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Multiculturalism and multicultural citizenship : public views on national belonging, equality and cultural distinctiveness in the Netherlands

Boog, I.

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Author: Boog, Igor

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Chapter 2

Research methods

2.1 Introduction

The methodological aspects of this study will be discussed in this chapter. First of all, the research type will be described, followed by a discussion of the sampling method, sample characteristics, a description of the questionnaire development, a review of the data collection and a brief explanation of the employed techniques for data analysis. Finally, a number of limitations of this study as well as possible directions for future research on this topic will be discussed.

2.2 Research type

As mentioned, the main research question is focused on the views of Dutch citizens about the three dimensions of multicultural citizenship discussed in Chapter 1.¹ Using these dimensions as a point of departure, the main research question has been divided into the following sub-questions:

- What views do Dutch citizens entertain about national belonging and its relationship with multiple citizenship and loyalty to the nation-state?
- What views do Dutch citizens have about the equality of citizens, both immigrants and natives, in society?
- What views do Dutch citizens have about the cultural distinctiveness of the various cultural and religious groups in the country?

¹ As said, the goal of this study is to explore public *views* on multicultural citizenship, and *not* to examine whether individuals would pass a civic integration test or are eligible for citizenship

- How are these views interrelated, and how are they related to the background variables of respondents, including age, gender, descent, educational level, income and political preference?

As mentioned in Chapter 1, few empirical studies on these public views exist, especially any which concern the dimension of national belonging and its relationship to national loyalty.

The proposed exploratory character and wide scope of this study led to the choice of a mixed-method methodological design, including a survey (n=710) and semi-structured in-depth interviews (n=66) in which both native Dutch and first- and second-generation immigrants – holding Dutch citizenship – were interviewed. The survey was meant to facilitate the exploration of relationships between views on all dimensions of multicultural citizenship and the inclusion of background variables in the analysis. Open-ended questions in the questionnaire and in the in-depth interviews allowed respondents to elaborate on their opinions, for instance, why and in what context do they hold certain views, in order to enrich the data and to improve the validity of the research findings (cf. Small 2011).

Given the size of the survey sample, it was not practicable to conduct the questionnaire by means of face-to-face interviews. Therefore, Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) was carried out by the TNS NIPO survey agency (further explained below). Respondents received an email invitation requesting them to participate in this research and a web link to the online questionnaire. In contrast, the in-depth interviews were conducted in person or by telephone.

2.3 Population, sample selection and sample characteristics

2.3.1 Sample selection

Decisions concerning the selection and composition of the sample were based both on two points, a review of the relevant literature and on practical considerations. The literature review indicated that such background variables as descent, religion, age, educational level and political preference are relevant in research on such topics as national belonging and loyalty to the nation-state (Devos & Banaji 2005; Huddy & Khatib 2007; Jones & Smith 2001a; Theiss-Morse 2009). Furthermore, in view of the scientific and political debates on multiculturalism (see Chapter 1), it was abundantly clear that the sample should include at least both native Dutch and first- and second-generation immigrants.

The wide scope of this study required a relatively large sample. Given a desired confidence level of 95% and also a confidence interval of around 95%, the sample

size should ideally be at least 400 (cf. Israel 1992). However, considering the number of the background variables, the sample size should be even larger, to allow for describing and comparing sub-groups. Moreover, the planned multivariate analyses (see Section 2.6) would require a respondent to survey-item ratio of around 10:1 (Bijleveld & Commandeur 2008; Costello & Osborne 2005). The limited budget for the study allowed for a sample size of only around $n=700$. Therefore, it was decided to select a sample which would at least include a sub-group of native Dutch and a sub-group of non-Western immigrants, each large enough to allow an analysis with, or close to, the desired confidence level and interval.

One of the problems with this sort of research is that it is not always easy to obtain a representative sample which is of the desired size, mainly because it is difficult and time-consuming to establish a comprehensive sampling frame.² Therefore it was decided to use the research panel TNS NIPObase, which contains around 216,000 respondents in 143,640 households (June 2012). It is mainly based on random respondent pre-recruitment (and therefore not on self-selection).³ By referring to the information TNS NIPO has about the background characteristics of respondents in their panel, it was possible to obtain a sample which is, by and large, representative with respect to the variables mentioned above. Another advantage of this panel is that it includes respondents who have already agreed to participate in TNS NIPO online surveys, which improves the response rate.

The panel included Dutch citizens who are 18 years of age or older. Consequently, it was decided to define the population for this study in the category of Dutch citizens who are 18 years of age or older. Studying children and young adolescents would require a different legal and theoretical approach (cf. French, Seidman, Allen & Aber 2006; Phinney 1990), which would make the scope of this study even wider, and would have limited its depth.

Considering the relatively low percentage of immigrants in the Netherlands (see Chapter 1), simple random sampling would have resulted in a low absolute number of immigrant respondents, negatively affecting the reliability of the study.

² Only Statistics Netherlands (CBS) has direct access to the Municipal Personal Records Database (Gemeentelijke Basis Administratie – GBA), which contains the requisite information for a sampling frame for studies on Dutch citizens.

³ The pre-recruitment by TNS NIPO is done in face-to-face and telephonic interviews, for which respondents were selected through random sampling. To increase the proportion in the panel of groups which are difficult to reach or less represented in society such as minorities, TNS NIPO uses other recruitment methods, including snowball sampling. For an assessment of this panel and other panels in the Netherlands, see Van Ossenbruggen, Vonk & Willems (2006). See also: <http://www.nopvo.nl>.

Therefore, a disproportionate stratified sample was selected, which included two sub-samples. The first consisted of Dutch citizens excluding non-Western immigrants, the second included immigrants belonging to the four largest non-Western immigrant groups in the Netherlands: persons of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean descent. In total, 950 persons were approached, of whom 710 returned filled in questionnaires. Consequently, the first sub-sample consisted of 468 native Dutch, 33 Western immigrants and 7 persons whose descent is unknown, and the second sub-sample consisted of 202 non-Western immigrants.⁴ The response rate varied between 67% (non-Western immigrants) and 84% (native Dutch and Western immigrants).

For the semi-structured in-depth interviews, a sub-sample of respondents was taken from the survey sample. To this end, the survey included questions about whether respondents were willing to co-operate in a follow-up interview and whether this willingness depended on a potential reward of 25 Euros. Such an incentive was indeed provided, as experience with other studies indicates that the relatively low response for in-depth follow-up interviews in the Netherlands can be increased by offering a reward (cf. Stoop 2005). Of the 710 respondents who filled out the survey, 184 consented to a follow-up interview, of whom 143 were only prepared to be interviewed in return for a monetary reward. The prevalent recommendation for a minimum size of non-probability samples for qualitative interviews is between 30 and 50 (Bernard 2011: 154). Therefore, of the 184 respondents who were prepared to participate, a random sample of 120 was selected and approached for an interview. In total, 66 persons responded (some after a reminder) and were interviewed, including 42 who expected a reward and 24 who did not. All 66 participants, however, were rewarded with a gift voucher worth 25 Euros.

2.3.2 Sample characteristics

As mentioned above, the sample was disproportionally stratified and included two sub-samples. The first sub-sample, consisting of native Dutch ($n=468$) and Western immigrants ($n=33$), was representative (in 2012) with respect to the variables gender, age, educational level, family size, province of residence and political preference. Of the Western immigrants, 21% were not born in the Netherlands (i.e. are first generation), and 18% of them have multiple citizenship. The second sub-sample, consisting of immigrants of Turkish ($n=59$), Moroccan

⁴ As mentioned above, given the limited budget it was decided to select a sample which allowed for analysis with or close to the desired confidence level and interval of at least native Dutch and non-Western immigrant respondents. This led to a sample that included a low number of Western immigrants. This limitation will be discussed in more depth in Section 2.7.

($n=45$), Surinamese ($n=73$) and Antillean ($n=25$) descent, was representative with respect to gender, age and educational level. Of these respondents, 57% were not born in the Netherlands, and 38% do have multiple citizenship.

The total sample consisted of 359 female and 351 male respondents who were between 18 and 93 years old. The average age of the native Dutch respondents was 47.7 (SD = 17.3). The non-Western immigrants were younger ($M = 37.2$, SD = 15.1) and the Western immigrants older ($M = 52.0$, SD = 17.2). The mean educational level, measured on a scale from 1 (no or primary education) to 7 (MA at university) of the native Dutch respondents was 4.0 (SD = 1.8), of the non-Western immigrants 3.4⁵ (SD = 1.8) and Western immigrants 4.4 (SD = 1.6).

The sample for the in-depth interviews ($n=66$) consisted of 41 native Dutch and 25 non-Western immigrants, including 26 male and 40 female respondents. At the time of the study, they were between 20 and 77 years old ($M = 45.2$, SD = 14.8). Their average educational level was clearly higher than that in the survey sample: 4.9 (SD = 1.3), which equalled higher general secondary education or pre-university secondary education.⁶

2.4 Development of the questionnaires

As said, two questionnaires were developed for this study: one for the survey and the other for the in-depth follow-up interviews. To this end, the sub-research questions regarding the three dimensions of multicultural citizenship (see 2.2 above) were operationalized on the basis of a study of the relevant literature.

To answer the first sub-research question, regarding views on national belonging and its relationship to multiple citizenship and loyalty to the nation-state, questions were formulated on:

- cognitive aspects of national identification, that is, criteria for national belonging;
- cognitive aspects of national self-identification;
- affective aspects of national and ethnic self-identification, that is, sense of belonging;
- views on multiple citizenship in relation to belonging and loyalty;

⁵ This average of 3.4 indicates a level between lower general secondary education (Dutch: VMBO) and vocational education (Dutch: MBO), consistent with the information of Statistics Netherlands (CBS Statline, accessed February 3, 2014, <http://statline.cbs.nl>). However, respondents of Antillean and Surinamese origin have a higher average educational level (3.8 and 3.7 respectively) than those of Turkish and Moroccan origin (3.2 and 2.8 respectively).

⁶ In Dutch: HAVO/VWO.

- views on expressions of national loyalty, including aspects of national pride, shame and patriotism.

To answer the second sub-research question about citizens' equality, questions were formulated in order to investigate views on:

- the principle of equal treatment;
- anti-discrimination policy and positive action measures;
- immigrant integration (policy and cultural retention);
- aspects of the prejudicial view that immigrants are a cultural and economic threat;
- frequency of social contact with, and social distance between, different groups.

To answer the third sub-research question, on cultural distinctiveness, questions were formulated to investigate views on:

- the value of cultural diversity;
- cultural and religious distinctiveness;
- the formal recognition of religious distinctiveness;
- cultural diversity measures in the workplace and in healthcare organizations;
- Islamic religious expressions;
- the compatibility of Islamic and Dutch norms and values.

These topics and the literature from which they were derived will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 3 to 6. Finally, questions were included to collect information about such background variables as gender, age, educational level, income and political preference.

The survey questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions in order to understand the motivation of respondents in answering the questions and simultaneously to improve construct validity. This questionnaire also included scales for measuring views on various aspects of national (self-)identification, prejudice and social distance. These scales were derived from previous studies and adapted for the present study.

The questionnaire for the follow-up in-depth interviews was semi-structured, focusing on why and in what context respondents hold certain views on the various

aspects. These questions did not just focus on respondents' views, they also asked them to relate these views to their personal experiences.

Pilot interviews were conducted among respondents from various (educational) backgrounds, to assess the expected duration of the interviews and the perceived difficulty and phrasing of the questions. The maximum duration of the survey, which was conducted online (as mentioned above), appeared to be around 25 minutes. The comments of the pilot respondents indicated that a longer duration would probably have lowered the completion rate, with which researchers at TNS-NIPO concurred. The maximum duration of the face-to-face interviews appeared to be around 60 minutes. Pilot respondents mentioned that they considered some questions to be quite difficult, and 'therefore one hour is more than enough'.

To improve intelligibility, when they had been deemed too complicated questions were rephrased and simplified. The questions which most needed some modification were those on the topics of loyalty and positive action measures. Furthermore, to reduce the risk of socially desirable responses, the order in which topics were addressed was adapted. In the survey questionnaire, for example, the question on positive action measures for ethnic minorities and questions about similar measures for women were addressed in different sections. In the questionnaire for the in-depth interviews, such questions were followed by a question in order to compare the respondent's views on such issues.

2.5 Data collection

The survey was conducted in November 2012 and the in-depth follow-up interviews took place between March and August 2013.

The in-depth interviews were conducted by the main researcher (n=31) and by three other interviewers (n=35). Respondents were asked to determine the location of the interview themselves. Most interviews were carried out face-to-face and in respondents' homes. Other interviews took place in their offices, or in cafés and restaurants. Some interviews were carried out by telephone or Skype, for practical reasons or at the request of the respondent. The duration of these interviews varied from 45 to 70 minutes. Respondents were asked permission to record the interview and only 4 refused. Consequently, 62 interviews were recorded. Notes were taken during the interviews.

In their introduction to the interview, interviewers stressed that this study concerned the respondents' views and that they were not being judged, there were no wrong answers and that not having an opinion or considering a question difficult is normal, perfectly acceptable and at the same time important information.

By and large, respondents appeared to be at ease during the interviews. Some clearly enjoyed answering the questions, and said that they considered it refreshing to talk extensively about these topics and not ending up in a polarized discussion. A few reacted emotionally to questions which concerned cultural or religious distinctiveness, and had to be reminded by the interviewer that the questions were not meant to spark a debate. As one respondent said, 'Why are you asking this? Why on earth would I consider it to be a problem if women choose to wear a headscarf?' Interestingly, interviewers were often surprised by the frankness of respondents who appeared to consider immigration and the cultural distinctiveness of immigrants to be problematic. They talked frankly and without hesitation about their views. Other respondents appeared to be very tolerant of cultural and religious distinctiveness in the first part of the interview, but had to acknowledge later that they were not tolerant with respect to all forms of cultural distinctiveness. Some argued, for example, that they support the principle of equal treatment, but at the same time had more difficulty approving of preferential treatment measures for immigrants than of preferential treatment measures for women. As one respondent said, 'After some heart searching, I would say yes to preferential treatment for women, and no to preferential treatment for ethnic minorities. But, with some hesitation, I approve of both, because you have to treat people equally.' These doubts expressed by respondents underlined how important it is to approach issues of citizens' equality and cultural distinctiveness in various ways, by addressing topics covering all three dimensions of multicultural citizenship.

It turned out that there were several categories of questions which respondents considered difficult to answer. The most challenging were those questions concerning national belonging. Some explained that they do not, or only rarely, think about criteria which determine who belongs to the Dutch national group, and found it difficult to think of relevant criteria. In the same vein, those who argued that they consider a certain manifestation of cultural distinctiveness, such as an Islamic headscarf or a mosque, to be a problem, often admitted that they were at a loss to come up with an example of a personal experience in which they had experienced these manifestations as problematic. This is in line with research which has indicated that thoughts and feelings about social groups reflect both 'controlled and conscious processes' and 'automatic and less conscious processes' (Devos & Banaji 2005: 448). For this reason, this study focuses not only on specific criteria for defining national belonging and specific manifestations of cultural distinctiveness, but also on patterns of inclusion and exclusion of citizens of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Other possibilities to examine less conscious forms of social categorization in future studies will be discussed in Section 2.7.

Other questions which were considered difficult were those about aspects of multiple citizenship and loyalty to the nation-state. While almost all respondents indicated that they were aware of the political debates on these issues, during the interview most of them said that they did not know of any actual cases of multiple citizenship or of any lack of loyalty which had presented a problem. Some began speculating, others simply said they did not know or did not understand why these issues were considered problematic by politicians. Similarly, most respondents did not know what the concept 'neutrality of the state' means, and considered it difficult to answer, for example, whether public officials and teachers should be allowed to wear an Islamic headscarf. Finally, many respondents did not know what the equality policies and regulations of the Dutch government, including measures for immigrant integration, anti-discrimination and positive action, entail. Thinking these issues over, many respondents admitted that they did not have any personal experiences to which they could refer to formulate an opinion. These responses illustrate the importance of researching the views on these issues of the political elite in future studies. Such directions for future studies will be discussed in Section 2.7.

2.6 Data analysis

After completion of the survey, TNS NIPO delivered the collected data in a file which could be processed by IBM SPSS Statistics. This file included factors in order to weight the total disproportional stratified sample to reflect the demographic profile of the Netherlands. Before commencing the statistical analysis, the data were cleaned and examined by calculating frequencies and creating contingency tables.

The quantitative data, collected by means of closed-ended questions in the online survey, served to explore views on the dimensions of multicultural citizenship (see Chapter 1), and relationships between these views and such background variables as gender and educational level. To this end, techniques for univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis have been employed. The bulk of this data is of either the nominal or the ordinal type (most questions used Likert scales), which means that linear relationships cannot be assumed. For this reason, techniques have been used which are nonparametric and can reveal possible nonlinear relationships between variables with various levels of measurement. To explore patterns in respondents' views, two such (related) techniques were used: Categorical Principal Components Analysis (CATPCA) and Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) (provided in the SPSS Categories module), which are alternatives to linear Principal Components Analysis (see also Linting &

Van der Kooij 2012). As mentioned above, such exploration is important, as this study focuses on patterns of inclusion and exclusion of citizens of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and not just on specific criteria for national belonging and specific manifestations of cultural distinctiveness (cf. Spruyt & Vanhoutte 2009). Furthermore, such data reduction techniques allow the exploration of patterns in expressions of national attachment, including loyalty to the nation-state. Consequently, the CATPCA technique was used to construct scales by which to explore relationships between these patterns (represented by scales) and other variables. These scales were constructed by summing items, and not by calculating component (factor) scores, as this study is exploratory and summated scales are generally more stable across samples and therefore easier to compare with results of future studies (cf. DiStefano, Zhu & Mîndrilă 2009). Importantly, it must be noted that the means that were calculated to compare scores on items are exploratory as well, as the items were measured using Likert-scales.

These techniques and the related technique of Categorical Regression (CATREG) (also provided in the SPSS Categories module) were also used to explore profiles of respondents, that is, response patterns (see also Bijleveld & Commandeur 2008; Van der Kooij 2007). The latter technique allowed the exploration of relationships with background variables, while controlling for other variables. It bears repeating, however, that while p-values to assess significance (derived from the CATREG procedures) have been reported, this study is exploratory in nature.

The qualitative data, collected by means of the open-ended questions in the survey and the in-depth interviews, served (as mentioned above) to explore why and in what context respondents hold certain views, in order to enrich the data and improve the validity of the research findings. The data collected by the in-depth interviews was transcribed, using the recordings and notes. These transcriptions and the data derived from the open-ended questions in the survey were coded, initially using a list of codes which was compiled on the basis of the interview topics, the literature study and notes made during the interviews. During the coding process, new codes were created to describe unforeseen topics in the data. Subsequently, relationships between codes were identified and described by categories (see also Strauss & Corbin 1998). In the next phase of the analysis, these categories were related to the results of the analysis of the quantitative data.

2.7 Limitations and possible directions for future research

In this section, the methodological and theoretical limitations of this study and possible directions for future research will be briefly discussed.

A general methodological limitation of this study is its exploratory nature (see Chapter 1). The reader has to bear in mind that the goal of this study is to provide insights into respondents' views and the relationships between these views and other variables. Furthermore, views were explored within a relatively short period of time (8 months).

Other limitations have to do with the sample selection. First of all, the survey sample contained a relatively small number of Western immigrants ($n=33$), whereas according to Statistics Netherlands their number (1.5 million) is close to the number of non-Western immigrants (1.9 million).⁷ The former group was also missing in the sample for the in-depth interviews. Both shortcomings limited the reliability of the results concerning this group. Similarly, the various groups of non-Western immigrants included in the sample (Dutch citizens of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean background) were relatively small, which limited the reliability of separate analyses of each group.

An important point is that the survey and in-depth interviews were conducted in Dutch. This limited the study, as it was not (practically) possible to explore the views of Dutch citizens who do not have a relatively good command of the Dutch language. Other limits are attributable to the fact that the sample was selected from the access panel TNS NIPObase, and that the survey was conducted online. This might have resulted in a sampling bias, as the sample only contains individuals who are able to participate in online web interviewing. While 96% of Dutch citizens had access to the Internet in 2012 (Van Deursen & Van Dijk 2012), not everyone has the (technical) capability to fill in online questionnaires. Furthermore, although their panel is based on random pre-recruitment and not on self-selection (as mentioned above), obviously respondents have already agreed to participate in online surveys of TNS-NIPO. As is the case with all studies which require samples for interviewing, this results in a non-response bias. This means that, while the sample was representative with respect to the variables mentioned above, it is not known to what extent and how the response patterns of the respondents included differ from (potential) responses of individuals who did not want to participate in such surveys.

This method of online interviewing has some other limitations as well. There was no interviewer present to explain questions which needed more clarification. This problem could only be partly dealt with by testing the phrasing and difficulty of the questions in pilot interviews, and by relating the results to those of the in-depth interviews. There is also the possibility that respondents might have been less motivated, which can lead to non-differentiation between items on the same

⁷ Numbers in January 2013. CBS Statline, accessed February 3, 2014, <http://statline.cbs.nl>.

response scale and to an acquiescence bias as well. The risk of the latter type of bias has been reduced (but cannot be eliminated) by including items which are neutrally worded, and by mixing negatively and positively worded items.

A further limitation of this study concerns the question type used. Most questions in the survey were of the closed-ended type, possibly introducing researcher bias and reducing the level of spontaneity in respondents' answers (cf. Bryman 2012: 250-252). However, this limitation was partly overcome by adding the response category 'other' to several questions, the inclusion of open questions to allow respondents to elaborate and by relating the results of the survey to those of the follow-up in-depth interviews.

A final methodological limitation concerns the fact that the in-depth interviews were carried out by native Dutch interviewers. As relations between majority and minority groups are important factors in the construction of social boundaries (see Chapter 3), this might have influenced responses by non-native respondents, namely by introducing social desirability bias.

The study also has theoretical limitations. First of all, the questions in the survey questionnaire were largely based on the relevant literature, and not on preliminary qualitative research to identify relevant topics (for example, regarding criteria for national belonging and expressions of loyalty) and to construct specific scales. In other words, this exploratory study did not include a preliminary exploratory phase.

Furthermore, views on citizens' equality, one of the dimensions of multicultural citizenship, were measured by a small number of items concerning the principle of equal treatment, anti-discrimination policies and positive action measures. Views on the above-mentioned topic of immigrant integration and the prejudice that immigrants present a threat appeared to be related not only to views on equality, but also to views on the other dimensions of multicultural citizenship, as will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. In future studies, more items should be included to explore public views concerning citizens' equality in more depth.

More generally, the wide scope of the study has limited the depth in which the views on multicultural citizenship could be researched. As mentioned in Section 2.5, existing research indicates that thoughts and feelings concerning social groups reflect both 'controlled and conscious processes' and 'automatic and less conscious processes' (Devos & Banaji 2005: 448). Therefore, in future studies specific attention could be paid to less conscious associations, for example, using Implicit Association Testing (IAT) (e.g. Devos & Bajani 2005), and the views of the elite on the dimensions of multicultural citizenship could be explored. In this context, Brady and Kaplan (2009: 35) argue that 'elites typically take the lead in constructing and elaborating ethnic identities, so that the dynamics of ethnicity

involve an interplay between elites and mass publics that cannot be understood without separate measures at the two levels'. Indeed, as discussed in Section 2.5, the results of the present study indicate that the Dutch discourse on aspects of multicultural citizenship, for example, on the issue of national loyalty, is partly shaped by the political elite. While such studies might provide insights into the interplay between elites and mass publics, longitudinal studies could take diachronic factors into account, for example, the effects of changes in the political debate, economic developments and immigration patterns (cf. Scheepers, Coenders & Lubbers 2003). Finally, as mentioned in Chapter 1, this study does not address the question how these public views are shaped in society or influenced by institutional processes such as education and the development of school curricula. This does not mean that such processes are not influential. On the contrary, see, for example, studies by Anderson (1991), Bakke (2000), Schiffauer, Baumann, Kastoryano and Vertovec (2004), and Vertovec (2011). Obviously, future studies addressing this question should also pay attention to the aforementioned role of the elite and diachronic factors.

