spits' said he just uses the word 'Moroccans' in his headlines when it is relevant, with which he meant that it catches the main theme of the article. On the other side, he said that headlines are often blunt and never cover the load of an article, and that the term 'Moroccans' is just an easier fit in the small space a headline may fill, than 'disadvantaged youngsters from Amsterdam-West'.

Pels argued it is very good to mention ethnicity in case of specific problems with specific (ethnic) groups. She felt the trouble Moroccan Dutch youngsters cause, is a very big societal problem in the Netherlands, and therefore needs to be addressed. She did agree though on clarifying the term 'Moroccans' to 'second generation Moroccan Dutch male youngsters, living in Amsterdam-West', as she emphasized it is not a racial problem, but a severe socio-economical problem. She argued mentioning ethnicity in criminal reports is just necessary in case it actually matters. For example, when Klaas Steen from Appelscha steals a car, it is not necessary to mention he is an ethnic Dutchmen, as it does not clarify his behaviour. But in case of a Kurdistan Iraqi father who killed two of his kids and committed suicide⁴⁴, it would matter to mention ethnicity, according to Pels, because his ethnicity and his history of suffering in war, might explain his actions.

Scheffer agreed with Pels, that in case of a specific problem in a specific (ethnic) group, it would be useful to acknowledge the problem. But he emphasized that the criticism needs to be just and the aim has have to be solution oriented. Scheffer thought that in terms of prevention, it is tremendously important to think about solutions. He therefore would like to see the search for solutions in the media. The phase of just mentioning that there are problems, has passed by now. It is time, according to Scheffer, to explain in the media, what goes wrong, why things go wrong, and how we can solve this. Scheffer reminded me that he was one of the first to openly mention there were societal problems with Dutch immigrants in his article 'Het Multiculturele Drama'. But this article was published ten years ago. Therefore he really urged to think in a more constructive way how to solve these problems.

Pels agreed with Scheffer that time has come to solve the problems. According to her, there has already been a major shift in language use in Dutch media. The overreaction in the nineties of using 'Moroccans' wherever possible, has faded away to a more nuanced use of language. She sees a tremendous progress in solving the problems of integration, which was set into motion among others through the use of more specific terms in Dutch media as 'disadvantaged second generation Moroccan Dutch youngsters from Amsterdam-West' in

⁴⁴ Case of a family drama in Zierikzee, 6 March 2010.

stead of ‘Moroccans’. In contrast Maes had a contradictive view. He felt like the taboo on mentioning ethnicity was much bigger in the past, due to the after pains of the Second World War, and journalists nowadays are much more direct in mentioning ethnicity. This could indicate a difference between the so-called quality papers like ‘Trouw’, which have an emphasis on the interpretation of their reports, and the free newspapers like ‘Spits’, that tend to be more popular. However I can not substantiate this, as I have gathered too little information on this specific topic to make a valid statement here.

To conclude, language use in Dutch media is an important factor in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen, as a more nuanced language use could contribute to a better interpretation of the situation of Moroccan Dutchmen. This clarification can contribute to a more righteous image of Moroccan Dutchmen. In case ethnicity is mentioned in relation to negative news, without any interpretation, it contributes to a purely negative image of Moroccan Dutchmen. The highlighting of ethnicity should therefore always be just and solution-oriented. In the next two subsections I will discuss the responsibilities media workers have regarding the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen. The first subsection will be dedicated to the news media workers, with a focus on newspaper journalists. The second subsection will be dedicated to the people working in the television entertainment.

7.1.3 Responsibilities of news media workers

In this subsection I will discuss the ideas of the respondents who work in news media. The focus is on newspapers, as most respondents are working in written press. The following subjects are addressed : general ideas regarding the role of news media in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen, work methods of the media, individual work methods and ideas regarding non-ethnic Dutch journalists.

All respondents agree that news media have a huge role in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen. People form their views based on their own experiences with Moroccan Dutchmen (which is difficult for people without contact with Moroccan Dutchmen in daily life) and through hear-say, where media are usually one of the main sources.

In the past decades, it would have been correct to accuse Dutch media of contributing to a negative image of Moroccan Dutchmen, according to Pels. However she felt media have acknowledged this flaw and have tried to do something about it. According to Scheffer this attempt has been successful, as he said he still has faith in the practices of Dutch journalists. Still he felt that there is an exceptional amount of attention to immigration related news,

compared to other societal issues. This might be explained by the idea of Vliegthart and Boomgaarden (2007) that the successes of public actors like Pim Fortuyn, Rita Verdonk and Geert Wilders⁴⁵, have influenced media attention towards immigration and integration of minorities, by putting these subjects high on their priority lists.

Scheffer argued media live by the grace of generalisation. This generalisation can appear in a whim, with only a few incidents already being explained as a kind of pattern or norm. Although these single incidents seem meaningless by themselves, media use them to illustrate the more principle questions behind it. This often leads to an exaggeration of the problem. Scheffer stated that on the one hand, this is how democracy works; how questions are addressed, and how society faces its own flaws and shortcomings. On the other hand, he added that these exaggerations are totally unacceptable, because the fact that the credibility of both television and newspapers is totally dependent on being conscientious and strictly follow the rules of truthfulness.

Scheffer continued he had expected media would get tired of the subject of integration of minorities, but until today media are still dealing with the subject and do not seem to make a lot of progress in clarifying what is happening. Scheffer explained this ongoing media attention to the subject through the commercialisation of Dutch media. There are so many television channels and newspapers that compete with each other, and this competition almost always leads to seduction of the superlative degree: the harder the stories, the better they sell. Scheffer contributed that this consumerism, which is too much focussed on the potential consumer, is bad for the conscientiousness of Dutch media.

His last point of criticism was that the border between factual news and opinion is fading in newspapers. As an example he mentioned an opening of the 'NRC'⁴⁶ which said: 'Cohen⁴⁷, conciliator in an extreme period'. He himself would have preferred a more factual headline, like 'Cohen succeeds Bos'⁴⁸.

All the criticism aside, the media the respondents work for, do claim truthfulness is one of their most important aims. According to Maes, 'Spits' tries to report harsh news and be as up-to-date as possible. Regarding the creation of a more positive image of Moroccan Dutchmen by mentioning them in het news as experts on non-minority subjects, Maes said

⁴⁵ Three (extreme) right Dutch politicians who dedicated much attention in their political programmes to problems around immigration and integration, especially of Muslims.

⁴⁶ One of the so called Dutch quality papers.

⁴⁷ New leader of the PvdA, Partij van de Arbeid, Dutch political labour party.

⁴⁸ Former leader of the PvdA.

that 'Spits' does not want to create news, but also does not want to exclude people from the news, or in other words, that 'Spits' does not want to positively discriminate, but tries to be objective.

Pels argued that the image of Moroccan Dutchmen differs between the different newspapers, especially when a so called quality paper like 'Trouw' is being compared to a more popular newspaper like 'De Telegraaf'. Pels emphasized that quality papers are searching for the interpretation of the stories they report, instead of a simplification that is often seen in papers like 'De Telegraaf'. Therefore minorities probably feel more at ease with their representation in quality papers. On the other hand, Pels admits that 'Trouw' is written for an audience of mostly ethnic Dutch, Protestant Christian readers, which makes the content less interesting to minorities. And as many minorities are using new media, like the internet and free newspapers like 'Spits', minorities are also not an interesting target group for the publisher of the newspaper. This idea is in accordance with the 'white-sells approach' of Ojo (2006: 345-348).

Finally, Pels mentioned that although she feels the search for clarification behind the stories in quality papers is a positive fact, newspapers should be careful for the multicultural pitfall, not to be non-critical at all. She feels 'Trouw' has been too non-critical in the past.

When it comes to their own work methods, all respondents try to be as just as possible. Maes said he tries to look at a story from all possible viewpoints. He furthermore tries to be as neutral and correct as possible. Pels mentioned she is very conscious when it comes to the representation of minorities. She claimed she likes to write about minorities in a non-minority-related subject. In case of a story on Moroccan Dutchmen both Maes and Pels ask for advice from colleagues who know more about Moroccan Dutchmen or Islam than they do. Furthermore they call interest organisations like the FORUM⁴⁹ for example and visit mosques to ask for advice or reactions.

Pels said she also makes use of quotes in order to more righteously represent Moroccan Dutchmen. By doing so, she prevents herself from faulty interpreting the words of her interviewee and it ensures she writes not just *about* Moroccan Dutchmen, but *with* Moroccan Dutchmen.

In contrast there was also one respondent who admitted he used a slightly suggestive headline, which was not totally objective, and maybe even a bit insulting, in order to trigger

⁴⁹ FORUM is an independent knowledge centre on multiculturalism.

the attention of the readers. He told me that in line with the opinions of the other respondents, he got criticised by his colleagues too.

In the introduction of this chapter I quoted an email written by a journalist of a Dutch quality newspaper, who explained she thought her writings and opinions did not have any influence on the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen. Maes and Pels did not experience their own roles as too influential in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen. Maes said he just feels part of a greater entity and Pels said she feels her writings are not directly influencing the thoughts of other people, because she is part of a development. She felt what she writes it is kind of predictable. However she obviously supported her writings, and she takes responsibility for her writings. Pels felt she does a good job regarding the subject of representation of minorities. Although she admitted she has made mistakes like the example that was given in the subsection on frames and stereotypes, regarding her generalisation of first generation Moroccan Dutch women, she claimed she is extra alert not to generalise. She said signalling problems in society, writing about them and clarifying them, are important tasks of journalists.

Scheffer with whom I talked about the outcomes of his article ‘Het Multiculturele Drama’ published in 2000, told me there have been different reactions to his article. Some very positive reactions, for example from minority members who claim they build their political careers on base of the article. Some negative reactions of people who thought it was a discriminating and stigmatising article. Scheffer explained he wrote the article because he feared distances were becoming too big in Dutch society. He was not afraid that the minorities interfered too much in Dutch society, but too little. Regarding these integration processes, Scheffer sees a pattern, which is also recognisable in Dutch media. The pattern starts with avoidance, which is followed by conflict and ends with accommodation. Avoidance is usually referred to as ‘tolerance’ in the Netherlands. In the media its impact is reflected by the total invisibility of the migrants. Then the conflict phase follows, which is not as bad as it sounds, according to Scheffer, as it shows people do care about each other. According to Scheffer it is not bad that media write about the problems that arise in this stage, as there will be a moment of resonance from another point of view, like the pamphlet⁵⁰ of Geert Mak after the murder on Theo van Gogh. The last stage is the one of accommodation. Scheffer illustrated this with a story of a Surinamer who raised his voice during one of Scheffer his speeches, shouting: ‘*And*

⁵⁰ This pamphlet ‘Gedoemd tot kwetsbaarheid’, ‘Doomed to vulnerability’, was a statement against the trade in fear for migrants and their cultures by a well-know Dutch writer.

why are we never in the media anymore?’ Surinamers have become Dutch citizens, and once you have become Dutch, special media attention fades away.

According to Pels this process of integration can be accelerated if more minority-members would work as journalists. She compared the situation of Dutch minorities with the situation of women x years ago. She remembered how she always had to be very strict on how women were portrayed, as they were for example often called by their first name instead of their last name which was usual for men, and often external characteristics were mentioned. Pels argued that minorities have to go through the same emancipation process and therefore need to be on the editorial floors of Dutch media.

Pels furthermore said that although it is not necessary, minority-members usually can write beautiful stories about their minority. However it can also be very difficult and one has to be careful not to become the “excuse-allochtoon”, as mentioned earlier. What I also mentioned in the same subsection was that Scheffer felt it is very stigmatising if minorities are specifically writing on their own minority. He strongly urged for all journalists to write about all subjects. Moreover he emphasized that it would be such a shame to let all the minority talent walk along. Pels contributed to this that she thinks that due to financial prospects and the fact that you might have to invest years of unpaid internships, minorities are just not that interested in a job as a journalist. Besides that, she argued it is a difficult job due to the language level and a lot of unwritten rules. This might be the reason that at the moment of the interview there were just a few minority journalists working at ‘Trouw’, of whom not a single had the Moroccan Dutch ethnicity.

Scheffer in his function as editor of the Dutch political television programme ‘Buitenhof’ tried to invite more minority experts on non-minority-related subjects, but found that there was little interest. This shows Dutch media maintain the ‘invisible’ frame by preventing Moroccan Dutch experts to appear on television.

To conclude, the news media workers did have the feeling that news media plays a big role in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen, though they experienced their own roles as very small. They furthermore said they tried to stay clear of generalisation by being truthful, objective, via the use of quotes, asking for advice from colleagues and interest organisations in case of writing about minority cultures the respondents were not very familiar with, by using more interpretative language and by breaking the ‘invisible’ frame by showing more Moroccan Dutchmen in non-minority related topics. In order to create a more righteous image, media should be less influenced by commercialisation, according to Scheffer, as this

competition leads to idea of “the harder the stories, the better they sell”. Lastly, they should as well be less influenced by consumerism, according to Scheffer, as media should not produce what potential consumers would like to consume, but what media think is important to share. In the next subsection I will discuss the responsibility of the entertainment programmes on television in the following subsection.

7.1.4 Responsibilities of the entertainment media workers

In this subsection I will discuss the responsibilities of the entertainment media workers. I will discuss the following topics: general ideas about the role of the entertainment television in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen and the work methods of the different media the respondents work for.

All respondents thought the role of their own medium in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen was quite small. Vallenduuk who worked as scriptwriter for the soap opera ‘ONM’ of BNN⁵¹ said that he felt ‘ONM’ could contribute to a more positive image of Moroccan Dutchmen only if the image they were producing would match the images of other media and the experiences of real life. Beerends, who was editor for the series ‘Dunya & Desie’, contributed that a change into a more positive image of the Moroccan Dutchmen, does not go fast. She argued that the image of Dutch society will slowly change into a more true image that shows all different ethnicities of society, among others through a more diverse image in entertainment programmes. Derksen, who is editor for the soap opera ‘SpangaS’, thought that her broadcasting foundation NCRV is just a very small opposing voice in a very big media world which mainly broadcasts a much more negative image of Moroccan Dutchmen. She said she feels like the majority of Dutch media is not contributing to a more righteous image of Moroccan Dutchmen at all, and that in most other drama and entertainment television Moroccan Dutchmen are absent, which according to Derksen is also a message. She did mention though, that due to the fact that ‘SpangaS’ is a daily soap opera for children, she thinks the positive effect on the image of minorities will be bigger than a television series for adults, as children are easier to influence, not yet having developed strong ideas or prejudices. Vallenduuk did not agree with Derksen that the majority of Dutch media are not contributing to a more righteous image of Moroccan Dutchmen. He felt there are no programmes on television that polarise. The overall attempt is, according to him, to foster understanding.

⁵¹ Barts News Network, broadcasting foundation, founded in 1998, makes innovative radio and television, especially for young people.

Whoever is right when it comes to the signals other television programmes spread, it is certain that the programmes the respondents work(ed) for, have the best intentions in changing the image of Moroccan Dutchmen into a more positive one. Public broadcasting BNN wanted to use a new viewpoint by showing how other cultures can also enrich one's own culture. Furthermore they opposed strongly to the sectarian atmosphere, which was present in Dutch drama until five years ago. In this atmosphere solely stories on Muslim girls who had to struggle to free themselves from the dreadful life of being a restricted Muslim woman were broadcasted, according to Vallenduuk. BNN wanted to highlight certain problems Moroccan Dutchmen have to deal with in Dutch society, but understanding was the desired outcome. BNN did not want to produce unrealistically positive stories, they urged to just tell the stories without any judgements and from different points of view.

For the storylines of the Moroccan Dutch character, they carried out research via their own network (among others non-ethnic Dutch scriptwriters and Moroccan Dutch actors) and via interest organisations, in order to authentically represent Moroccan Dutch habits, weddings, religious expressions, and so on. Furthermore, BNN chose the real city of Amsterdam as decor, opposed to the other Dutch soap operas that play in fictive towns. BNN felt it was important to produce recognisable storylines, in a recognisable society and a recognisable city to enlarge the authenticity and therefore the success of the soap opera.

This recognisability and actuality is an important issue to the public broadcasting NPS as well. The NPS has been one of the first broadcastings that had multiculturalism as a spearhead. Beerends stated:

'It is a task, a natural habit for us.'

The NPS tries to fulfil this task by being up-to-date and by spreading a righteous image of Dutch society in their programmes. They try to equalise the proportion of minority members who act or feature in their productions to the proportion of minority members in Dutch society. Thereby those minority members obviously do not have to act like a stereotype of their own ethnicity. Derksen mentioned the public broadcasting NCRV is also trying to do this. Concerning the image of minorities, Beerends emphasized the NPS opposes to the conventional image of minorities having problems in Dutch society, by broadcasting another, much more positive image.

Derksen claimed the NCRV has special attention for multiculturalism too. She pointed out that the policy on multiculturalism in all the public broadcastings comes from a

higher level, as the NPO⁵² has a performance contract with the Dutch government. She alluded to a single sentence in this contract: *'In five years from now, the representation of women and 'allochtonen' on the visually defining television channels will be improved'* (Publieke Omroep 2010).

She continued by mentioning that the agreement is a bit vague. The different public broadcastings have to rapport to the visitation commissions, but how to measure the quality of diversity? Is it the number of minority members that are visible on television, the way they are portrayed or is it the number of minority members who work behind the scenes, as editors and managers? Derksen sighted:

'It looks like the Babylonian confusion of tongues. It really is an endless discussion in Dutch media.'

As the exact desired improvements of diversity in the public broadcastings gathered in the NPO are not totally clear, all respondents had their own ideas about how to deal with it. Derksen, who is responsible for the children's soap opera 'SpangaS', chose for a positive image of multiculturalism. She chose specifically to show positive or even exemplary role models instead of the negative clichés that already existed in Dutch media. Derksen did try to shape the characters in accordance with their cultural backgrounds, and she emphasised the difficulties of living in two different cultures form part of the storylines. To achieve this, interest organisations and individuals from minority groups are consulted. In the end, consistent with the NCRV-slogan *'Together on the world'*, all youngsters get along with each other in the series, regardless of their ethnical backgrounds. The message of 'SpangaS' works both for ethnic Dutch children, as well as for minority children, according to Derksen. 'SpangaS' shows how easy it is to get along with children from other ethnicities, that those 'other' children are just like themselves, and secondly the children get to know a little more about the different cultures visible in 'SpangaS'. For the younger siblings of 'Kutmarokkanen', 'SpangaS' supplies other role models to live up to.

According to Derksen, one of the research results coming from an exchange project of the NCRV with the University of Amsterdam, is that these positive role models mentioned above, have a stronger output than the negative clichés that are widespread in Dutch media. In

⁵² Nederlandse Publieke Omroep, Dutch Public Broadcasting. Forms management on the base of the media law and decides over the strategy and programming in cooperation with the different broadcastings.

this exchange project, the NCRV delivers movie scenes which are used to open up group discussions in the research groups, while the University of Amsterdam in return delivers their research results on the formation of citizenship and the acceptance of certain subjects shown in the scenes and the desired improvements. The success of positive role models is in accordance with the feelings of the ‘SpangaS’ actors coming from minority groups. To them, their characters can not be close enough to model-integration.

According to Beerends herself, the desired outcome of the series of ‘Dunya & Desie’, which she was responsible for, was quite ambitious. She wanted to make a cool series in the first place, with an important underlying message about the positive outcomes of multicultural society. But she intentionally did not want to make ‘good television’. According to Beerends, looking back, the ambitious plan succeeded. Already after the precursor of the series, schools and therapists working with Moroccan Dutch clients, were calling and asking when the series would be continued. When in the end, the series of ‘Dunya & Desie’ was brought to life, the series was very popular, and not just with the higher educated, left wing public. Beerends recalled she was very content with the positive reviews in ‘De Telegraaf’, which indicated the success among a group of people which is usually confronted with a quite negative representation of Moroccan Dutchmen.

In order to create a righteous image, try-out-panels were organised before the end versions were ‘locked’ as this is called in television language. In these panels, both ethnic Dutch and non-ethnic Dutch people were seated, to test their ideas and reactions to the series. Besides this, the storylines that had something to do with Moroccan culture were always checked with the Moroccan Dutch protagonist, as she was part of the research team as well. In case the Moroccan Dutch actors said ‘*Sorry, but things really do not work like this in our culture*’, the script was, where possible, adapted to a more authentic situation.

Beerends noticed other (non public) broadcastings recently showed interest in multiculturalism too, though according to her they are often just interested in a certain image they would like to exploit. Beerends quoted a rapper, called Negative, talking about ‘Flow’, a hip-hop programme of the NPS in which 80% of the participants is part of a minority group:

‘I am so happy! Finally there is a programme that is really about us. It is so difficult not to “sell off your ass”.’

Beerends exemplified that other broadcastings often show just a stereotype version of a minority-member. In the case of Negative, a Surinam Dutchmen, his love for poetry would

probably not be highlighted by those other broadcastings, as they just like to show the stereotype of a 'sexy Surinamer'.

From this subsection on the responsibility of entertainment television, it became clear that the public broadcastings try their best to serve the goals of the performance contract they signed with the Dutch government. They do this in different ways though. BNN tried with 'ONM' via interpretation to show different points of view regarding the actions of their Moroccan Dutch character Yousef. Beerends with the series of 'Dunya & Desie' tried to make good television, with a hidden message inside about the value of multiculturalism. Derksen chose to show exemplary Moroccan Dutch characters in 'SpangaS' in order to supply more positive role models for Moroccan Dutch youth and to bend the present image of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media to a more positive one. Because she argued there is not one designated 'true' Moroccan Dutchmen, but there are many different types of Moroccan Dutchmen, and according to Derksen those other Moroccan Dutchmen should be more visible in Dutch media.

Scheffer did not agree with the idea that conventional Dutch media represent Moroccan Dutchmen too negatively. In the following paragraph I will discuss his idea on the image of the imaging.

7.2 The image of the imaging

The idea of the image of the imaging was presented to me by Paul Scheffer. I dedicate this paragraph to his idea, as I feel it is an interesting idea and above that it enabled me to look at this research topic from a different point of view.

Scheffer argued there is a lot of nonsense claimed about the way in which Dutch media writes about Moroccan Dutch migrants and their children, as Dutch media would be all too negative about Moroccan Dutchmen. Scheffer admitted that in case 'De Telegraaf' writes about Moroccan Dutch youngster in Gouda, it is a negative image that is being sketched. Or when 'de Volkskrant' opened with the story of a couple that has been scared away from their neighbourhood by Moroccan Dutch youngsters, that too corresponded to this negative image. But those examples were exceptions, which have in no way become a standard in Dutch media, according to Scheffer. Therefore he analysed a wrong image of the imaging of Moroccan Dutchmen (or minorities in general) in Dutch media. Scheffer pointed at the load of positive articles on Moroccan Dutchmen, interviews with successful businessmen, interviews

with Aboutaleb, interviews with Markouch⁵³, etcetera. Compared to ten years ago, there has been a tremendous increase of minority members working or acting in Dutch media, according to him. Furthermore he mentioned, almost all newspaper have a columnist of non-ethnic Dutch decent. According to him, Dutch media nowadays is really diverse, and there are many articles that counterbalance a unilateral image. Even after the murder on Theo van Gogh, Scheffer continued his plea, while one would expect that the news coverage would be very negative on Moroccan Dutchmen in those days, the opposite occurred. Journalists paid a lot of attention to the subordination and discrimination of Moroccan Dutch youngsters and many Moroccan Dutchmen were asked about their opinions and their clarifications for this radicalisation.

Scheffer went on by discussing the contradictions which are present in nowadays Netherlands; a country where Wilders can have a lot of followers on the one hand, while the mayor of Rotterdam is a first generation Moroccan Dutch immigrant on the other hand. A lot of different opinions are reflected in Dutch media and according to Scheffer they for sure do not reflect just one single image of minorities in Dutch society. Therefore he discovered an image of the imaging on minorities which is untrue and inaccurate. The same exaggerations are used as in the image of Moroccan Dutchmen. Scheffer pointed out that it is weird to be judicial on stigmatisation based on uncertain generalisation, if you yourself do not hesitate just a bit to place another generalisation against it. Like 'the' Moroccan Dutchmen does not exist, 'the' media also do not exist. Of course some media do fit their generalisation, like some Dutchmen fit their generalisation too. And although Scheffer had some critics on Dutch media, like he felt their aim to clarify what is happening, is weak and their discussion on minorities and integration seems to be stuck, he did not feel Moroccan Dutchmen are permanently stigmatised.

The idea of the image of the imaging was not a widely shared idea among the other respondents in this research. However it must be said that this idea was presented to me in the later stage of this research and therefore could not be discussed with all respondents. I think it would be very interesting for a subsequent research to present this idea to both Moroccan Dutchmen and media workers and discuss their opinions about this, as it opposes the main ideas present among the Moroccan Dutch respondents. The ideas of the other respondents working in the media, are a bit closer to the idea of the image of the imaging, but still differ, as most respondents do actively try to bend the negative image of Moroccan Dutchmen into a

⁵³ Political leader of the PvdA in Amsterdam-West.

more righteous one. I would recommend a follow-up research on this topic, as I think this would yield very interesting findings.

In the next chapter I will show how opinions about how to represent Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch entertainment programmes, can differ.

8. Benchiki's criticism on the Moroccan Dutch character Nassim

In this chapter I will discuss an excellent example of how ideas upon representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media can differ between ethnic Dutch entertainment producers and Moroccan Dutch entertainment producers and between random Moroccan Dutchmen as well. In the first section I will incorporate a column written by Salaheddine Benchiki wherein he criticises one of the Moroccan Dutch characters in 'SpangaS'. However I recommend Dutch readers to read the original Dutch text, which can be found in the appendix. After this I will dedicate a short section to discuss some of the reactions on his column and the last section presents the response of Derksen, head of drama at the NCRV and therefore responsible for the characters of 'SpangaS'.

8.1 The column of Salaheddine Bechiki

The SpangaS Moroccan

My small nephews and nieces regularly watch a very strange Dutch youth series called SpangaS. When I'm at their place, around dinnertime, gently positioned on the 'sedari'⁵⁴, I can't escape from picking up on the moving images in the background. I haven't got the faintest idea of what the series is about, but every time I see a Moroccan prance through the screen. His name in the story is Nassim is what I've learned. When I see this kid, I get curious to know what he's doing, as a fellow Moroccan.

The kid plays a very weird character. He plays a type of Moroccan I've never met in my whole life. I've seen a lot of Moroccans, but this is surreal. He plays the ideal, perfect, happy, perfectly integrated, lively, spontaneous Moroccan, who so happily joins the Dutch in their actions that it features towards bizarre television. Truly incredible. An example even to Ali B.

What I've seen of the character is so horribly fake. This perfect kid also has the weirdest friends in the series. While in reality a Moroccan would usually hang-out with other Moroccans, he coolly hangs-out with various types of Dutchmen. Nothing and nobody is

⁵⁴ Moroccan couch.

beyond him. Preppy kids, skaters, alternatives and even social outcasts, nothing is too crazy for Nassim. One episode Nassim went out with a Dutch guy with relationship issues. Two girls were in love with the preppy friend of Nassim and he did not know which one to pick. Nassim acted as some kind of little lapdog and slave the full episode.

'Hey, Nassim.... here's some cash, go and get me and the girls some beers.'

Nassim ran to the bar as a lapdog and was cool to do as the Dutchman told him.

A real Moroccan would have reacted completely differently.

'What did you just say Dutchy? I'd like to shove these bottles up your.... Retard, go get your own dirty beer for those sleazy sluts of yours.

But it has even been much worse. I can even remember a scene where he tried to match up his own mother with a Dutch teacher.

Nassim's mother started cooking for the teacher. The mother was completely unaware her son was trying to pimp her and while smiling he told the teacher: "My mother is a good cook, right?" Hoping this would make her seem more attractive to the gentleman. This is really incredible. Isn't there anybody at SpangaS who says: "Hey, I don't want to be a dick, but this is a little unrealistic people. This is not what Moroccans are like!"

Why do Dutch scriptwriters structurally deform Moroccan characters in films and series? They take a hardcore Moroccan with respect to looks, complete with sheepish curls, but transform him to a Dutchman to the second power.

In the toddler series of Shouf Shouf they also share this habit. One of the Moroccans had been in love with a Moroccan girl from the series for years. She, like usual in Dutch series, was not interested in him and dissed him every time. After one of these disses he would relent, but just come back for the next one in a weekly ritual. Amongst Moroccans this would usually be completely different. In case a Moroccan kid is dissed in public and loses face amongst his friends you would usually expect a very different reaction.

“Tooazzz.... shut your trap, you dirty broomstick. Why do you live above this filthy cafe, go help your mother. Do you really think you’re something.... you should not think I’m a girl so..... I’ll demolish you and this complete stinking cafe where you’re at every week! And I’ll get that dirty neighbour with his talk too in one go.”

Not that I approve of that behaviour. Anything but that actually, but it would at least be a little more realistic than those strange lines they come up with weekly. Even Moroccans (the majority) who would not started calling her names or whatever would at least grant her a deadly glance and completely ignore her afterwards.

Dutch scriptwriters however are successful in making Moroccans look stupid. In that case they do manage to use every cliché known. Then he is late due to Summer-time. Then they’re even to inept for a successful break-in. In short, they look utterly ridiculous.

I want to finish with the infamous neighbour from Shouf Shouf. Neighbour racially insults three Moroccans every week and every week they indulge in this behaviour only to have Neighbour date a Moroccan mother in headscarf, with a date to the beach. Dutch television is one big joke. I prefer bad films on 2m. At least in those you’ll what Moroccans are really like (Benchiki 2010).

8.2 Reactions to the column

There were 131 reactions to the column placed on the site of Benchiki at the moment of writing. The majority of the youngsters reacting on the column, agreed with Benchiki. They found his column endlessly funny and shared his feelings regarding the way this Moroccan Dutch character is represented. However there were quite some side notes suggested and besides that there were readers as well who did not agree at all with Benchiki. It is remarkable that most respondents who did not agree with Benchiki underpinned their opinions very well. The hypothesis rises that the more educated youngsters agree with Benchiki less often, which might be clarified by a lack of recognition with the Moroccan Dutchmen that Benchiki prefers. I will incorporate a few reactions, both of respondents who agree with Benchiki and of respondents who disagree with him.

“I agree that this character is not credible. Still I prefer someone like him, than yet another series with a Moroccan criminal character.”

“Yes, oh my god! This Nassim is cheesed⁵⁵!! Woh, if Moroccan Dutchmen were like this... It is a disgrace. He should not call himself a Moroccan!”

“Brother, do you know why they do this? In order to let those Mocros⁵⁶ grow up and become decent citizens instead of becoming like those Mocros from the news media.”

“You are totally right. I just think you missed one Moroccan Dutchmen: Yousef Al Bassity, the character from ONM! Another character to get tired of. They made a real faggot of him... A Morco who cries about a Dutch baby or because his friendship with a cheesehead is over...”

“Those Dutchmen make real cheeses of those Mocros. This Nassim plays totally cheesed!”

I also discussed the column of Benchiki with the ‘Meiden van Halal’ and the girls from the Doenja foundation. The ‘Meiden van Halal’ did not agree with Benchiki. Esmaa said that Princess Maxima once blundered by saying that ‘the’ Dutchman does not exist. According to Esmaa, ‘the’ Moroccan Dutchmen does neither. She mentioned some examples of Moroccan Dutchmen, like the ‘fur-collar-Moroccan’ or the discreet Moroccan Dutchman living in Amsterdam-South. Esmaa claimed she is actually happy that the ‘real Moroccan’ is not assignable. The girls from the Doenja foundation agreed with Benchiki that the character of Nassim did not really fit a Moroccan Dutchmen, but they still saw him as a Moroccan Dutchmen. And they for sure did not agree with one of the respondents on Benchiki’s column who feels the character Yousef from ‘ONM’ is a ‘cheesehead’ too. According to the girls, Yousef is a very authentic Moroccan Dutchmen.

As became clear from the first empirical chapter about the ideas of Moroccan Dutchmen on their representation in Dutch media, the opinions about the performances of Benchiki are divided. However what is most interesting is, is the opinion of the person who is

⁵⁵ Poor translation of ‘verkaasd’, which is a sobriquet for Dutchmen as they are characterised as people who have a strong connection to cheese, I suppose.

⁵⁶ Mocros is a street term for Moroccan Dutchmen.

responsible for the character of Nassim in 'SpangaS'. In the next paragraph I will discuss the response from Derksen.

8.3 Response from Derksen

Derksen replied my email with an enthusiastic telephone call, in which she told me she would be delighted to give a reaction on the column written by Benchiki about one of the characters of 'SpangaS', where she herself was responsible for.

Derksen started by saying she felt sorry Benchiki was so angry with 'SpangaS' way of dealing with multiculturalism, especially because Benchiki is active in the field himself. She disagreed with Benchiki on his idea of how to use media regarding imaging, as he seems to stand for a quite negative representation of Moroccan Dutchmen under the slogan 'an authentic representation'. She mentioned that imaging is something the producers of 'SpangaS' are very consciously discussing and that she exactly wanted to prevent her characters from becoming the cliché images that are so well known in Dutch media, the ones that Benchiki describes in his column as the 'true Moroccan Dutchmen'.

She then emphasized that the Moroccan Dutch characters in 'SpangaS' are not 'Kutmarokkanen' who make trouble wherever possible, neither 'Knuffelmarokkanen'⁵⁷, who do everything according to the rules. The Moroccan Dutch characters make mistakes and behave bad, like all characters do sometimes. It is just, as Derksen mentioned, this bad behaviour is general bad human behaviour, and not typical Moroccan Dutch bad behaviour. The producers of 'SpangaS' consciously chose for this representation, because they do not want to join in the general negative stereotypes.

Benchiki blamed character Nassim for being too Dutchified. Derksen regretted Benchiki's point of view, whereas he did not recognise any 'Kutmarokkanen' in 'SpangaS'. According to Derksen, Nassim is not totally Dutchified, as his Moroccan background is a very important part of the role concept. Cultural identity is an important issue in the whole series, because the storylines deal with this a lot. Derksen is convinced that those positive role models have a much stronger impact than those negative stereotypes, as became clear from scientific research carried out by the University of Amsterdam.

Derksen came with the following example for the statement that positive role models have a stronger impact. In 'SpangaS' they created a storyline wherein one of the best friends

⁵⁷ Literally 'cuddle Moroccan'. Term for Moroccan Dutchmen who behave exemplary in Dutch society and try to please ethnic Dutchmen (and media).

of Nassim admits he is gay. Nassim struggles with this confession of his friend, because homosexuality is off course not something you openly practice in Moroccan culture. So Nassim had to deal with the question 'can I stay friends with him being a gay, or not?'. According to Derksen, showing Nassim's thoughts and considerations regarding his friend's sexuality gave a much more realistic image of reality than if Nassim would have just beaten up his friend, like Derksen thought Benchiki would have preferred.

Derksen continued she feels it is important that Moroccan Dutchmen recognise themselves in the home situations sketched in 'SpangaS', but she feels it is important too that ethnic Dutchmen can have a look in a family with a different cultural background, with different norms and values. Derksen emphasised that she feels it is really important that Dutch society knows about these other rules and customs. She concluded that 'SpangaS' is in fact a very educational project and that if Benchiki says 'Nassim is just a Dutchmen' he really misses the point. Because the target group of 'SpangaS' are children between nine and twelve years old, so those positive role models can figure as alternatives to the negative stereotypes of Moroccan Dutchmen in conventional news media.

To conclude, his chapter exemplified how opinions are divided about the best way to represent Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch entertainment television. The ethnic Dutch production of 'SpangaS' tries to put down a more positive role model of a Moroccan Dutchman opposing the negative image which is present in conventional Dutch media, while Moroccan Dutchman Benchiki tries to put down a more authentic version of a Moroccan Dutchman in his own television shows. Both ethnic Dutch and Moroccan Dutch media consumers differ on their opinions, which way of representation is better. Is it necessary to use exemplary Moroccan Dutch characters in order to bend the negative image into a more positive one? Or is it better to try and interpret Moroccan Dutch culture and patterns? Is Salaheddine's character 'Moussie El Kandoussie' contributing to the negative imaging of Moroccan Dutchmen? Or is he just producing television which is appreciated by Moroccan Dutch youngsters? All these questions together with the main research question will be answered in the final chapter, the conclusion of this research.

9. Conclusion

In this conclusion I will answer the main research question *'To what extent do Moroccan Dutchmen feel themselves represented in Dutch media and how do Dutch media think about their role in this representation?'* As the question is twofold, the answer will be as well. First I will answer the question *To what extent do Moroccan Dutchmen feel themselves represented in Dutch media?'*, secondly I will answer the question: *'How do Dutch media think about their role in this representation?'*. In my answer I will interlink both theory and empirics in order to fully answer the research question.

9.1 To what extent do Moroccan Dutchmen feel themselves represented in Dutch media?

The Moroccan Dutch respondents all felt they were too negatively represented in Dutch media. They felt they were approached by Dutch media through the frames of Fleras I described in the theoretical framework. Especially the 'invisible' frame, the 'problematic' frame and the 'stereotype' frame were very familiar to the respondents (Fleras 2001: 318). The 'invisible' frame was especially recognised through the absence of Moroccan Dutch experts on any other subject than minority-related subjects in the news media. The 'stereotype' frame was mostly discussed by women. The women from the Al-Amal foundation for example felt they were stereotyped as suppressed and ignorant women due to their headscarves. The male respondents were also confronted with stereotypes. They were most familiar with the stereotype of 'Kutmarokkaan' and '(semi) criminal'. The 'problematic' frame, which was by far the frame the respondents were most often confronted with, was visible through the strong linkage of Moroccan Dutchmen and crime in Dutch media.

The linkage of Moroccan Dutchmen with crime has been an intensely discussed subject during this research. Sibon already demonstrated in 2005 that Moroccan Dutchmen were overrepresented in the crime reports of four Dutch newspapers, while other minorities were underrepresented.

Many respondents mentioned they feel Moroccan Dutchmen are the target of actually everything. They were well-known with the 'intruder' frame and the 'victim' frame of Van Gorp (2005) and the matching 'semi criminal' and 'victim of the situation' stereotypes of d'Haenens (1996, in: Haghebaert 2005: 16), while they felt these frames and stereotypes do not apply at all to their ethnic group. They do admit there are problems with Moroccan Dutch

youngsters in Dutch society, but they do not feel that a Moroccan Dutchman is a synonym for a criminal. Neither do they see themselves as intruders, as most respondents were born in the Netherlands, feel Dutch and want to get rid of the division between ‘allochtonen’ and ‘autochtonen’. Lastly, they also do not feel like victims of the situation, they are no helpless people who do not know how to speak Dutch, pay at the Albert Hein⁵⁸ or read the sign at the bus stop.

All these negative associations with Moroccan Dutchmen and the widening gap between ‘us’ and ‘them’, feeds the soil for alienation. However most respondents claimed they have become mellow due to the overload of negative stories of Moroccan Dutchmen, or stand above the whole thing, some respondents did mention they felt hated, or were recognising alienation among other Moroccan Dutchmen.

Another interesting topic in our interviews was the supposed cause of this negative image of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media. The respondents thought news selection was mainly based on sales numbers. They felt that the more negative the reporting, the higher the sales numbers. Though one respondent argued that it is not fair to solemnly judge Dutch media for this, as the consumers are maintaining this selling point as well by eager consumption.

The Moroccan Dutch respondents furthermore felt that the link between their ethnicity and crime was constructed both through media, as through individuals like extreme-right politician Wilders. According to the respondents, Wilders focuses the attention of media and individuals to problems around integration, by putting it high on his priority list. This is in accordance with the ideas of Vliegenthart and Boomgaarden.

The representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch entertainment television programmes, was more positively approached by most respondents. They said the entertainment television with a multicultural character could contribute positively to the image of Moroccan Dutchmen. Most respondents liked the positive role models present in series like ‘SpangaS’ and ‘Dunya & Desie’ which are ethnic Dutch productions. Others appreciated the productions of Moroccan Dutchman Benchiki better. Benchiki himself was the exception on the previous claim that most respondents liked the Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch entertainment programmes. Benchiki thought the Moroccan Dutch characters created by ethnic Dutchmen are not righteous at all, and are often portrayed way too exemplary or as stupid.

⁵⁸ Dutch supermarket.

To conclude, the Moroccan Dutch respondents did not feel righteously represented in Dutch media. They felt Moroccan Dutchmen are not visible enough and represented too negatively. They felt they are too negatively portrayed, as they feel there is a strong association between Moroccan Dutchmen and crime, there are vivid stereotypes and frames used in Dutch media, and there is an absence of Moroccan Dutch experts on non-Moroccan Dutch subjects. However in entertainment programmes their representation is, although not authentic at all the times, appreciated by most respondents, as they feel it is contributing to a more positive representation.

The respondents saw the increase of Moroccan Dutch media workers as a contribution to a more righteous representation of Moroccan Dutchmen. Furthermore they thought more interpretation and clarification of the stories reported in Dutch media will help to draw a more righteous image of their minority group. Thirdly, one respondent mentioned a change in the demand side by media consumers could lead to a more righteous image as well, as this would lead to a change in the supply side as well. And lastly, the respondents would like to see the partition between ‘allochtonen’ and ‘autochtonen’ go, as they claimed, they are all Dutchmen.

9.2 How do Dutch media think about their role in this representation?

Dutch media in this research represented Dutch newspapers and Dutch television. The ideas of the respondents regarding their role in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen differed between the respondents who work for the newspapers and the respondents who work for television. Although both groups of respondents felt the negative image of Moroccan Dutchmen had to change into a more righteous image. I will first discuss the ideas of the respondents who work in television and then the ideas of the respondents who work for newspapers. Finally, I will provide some of my own ideas on the topic and give an overall conclusion of this chapter.

Amongst the group of respondents who work for television, they felt conventional Dutch media were presenting a far too negative image of Moroccan Dutchmen. They therefore wanted to change the present image in to a more righteous image. The respondents presented three ways in which entertainment productions tried to deal with this desired change.

One way, which scriptwriter Vallenduuk subscribed, was through clarification. The scriptwriters of ‘ONM’ tried to explain the actions of their Moroccan Dutch character Yousef by showing the underlying thoughts of Yousef, and by explaining Moroccan Dutch culture

and patterns. They emphasised not to judge any of his ideas or actions, or the ideas of those opposing Yousef's ideas and actions. All they wanted to do was showing different points of view of a certain situation.

The second way was more actively trying to bend the negative stereotype of Moroccan Dutchmen well-known in conventional media into a more positive one. This is the way Derksen preferred, by presenting her Moroccan Dutch characters in a very positive role model. In 'SpangaS', the soap opera for children Derksen is responsible for, she has put Moroccan Dutch characters whom are exemplary Moroccan Dutch youngsters. Off course they have small problems too, but those problems are not typical Moroccan Dutch youngster problems, those are general youngster problems. Derksen liked to present a better image of the Moroccan Dutchmen than the image showed in conventional Dutch media, as to supply Moroccan Dutch children with more positive role models than the ones known from conventional media, and to show ethnic Dutch children, that Moroccan Dutch children are not per definition like the youngsters the see on the news.

The third way was presented by Beerends, who is responsible for the characters in the series 'Dunya & Desie'. With the series, she tried to make nice television in the first place, and show that multiculturalism can enrich one's life, in the second place. This was a more silent message, whereby ethnic Dutchmen who like the series because of the themes that address girls, like friendship, boys, make-up, etcetera, without really mentioning it too obvious, are getting used to Moroccan Dutch culture, patterns, rules and habits.

In television programmes that deal with real persons instead of characters, like the news, political programmes like 'Buitenhof' and talk shows, there are still too little Moroccan Dutchmen visible, according to the respondents. Besides that, the image of Moroccan Dutchmen coming from these programmes, according to the respondents is too negative. This is mainly due to the absence of Moroccan Dutch experts in these programmes. Therefore the entertainment productions want to compensate this in their fictive programmes, by showing the more positive side of this minority, the energy and the humour of the group.

The respondents who work for the newspapers agreed that the present image of Moroccan Dutchmen is too negative. They also have different ways to create a more righteous image of Moroccan Dutchmen. One way is via interpreting their stories about Moroccan Dutchmen, clarifying terms as 'Moroccans' into 'low educated Moroccan Dutch youngsters from disadvantaged neighbourhoods' for example, and try to stay clear of the use of the standard stereotypes or frames. Another way is just trying to be as objective as possible without

discriminating positively or negatively. The hypothesis rose that so-called quality papers are using more nuanced language in line with their urge for interpretation of their stories, while the more popular newspapers are just reporting the news as it is, and have less problems with using the term 'Moroccans' in case of limited space for example.

All respondents claimed they try their best to report as truthful, objective and accurate as possible. Scheffer however urged for a profound clarification of Dutch newspapers, by being more problem-solving instead of just indicating the problems with Moroccan Dutch youngsters. He urged for the disappearance of the whole idea of 'allochtonen' and 'autochtonen'. In accordance with his theory on migration which follows the steps of 'avoidance', 'conflict' and 'accommodation', he thought it is not so bad to report on Moroccan Dutchmen and mention their ethnicity as well, as long as the statements about them are righteous and true of course. Because Moroccan Dutchmen are in the migration-stage of 'conflict' now, which sounds more negative than it is, as according to Scheffer it indicates people care about each other. He thought it is only a matter of time before the stage of 'accommodation' settles in, and the issues of Moroccan Dutch youngsters in Dutch society as well as the image of the negative imaging of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media will be solved. This stage of 'accommodation' would probably lead to a blur of the terms 'Moroccan Dutchman' and 'ethnic Dutchman'.

In his idea of the image of the imaging, Scheffer explained how he thinks the whole idea of the negative image of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media is exaggerated and generalised as well, just like the negative image of Moroccan Dutchmen is exaggerated and generalised. According to Scheffer, the image of non-ethnic Dutchmen in Dutch media has already undergone a huge change into a more positive one, as almost all newspapers have non-ethnic Dutch columnists, and according to him, many success stories on non-ethnic Dutchmen are being told. As testing this statement was no part of the research, I do not know whether this is true, but I do know that the Moroccan Dutch respondents at least did not feel there already had been a huge change in their representation in Dutch media.

Due to commercialisation and consumerism, newspapers tend to write what potential consumers want to read, which leads to the idea that 'the more negative the story on Moroccan Dutchmen, the better it sells'. According to the respondents, an increase of Moroccan Dutchmen consuming Dutch media and working in Dutch media would help to bend the negative image of Moroccan Dutchmen into a more positive image. Because Dutch media will become more interesting for Moroccan Dutch consumers when they are more righteously represented, and therefore the Moroccan Dutch consumers will become a more

interesting target group for the publishers of newspapers as well. However Scheffer warned that minorities should definitely not become journalists in order to write solemnly about their own ethnic group, as this would be stereotyping and stigmatising.

To conclude, all respondents working in Dutch media do think the role of Dutch media in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen is important. Still most of them experienced their own role as very small. The respondents who work for television have other ways in which they try to change the present image of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch society into a more positive one, than the respondents who work for newspapers do. Inside those groups there are differences as well in the ways of making this change able to proceed. Which way is best, depends on the consumers and the mission of the medium.

I think, as news tend to be negative, and daily Moroccan Dutch life itself is not necessarily newsworthy, it is good to have entertainment television programmes that show daily life of Moroccan Dutchmen, since ethnic Dutchmen do not know this world. They do not know about Moroccan Dutch culture, patterns, rules and habits. The only thing they see and hear, comes from own experiences with Moroccan Dutchmen, experiences of relatives and friends with Moroccan Dutchmen and Dutch media. And as many ethnic Dutchmen do not have much or even any contact with Moroccan Dutchmen, especially in the more rural areas of the Netherlands, they are dependent on Dutch media. Therefore without entertainment programmes that deal with Moroccan Dutch culture, they would just see the negative excesses of Moroccan Dutchmen in the news, and occasionally a positive chart about the level of Dutch spoken among Moroccan Dutchmen for example.

Excesses of ethnic Dutchmen in the news, are experienced as exceptions, as ethnic Dutchmen know that a 'normal' ethnic Dutchman, like everyone in their own social group of relatives and friends does not act like this. Due to the lack of knowledge on 'normal' Moroccan Dutch life however, the excesses of Moroccan Dutchmen exposed in Dutch media, seem to be 'normal'. Therefore I think, showing daily life on Dutch television in entertainment programmes, and clarifying Moroccan Dutch culture, patterns, rules and habits, is a very good way of presenting a more righteous image of Moroccan Dutchmen. The almost too positive characters Derksen uses in 'Spangas' as role models where siblings of 'Kutmarokkanen' can live up to, is fine in my opinion, as long as it is a children's programme. I think for youngsters and adults it is important there is a certain level of realism. Of course that does not say a character like Nassim would not be realistic, as Moroccan Dutchmen like Nassim do exist. I am an advocate of presenting all sorts of different

characters of Moroccan Dutchmen. I just think that it is important for both ethnic Dutch as Moroccan Dutch youngsters and adults, to show what Moroccan Dutch daily life looks like, what problems may be encountered and how to deal with these, or even better solve them.

Altogether, change is needed in the representation of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media, according to both the respondents who work in Dutch media as the Moroccan Dutch respondents. To what extent this change has already started, how this change should be achieved, and what the end result should be, differs between Moroccan Dutch respondents and ethnic Dutch respondents, between Moroccan Dutch respondents among each other, between respondents working for Dutch television and respondents working for Dutch newspapers and even between respondents inside those groups. One thing everyone agrees on, is that the present image of Moroccan Dutchmen in Dutch media is too negative, and that this image needs to change to a more righteous one.

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Appendix

The column from Salaheddine Benchiki in Dutch

De Marokkaan van Spangas

Mijn kleine neefjes en nichtjes kijken regelmatig een hele vage Nederlandstalige jeugdserie genaamd Spangas. Als ik bij ze thuis ben rond etenstijd en suf op de sedari lig, ontkom ik er niet aan dan dat ik wat mee pik van die bewegende beelden op de achtergrond. Ik heb geen flauw idee waar die serie over gaat, maar elke keer zie ik weer een Marokkaan voorbij huppelen in beeld. Zijn naam in het verhaal is Nasim heb ik begrepen. Als ik die jongen zie, wil ik als medemarokkaan, toch wel even weten wat hij daar precies doet.

Deze jongen speelt een heel vreemd personage. Hij speelt een type Marokkaan, die ik in mijn hele leven nog niet ben tegengekomen. Ik heb veel Marokkanen gezien, maar dit is ongekend. Hij speelt de ideale, perfecte, opgewekte, perfect geïntegreerde, kwieke, vrolijke, spontane Marokkaan die zo ontiegelijk leuk met de Nederlanders meedoet dat het bizarre televisie is geworden. Werkelijk onvoorstelbaar. Ali B kan hier nog zelfs wat van leren.

Wat ik gezien heb van het personage, ziet er zo verschrikkelijk nep uit. Deze perfecte jongen heeft ook de meest vreemde vrienden in de serie. Waar een Marokkaan meestal gewoon met andere Marokkanen omgaat, gaat hij heel tof om met allerlei verschillende type Nederlanders. Niks en niemand gaat hem te ver. Kakkers, skaters, alto's en zelfs tokkies, niks is Nasim te gek. Een aflevering ging Nasim stappen met een Nederlandse vriend met liefdesproblemen. Twee meiden waren op de kakvriend van Nasim verliefd en hij wist geen keuze te maken tussen de twee. Nasim fungeerde de hele aflevering als schoothondje en slaafje.

'He, Nasim.....hier heb je geld en ga even voor mij en de meiden wat biertjes halen.'

Nasim rende als een schoothondje naar de bar en heel tof deed hij wat de Nederlander hem vroeg.

Een echte Marokkaan had heel anders gereageerd.

‘Wat zei je daar a kaaskop? Ik wil die flesjes wel in je stoppen. Mongool, ga zelf je vieze bier halen voor die vieze hoertjes van je.’

Maar het kan nog veel erger. Ik kan me zelfs een scene herinneren dat hij zijn eigen moeder probeerde te koppelen aan een Nederlandse leraar.

De moeder van Nasim ging koken voor de leraar. De moeder had niet door dat haar zoon haar probeerde te pimpen en vervolgens zei hij glimlachend tegen de leraar: ‘Mijn moeder kan lekker koken hè? In de hoop dat zijn moeder aantrekkelijker zou worden voor de beste meneer. Dit is toch onvoorstelbaar. Is er dan helemaal niemand binnen Spangas die zegt van, ‘Hé, ik wil niet lullig doen, maar dit is wel een beetje ongeloofwaardig mensen. Zo zijn Marokkanen helemaal niet!’

Waarom verkrachten Nederlandse scriptschrijvers structureel Marokkaanse personages in films en series. Ze nemen qua uiterlijk een hardcore Marokkaan met schapenkrullen en maken van hem een Hollander in het kwadraat.

In de kleuterserie van Shouf Shouf hebben ze hier ook een houtje van. Een van die Marokkanen was zogenaamd jarenlang verliefd op dat Marokkaanse meisje in die serie. Zij wilde, zoals gewoonlijk in Nederlandse series, niks van hem weten en elke keer diste zij hem. Na zo’n dis droop hij weer af om vervolgens op zoek te gaan naar de volgende dis van haar en dit ritueel ging dan wekelijks zo door. Normaal gesproken gaat dat bij Marokkanen dus echt heel anders. Als een Marokkaanse jongen in het openbaar gedist wordt en afgaat bij zijn vrienden dan krijg je vaak toch een hele andere reactie.

‘Tooazzz.....hou je bek a vieze kk-tering vieze bezem. Wat woon je boven dit smerige café, ga je moeder helpen. Denk je dat je wat bent.....je moet niet denken ze3ma ik ben meisje dus.....ik sloop jou en heel dit teringcafé waar je elke week in zit! En die vieze boerman met zijn praatjes sloop ik ook gelijk erbij.’

Niet dat ik dit gedrag goedkeur. Verre van zelfs, maar het zou al weer een stukje meer geloofwaardiger overkomen dan die rare verzinsels waar ze nu wekelijks mee aankomen. Zelfs de Marokkanen (de meesten), die niet over zouden gaan op schelden of wat dan ook,

zouden haar sowieso een dodelijke blik geven en haar vervolgens geen seconde aandacht meer geven.

Waar de Nederlandse scriptschrijvers wel een ster in zijn is als ze Marokkanen dom willen laten overkomen. Dan lukt het ze ineens wel om de Marokkaan zo cliché mogelijk te maken. Dan komt hij te laat wanneer het zomertijd wordt. Dan zijn ze zelfs te dom om in te breken. Kortom, dan worden ze gekraakt tot op het bot.

Ik wil afsluiten met de bekende Boerman uit Shouf Shouf. Boerman maakt elke week racistische opmerkingen tegen drie Marokkanen en elke week slikken ze dit en als toetje in deze serie gaat deze Boerman, op date met een Marokkaanse moeder met een hoofddoek naar het strand. Nederlandse televisie is echt een grote grap. Dan maar slechte films kijken op 2m. Daar zie ik nog een beetje hoe Marokkanen echt zijn.