

The effect of the portrayal of ethnic minorities in the media on attitudes of minority and majority groups in the Netherlands

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

“The coverage and portrayal in the media of ethnic minorities have an effect on both minority and majority groups. But it is a complex effect, one that is mediated by each person’s psychological make up, social status, age and use of the media. It is unlikely that scholars will ever be able to make definitive conclusions regarding the effects of the media on racial and ethnic minority groups or any other segments of society” (Wilson et al., 2003:59). This quote of Wilson et al. (2003) seems to discourage one from doing research on the portrayal of ethnic minorities in the media. However, the opposite is true. Exactly because of the complexness of this topic, it is interesting to examine what we know and what we do not know yet. This study will offer an overview on our knowledge about the coverage and portrayal of ethnic minorities in the media and the effects of this portrait on the attitudes of both the minority and the majority groups. In addition, the influence of the portrayal of ethnic minorities in newspapers, commercial and public channels on the attitudes of the minority and majority groups will be examined. The influence of the media on attitudes of people has been a focus point in science for decades. Portrayals of ethnic minorities in the media have been studied across the world and across a wide variety of media, like news, prime-time programming, amusement and drama programs, advertising, and newspapers (Ramasubramanian & Oliver, 2007).

The centre of attention in this article will be the Netherlands. This is a interesting country to study because the Dutch society is to be regarded as a mediocracy (Vliegenthart, 2007). A mediocracy is a situation where the media is very mighty and dominates or controls the populace. ‘This explanation has been especially popular among politicians, who in several cases have pointed to the media, which they hold responsible for creating a tense and negative context around immigrants and the issue of immigration and integration’ (Vliegenthart, 2007). A mediocracy is also defined as a situation where politicians listen exclusively to the media regarding what is important and what they should do about these problems. Hence, it is assumed that the media has a lot of power and is very influential.

A lot has happened in the last 15 years in regarding to the position of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. Since the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York, and the subsequent ‘war on terrorism’, ethnic minorities have been the issue of intensive political debate and got much attention of the media. Events like the rise of politician Pim Fortuyn and the murder on Theo van Gogh caused again much media attention towards ethnic minorities. The Netherlands used to be known for their multicultural policy but now the Netherlands have a more restrictive approach towards immigrants. And whereas the Netherlands were known for their ‘tolerance’ more negative feelings toward ethnic minorities are expressed now. In this article we are going to look at the possible influence the media has on attitudes towards ethnic minorities, but also how the ethnic minorities themselves are

influenced by the media. This is important to examine because the media might have a big influence on the society, and if so, the public and politics should be aware of this. The main question of this article is: *How are ethnic minorities portrayed in the Dutch media and what kind of influence has this on the attitudes of the native Dutch and the ethnic minorities themselves?*

Chapter 2 of this article is about the portrayal of ethnic minorities in the media. *What do the Dutch media say about ethnic minorities in the Netherlands, and how are they portrayed?* This is the main question of the second chapter. Different studies will be discussed which show how ethnic minorities are represented by the media. In this chapter some issues like underrepresentation and a stereotype image of ethnic minorities will be discussed. In the second chapter is also shown that not all media represent ethnic minorities in the same way. There seems to be a big distinction between the more ‘popular’ or ‘sensational’ media and the more ‘serious’ or ‘quality’ media.

The third chapter will address explanations about how the media would influence people’s attitudes. In this chapter three theories about the influence of the media on the attitudes of ethnic minorities and the native Dutch will be discussed. In addition, an alternative perspective on this subject will be discussed. The main question that will be answered in this third chapter is: *How do the traditional media influence people’s attitudes?*

In the following chapters, results of empirical studies in the Netherlands will be discussed. In the fourth chapter the hypotheses regarding the native Dutch will be looked at. On the basis of previous research done in the Netherlands concerning this topic, the different theories will be reviewed. Not much research is done in the Netherlands on this subject but we will look at the few studies that have been done. Four studies will be discussed, one on the influence of the television, one of the influence of the newspapers and two on the influence of the media in general. The main question in chapter 4 is: *Does the media affect the attitudes of the native Dutch towards ethnic minorities?*

The fifth chapter of this article is about empirical studies on the ethnic minorities in the Netherlands themselves. *Does the media affect the attitudes of ethnic minorities towards the Dutch society and to their own ethnic group?* Several studies will be used to review the hypotheses that were proposed.

The sixth chapter, is the methods chapter. In this chapter the methods will be discussed which will be used to examine the hypotheses that we proposed. In the seventh chapter the results will be discussed. This study is an extension on previous research on in influence of the media on the attitudes of native Dutch and ethnic minorities, because the distinction between sensational en serious media will be made. Finally, the last and eight chapter will be the conclusion and discussion.

Chapter 2 - The Portrayal of ethnic minorities in the Dutch media.

In the Netherlands ethnic minorities are often negatively shown in the media (Lubbers et al., 2000). However, dissimilarities have been found between different forms of media. In this chapter we will first discuss how ethnic minorities are portrayed in the Dutch media generally. Subsequently, the distinction between the forms of media will be discussed.

Research on ethnic minorities in the Dutch media shows that ethnic minorities are regularly 'underrepresented'. This 'underrepresentation' appears in two forms. Firstly, there is an underrepresentation in the job distribution in the media. Only 2 per cent of the journalist in the Netherlands is a member of an ethnic minority group, whereas in general 10 per cent of the working population has an ethnic minority background (De Clercq & Devroe, 2003 in Haghebaert, 2005). This lack of ethnic minority journalists could be a reason for the negative image that the media shows about ethnic minorities. Because ethnic minorities cannot represent themselves, a less complete and less positive portrait will be shown (Fiske in Haghebaert, 2005). The second form of 'underrepresentation' is a lack of coverage of ethnic minorities by the media. Although non-western ethnic minorities comprise almost 10 per cent of the Dutch population their numbers in the media fall short of this (Klute in Van der Graaf, 2002, Van Dijk, 1983). This underrepresentation leads to a disordered view of ethnic minorities in the real society (Van der Graaf, 2002).

In addition to underrepresenting ethnic minorities, the Dutch media frequently portrays a stereotype image of ethnic minorities (Haghebaert, 2005, Van Dijk, 1983). Ethnic minorities who are shown in the media are often sportsmen and rap musicians, which are stereotypes of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands (Crombez, 1996). Because media texts are regularly short, only a stereotype view of ethnic minorities is represented because there is no space for a complex description of someone or a situation (Van der Graaf, 2002). Because of this, the ordinary life of ethnic minorities such as work, health, culture and politics is relatively little covered in the Dutch newspapers (Van Dijk, 1991).

In addition, ethnic minorities in the Netherlands are often represented in negative stories or in a negative frame. Through time, several studies have shown this phenomenon. The first study on the representation of ethnic minorities in the Dutch media was done by Van Dijk in 1983. In his book, Van Dijk (1983) states that articles about ethnic minorities are regularly in a negative frame. In newspapers in the Netherlands between 1985 and 1986, articles about ethnic minorities were usually about immigration (Van Dijk, 1991). Though, Van Dijk also states that the subject crime is particularly associated with Surinamese and Turks (Van Dijk, 1991). In 1998, Lubbers et al. (1998) stated that Moroccans and Turks were the groups which were most often associated with crime. Lubbers et al (1998) also stated that since 1990 the articles about ethnic minorities and crime increased

extremely. According to Vliegthart (2007), media messages about ethnic minorities in the Dutch newspapers, between 1995 and 2004, were particularly focussed on the Islam as a threat for the Dutch society. The second most used frame for reporting on ethnic minorities is the multicultural frame. This is a quite positive frame where cultural diversity is seen as an asset that enhances the quality of society (Vliegthart, 2007). But this frame only dominated the newspapers between 1998 and 2000 (Vliegthart, 2007). For television, similar results were found. Bouwman (1987, in Vergeer, 2000) found in 1985 that in Dutch drama and amusement programs minorities were often 'naturally' involved with violence. In these drama programs were men of ethnic minority groups more often the offender in a crime than native men.

Because of underrepresentation, a stereotypical image and the association between ethnic minorities and negative issues, it can be concluded that ethnic minorities are generally negatively portrayed in the media. But as already stated, not all forms of media are equally negative about ethnic minorities. Differences are found in television channels and programs as well as in newspapers. For instance Van Dijk (1983) found differences between the Dutch newspapers. Where the sensational Telegraaf paid more attention to crime, the serious Volkskrant paid more attention to discrimination. In short, the serious newspapers reported on ethnic minorities having problems, while the sensational newspapers focussed on ethnic minorities causing problems (Van Dijk, 1991). In addition, Lubbers et al. (1998) found that the sensational or popular newspaper the Telegraaf, gives a more negative view on Moroccans in the Netherlands than the serious Volkskrant or the NRC Handelsblad do. Jaspers and Lubbers (2005) and Vergeer (2000) also assume that 'sensational media' are more negative about ethnic minorities than the 'serious media'. Finally also Vliegthart (2007) made a distinction between sensational (Telegraaf and Algemeen Dagblad) and serious (Trouw, Volkskrant, NRC Handelsblad) newspapers. Vliegthart (2007) found that some serious newspapers allow far more diversity in their articles about ethnic minorities than more sensational or popular newspapers (Vliegthart, 2007).

In television programs the distinction is frequently made between the drama and amusement programs and the informative and news programs. Vergeer (2000) states that the commercial channels broadcast much more amusement and drama programs than the public channels do. Besides that, the commercial channels broadcast more American amusement and drama programs. In American shows ethnic minorities are often shown negatively and as threatening. So, the television channels who broadcast more American shows, which are generally commercial channels, show ethnic minorities more negatively (Vergeer, 2000). Jasper and Lubbers (2003) also make a distinction between television channels. They separate the sensational television channels from the serious television channels and assume that the sensational channels portray a more negative view of ethnic minorities than the serious channels do. Hence, it is clear that researchers assume that distinctions between different forms media are important because they portray ethnic minorities differently.

Overall, ethnic minorities are far more often shown in negative news or stories (Van Dijk, 1991, Lubbers et al., 1998). The media does not portray a representative image of ethnic minorities. Furthermore, ethnic minorities are often stereotyped and linked with negative news such as crime and violence. In addition, a distinction between different media forms is important because not all sorts of media are equally negative on ethnic minorities. It is assumed that the sensational media is more negative about ethnic minorities than the serious media.

Chapter 3 - Media and the influence on attitudes

In the Netherlands, native Dutch and ethnic minorities are seldom in contact. Two third of the native Dutch have hardly ever contact or no contact at all with ethnic minorities (CBS, 2008). Turks and Moroccans are more or less only in contact with their own ethnic group (CBS, 2008). Only the Surinamese and Antilleans have a lot of contact with native Dutch (CBS, 2008). Because of this lack of direct contact, people use other ways to develop an image of other ethnic groups. The main way people develop this image and their attitudes towards each other, is by watching or reading media messages.

In the previous chapter we saw that ethnic minorities are often underrepresented, stereotyped and are more frequently represented in stories about crime and violence than the native Dutch. Several theoretical perspectives offer explanations about how the portrayal of ethnic minorities could contribute to the development, maintenance, or modification of attitudes (Graves, 1999). Because of the negative portrayal of ethnic minorities in the Dutch media, some concerns arose about what influence this had on the attitudes of native Dutch and those of ethnic minorities. Based on three theories and one other alternative perspective, hypotheses will be formulated about how the media influences attitudes of the native Dutch and the ethnic minorities themselves.

The Cultivation Theory

The first theory that will be discussed is the Cultivation theory. In the seventies, George Gerbner developed one of the first theories about the influence of the television upon people attitudes and values (Vergeer, 2000). This theory suggests that the television is the main storyteller of the society. Frequent exposure to television will eventually lead to the cultivation of attitudes that are consistent with the social behaviour, norms, values and attitudes that the television content provides (Graves, 1999, Vergeer, 2000, Rivadeneyra et al, 2007). 'The world of the television becomes the social reality of the viewer' (Graves, 1999). This theory assumes that the viewers are non-selective and most viewers watch by the clock and not by the program (Boer & Brennecke, 1995). Because all people watch the same message, people's attitudes will become more alike. Gerbner called this effect 'mainstreaming' (Vergeer, 2000). Vergeer (2000) stated that there are differences between television programs and their influence on people's view of the world. According to Vergeer (2000), amusement and drama programs do change people's view of the world whereas the news and informative programs do not. Vergeer (2000) argues that this distinction occurs because news and informative programs portray a realistic view of the reality but this image is assumed as far apart from the viewer, one does not feel that this image applies to them because it is too abstract. Although the drama and amusement programs do not portray a realistic view of the world, people *do* feel that this image

applies to them because it looks and feels like their own life and world.

Because of underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in the media, this theory would predict that individuals who watch more television will be more likely to downplay the importance and contribution of ethnic minorities in the real world (Rivadeneira et al., 2007). Secondly, individuals who watch more television will be more likely to adopt stereotypical attitudes about ethnic minorities because of the manner ethnic minorities are represented by the media (Rivadeneira et al., 2007). According to these hypotheses native Dutch who frequently make use of the media will see ethnic minorities as powerless and unimportant and will adopt stereotypical attitudes towards ethnic minorities (Vergeer, 2000, Rivadeneira et al., 2007, Tolsma, 2009, Gijsberts and Vervoort, 2009). Moreover, ethnic minorities who frequently make use of the media will create feelings of low self-esteem because of the invisibility and stereotypical and negative image of them in the media (Graves, 1999, Vergeer, 2000, Rivadeneira et al., 2007, Tolsma, 2009, Gijsberts and Vervoort, 2009). In addition, ethnic minorities who make use of the Dutch media will think, because of the negative image that is shown in the media, that the majority holds negative views on them (Tolsma, 2009). This results in that ethnic minorities who make use of the Dutch media, perceive higher levels of group discrimination and develop a more negative attitude towards the Dutch society (Tolsma, 2009). As already stated in the previous chapter, sensational media is more negative on ethnic minorities. Consequently, this form of media will have a greater negative influence of the attitudes of people. Our main hypotheses that result from this theory are: *Native Dutch who make more use of the Dutch media, especially sensational media, will create a more negative attitude towards ethnic minorities (hypothesis 1a). And members of an ethnic minority group in the Netherlands who make more use of the Dutch media, especially sensational media, will create a more negative attitude towards the Dutch society (hypothesis 1b) and their own ethnic group (hypothesis 1c).*

The Social Cognitive Theory

The second theory that will be discussed is the Social Cognitive Theory. This ‘learning’ theory assumes that human beings are self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting, and self-regulating (Bandura, 2001). The Social Cognitive Theory suggest that audience members construct the messages they take away from the media are based on their personal characteristics, the features of the media images, and their personal connections to these images (Bandura, 2001). Because of the characteristics of people some portrayals are more salient for people than others (Rivadeneira et al., 2007). The main idea of this theory is that people identify themselves with people who are alike and because of this screen the media for messages about these people. This means that when persons in the media are similar to the media user, the media user is more cognitively engaged in the viewing process and is also more likely to be affected by the content of the message (Rivadeneira et al., 2007). Another part of this theory is that role models are more likely to be influential if they are similar to the media user.

As a result of this theory one can argue that because of the underrepresentation in the media, ethnic minorities do not have characters in the media to identify themselves with. And if there are similar characters in the media, because of the negative and stereotypical portrayal of ethnic minorities, identifying with these characters could lead to lower self-esteem among ethnic minorities (Graves, 1999, Rivadeneyra et al., 2007). It could also be that ethnic minorities who make more use of the Dutch media will tend to have a more negative view of their own ethnic group in general. Because sensational media is more negative on ethnic minorities, it is assumed that this form of media will have a greater negative influence on the attitudes of people. The native Dutch do have many positive characters in the media to identify themselves with. Because of this, they will have a positive view about themselves and their group. This theory assumes that one is more influenced by messages about people who are alike, because of this the attitudes towards ethnic minorities of native Dutch should be fairly uninfluenced by the negative messages about ethnic minorities. Therefore, our main hypotheses that result from this theory are: *Native Dutch who make more use of the Dutch media will not create a more negative attitude towards ethnic minorities (hypothesis 2a). And members of an ethnic minority group in the Netherlands who make more use of the Dutch media, especially sensational media, will create more negative attitude toward their own ethnic group (hypothesis 2c).*

The Agenda Setting Theory

The Agenda Setting theory implies that the media does not directly influence the attitudes of people, but that the media does directly influence *what* we form an attitude about (Boer & Brennecke, 1995, Weaver, 2007). The amount of attention journalists give to certain subject determines what the public perceive as important subjects (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The first empirical research about Agenda Setting was done by McCombs and Shaw in 1972 and was called ‘Chapel Hillstudy’. McCombs and Shaw proved that topics that are shown in the mass media are perceived as more important than other topics by the public (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Since 1980, in research about the Agenda Setting Theory, there is a lot of attention for phenomenon ‘priming’ (Boer & Brennecke, 1995). Priming is a subtle variant of the Agenda Setting Theory (Boer & Brennecke, 1995). Priming is the process where the media emphasises on certain aspects of a subject. This creates standards for the public for the evaluation of the subject. If the accent on the coverage of ethnic minorities is on ethnic minorities causing problems, the public will evaluate ethnic minorities differently than when the media emphasises on the positive parts of the multicultural society. The media creates a framework for the evaluation of subjects. The mechanism behind this theory is simple. People do not make an evaluation by making an extensive analysis about a subject, looking for every piece of information, and listing the pros and cons (Boer & Brennecke, 1995). An evaluation is often made intuitively. And this intuitive evaluation is influenced by the most accessible information. This is what the media portrays the most often (Boer & Brennecke, 1995). In our case, this would predict that ethnic minorities and the Dutch

are influenced by the framework of the media. Because of the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities, native Dutch will assume that ethnic minorities are unimportant or powerless. The stereotypical image of ethnic minorities will cause the Dutch to think that ethnic minorities are like these stereotypes. And because ethnic minorities are more often linked to crime the Dutch will assume that ethnic minorities are threatening. Ethnic minorities will tend to have these same evaluations about other ethnic minorities and their own ethnic group. Moreover, because of this negative frame the media uses, ethnic minorities will think that the majority holds negative views on them and will develop a more negative attitude towards the Dutch society (Tolsma, 2009). These effects will be greater for people who make more use of sensational media because this form of media is more negative on ethnic minorities. Similar hypotheses as for the Cultivation Theory result for the Agenda Setting Theory, namely: *Native Dutch who make more use of the Dutch media, especially sensational media, will create a more negative attitude towards ethnic minorities (hypothesis 3a). And members of an ethnic minority group in the Netherlands who make more use of the Dutch media, especially sensational media, will create a more negative attitude towards the Dutch society (hypothesis 3b) and their own ethnic group (hypothesis 3c).*

Finally there is a fourth and alternative reasoning on this subject, which is recently introduced by Tolsma (2009). Tolsma (2009) assumes that media usage of ethnic minorities does not influence attitudes towards the Dutch society but personal characteristic influences media usage. He states that media usage, instead of being a feeding source of a negative attitude towards the Dutch society, could be an expression of 'national preferences' and a indicator of involvement with the host country. This view on media usage leads to the following hypothesis: *Members of an ethnic minority group in the Netherlands who make more use of the Dutch media have a more positive attitude towards the Dutch society (hypothesis 4).*

These theories give inside in how attitudes and values can be formed or changed by the media. Watching a lot of television or reading newspapers can change how people perceive the world. According to Cultivation, Social Cognitive and Agenda Setting Theory the Dutch media will have a negative influence on the ethnic minority's attitudes towards their own ethnic group. And according to Cultivation and Agenda Setting Theory, the Dutch media will have a negative influence on the ethnic minority's attitudes towards the Dutch society. In addition, except of the Social Cognitive Theory, which state that the Dutch will not be influenced by media attention towards ethnic minorities, all theories imply that also the native Dutch will create a more negative attitude towards ethnic minorities. Finally, Tolsma (2009) stated that Dutch media usage by ethnic minorities relates to more positive attitudes towards the Dutch society because of more involvement with the host country.

Chapter 4 – The media influence on the attitudes of native Dutch towards ethnic minorities

In the previous chapter an overview was given on the relevant theories about media influence. In this chapter we are going to look at some empirical studies which are done in the Netherlands and what kind of effect the media has on the attitudes of the native Dutch towards ethnic minorities. The hypotheses formulated about the effect on the attitudes of native Dutch towards ethnic minorities will be examined. The Cultivation Theory and the Agenda Setting theory implied that native Dutch will become more negative about ethnic minorities, whereas the Social Cognitive Theory implied that native Dutch will not be influenced by the Dutch media.

In the 'Jaarrapport Integratie 2009' Gijbarts and Lubbers (2009) state that media attention towards migrants influences the attitudes towards migrants. They conclude in their trend analysis that in years with much media attention for immigrants in combination with great streams of immigration of non-western immigrants, people were in general more negative towards these immigrants (Gijbarts & Lubbers, 2009). Hence, attitudes towards migrants become clearly more negative when the media pays more attention to issues concerning migrants. Thus, according to this empirical study the hypotheses that resulted from the Cultivation Theory and the Agenda Setting Theory (hypotheses 1a and 3a) seem supported and the hypothesis resulting from the Social Cognitive Theory seems refuted (hypothesis 2a).

In addition, Tolsma (2009) paid attention towards the influence of the media on the attitudes of native Dutch. In his study both television and newspapers were included. Tolsma (2009) found that Dutch media usage is negatively related to negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities and is *not* a feeding source of negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Thus, according to Tolsma's empirical study the Dutch media has a positive influence on the attitudes towards minorities. This is surprising because of the negative image that the media shows of ethnic minorities. According to this study all hypotheses 1a, 2a and 3a seem refuted. The empirical studies of Gijbarts and Lubbers (2009) and of Tolsma (2009) both used one measure of media usage. Now two other empirical studies will be discussed, which examined television and newspapers separately. In addition, in these studies the distinction between sensational or popular media and informative or serious media is taken into account.

Vergeer (2000) examined in 1994 his hypothesis which states that people, who watch more television, will think of ethnic minorities as more threatening. Vergeer (2000) distinguished in his research two types of television programs: amusement and drama programs, and information and news programs. Vergeer (2000) found in his research that people who watch more television in general feel more threatened by ethnic minorities. People who watch more amusement and drama programs feel

more threatened by ethnic minorities. No significant relation was found for news and information programs and the feelings of ethnic minorities being threatening. Watching RTL4, a television channel which drama programs are for three quarters American, is most related to perceiving ethnic minorities as threatening. Thus, according to this study in the Netherlands we see that the Cultivation Theory (hypothesis 1a) and the Agenda Setting Theory (hypothesis 3a) seem supported, people who watch more television, especially drama and amusement programs, perceive ethnic minorities as more threatening which is a negative attitude. Though, no effects were found for news or informative television programs.

Lubbers et al. (1998) examined the relation between exposure to newspapers and the attitudes towards ethnic minorities. In this longitudinal research Lubbers et al. (1998) used two national newspapers namely, the *Volkskrant* and the *Telegraaf* and also one regional newspaper, namely the *Gelderlander*. Exposure to newspapers explained 16,4 per cent of the variance of the extent of which people perceive ethnic minorities as threatening. In chapter 2 we saw that Van Dijk (1983) found that the 'sensational' *Telegraaf* reported the most about ethnic minorities and crime. Lubbers et al. (1998) found that people who are exposed to the 'serious' *Volkskrant* perceive ethnic minorities as less threatening than people who are exposed the 'sensational' *Telegraaf*. However, people who are exposed to the 'serious' *Gelderlander* perceive ethnic minorities equally threatening as people who are exposed to the 'sensational' *Telegraaf*. People who are exposed to other newspapers perceive ethnic minorities as less threatening than people who are exposed to the *Telegraaf* (Lubbers et al., 1998). So, here we see that the Cultivation Theory and the Agenda Setting Theory (hypotheses 1a and 3a) seem partly confirmed when we look at newspapers like the *Telegraaf* and the *Gelderlander*. But people are quite uninfluenced by the 'serious' newspaper the *Volkskrant*. This does not mean that the hypotheses of the Social Cognitive Theory are partly confirmed, because then people should not be influenced by the newspapers at all.

One can see that there has not been much research done on the influence of the media on attitudes of native Dutch towards ethnic minority groups. The hypotheses resulting from the Cultivation theory and the Agenda Setting Theory seem supported for both television and (some) newspapers separately, on perceiving ethnic minorities as more threatening. But Tolsma (2009) had to refute all hypotheses resulting from the theories. It is important to remember that there are major differences in negative influence between forms of media, the more popular and sensational forms of media tend to have a more negative influence than the more serious forms of media. This is shown in the study of Lubbers et al. (1998). Tolsma (2009) did not make any distinction between these forms of media and this could have influenced his results and thereby the refutation of all formulated hypotheses.

Chapter 5 – The media influence on the attitudes of ethnic minorities

In chapter 4 we saw that the media seems to have some negative influence on the attitudes of natives towards ethnic minorities. What kind of influence has the negative portrayal of ethnic minorities on these ethnic minorities themselves? How do these ethnic minorities themselves feel about this negative image? These are the questions that stand central in this chapter. The hypotheses formulated about the effects on ethnic minorities themselves will be examined. The Cultivation theory and the Agenda Setting Theory implied that media usage by ethnic minorities would have a negative effect on their attitude towards the Dutch society and all theories implied that media usage would have a negative effect on attitude about their own ethnic group. But the view of Tolsma (2009) is that media usage is related to involvement with the host country.

The ethnic minorities in the Netherlands make frequently use of the Dutch media. The Antilleans and Surinamese media usage does not differ much of the media usage of the native Dutch (CBS, 2008). A considerable proportion of the Moroccans and Turks make use of the Dutch media, especially watching television (72 per cent of the Moroccans watch Dutch television every day), but also reading newspapers (CBS, 2008).

In the Netherlands a manifesto was written about the negative news about ethnic minorities. Many Moroccan public figures signed this manifest. But not only the Moroccans are not pleased with the portrayal of their ethnic group in the Dutch media. A qualitative study of Sterk and Balgobind (2005) on the ethnic minorities in television drama programs has shown that ethnic minorities are not pleased with the manner they are portrayed in these programs. Members of ethnic minority groups are annoyed by the cliché storylines about their ethnic groups (Sterk & Balgobind, 2005). Generally members of ethnic minority groups are not pleased with the way they are shown in drama programs and do not see this portrayal of them as representative or positive at all (Sterk & Balgobind, 2005).

Jaspers and Lubbers (2005) did research on ethnic minorities and the Dutch media. They examine the meta-view of the Moroccans. A meta-view is the view of Moroccans about how the Dutch perceive their ethnic group. Jaspers and Lubbers (2005) did make a distinction between ‘sensational’ and ‘serious’ media. They state that the newspaper the *Telegraaf* is sensational whereas the *Volkskrant* and the *NRC Handelsblad* are serious. They do not specify how television channels are classified. An influence of media usage is found. Moroccans who only make use of serious media have a less negative meta-view than Moroccans who only make use of sensational media or no media at all. In addition Moroccans who make use of serious media *and* sensational media have a less negative meta-view than Moroccans who only make use of sensational media or no media at all. Serious media usage seems to have a less negative effect on the meta-view than sensational media usage. So this

seems to support the hypotheses 1b and 3b, sensational media has a negative effect on the meta-view of Moroccans. Additionally, Moroccans who do not make use of the Dutch media have a more negative meta-view than Moroccans who do make use of the Dutch media. These results could support the view of Tolsma (hypothesis 4). When people have a negative meta-view, people could distance themselves from the Dutch society, which results in not making use of the Dutch media. So, it seems likely that people's attitude towards the Dutch society influences Dutch media usages.

In the study of Gijsberts and Vervoort (2009) ethnic minorities stand central. In their study, the researchers examined what the ethnic minorities in the Netherlands think about their acceptance in the Dutch society. Gijsberts and Vervoort (2009) found that media usage does not have a negative effect on minorities. Media usage by ethnic minorities even has a slightly positive effect on feelings of acceptances in the host country. The results of Gijsberts and Vervoort (2009) are in contrast to hypotheses (1b and 3b), which state that media usage has negative positive effect on attitudes towards the Dutch society. These results seem to support the view of Tolsma (hypothesis 4). The feelings of acceptance could influence Dutch media usage. If people feel more accepted by the Dutch society, they will express this 'national preferences' by making more use of the Dutch media. However, these results could be influenced by not separating different forms of media. Because 'sensational' media is more negative about ethnic minorities this form of media could have a negative influence on the attitudes of ethnic minorities.

Tolsma (2009) also paid some attention to the influence of the media in his dissertation 'Ethnic hostility among majority and ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands'. Tolsma (2009) found that for all ethnic minority groups, except for second generation Moroccans, Dutch media usage is an indicator of involvement with the host country and is negatively related to negative attitudes towards the native Dutch. This means that Dutch media usage is not an important source of negative feelings towards the native Dutch. Hence, according to Tolsma (2009) there is no support for the hypotheses 1b and 3b. However his results do support Tolsma's own perspective (hypothesis 4). However, also the results of Tolsma (2009) could be influenced by not separating different forms of media. Since 'sensational' media is more negative about ethnic minorities this form of media could have a negative influence on the attitudes of ethnic minorities which is shown in the study of Jaspers and Lubbers (2005).

In sum, ethnic minorities are not pleased with the manner they are portrayed in the Dutch media, and do not see this portrayal as representative of them. The results of the previous research on the influence of the Dutch media are mixed. The hypotheses 1b and 3b, which stated that Dutch media usage would have a negative effect on minority's attitudes towards the Dutch society, seem supported by the study of Jaspers and Lubbers (2005), but seem refuted by the studies of Gijsberts and Vervoort (2009) and Tolsma (2009). However, the hypotheses 4, which stated that media usage could have a positive relation with the attitudes of minorities towards the Dutch society, seem (partly) supported by

all the previous discussed empirical studies. In addition, there has not be done any research on the influence of the media on the attitudes of ethnic minorities towards their own ethnic group. Because of this gap in research and these mixed results more research has to be done to clarify what influence the media has on attitudes of ethnic minorities. In the next chapter we will examine the hypotheses ourselves, making a distinction between sensational and serious media.

Chapter 6 - Methods

Data

The data that were used to test the hypotheses were drawn from the Living Conditions of Urban Ethnic Minorities survey. This is a large-scale survey that is conducted in 2004, in the 50 largest municipalities in the Netherlands. Use is made of computer-aided personal interviews and translated questionnaires or bilingual interviewers, when needed and possible. The survey included the four largest non-western ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands namely, Moroccans, Turks, Surinamese and Antilleans. The sample consists of 947 Turks, 915 Moroccans, 760 Surinamese, 808 Antilleans and 666 native Dutch, all respondents were between 15 and 65 years old. The overall response rate was 45% which is lower than in comparable surveys in other Western countries but is quite common for large-scale family surveys in the Netherlands, which vary between 40% and 50% (Dykstra et al., 2005). The response rate for Turks was 51%, Moroccans 45%, Surinamese 38%, Antilleans 47% and for native Dutch 50%. The native Dutch in the Living Conditions of Urban Ethnic Minorities survey are used as a reference category. Because the fieldwork is conducted in the 50 largest municipalities in the Netherlands it cannot simply be assumed that the outcomes for the native Dutch in this survey are representative for the indigenous population (Dagevos, 2006). This is not the case for the ethnic minorities; because most members of minority groups live in the larger municipalities, this sample gives a better representation of the minority groups than of the native Dutch. The coverage degree of native Dutch in the 50 biggest municipalities is 36%, whereas the coverage degree of the minority groups, depending on each group, is between 75% and 79% (Dagevos, 2006). The sample had a small overrepresentation of women (54,4%).

Measures

Dependent variables

The attitude towards ethnic groups is measured with a 'temperature-scale question'. People were asked to rate native Dutch, Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, Antilleans and their own ethnic group with a number between '0' and '100', '0' being very negative about the ethnic group and '100' being very positive about the ethnic group. The dependent variable, *the attitude towards ethnic minorities*, is a sum of the attitudes towards Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, Antilleans divided by 4 to create a scale from 0 to 100.

The dependent variable *the attitude towards the own ethnic group* is the same temperature-scale used in the questionnaire.

The dependent variable *the attitude towards the Dutch society* is measured with the question:

‘If you would rate your satisfaction with the Dutch society, what number would you choose?’. The scale is ranged from ‘1’, being very bad, until ‘10’, being very good.

Independent variables

Exposure to newspapers is measured by a six-item scale. The respondents were asked how many days a week they read a Dutch newspaper. Answers ranged between ‘1’ = never and ‘6’ = every day of the week.

Exposure to commercial channels – is measured with a six-item scale, the respondents were asked how many days a week they watched commercial channels. The answer categories ranged between ‘1’ = never and ‘6’ = every day of the week. Commercial channels are seen as sensational media. The commercial channels need to make profits by attracting watchers. Bad news and sensation are to lure watchers and therefore their programs are more aimed at sensation (Haghebaert, 2005). The commercial channels also air more drama and amusement programs than public channels.

Exposure to public channels - were measured in a similar way, also with six-item scale with a answer categories ranging from ‘1’ = never and ‘6’ = every day of the week. Public channels are seen as ‘serious’ media’. Because the public channels are funded by the Dutch government there is more room to make informative and serious programs.

Education – For the variable education use is made of two variables in the data set. In the data set two questions regarding the education were asked: ‘What is your highest acquired level of education in the Netherlands?’ and ‘What is your highest acquired level of education outside the Netherlands?’. These questions were combined, resulting in a variable education that represents a respondent’s highest acquired level of education in or outside the Netherlands.

Age – this variable is conducted in categories. Respondents were asked in which age category they belonged. The categories ranged between ‘1’, being between 15 and 19 years old, and ‘10’, being between 60 and 64 years old. In the analysis it is used as an interval variable.

Dutch Language Proficiency – The Dutch language proficiency is measured with the question: Do you have difficulties with the Dutch language? People could answer: ‘often’, ‘sometimes’ or ‘never’. Thus ‘never’, is speaking good Dutch, ‘sometimes’ is speaking reasonably good Dutch and ‘often’ is speaking poor Dutch. It is important to include the Dutch language proficiency, to make sure that the association between media and the attitude towards ethnic groups are not the result of differences in the Dutch language proficiency.

Ethnic origin – Included in the analysis are the different ethnic groups, Turks (reference group), Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans to see if there are any differences between these groups.

Self identification – Identification with the host country is included in the analysis for the ethnic minorities. Self-identification is included in the analysis to examine the perspective of Tolsma

(2009) that states that ‘the use of Dutch media by minority groups may indicate an expression of ‘national preferences’ and an involvement with the host country’ (Tolsma, 2009). Identification with the host country has been shown to be related to involvement with the host country (Tolsma, 2009). The question asked to the respondents was: “Do you feel more (ethnicity of origin country) or Dutch?”. The answer categories ranged from: ‘1’ = I feel completely (ethnicity of origin country), ‘2’ = I feel more (ethnicity of origin country) than Dutch, ‘3’ = I feel just as much (ethnicity of origin country) as Dutch, ‘4’ = I feel more Dutch than (ethnicity of origin country), and ‘5’ I feel completely Dutch. Thus, higher values correspond with higher identification with the Netherlands, and in this study are seen as an indication of an expression of ‘national preferences’ and an involvement with the Netherlands.

Chapter 7 - Results

Descriptive statistics

In table 1 the means of some variables of our interest are shown for the native Dutch and the minority groups. Table 1 shows that on a scale from '1' to '100' the mean of the attitude towards the ethnic minorities is about '54'. On a scale from '1' to '10', the mean number the ethnic minorities give for the Dutch society is a '6,8'. The attitude of the ethnic minorities towards their own ethnic group is about '65'. Moreover, in table 1 it can be seen that the native Dutch read more often a Dutch newspaper than ethnic minorities. Though, the native Dutch and ethnic minorities watch almost equally often public and commercial television channels.

Table 1: the mean of several variables for native Dutch and the ethnic minorities^{a,b,c}

	Native Dutch	Ethnic minorities
Attitude towards the ethnic minorities	54.043	.
Attitude towards the Dutch society	.	6.781
Attitude towards the own ethnic group	.	65.458
Exposure to newspapers	4.380	3.601
Exposure to public channels	4.841	4.802
Exposure to commercial channels	5.054	5.054

a. Attitude towards ethnic minorities/own ethnic group = On a scale from 1-100 (100 = very positive attitude about ethnic minorities/own ethnic group).

b. Attitude towards the Dutch society = On a scale from 1-10 (10 = very positive attitude about the Dutch society)

c. *N* ethnic minority = 3204 *N* native Dutch = 594

In table 2 the correlations for the native Dutch, the attitude of native Dutch towards ethnic minorities, exposure to newspapers, exposure to public channels and exposure to commercial channels are shown. Firstly, there exists a significant positive correlation between exposure to public channels and to commercial channels. It is quite reasonable to presume that people, who watch television, watch both types of channels. Secondly, exposure to newspaper positively correlates with exposure to public channels but negatively with commercial channels. People who read more often a Dutch newspaper watch more often public channels and less often the commercial channels. Thirdly, there is a negative correlation between exposure to commercial channels and attitudes towards ethnic minorities. People who tend to watch more commercial channels seem to have a less positive attitude towards ethnic minorities. Finally, there is a positive correlation between exposure to public channels and the attitude towards ethnic minorities. People who more often watch public channels, have a more positive attitude towards ethnic minorities.

Table 2 Correlations between most important variables for Dutch natives^{a,b,c}

	Attitude towards ethnic minorities	Exposure to newspapers	Exposure to public channels	Exposure to commercial channels
Attitude towards ethnic minorities	.			
Exposure to newspapers	0.066	.		
Exposure to public channels	0.109**	0.220***	.	
Exposure to commercial channels	- 0.080 ~	- 0.068 ~	0.143***	.

a. Attitude towards ethnic minorities = On a scale from 1-100 (100 = very positive attitude about ethnic minorities).

b. $N = 594$

c. ~ = $p < 0.10$; * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$.

In table 3 the correlations between the attitude towards the Dutch society, the attitude towards one's own ethnic group, exposure to newspapers, exposure to public channels and exposure to commercial channels for ethnic minorities are shown. A positive correlation exists between the attitude towards the Dutch society and the attitude towards the own ethnic group. Ethnic minorities who tend to think more positively about their own ethnic group also tend to be more positive about the Dutch society. Exposure to public channels and exposure to commercial channels are significantly positively correlated with the attitude toward the Dutch society. Ethnic minorities who watch more television,

public or commercial channels, are more positive about the Dutch society. Self-identification with the host country is significantly positively associated with the attitude towards the Dutch society. Members of an ethnic minority, who see themselves as more Dutch, are more positive about the Dutch society. The attitude towards the own ethnic group is negatively correlated with exposure to public channels. This means that the ethnic minorities who watch more often public channels, are more negative about their own ethnic group. Self-identification with the host country is significantly negatively correlated with the attitude toward the own ethnic group. Members of an ethnic minority group who see themselves more as Dutch, have a more negative attitude towards their own ethnic group.

For ethnic minorities, exposure to Dutch newspapers is positively correlated with commercial and public channels, so ethnic minorities who are more exposed to Dutch newspapers also watch more commercial and public channels. Like for the native Dutch, there is a positive correlation between watching public and commercial channels. Hence, also ethnic minorities who watch television, often watch commercial channels as well as public channels. Self-identification with the host country is positively correlated with the exposure to the Dutch newspapers. Ethnic minorities who are more exposed to the Dutch newspapers see themselves more as Dutch. Self-identification with the host country is significantly positively correlated with watching public and commercial channels, so ethnic minorities who watch more public and commercial channels see themselves as more Dutch.

Table 3 Correlations between most important variables for ethnic minorities^{a,b,c}

	Attitude towards Dutch society	Attitude towards own ethnic group	Exposure to newspapers	Exposure to public channels	Exposure to commercial channels	Self identification with host county
Attitude towards Dutch society	.					
Attitude towards own ethnic group	0.060***	.				
Exposure to newspapers	-0.003	-0.011	.			
Exposure to public channels	0.043**	-0.035*	0.202***	.		
Exposure to commercial channels	0.059***	0.017	0.216***	0.471***	.	
Self identification with host country	0.058***	-0.115***	0.173***	0.085***	0.165***	.

a. Attitude towards native Dutch and own ethnic group = On a scale from 1-100 (100 = very positive attitude about native Dutch or own ethnic group).

b. $N = 3218$

c. $\sim = p < 0.10$; $* = p < 0.05$; $** = p < 0.01$; $*** = p < 0.001$

Analyses

In table 4 the regression analysis of the attitudes of the native Dutch towards ethnic minorities is displayed. Education has a positive relationship with the attitude towards ethnic minorities, higher educated native Dutch are more positive about ethnic minorities. In addition younger people tend to have a more positive attitude about ethnic minorities. Reading Dutch newspapers does not relate to the attitude towards ethnic minorities.

Watching public television channels does have a significant positive effect on the attitude towards ethnic minorities. Watching commercial television channels seem to have a significant

negative effect on the attitude of the native Dutch towards the ethnic minorities. These result are not completely in line with the hypotheses (1a, 2a and 3a) drawn from all previously discussed theories namely, the Cultivation theory, Agenda Setting theory and the Social Cognitive Theory. The Cultivation theory and the Agenda Setting theory stated that media usage, especially sensational media or in this case commercial channels, would have a negative effect on the attitudes towards the ethnic minorities (hypotheses 1a and 3a). The Social Cognitive Theory stated that media usage would not have any effect on the attitude towards the ethnic minorities (hypothesis 2a).

However, one element of the Cultivation theory and the Agenda Setting theory seems supported, commercial channels do have a more negative effect on the attitude towards ethnic minorities than public channels. Though, it is unexpected that public channels have a positive effect on the attitudes of the native Dutch towards the ethnic minorities instead of a slighter negative effect. Possibly, the public channels display a more positive portrait on ethnic minorities than was assumed. One other explanation for these results is that it might be that people with a more positive attitude towards the ethnic minorities, watch more often to public channels. The most important result from this study is that it is very important to divide commercial and public channels because they have different relations with the attitude towards ethnic minorities.

Table 4 Regression analysis of the attitudes towards four minority groups; unstandardized coefficients^{a,b,c}

Constant	48.219***
Newspaper	0.156
Public channels	1.357*
Commercial channels	-0.976~
Gender	
- Woman (-reference group)	-
- Man	-1.305
Education	1.788***
Age	-0.564~
% Explained variance	5.936

a. On a scale from 1-100 (100 = very positive attitude about minority groups)

b. $N = 585$.

c. ~ = $p < 0.10$; * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$.

In table 5 two models of the attitudes of the ethnic minorities towards the native Dutch are shown. First model 1 will be discussed. In Model 1 exposure to Dutch newspapers does not have a significant effect on the attitude towards the Dutch society. Men from a ethnic minority are more positive about the Dutch society. People who experience difficulties with the Dutch language are more positive about the Dutch society. This result is very unexpected because one would imagine that people who do not speak the Dutch language well, will be less integrated in the Dutch society and therefore be less positive about the Dutch society. Possibly ethnic minorities who speak good Dutch understand the negative message of the media better, and consequently are more negative about the Dutch society. The Surinamese seem to be more negative about the Dutch society than the Turks.

Commercial channels have a positive effect on the attitude towards the Dutch society, whereas the public channels do not show a significant relation with the attitude towards the Dutch society. These results are unexpected when one looks at the hypotheses drawn from the Cultivation theory, Agenda Setting theory. These hypotheses (1b and 3b) state that media usage, especially sensational or in this study commercial channels, will have a negative effect on the attitude towards the Dutch society. An explanation for these results is difficult. It could be that the assumption that a negative portrait about ethnic minorities in the media will create a negative attitude towards the Dutch society is incorrect. On the other hand, the perspective of Tolsma could be correct, which stated that media usage could be an expression of involvement with the host country. To analyze the perspective of Tolsma (2009), we included a variable self-identification with the host county. This would be the reason for the positive relationship some researcher have found between media usage and the attitude toward the native Dutch. According to Tolsma (2009), involvement with the host country has been shown to be related to identification with the host county. In the LAS data set self-identification with the host country is the best variable to test this hypothesis. If ethnic minorities feel more like native Dutch, they will probably watch more Dutch television and read more Dutch newspaper and also be more positive about the Dutch society. In the second model, we see that not much changes when we include the self-identification. Based on Tolsma's perspective we would expect to see that the relationship between media and the attitude towards the native Dutch would disappear or at least diminish. Some very small changes do appear when one looks at the relationship between commercial channels and the attitude towards the Dutch society, this positive relationship diminishes a bit. Though, a relation between commercial channels and the attitude towards the Dutch society still exists. We thus do not find strong evidence for Tolsma's view.

Table 5 Regression analysis of the attitudes towards native Dutch; unstandardized coefficients^{a,b,c}

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	6.333***	6.139***
Newspapers	0.018	0.015
Commercial channels	0.075***	0.069**
Public channels	-0.004	-0.004
Gender		
- Woman (reference group)	-	-
- Man	-0.035	-0.036
Education	-0.063***	-0.069***
Age	0.056***	0.055***
Dutch language		
- Poor (reference group)	-	-
- reasonably well	-0.008	-0.029
- well	0.045	-0.020
Ethnic origin		
- Turkish (reference group)	-	-
- Moroccan	0.016	0.003
- Surinam	-0.206*	-0.243**
- Antillean	-0.025	-0.056
Self-identification	-	0.115***
% Explained variance	1.895	2.475

a. On a scale from 1-100 (100 = very positive attitude about native Dutch).

b. $N = 3187$

c. $\sim = p < 0.10$; $* = p < 0.05$; $** = p < 0.01$; $*** = p < 0.001$.

In table 6 the attitudes of the ethnic minorities towards their own ethnic group are shown. In table 6 it can be seen that none of the media variables seem to have a significant association with the attitude towards the own ethnic group. Thus, it can be assumed that the media does not have any effect on the

attitude towards ethnic minority's own groups. These results seem to refute the hypotheses (1c, 2c and 3c) of the Cultivation theory, Agenda Setting theory and the Social Cognitive Theory. These theories all supposed that the media, and especially the sensational media, would have a negative effect on the attitude towards their own ethnic group.

Table 6 Regression analysis of the attitudes of the ethnic minorities towards their own ethnic group; unstandardized coefficients^{a,b,c}

Constant	71.745***
Newspaper	-0.324
Commercial channels	0.389
Public channels	-0.260
Gender	
- Woman (-reverence group)	-
- Man	1.351~
Education	0.050
Age	-0.807***
Dutch language	
- Poor (-reference group)	-
- reasonably well	-4.026**
- well	-2.353~
Ethnic origin	
- Turkish	-
- Moroccan	-1.745~
- Surinam	2.514*
- Antillean	-2.254*
% Explained variance	2.257

a. On a scale from 1-100 (100 = very positive attitude about native Dutch).

b. $N = 3187$

c. ~ = $p < 0.10$; * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion and discussion

Generally, the Dutch media portrays a negative image of ethnic minorities. Often ethnic minorities are underrepresented, stereotyped or associated with negative subjects as crime and violence. The media does not portray a representative image of ethnic minorities. An important point that researchers make is the distinction between different media forms, because not all sorts of media are equally negative on ethnic minorities. The sensational media seems more negative on minorities than the serious media.

There exist different theories that try to explain how the media would influence person's attitudes. Whereas the Cultivation Theory and the Agenda Setting Theory would expect that native Dutch who make more use of the Dutch media, especially sensational media, will create a more negative attitude towards ethnic minorities, the Social Cognitive Theory assumes that the native Dutch will not be influenced by the negative portrayal of minorities and therefore will not create a more negative attitude towards ethnic minorities. No support is found in this, or other studies for the Social Cognitive Theory. In our study we did find some support for the Cultivation Theory and the Agenda Setting Theory. This study shows that exposure to public television channels has a positive effect on the attitude of the native Dutch towards ethnic minorities, whereas watching commercial television channels has a negative effect on the attitude of the native Dutch towards the ethnic minorities. These findings are to some extent in line with the results Lubbers et al. (1998) and Vergeer (2000), who found that exposure to a sensational newspaper or a sensational television channel was related to negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Though, they did not find a positive relation between serious media and the attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Other studies concerning media influence on the attitudes towards ethnic minorities show diverse results. Gijssberts and Lubbers (2009) stated that that media has a negative effect on the attitudes towards the ethnic minorities, whereas Tolsma (2009) stated that the media has a positive effect on the attitudes towards the ethnic minorities. However, in these studies the distinction between sensational and serious media was not made and therefore may give these mixed results. This study is an extension on the research on the influence of the media on the attitudes of the native Dutch towards the ethnic minorities, by showing that it is especially important to separate the sensational and serious media. Therefore further research on this topic should include this distinction in their analyses. In addition, this study shows no influence of newspapers on the attitudes of the native Dutch, this could be because in this study we were not able to make the distinction between sensational and serious newspapers. Future research should include this distinction to further analyze the effect of newspapers.

The Cultivation Theory and the Agenda Setting Theory assume that members of an ethnic minority group in the Netherlands who make more use of the Dutch media, especially sensational media, will create a more negative attitude towards the Dutch society. This study shows a positive effect of exposure to sensational television channels on the attitudes of ethnic minorities towards the

Dutch society. Although this result is unexpected when you look at the proposed theories, other studies, like those of Gijssberts and Vervoort (2009) and Tolsma (2009), also found positive effects of the media on the attitudes of ethnic minorities towards the Dutch society. To explain these findings, Tolsma (2009) suggested that media usages by ethnic minorities could be an indicator of ‘national preferences’ or involvement with the host country. Thus, the attitudes of ethnic minorities influences the Dutch media usage. To test this explanation, self-identification was included into the model. Though, including self-identification did not make the positive effect of sensational media disappear. Although adding self-identification did diminish the effect of exposure to commercial channels a bit, still there is no strong evidence for Tolsma’s (2009) perspective. The reason for this positive effect of sensational media needs further research. To fully examine the perspective of Tolsma (2009) longitudinal research must be done to expose whether the media influences ethnic minorities’ attitudes towards the Dutch society or that the attitude towards the Dutch society influence the media usage. Also for the attitudes of ethnic minorities this study shows no influence of newspapers, this could be because we were not able to make a distinction between sensational and serious newspapers.

The Cultivation Theory, Agenda Setting Theory and the Social Cognitive Theory all assume that ethnic minorities who make more use of the Dutch media, especially sensational media, will create a more negative attitude towards their own ethnic group. No, previous research has been done on the influence of the media upon the attitudes of ethnic minorities towards their own ethnic group. And this study shows that the media does not seem to influence the attitudes of ethnic minorities towards their own ethnic group.

In sum, the assumption that the media, and especially the sensational media, has a negative effect on the attitudes of native Dutch towards the ethnic minorities and on the attitudes of ethnic minorities towards the Dutch society and their own ethnic group is partly supported by this study. For the attitudes of the native Dutch towards the ethnic minorities a negative effect of sensational media and a positive effect of serious media was found. Though, sensational media has a positive effect on the attitudes of ethnic minorities towards the Dutch society and no effect on the attitude towards the own ethnic group. In this study no strong support is found for the perspective that media usage by ethnic minorities is an expression of ‘national preferences’ and a indicator of involvement with the host country. These are important findings because the Netherlands is regarded as a mediocracy, and politicians listen to the media regarding what is important and what they should do about these problems (Vliegthart, 2007). To get a better understanding on this topic, future research should make the distinction between sensational and serious media. Moreover, longitudinal research on this topic should be done to examine, in further extend, the perspective that the Dutch media usage by ethnic minorities relates to more positive attitudes towards the Dutch society because of more involvement with the host country.

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