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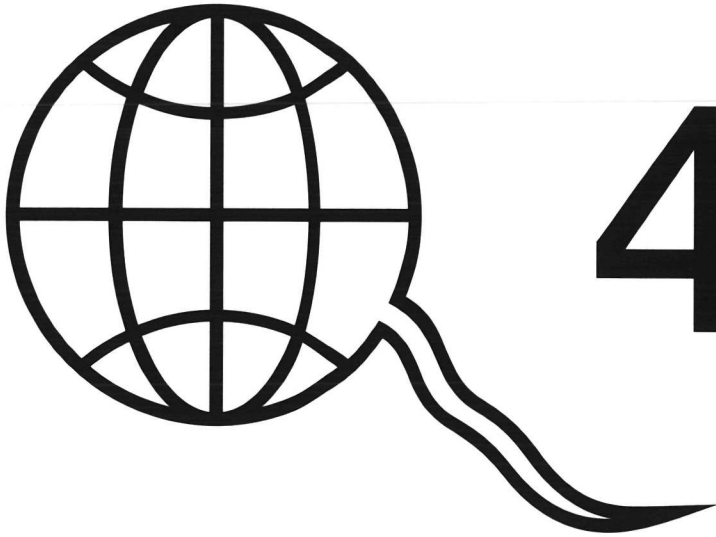
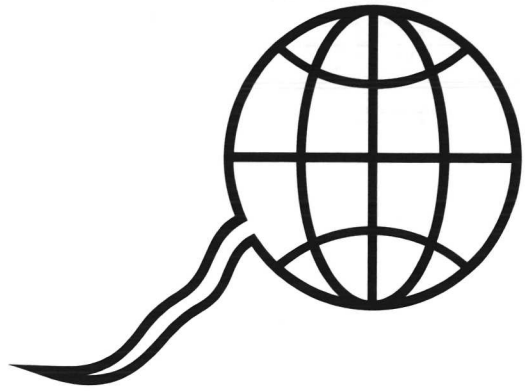
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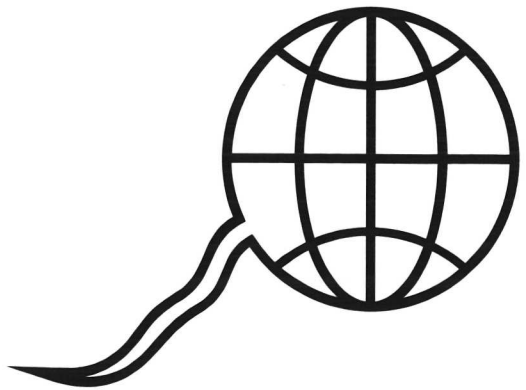
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Journalism and Multiculturalism

In this project issues regarding multiculturalism have been put central in the research design, following the conceptualization of the multicultural society as a potential catalyst of challenges or changes to the professional ideology of journalism. The interconnections between the news media and the multicultural society have been operationalized into two main research questions: [1] what are the basic, occupational and professional characteristics of journalists coming from migrant groups in Dutch society and [2] an assessment of professional knowledge and views of specialist journalists in The Netherlands as these are articulated with issues concerning the multicultural society. The first question has partly been addressed in the analysis of the survey data (see chapter III). Only 2% of Dutch journalists describe themselves as having an ethnic minority background, most of which work in the public broadcasting sector and are specialized in specific 'multicultural' topics. Of our main sample of Dutch journalists ($n=773$), a minority (28%) felt that the Dutch media audience is particularly interested in news regarding the multicultural society. Issues regarding multiculturalism are charged with emotion in The Netherlands, and function as a source of recurring debates in professional, political and public circles. A typical feature of these discussions is the lack of consensus on definition: what are we exactly talking about, when discussing 'the multicultural society' and the media? This has been my main motivation for opting to explore the issue in a qualitative, rather than a quantitative context – as I expected this would allow me to trace more exactly the full range of definitions and meanings involved. In this chapter additional analyses on the data from the sub-sample of minority journalists contribute to answering the first question. The second research question regarding Dutch media in the multicultural society is dealt with, using in-depth qualitative methods of data gathering and analysis in a range of interviews with experts on the multicultural society.

As discussed in the first chapter, professional and scholarly debates regarding media and multiculturalism in The Netherlands center around three issues: the knowledge of journalists about other cultures and ethnicities, their views on representation (i.e. pluriformity, diversity), and the perceived responsibilities of journalists in a multicultural democracy. It was correspondingly argued that the discussion and therefore the problematization of professional knowl-

edge, representation and responsibilities of journalists in The Netherlands regarding multiculturalism potentially affects the core values of the occupational ideology of journalism. In order to assess how these issues are experienced in contemporary Dutch journalism, extensive in-depth interviews were held with eighteen experts in the field of reporting on multicultural issues. The analysis of the interview transcripts intends to link the debate in the Dutch literature – in popular, trade and scholarly publications – with the perceptions of journalists working in the specific multicultural 'beat'. This chapter starts with an overview of the literature and contemporary discussions about media and multiculturalism, insofar as these titles reflect specific research on the challenges of multiculturalism to Dutch journalism and contribute to our understanding of the issues at hand. This literature review further functions as the basis for the range of issues and questions used to (semi-) structure the (18) expert interviews held. Hereafter first research question is dealt with, as the results of our additional survey among a subsample of ethnic minority journalists are analyzed in detail. The second question is then addressed in terms of the qualitative research design particular to this theme, after which the analysis of the in-depth interviews with multicultural experts follows.

Media and the Multicultural Society

Research about media and ethnic minorities has been conducted and published since the 1960s. Most of that body of work has focused on issues of 'race' and 'racism'; the concept and discussion of multiculturalism constitutes the contemporary approach to the issues at hand (Wilson and Gutierrez, 1995). In The Netherlands the issue has sparked debate particularly in the early 1980s through the work by Dutch discourse analyst Van Dijk on newspaper coverage regarding ethnic minorities (Van Dijk, 1983; 1988 and 1991), but it can be traced back to studies as early as 1967 on the print media coverage of foreign employees. Emmerik-Levelt and Teulings concluded in their study of news items on so-called *gastarbeiders* ('foreign guest workers') of 1967, that coverage would focus on the impact they had on Dutch society and would generally not take into consideration issues or problems of migrants themselves (1967: 172). In a recent summary of Dutch research on media and migrants, Brants, Crone and Leurdijk (1998) conclude that this early finding does not essentially differ much from conclusions drawn from later and even most recent studies. They claim that, although the evidence is too inconclusive to suggest a 'bias' in the Dutch media, the overall conclusion must be that news media hardly cover topics of interest to particular migrant families or communities and that Dutch journalists tend to ignore people with an ethnic minority background as actors in the news (Brants et al, 1998: 16; see also Leurdijk, 1997 and 1999: 15-16). Brants, Crone and

Leurdijk identified a total of 61 studies (of which only a few from scholarly sources) on issues regarding news coverage and media production vis-à-vis the multicultural society. As noted, the work of Van Dijk can be viewed as seminal in this respect. Van Dijk claimed, that news coverage in Dutch newspapers reflects more or less 'hidden' racism, in that it systematically ignores an ethnic minority perspective on issues, only uses white majority sources and is focused almost exclusively on problems and conflicts when it comes to minorities (Van Dijk, 1983). In a follow-up publication Van Dijk added a content analysis of British newspapers, in which book he emphasizes the way news media contribute to the reproduction of (racial) prejudice (1991; see for a critical discussion of Van Dijk's work: Berg, 1992; Top, 2000). The media responded – not surprisingly – furiously to Van Dijk's allegations at the time. The vast majority of studies identified by Brants, Crone and Leurdijk were conducted in the 1990s, and consisted of (quantitative and qualitative) content analyses (1998: 14).

In recent years the role of the media in the Dutch multicultural society has gained steady ground in academia, resulting in a number of articles, papers and dissertations (see for example Leurdijk, 1997 and 1999; Vergeer, 2000). The relative importance of the topic is emphasized by five recent publications, all of which intend to summarize existing research, knowledge and views about ethnic minorities and the media in The Netherlands.¹ The public debate furthermore has been recently stirred by a series of articles, programs and discussion sessions on 'the multicultural society', all more or less based on an essay on the topic, written by Paul Scheffer and published in national daily *NRC Handelsblad* on 29 January 2000.² Scheffer, a well-known publicist and high-profile member of mainstream political party *PvdA* (social-democrats), stated Dutch society should explicitly acknowledge that migration and multiculturalism result in social problems. This call against supposed 'political correctness' resonated throughout the media, which all spent extensive coverage on the public debate that followed. Indeed the first three months of 2000 can be characterized by a 'wave' of public debates, conferences, publications, radio and television programs all focused on the Dutch multicultural society (see Deuze, 2002).

All of the recent publications combine insights both from the professional and the academic field, a combination which is quite unique in The Netherlands and perhaps indicative of the shared notion of urgency towards the topic.³ Even though these publications were established more or less independent of each other, the structure of the texts has been quite identical. The issues regarding media, ethnic minorities and racism have been addressed in terms of: representations of multiculturalism in media content and effects thereof; the

role of ethnic minority journalists in the media; media use of ethnic minorities and ethnic minority media appearing in The Netherlands. The most recent overview of research, a Cd-rom produced by University of Nijmegen's *Media-groep* (2000), shows in its index the following topics: "ethnic minority media, research on media use, representation, ethnic minority organizations" (see <http://www.socsci.kun.nl/maw/cw/emm/>). What has to be noted here is the fact that little or no mention of the perceptions of Dutch journalists regarding (reporting on) ethnic minorities and multicultural topics in general is made in the literature. The work on media professionals of Van Donselaar and Tanja (2000) is focused exclusively on the coverage of extreme right-wing groups and issues, and Leurdijk (1999) as well as Costera Meijer (2001b) focus on television professionals only. Virtually absent in the literature – as explicitly noted by Brants, Crone and Leurdijk (1998: 39) – are considerations of the professional views, routines and perceptions of journalists specifically reporting about 'multicultural issues' (a similar 'gap' in media production research in the UK and the US is noted explicitly by Cottle, 2000b: 15). Such issues are both general and specific in character: general when seen from the perspective that all news in a multicultural society is 'multicultural' (regarding choice of angle, newsgathering, sourcing, reporting style, audience-orientation), specific when seen as 'typical' news topics: migrants, asylum seekers, ethnic minority organizations, racism and racial/ethnic discrimination.

In other words: research about multiculturalism in The Netherlands has neglected the knowledge and views of (print) journalists who cover the multicultural society, and how that body of knowledge and experience is constructed (Deuze, 2002). Yet most publications talk about establishing guidelines or even a code of conduct for journalists when reporting on ethnic minorities (a specific example thereof can be found in Sterk, 2000: 105, which is based on an earlier brochure advising journalists in this regard, see Doppert and Top, 1993). The various special interest groups in The Netherlands for ethnic minority groups and specifically minorities and the media – most notable the *Werk-groep Migranten en Media* (MenM), the *Stichting Omroep Allochtonen* (STOA), Forum, the *Anti-Discriminatie Overleg* (ADO), and the *Landelijk Bureau Racismebestrijding* (LBR) – and even government officials generally claim that journalists do not know enough about the particularities of different cultures and ethnicities, that they therefore 'misrepresent' minority peoples and accordingly not live up to their perceived democratic responsibility of (as Dutch state secretary for media issues Van Der Ploeg calls it) 'providing a pluriform society with pluriform information' (Van Der Ploeg, 1999).⁴ Indeed the three issues of knowledge, representation and responsibility can be seen as dominant in the

contemporary Dutch debates about media and multiculturalism, even though these have not been attributed or related to the perceptions of Dutch journalists in any systematic way.

Ethnic minority journalists in The Netherlands

In the main sample of Dutch journalist 2% (n=12) said to have a non-Dutch ethnic background, which journalists are scattered across media types, specializations and so on. As one of the core issues regarding journalism and the multiculturalism the representation of ethnic minorities in the newsroom, I have opted for including a subsample of reporters with an ethnic minority background (an approach similar to Weaver and Wilhoit's in the US, see 1996: 195ff). Minority journalist organizations such as STOA and MenM were contacted to help us locate specific reporters with a minority background (see the sampling procedure as documented in chapter II). Of our initial list of 180 people in this subsample, we were able to successfully complete interviews with 91 journalists. Several people had moved to unknown locations, switched to jobs outside of the media, or did not work in journalism at all (N=56). Two people refused to participate in the survey, the rest (N=31) could not be reached. Of the 91 people interviewed, 74 said to have a non-Dutch ethnic background. What follows here is a report on the basic, occupational and professional characteristics of this particular group of 74 media professionals.

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS. The composition of this sample, as reported by the respondents, is diverse. The ethnic make-up of these 74 journalists consists of (labeled according to answer given): 23 Surinam/Antilles, 16 Indonesian, 11 Turkish, 9 Moroccan, 5 other Asian (2 Chinese, 1 Vietnamese, 2 Pakistani), 7 European (other than Dutch), 2 Nigerian and 1 Arabic. The gender ratio among ethnic minorities is in the balance: women make up 49% of this sample. 14% (N=10) of these journalists are Muslims; 42% (N=31) said they have no religious beliefs (versus 68% of the main sample of Dutch journalists). About half (47%) of minorities are single (31% in the main sample), and none of these journalists consider themselves politically aligned to the right (similarly only 1% does so in the main sample). In terms of age this sample matches the main group perfectly: 28% is younger than 36 years (in fact, 36 is the mode in years of age). One-third of ethnic minority journalists followed a BA-level journalism education program – similar to the pattern of education among all journalists.

OCCUPATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS. An analysis of the answers of this group shows that the majority (76%) works in the national public broadcasting sector, equally distributed among radio and television newsrooms, whereas

most journalists with a Dutch ethnic background work in the print sector of the media. This also explains that almost half (49%) of the minorities work on a part-time or freelance basis – types of contract preferred by employers in broadcasting. Four people function in a supervisory capacity. Only two minority journalists reported working for a local or regional medium. Regarding specializations it seems that ethnic minority journalists are more likely to mention topics related to the multicultural society (like migration, asylum seekers, minorities: 18% of this sample against 2% of all reporters) and to the foreign 'beat', in particular migration countries such as Turkey, Morocco and Surinam (another 18% against 4% in the overall group).

PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS. Although ethnic minority journalists do not answer very differently on the questions in the general survey, some cross-tabulated scores stand out significantly. In their perception of the audience's interests, journalists in this sample feel that their public expects backgrounds and analyses (89% versus 66% of the 'Dutch' sample) especially of news related to multicultural issues (51% versus 29%). In table 1 below the full range of answers on questions regarding role perceptions is reported, comparing the answers of journalists in the minority sample with the main sample.

In terms of role perceptions ethnic minority journalists share the same media roles as their colleagues in the main sample; a factor analysis of these items showed similar support for non-revenue, audience-revenue and advertising-revenue goals. But the respondents in this sample do feel much stronger than their colleagues that developing the (intellectual and cultural) interests of their audience, having an influence, standing up for the disadvantaged and giving people a chance to voice their opinion are (very) important roles for them in society. These answers indicate support for an advocacy role perception, emphasizing a kind of 'responsible educator' role in society. This role may also be reflected in the higher importance attributed to getting feedback from news sources (68% versus 45% in the main sample says this is an important aspect of their work) and the fact that minority reporters seem to be more reluctant to actually harass or badger (unwilling) sources: half of this sample thinks that might be justified on occasion, against 67% of the overall group.

These results show that journalists with an ethnic minority background are more likely to work with topics related to their ethnicity (such as migration countries or specific multicultural issues). Summarizing the variables on which these journalists' answer differ from their colleagues, it seems that they feel a particular responsibility towards maintaining a good relationship with their sources, plus developing and indeed influencing the interests of the peo-

Table 4.1
Journalists' role perceptions (% saying "important" or "very important")

<i>Media role</i>	<i>Minority sample</i>		<i>Main sample</i>
	<i>N=</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>773</i>
Provide analysis and interpretation		93	87
Get news to the public quickly		78	82
Be an adversary of public officials and businesses		73	81
Give people a chance to express their views		82	73
Signaling new trends		74	72
Reach widest possible audience		76	71
Investigate claims government		65	69
Develop intellectual/cultural interests of the public		63	53
Provide entertainment		51	49
Have an influence on the public/political agenda		61	44
Stand up for the disadvantaged		55	41
Provide a good Umfeld for advertisers		15	16

ple they intend to serve. The journalists in this subsample are particularly inclined to give less privileged people a voice, providing access to the media to the disadvantaged – which in the Dutch context means ethnic minorities, as people within this segment of the population are more likely to lag behind in terms of education, work and social status. This does suggest that one's ethnicity has an influence in the development of professional identity in journalism, as ethnic minority journalists are more likely to embrace an advocacy role – rather than for example being a watchdog or some kind of public adversary – in their professional self-perception.

Expert Interviews

As noted, the themes identified in studying issues related to media and multiculturalism in general (and not particular to for example ethnic minority journalists) are: knowledge, representation and responsibility. These are operationalized here in relation to the central thematic structure of our project as potential challenges to the occupational ideology of professional journalism (see chapter 1). The role of the (news-) media in a multicultural democracy is a complex one. It can be seen as an arena where the dominant notions of professional journalism may clash with the democratic ideals of diversity, pluriformity and social equality.⁵ The data gathered in this chapter – using expert interviews with journalists – should be seen as instrumental in building theory about the articulation of multiculturalism and Dutch journalism. The overall

qualitative methodological motivation and approach for analyzing interview data has been described in the second chapter. For our research design the methodological texts offered by Wetherell and Potter (1988) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) have been coupled. Two recent studies in The Netherlands have followed a similar approach: Leurdijk (1999) and Costera Meijer (2001b) in analyzing in-depth interviews with media professionals in the television sector (working for talk shows, documentaries, reality television shows, news broadcasts and soap operas; results of these studies are integrated in the analysis offered in this chapter). One should note here that broadcast media newsrooms in The Netherlands do not employ 'niche' departments. Even though several talk shows have been produced which use a specific multicultural angle, the journalists working for such shows are not necessarily considered to be 'multicultural experts' in the field. It is for these reasons the (self-) assigned experts in the print media sector were picked as informants to conduct our expert interviews with.

Beyond whether media professionals think issues regarding the multicultural society are valid topics for the news and what specific role perceptions journalists accordingly claim in their work, a specific goal for this study is to address the 'knowledge gap' regarding the professional views, routines and perceptions of journalists specifically reporting about 'multicultural issues' (Brants et al, 1998: 39; a similar notion of such a 'gap' in media research in the UK and the US made by Cottle, 2000b: 15). This presupposes that there exists in fact a multicultural 'beat' or niche within the press newsroom and that one may expect of journalists working within such a field more knowledge about issues pertaining to multiculturalism and journalism in The Netherlands – more than their colleagues in other departments or perhaps in the broadcasting sector. The experts were selected from journalists working for the five mainstream national dailies, the five regional newspapers appearing daily in the Randstad (comprising Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and The Hague, in which geographical area the vast majority of ethnic minorities are concentrated), four mainstream 'opinion magazines' and the two specific multicultural opinion magazines appearing biweekly in The Netherlands.⁶ As a first step the newsrooms of these media were called, at which time we asked to be put through to 'the person directly responsible for news coverage regarding multicultural issues'. Only the people at one newspaper insisted they did not have such a journalist: Amsterdam-based *Het Parool*. Another regional daily, the *Noord-Hollands Dagblad*, mentioned that their specialist was only appointed one week earlier – he felt he could not seriously discuss the topic yet. Four other newsrooms put us through to the editor-in-chief as the sole responsible in

this regard (national daily *De Telegraaf*, opinion magazine *Vrij Nederland*, regional daily *Utrechts Nieuwsblad* and special interest magazine *Contrast*). A total of 18 in-depth interviews of approximately one hour each were held during June and July 2000 (with *De Volkskrant*, *Haagsche Courant*, *Elsevier* and *Vrij Nederland* offering two specialists each).

The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, and were conducted and transcribed by two MA students and the author.⁷ The topics in the interviews were based on the literature review (reported in this chapter and in the discussion of media and multiculturalism in chapter 1), and concerned issues of knowledge, representation and responsibilities. A complete list of issues and questions is offered in appendix 11 of this book. It is important to note here that this list was not applied chronologically or literally in the interviews; the informants were given as much leeway as possible to direct the flow of discussion. Most interviews were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere, with participants generally talking openly and reflexively about their work. We made sure to bring information to the interview ourselves – as many participants in fact asked us questions as well. Examples thereof: “so is this what my colleagues say as well?” or: “does research show that our newspaper is doing okay when it comes to covering minorities?”⁸ The participants seemed appreciative of getting some feedback on studies such as content analyses (as for example reported in Brants et al, 1998) or minorities’ media use (as collected on Cd-rom, *Mediagroep*, 2000). This information was then used to further explore issues such as ethnic minority representation in media content or addressing a multicultural audience in news coverage.

Selecting and coding each sentence or phrase in the transcript identified the various topics and issues that were addressed by the participating journalists. This resulted in more than 30 different topics, which were grouped and narrowed down to eight more or less distinct topical categories: migration (including asylum seekers, newcomers, guest workers or: “*gastarbeiders*”), religion (including references to the Islam, mosques, imams), public debate (especially since almost all journalists referred to the media discussion following the aforementioned article by Paul Scheffer), racism, social problems, occupational ideology (references to ‘that what a journalist is supposed to do’), general comments about ‘the’ multicultural society (and how it can be defined) and finally – and perhaps also somewhat surprisingly as almost all reporters used this topic – remarks about the standards of reporting at the most popular Dutch mainstream newspaper, *De Telegraaf*.⁹

In the analytical procedure each of the categories was put into the context of the daily work of the participants as to determine how the categories found could be seen as being instrumental to the journalists’ understanding of his or

her work regarding multicultural topics and issues. The main question was, in other words, to see how journalists make sense or give meaning to these topics. The final step of the analysis involved assigning labels to the repertoires and explore in which ways these repertoires were used by the interviewees within the context of the thematic issues used as (semi-) structure of the interviews: professional knowledge and views (cf. representation and responsibilities) of journalists in the multicultural society.

Analysis

As suggested by Wetherell and Potter (1988), the journalists all gave multi-layered and often contradictory answers to our questions. Especially when talking about examples of how they handled certain stories in the past, the journalists would use different language than at times where he or she would reflect on for example roles and responsibilities of journalists in a multicultural society. The (critical) self-reflexivity of participants' answers would also increase closer to the end of the interviews. The answers given show that 'the multicultural society' as a news topic or specialization is important for contemporary Dutch journalism on a number of different levels:

"Well, all changes in a society resulting from immigration are a journalistic project to document. You should not deny the fact that immigration is a problematic category, that whole transformation of society has appealing aspects and problems – like any big change has. That is how sober you should treat it."

In this quote one can observe that this particular journalist views the multicultural society as a more or less 'natural' change in society because of immigration (as he explicitly mentions that this is like "any change"). Additionally he emphasizes the problematic aspect of such a change – both as a 'category' (of news topics), as well as an "appealing aspect" (for journalism). In this utterance the participant also extrapolates these notions to the way journalists deal with the issues at hand in general, by referring to multiculturalism as a 'project' for journalism.

"We have this editorial policy which tries to prevent us from writing about other cultures in a negative way. So for example if there is a shooting and it does not really matter that in fact two Moroccans were involved, then you should not mention that. You also would not mention it if this were two Dutch persons. But this always gets moved around a bit, I think that you can also see that [mentioning someone's ethnicity in a news story – MD] in all media coverage, at least I've noticed that in other media."

This journalist clearly distinguishes between 'Dutch' people and 'Moroccan' people; ethnicity therefore is something that has to do with different national backgrounds, according to this participant. Even though the reporter refers to the editorial policy of his newspaper, he also attributes negative writing to an incident such as a shooting – emphasizing the aspect of crime in news stories about ethnic minorities. The quote ends with specific reference to the Dutch media in general – locating 'negative' shifts in news coverage at the work of other journalists instead of himself and his colleagues. In one such quote one may therefore find various repertoires, categorical levels and topics at work, which can be seen as elements used by this particular participant to actively negotiate 'meaning'. Another important element in this specific quote is a notion of shifting or varying interpretations of certain reporting conventions; a consensual view on mentioning a news actor's ethnic background would be to be careful about stereotypes but an articulated view (in light of different news topics) would be, that such a policy is clearly dependent on one's direct negotiation with the issue at hand (instead of an overarching editorial policy guideline).

The first coding steps in the analysis showed that the participating journalists effectively talked about eight more or less consistent topical categories when discussing multiculturalism and the media. Here the full range of these categories is described briefly before moving on to the analysis of the repertoires used by the participants to give meaning to these topics in terms of their knowledge and views on journalism in the multicultural society. These repertoires are located throughout the topical categories, as these categories together describe the phenomenon of multiculturalism in terms of the informants.¹⁰

CATEGORY 1: MIGRATION. All participants attributed the (increasing) multiculturalism of Dutch society to issues of migration, including asylum seekers or 'newcomers', referring also to so-called guest workers or: "gastarbeiders" which were invited to The Netherlands in the 1960s and 1970s.

"I write about the multicultural society because I find it interesting, because it is one of the biggest topics right now [...] the whole world is on the move and we get our share of it."

One aspect of multiculturalism for journalists can thus be described as migration (see also the first quote used in this section), as it relates specifically to foreign immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees: people moving to The Netherlands.

CATEGORY II: RELIGION. References to religion were paramount in the interviews, although within this category all propositions dealt with the Islam only (including anecdotes of visits to mosques, interviews with imams). It seems that for journalists being a Muslim is more or less the same for everyone, regardless of one's ethnicity – whereas journalists also implicitly assume that all Muslims are also ethnic minorities. Journalists would especially discuss the Islam in terms of their knowledge (or lack thereof):

"I am not an expert, no. Sure, I've read a bit in the Koran but... no. Of course I have at some point discussed it with a fundamentalist Muslim, but I only do that when it is necessary for the story at that time."

Safe to say that a second aspect of multiculturalism for Dutch journalists deals specifically with the Islam, as it is to some extent seen as an intrinsic 'quality' of ethnic minorities in The Netherlands.¹¹

CATEGORY III: SCHEFFER-DEBATE. The Dutch public debate on the multicultural society of early 2000, which debate was inspired by an essay by publicist Paul Scheffer in *NRC Handelsblad*, was just about closed at the time the interviews were conducted (Summer of 2000). The effects of this debate were quite clear: almost all participants referred to the so-called 'Scheffer-debate' in the conversation. They did so particularly in terms of what Leurdijk (1999) calls a confrontation repertoire, more or less praising Scheffer for 'breaking the taboo' on openly problematizing the multicultural society. Regarding the importance attributed to this public and professional debate, I considered this event as a topical category on its own:

"I have written a lot about multicultural issues, especially since the public debate started around that article of Paul Scheffer. Paul is a political thinker with whom I dealt with before and he called directly upon the responsibilities of the politicians."

Two participants also criticized the discussion as the media covered it, claiming that it was mainly a debate about, and not so much with ethnic minorities. Three experts even said that their appointment was 'caused' by the Scheffer-debate. As the participants addressed the Scheffer-debate or the original article (titled "*The multicultural drama*") as instrumental in arguments about several different issues, one may assume that the public debate can possibly be viewed as being of great help to this project; it more or less 'allowed' journalists to speak freely, less constrained perhaps by their perceived sensitivities towards ethnic minority issues in society.

CATEGORY IV: RACISM. Very few journalists talked about race, racism or for example extreme right-wing (racist) political parties and groups in Dutch society. This may have to do with what Costera Meijer (2001b) describes as the complicated and problematic nature of the language of ethnicity in The Netherlands: it is generally not done to talk about 'race', one should preferably use terms like "*allochtoon*" (non-native) or 'ethnicity'. The participants generally offered different arguments in this context, coupling notions of race or racism with the emergence of right-wing political party the *Centrum-Democraten* (CD) in the 1980s.

"Really, discussions about extreme right-wing groups are outdated, those are ancient issues. That debate has been closed in The Netherlands at least ten years ago."

Other arguments pertain to the fact that all journalists who indeed mention race or racism, do so with obvious disdain or even disgust about people with racist ideas, in fact revealing an active personal agenda:

"For example if a policeman is racist or says stupid racist things, I would not put him in my story, unless my aim is to show that the police in general is racist [...] Then I would write such statements very 'dry', so that no one could really think that this man is right."

This personal agenda shows in a study, conducted by the nvj-workgroup *Migranten en Media* in 1994. Several newspapers were analyzed to see how they covered the Dutch extreme right-wing party CD: the *Centrum-Democraten* (Albronda, 1994). The report revealed that several newspapers made an active effort to debunk the claims of CD-politicians and to critically engage the social background of the phenomenon. Since 1994 the CD has more or less fallen apart and split up in several small factions, which perhaps explains the argument of journalists, that they see this is as an 'old' discussion.

CATEGORY V: SOCIAL PROBLEMS. Early studies of 'race' and the media by scholars like Halloran and Husband have signaled the operation of deep-seated news values such as 'negativity', 'conflict' and 'violence' involved in the news (Halloran, 1977; Hartmann and Husband, 1974). In The Netherlands similar conclusion were drawn applying discourse analyses of news media by Van Dijk in the 1980s. It is therefore not surprising that all participants talk about crime (also: police matters, justice, judicial procedures, imprisonment, burglary, hooliganism, and so on) when discussing (examples of) multicultural reporting. An explicit example thereof, as one participant comments: *"I do not see the difference between Moroccan youths and Dutch hooligans, I mean, that is the*

same problem." Here one can also refer back to the first quote in this analysis, where the informant explicitly stated: *"You should not deny the fact that immigration is a problematic category, that whole transformation of society has appealing aspects and problems – like any big change has."*

Although several journalists indicate an awareness of the pitfalls of negative stereotyping of ethnic minorities in this respect, all reporters associate multiculturalism with social problems. It is unclear whether this topic is addressed because of the 'breaking of the taboo' on this issue by Paul Scheffer or whether this is due to the structural nature of news values in (Western) journalism. In fact one could perhaps argue that it is also because of these 'intrinsic' negative news values journalists can relate so well to the point regarding the multicultural 'drama' made by Scheffer.

CATEGORY VI: OCCUPATIONAL IDEOLOGY. Cottle (1997) has shown that elements of the ideology of journalism such as the notion of 'objectivity' and the often unspoken acceptance of shared news values (see previous category) can be seen as instrumental to the problematic nature of journalists' reporting about multicultural issues. The interviews give evidence to the assumption that the ideology of journalism is sometimes in deep conflict with the kind of stories and reporting journalists do. This can go as far as establishing new codes for journalists covering minority issues:

"As a journalist you should be committed to all groups in society [...] at some point we agreed that we should never mention someone's ethnicity for fear of stigmatization, unless it was really relevant – we were very strict in that sense. But a newspaper should pay attention to all people who have problems in society; not just ethnic minorities [...] But we found that we in fact were covering up certain problems, so now we are working on a new editorial policy. But it's still very new, it's good that journalists are thinking about this."

Other reporters are quite defensive about what they perceive as professional journalism, referring to being 'neutral', maintaining 'professional distance' or 'autonomy':

"I'm just doing my work as a journalist, independent of whatever. Of course, we are not servicing some kind of special interest group or something like that, no."

One way for a journalist to solve such a conflict is to relay the responsibility to his or her audience and the way audience members expect a certain style of reporting.

"We used to really defend the position of minorities in society, and that has diminished a lot. That has to do with the fact that we used to have a 'left' audience, now our readership is much more diverse."

CATEGORY VII: THE MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY. General comments about 'the' multicultural society can also be determined as a specific category, as journalists would often refer to Dutch society as a whole without making explicit what they mean. On the other hand, when it comes to talking about colleagues with an ethnic minority background, participants would become hesitant to 'choose a side':

"We do not have any ethnic minorities working for us, no. But if we would have, I don't think they should cover specific multicultural issues. It depends, if they really want it, which is how we work. It is also fun the way they would view normal things, the not-multicultural society."

Sometimes a journalist would even explicitly connect the multicultural society in general to something 'not Dutch':

"That is a very problematic concept, the multicultural society. What does it mean? I don't know. Well, a lot of foreigners live in The Netherlands, people who do not belong here."¹²

It seems clear from such propositions, that multiculturalism is perceived by the participants as something different than what they think Dutch society is. It is something that changes the society, a development that runs either parallel with Dutch society or as a development that is seen as impacting upon society at large.

CATEGORY VIII: DAILY NEWSPAPER 'DE TELEGRAAF'. Almost all reporters made specific remarks about the perceived standards of reporting at the most popular Dutch mainstream newspaper, *De Telegraaf*. It almost seems as though this newspaper's standards function as a sort of benchmark for other reporters, hence my choice to consider these statements together as a distinct topical category in this context.

"I don't think there are any newspapers in The Netherlands that can assume their readers know a lot about the norms of values of other cultures. I mean I think that the newspaper which is mostly read by ethnic minorities is De Telegraaf, and that paper writes mostly in negative ways about ethnic minorities."

Other reporters voiced similar strong opinions. One of our interviews featured the deputy editor-in-chief of *De Telegraaf*. During the interview he acknowl-

edged the critical comments of his colleagues, but stated:

"Look I have done my homework of course. We have paid a lot of attention to the latest report of the Sociaal-Cultureel Planbureau [SCP; governmental social-cultural monitoring agency, MD]. We have had a series on different religions, including the Islam. We have had quite a few interviews with ethnic minorities, in-depth interviews in which important comments were made by someone like Ahmed Aboutaleb [director of multicultural organization Forum, MD]. So it is not the case that we only have people like that in the newspaper in the context of stealing or murders. That kind of criticism is too easy and reality shows it is just not true."

As noted earlier, several studies found that *De Telegraaf* indeed seems to be more stereotypical in its coverage of minority issues. On the other hand scholars have noted severe limitations to such studies (see Brants et al. 1998 for a discussion). Regardless of such discussions, *De Telegraaf* still functions for many as a virtual 'how not to'-standard, so it seems.

Repertoires

From the various propositions used in the answers six more or less distinct repertoires could be distilled. Within each repertoire the participants address issues regarding professional knowledge, representation and responsibilities. These repertoires connect to the topical categories as different ways for journalists to talk about- and give meaning to – their experiences and work regarding the multicultural society. In other words: repertoires are more or less coherent systems of belief from which individual reporters 'borrow' claims and arguments regarding the issues they face in their daily work. This also explains why people sometimes contradict themselves in what they say; using this method of analysis it means that someone uses statements from two or more different or even conflicting repertoires (see chapter 11 for more details on interpretative repertoire analysis of interview transcripts).

When discussing journalism in the Dutch multicultural society, the participants generally referred to themselves as active agents in the media environment. They offered a wealth of examples, talking about stories they wrote in the past, about personal experiences on the job when newsgathering, interviewing sources with different ethnic backgrounds than one's own. Two repertoires were used more or less equally in these experiential accounts: a 'business as usual' repertoire and an 'ingroup-outgroup' repertoire. All journalists used both repertoires throughout the interview.

BUSINESS AS USUAL REPERTOIRE. Working as a journalist on topics re-

lated to the multicultural society is, well, 'just journalism' as participants would say (referring to journalism as a distinct occupational ideology, see category VI above). Speakers would specifically use terms like 'of course', 'inevitably' or 'naturally' to describe how and why journalists cover issues concerning the multicultural society:

"Everyone is part of the multicultural society, naturally when you live in the Randstad, that is just a fact. And whether you are Dutch or you are Dutch with a different ethnic background, I mean everyone has to do with that whether you like it or not. It is a fact that this is how the society is and will increasingly turn out to be."

More concretely journalists using this repertoire would speak out on the way to handle minorities and minority issues, as one editor-in-chief comments:

"I really feel that all of my journalists should have a multicultural competence. I also principally feel that, well let's say, the cultural minorities should not be looked at any differently, but should just be seen as part of the society as a whole and therefore I feel that we should cover that, not too much in the spotlight, not like positive discrimination, just treat it like an adult, like any other aspect of society."

When discussing their professional knowledge, journalists claim that working with ethnic minorities or for example handling minority issues does not require any special kind of networking – other than what 'other' journalists normally would do. In terms of representation the participants would often refer to hiring practices of their employer when confronted with questions regarding having minority journalists work in their newsroom. In this context journalists would explain the low numbers of journalists with an ethnic minority background in Dutch journalism by referring to a 'natural evolution' of Dutch society, which would eventually result in getting more minority applicants for jobs – specifically in the Randstad area:

"You have to be realistic in our city. It will happen naturally of course. It is just a given when you work in a city where 50% has an ethnic minority background, that you are going to get journalists who can write well, who have a broad orientation, who will sooner or later feel completely at home in Dutch society, which is a prerequisite."

The participants specifically used similar propositions when discussing whether a reporter with an ethnic minority background should or should not report on minority issues:

"No, why? That is naturally up to people themselves – I mean a lot of ethnic minorities do not want to be associated with that, they also want to be just another normal employee like everybody else, just to work on general issues."

Finally, on issues of responsibilities of journalists, participants would reiterate their position as 'just' journalists doing their job, like any other journalist would do:

"Our responsibility is to use people who are most qualified to say something about a topic if it does not have anything to do with that I will not call a Turkish man to set some kind of example. It has to be relevant. I have to be a journalist first and do what is relevant."

Costera Meijer (2001b) found that producers of Dutch soap operas use a similar professional repertoire when discussing the way they deal with ethnic minorities, which she calls a 'denial' repertoire. Producers would argue that 'colour does not matter', about which approach Costera Meijer says that it provides a common ground for media professionals to show for example that they are not 'biased' in any particular way. Leurdijk (1999) and Van Donselaar and Tanja (2000) report references in terms of "we're just doing our work" likewise among television producers and journalists who cover extreme right-wing groups. By referring to the evolutionary or 'natural' aspect of multiculturalism it seems as if participants to some extent free themselves of the responsibility of doing something specific about – or even reflect upon – their role as journalists in a multicultural society. In a way this repertoire sounds like pure optimism, as in 'everything will turn out okay sooner or later' even. Its function for the journalists lies in the fact, that it offers them a retreat from sensitive and personal positions regarding minorities: if the inclusion or exclusion of ethnic minorities and migrant cultures in the media is a 'natural' phenomenon, who are journalists to do something about that?

INGROUP-OUTGROUP REPERTOIRE. The business as usual repertoire is closely linked to the other repertoire used in the individual domain of the participants: talking about ethnic minorities as being different, as an 'outgroup' with certain characteristics which differ in one way or another (from the majority of the Dutch population). Participants would shift subtly from one repertoire to the next, sometimes only recognizable through the use of certain phrases (like 'us' and 'them', or 'they' and 'we', or describing people with different ethnic backgrounds as impersonalized groups: "*the Turks in Rotterdam...*"; addressed in relation to news content in Brants et al, 1998: 15). An example of the articulation of the business as usual repertoire to the ingroup-

outgroup repertoire can be found by the way ethnic diversity in the newsroom is discussed:

"You are dealing with relatively lower-educated people. Their emancipation still has to develop is in many aspects less advanced than among Dutch people. It is therefore logical that they are underrepresented in journalism."

When discussing the professional knowledge of journalists regarding the multicultural society, most journalists immediately frame their replies in terms of knowing about 'other peoples' in Dutch society; people with different backgrounds, cultures, religions, languages, habits and so on (see topical category VII on the multicultural society being referred to as something 'not Dutch'). This kind of knowledge generally consists of anecdotes about encounters with 'the other':

"No I am not going to mosques or something like that, what am I supposed to do there, no I am not going there. But I know those people, I have for example visited Morocco with a man, a soldier, when the Moroccan king lifted their – what do you call it – ban. So ever since I sort of know those men."

Such experiential anecdotes can also be framed with a more 'positive' connotation, though:

"So it is really nice when there is a festival being organized, or when something fun is going on in the mosque so that you can go there and have a chat. At such times I try to ask a bit more about that community, write down phone numbers to call again later on."

The participants generally admit that it is in fact quite difficult for them to 'enter' ethnic minority communities – whether this concerns organizations or religious groups or for example individual families. Three participants in fact mentioned living in a street were also people with an ethnic minority background live, one journalist mentioned being of Moroccan descent.

In terms of representation this repertoire is also often used to explain the relatively small use of minority sources – be it spokespersons or the 'person on the street' – in news coverage, claiming *"they are the most difficult group to approach"* for example. Another aspect of representation in this repertoire concerns hiring practices of print media:

"I would want them, why not? If they are any good of course, than there is nothing wrong with that. But I think why not, but they have to want it themselves. That is again our culture, if someone really wants to work here we prefer him, but I am not going on the streets to search and hire them like please come and work at our paper."

The ingroup-outgroup repertoire is the dominant repertoire among all participants and is particularly used when talking about the representation of minorities and the perceived responsibilities of journalists writing about multicultural issues:

"First and foremost I feel it is important that you, when speaking or interviewing someone from ethnic minority circles about the topic of the multicultural society, that you should do justice to his or her opinion. And that can get clearer when you contrast his opinion with opinions which are conflicting, and those could be the dominant opinions in our society such as the separation of church and state or the freedom of speech."

This last quote can also be seen as an example of a series of propositions that connect the journalist as an individual ("I feel...") to a larger frame of news work in general ("you should do justice") and even to abstract notions of the society at large ("the dominant opinions in our society"). In fact most participants would use such connections between different levels of abstraction or domains when discussing responsibilities. The ingroup-outgroup repertoire served in this regard to legitimize quite elaborate reflections on multiculturalism and journalists in society:

"I mean the Surinamese community has really its own way of talking it is just another people altogether, the Turks and Moroccans also so you just know that they have a different culture. But also their status as newcomers just results in a different way of thinking and a different way of looking at the world and at the society. Those people they all just want, they all are really climbers on the ladder, while the voice of the Dutch, and those are the conservatives so to speak. All of that brings a lot of differences and every time I deal with such a topic, step into such a community, than you feel that it lives."

This kind of legitimization of the 'difficult' work of journalists who have to deal with multicultural topics becomes problematic considering the interconnectivity with the business as usual repertoire. If journalists treat ethnic minorities and minority issues just like 'any other topic', they tend to describe those topics as having certain distinct characteristics, which are not only different, but also quite clearly difficult to understand – because these are perceived to be different. I would like to suggest that this repertoire functions in two distinct ways: it articulates the journalist as an active professional to his or her topic – as the one person legitimized to give meaning to differences in society, but it also locates the journalist outside of the topic, thereby seemingly 'objectifying' his or her approach to the multicultural society.

Next to personal experiences participants would often discuss the nature and daily practices of news work in terms of their colleagues, or their medium or media organization in general. The analysis showed two distinct repertoires are at work on this level, one that can be labeled as 'that is the way we do it here' repertoire, the other one as a 'problematization' repertoire. This does not necessarily mean that the same repertoire ('business as usual') merely shifts from an individual to a collective dimension ('that is the way we do it'); with this shift new claims and arguments were introduced by the journalists, enabling them to reflect on the nature of the newsmedia business and the way their colleagues go about work. As before, participants were found to shift quite comfortably between the two sets of propositions.

THAT'S THE WAY WE DO IT HERE REPERTOIRE. American author Ethel Portnoy, when asked to write a critical comment in quality newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* about The Netherlands, mentioned as the defining characteristic of Dutch society its consensual model or as she called it: "*The Dutch have a saying: that's the way we do things. Why rock the boat?*" (Portnoy, 2000). Examining the propositions in the interviews it seems clear that a similar model works in Dutch newsrooms as well. The reason for picking this line is the way participants framed their explanations about how and why they write about multicultural issues. The journalists quickly left their individualistic accounts – which can be located in the 'business as usual' repertoire as described above – and moved into a meso-level discourse describing actions referring to their medium, newsroom, colleagues, or simply in terms of 'we':

"Things which have to do with migration all over the world are the most important topic of our time. So it is important for us to write about that; we are that kind of magazine."

This notion of 'we' connects with a more or less formal editorial policy of the media organization as a frame of reference for the reporters, for example regarding hiring practices of people with a ethnic minority background:

"So it is just our policy to take ethnic diversity into consideration, although quality as to be good as well [...] So we watch it carefully although we do not do any positive discrimination, that is a bit outdated. But the editors-in-chief are clear about this, also in the news coverage."

It seems that journalists would like to argue that they themselves do not work according to strict guidelines and policies, but that their work is embedded in policies and set routines within the news organization. Connected to these statements are references to what such (formal or unwritten) policies and

codes entail in the daily practice of news work. In that respect all of the interviewees mentioned institutional authorities as a first layer of sources and professional knowledge. This reflects a common tendency among journalists in sourcing: attributing credibility and authority to (spokespersons of) more or less established organizations and institutions in society.¹³ Mentioned as the kind of sources of knowledge with respect to the multicultural society are: imams (and various Islamic religious groups and foundations), community organizations, neighborhood committees, civil servants dealing with ethnic minorities (as migrants or asylum seekers) and so-called 'self-help' organizations (or press liaisons thereof; often mentioned in this context is *Forum*, an institute for multicultural development in The Netherlands).

When talking about professional knowledge, interviewees utilize this repertoire to describe a news approach which can be labeled as 'to each his or her own': although they are considered to be the multicultural experts, each colleague will deal with related topic his or her own way, not necessarily consulting with the newsroom-expert in the field.

"I write about a number of issues about such communities but a colleague of mine writes about integration policies of local government because her alderman is responsible for integration. So she really writes from a government perspective, I call that business-like news, I am more in the neighborhoods when something is going on."

When it comes to representation, the interviewees claimed to consider it as part of their medium's policy to combat negative portrayal or stereotyping of ethnic minorities. Such generally defensive statements were often made at the expense of other media, signaling a third-person effect in quite a few cases, varying from a mild, self-critical view:

"But we, or maybe it was another paper, had written that Muslim women were not allowed by their husbands to go to school, but somebody said afterwards that we only assume this is the case, but it does not have to be like that at all. I think we should know more about such things."

... To a critical assessment of the performance of colleagues elsewhere (as our analysis of category VII shows), notably mentioning popular national daily *De Telegraaf* as an example of 'how not to'.

"I try to write in a neat, friendly way where they come from if it is relevant for the story. But I will not choose the Telegraaf-approach – they are inclined to emphasize the country of origin. But that has often nothing to do with it."

Part of this repertoire concerns defining 'the way we do things here' in terms of

what others are doing wrong. Especially when supplied with information regarding results from content analyses as reported by Brants, Crone and Leur-dijk (1998) – who conclude that generally Dutch news coverage on migrant issues consists of mainly negative stereotypes – journalists acknowledge the findings but comment:

“Such findings are much too general. I can think of such criticism regarding certain media that it used to be like that or in some case still is. But I find it most striking that the recent coverage has been done on a high level [...] Sure there are some newspapers who emphasized xenophobia [...] but I think that even those kind of papers have matured recently, and I think that you cannot accuse our paper of reporting carelessly, just like most of the other bigger newspapers.”

In terms of responsibilities of journalists the participants would build on their earlier statements regarding their own pragmatism and the newsroom guidelines and routines when it comes to multicultural reporting:

“So I don’t follow a specific line, I’m just trying to be pragmatic about it. I do not think that you should deliberately withhold certain information to, like, educate the reader or to prevent them from looking at things in a certain way. I feel that anyone who reads our magazine is intelligent enough to see that.”

This repertoire is quite similar to the earlier mentioned ‘business as usual’-repertoire, but differs in particular when it comes to the way it is being used by the journalists involved. They connect issues regarding how they perceive their work on an individualistic level to a relatively value-free – seen from their perspective – statements about daily practices to accounts of the way this work is embedded in their organization with respect to other news organizations and colleagues elsewhere. Similar to viewing multicultural journalism like business as usual, this repertoire functions to provide legitimacy to the work of a journalist when writing about contemporary society – in particular allowing journalists or news media in general to retreat from an involved position (as for example someone who is aware of inequalities in society regarding ‘color’) to a seemingly dispassionate role.¹⁴

PROBLEMATIZATION REPERTOIRE. One of the topical categories mentioned earlier showed that the journalists generally refer to issues regarding multiculturalism as social problems (see category v). The consensus seems to be that journalists are reporting about multicultural issues when for example crime and social unrest are concerned. But problems are not ‘just’ a topic, the

way journalists talk about the multicultural society suggests that problematization of issues in itself can be seen as a distinct repertoire. Both Van Donselaar and Tanja (2000) and Leuridijk (1999) found similar repertoires in their analyses, as the journalists interviewed in those studies would consciously opt to report on social problems to break a perceived 'taboo' on the issues facing ethnic minorities in Dutch society (or problems facing Dutch society in the process of integrating migrant communities).

As journalists have used a wide variety of examples, a scan of the transcripts offers insight into what kind of stories they tend to cover, what they feel is newsworthy about the multicultural society, and what they think of first when asked about the daily practices on the job: "minorities and asylum seekers", "Moroccan problem youths", "riots in Amsterdam-West", "problems with integration and the Islam", "low education levels and unemployment of ethnic minorities", "rising crime levels in minority communities", "hunger strikes by so-called 'white illegals' here", "neighborhoods with a lot of minority residents, crime, vagabonds and so on", "Islam and fundamentalism", "suppression of women", "violence in discotheques". Two journalists also mentioned cultural festivals. What such examples illustrate is what may be coined as a 'problematization' repertoire, within which propositions can be grouped that either explicitly or implicitly equal multicultural issues with social problems.

In terms of knowledge about different ethnic minorities journalists describe how they have constructed their network of contacts and potential sources of news. It turns out that they often meet people in the context of problematic instances, according to the examples offered by the participating journalists.

"Let me give an example. The first Islamic school that we have here, the chairman happens to be quite a good friend of mine. At some point I found out that there were gigantic problems between the board members of that school, so I really doubted what to do for a while [...] in the end I did write that story and I've heard that the chairman is really angry with me now, but I have not seen him since."

One has to note that the experts themselves also signal a problematic aspect of such contacts as these pertain to professional knowledge (using propositions from the ingroup-outgroup repertoire):

"It takes a while to get to know people. It is common knowledge that the Moroccan community is the least accessible; they are also not really newspaper readers and are generally distrustful towards journalists. There has to be a news angle and it is nice when such an angle is a bit positive, oth-

erwise a conflict arises when you only approach them when there are issues of crime among youths for example involved."

When it comes to representation, participants are more often quite vague in describing what they feel 'the multicultural society' represents in their work:

"Yes I mean the multicultural society to me that means asylum seekers, and naturalization, and newcomers, and Islam and problems within mosques, I mean everything."

It seems clear that multiculturalism for these experts poses questions of how to position minorities in stories, in particular when the majority of such stories deal with social problems. Such questions are discussed on the level of the perceptions of social responsibilities.

"I try not to generalize, so the moment that there is a fight between young Moroccans and the police in Amsterdam I will hesitate to write that it concerns Moroccan people; I will always write that it is about a part of a small group and so on. That way. But people often do not see that, they will still perceive it to be yet another negative story on Moroccan boys."

Not the choice of news topic is questioned, but the way the story is constructed. Several participants would combine arguments from the 'the way we do it' and 'business as usual' repertoires to legitimate their work in this respect, claiming that the problems arising from immigration are "*just absolutely a journalistic topic.*" Using this line of reasoning, journalists refer to what they perceive as an intrinsic quality of news: it concerns things that go wrong, it is inherently negative. The problematization repertoire can therefore be seen as the coupling of a dominant perception of what news is (or should be) all about, with the practice of reporting about the multicultural society. In other words: the taboo journalists are breaking when explicitly covering problems of ethnic minorities in The Netherlands is not a taboo maintained to protect minorities from an intolerant or prejudiced society, but it is an ideological taboo of writing about news which is not about 'things that go wrong'. Whether this is really the case is not of concern here, but one has to note the active negotiation going on here between ideal-typical news values, occupational ideology, and a perception of social reality. Again it seems that this repertoire has a powerful function for providing legitimacy, as it claims that journalists do not write about ethnic minorities, they write about things that go wrong - 'regardless'.

ANTI-RACISM REPERTOIRE. Racism has shown to be a topic much talked about in the context of a discussion on multiculturalism and the media. Although few journalists talked openly about race, the ones who did showed par-

ticular disdain for people with racist ideas, in fact revealing an active personal agenda. Throughout most interviews participants expressed sensitivities towards stereotyping minorities and fighting (racial) prejudice in Dutch society (similar activism found among the journalists interviewed by Leurdijk and by Van Donselaar and Tanja). This clearly poses a challenge to their sense of professional neutrality as expressed in for example the 'business as usual' repertoire. Anti-racism as a particular attitude, as a way to position oneself as a reporter to multicultural topics, can thus be labeled as an interpretative repertoire as well. The difference between the topical category and the repertoire regarding race is, that 'race' is a concept which becomes apparent in terms of topics which have a certain news value, whereas 'race' is (part of) a belief system which allows journalists to give meaning to what kind of news decisions they make when for example writing about such topics. In this repertoire references to a journalists' audience are omnipresent.

"You get a lot of extreme right response and you get response like that it is good that it is written that way [...] I notice that people who are anti-foreigner read my stories well and even though you want to counter their views you have to use the journalistic standard."

With respect to the themes identified in talking about multiculturalism and journalism, journalists can use a specific anti-racist repertoire when commenting about the kind of knowledge of for example colleagues as it related to the representation of minorities in the news:

"Unfortunately there are many colleagues who have stereotypical images in their minds when covering multicultural issues. Who go out on the streets to write a story on the suppression of Islamic women. If you set out like that, you will get such a story - anything that does not fit that format will be left out. I think that's a shame."

Some would argue that being anti-racist is definitely in conflict with being a journalist in the context of a media organization:

"But I really think that people should suppress their 'missionary drive', because no one wants that [...] In journalism you have to accept that whether you are politically speaking ultra-left or ultra-right, when you are a professional you operate within a framework set out by management and the editors. Right?"

Research by Van Donselaar and Tanja (2000) specifically focused on journalists covering extreme right wing and racist social movements in The Netherlands.

They found that all interviewed journalists expressed conflicts between their own anti-racist convictions, the constraints of the 'neutral disseminator' doctrine of the profession and the goals of their media organization. Such awareness of the various factors or levels of influence on media decision-making (see for example the hierarchical levels recently reiterated by Reese, 2001) is clearly expressed when discussing 'extreme' topics like public racism, but is virtually absent when talking about more general issues such as social problems in inner cities (category v) or religion (category 11). Costera Meijer (2001b) has suggested that 'color' – which she typifies as the Dutch way of talking about race – is a concept with a lot of potential when discussed by producers and writers of soap operas. This repertoire suggests that the same goes for media practitioners, as they share a distinct anti-racist view on society – an opinion which also allows them to see the potential pitfalls of stereotyping or misrepresenting ethnic minorities in their selection and coverage of news. It functions in other words as a possibility to step away from overtly ideological claims of neutrality or just doing your work towards a more reflective discussion of the role of the media professional in the multicultural society.

JOURNALISM IN THE NETHERLANDS REPERTOIRE. Concluding our analysis a repertoire can be mentioned within which the participants reflect broadly on the Dutch media system in general. The journalists would frequently utter a variety of statements on journalism in The Netherlands as a whole when discussing the issues at hand. Apparently journalists have a somewhat developed sense of what 'journalism in The Netherlands' is and use these notions as some kind of benchmark when discussing their own work.

With respect to the professional knowledge of journalists in The Netherlands, several experts lamented what they felt to be an exclusive 'white' view on multiculturalism in the media, or as one journalist claims: "*What is difficult for us is the same problem for all media in The Netherlands, that we are a very white medium.*" Few participants would explicitly address what kind of problems this 'whiteness' may bring for Dutch media. One local newspaper journalist however does, using propositions from both 'ingroup-outgroup' and 'problematization' repertoires to reflect within a general 'journalism in The Netherlands' argument:

"When it comes to a problematic group of Dutch people in whatever city, we [Dutch journalists, MD] will eventually get them to speak out – something which sometimes does not happen at all when it comes to Moroccans or Turks. We just keep on writing how difficult they are but then I would really like to speak to such a Moroccan. [...] I think that this is the trend in all me-

dia, that it takes a lot of effort to get close to them. There is a lot of distrust between the press and the community. [...] Before you know it you only use native Dutch experts to talk about the multicultural society."

Another participant gives a specific example of what kind of problems this may bring regarding religion: *"Native Dutch journalists still do not know anything about the Islam, even though it is becoming an important part of this society, for a lot of people."* Other participants addressed the issue of knowledge in more practical terms, referring to the fact that building networks (of contacts) in ethnic communities takes a lot of time, which is according to one expert, *"a chronic problem for journalism."* A colleague feels that this is more of a problem for local and regional newspapers than for national dailies. This perceived lack of time and other practical constraints of news work are also addressed when discussing representational issues in Dutch journalism. The role of (often nighttime) copy editors for example:

"There is a kind of tension between the reality on the street and the reality of the newspaper. For example when something bad happens, I try to explain the context as much as possible. But because of fast copy editing the article will be shortened and given a new headline, which sometimes means you've lost at least half of the energy you've put into it. Then a 'paper-reality' emerges which is different from that which I have seen."

Most comments regarding the role of Dutch journalists in the multicultural society were made on the level of media responsibilities. Several experts expressed the necessity of 'ideological' standards such as professional distance and objectivity as being in conflict with a responsibility towards minority 'groups' in society: *"Yes I feel personally involved with the topic [the multicultural society, MD] but that has to do of course with the fact that as a journalist you have to be committed to groups in society."* Overall there seem to be two ways of using this particular repertoire, making it a functional repertoire within which other repertoires and topical categories can be located. The first way to use it is to defend 'business as usual'-type of arguments: *"Journalists are all individualistic and stubborn, I am no exception - I am just doing my work."* A second function of the 'journalism in The Netherlands' repertoire is to explicitly criticize the way things get done (mostly at other media), for example the choice of employing a multicultural expert:

"Well I feel a lot of attention is given to the multicultural society in Dutch media, and that is okay. What I regret is that it is always being put under the header 'multicultural society', and that newspaper editors make such an effort to employ specialists on the multicultural society. Maybe this is the only

way, but I think it is a little weird. If you write about Dutch cities than it is automatically part of your story so I think it is strange that a city news desk and a multicultural desk have to arrange who will write about let's say a street fight in Amsterdam-West. Such carefulness is typically Dutch I guess."

Conclusion

In this chapter the characteristics of ethnic minority journalists in The Netherlands were analyzed, and an assessment was made of the experiences, knowledge and views of multicultural specialists in the Dutch print media. Before offering concluding remarks in more detail, two general conclusions can be made. First it was found that ethnicity does matter in journalism; minority journalists expressed strong support for what can be called an advocacy role of the media in society – a role perception not found among their colleagues. This means in terms of the model on professional identity (see chapter 11) used in this project, that the agency of a journalist is clearly constrained *as well as* enabled by the ethnic background of the media professional involved.

A second conclusion comes from the in-depth interviews we held with multicultural experts: their views show a general lack of direction, coupling several arguments, topics, and opinions in a less than coherent framework for understanding their daily work. The repertoires journalists apply when discussing their work regarding the multicultural society reflect different accounts in different domains. The various repertoires were applied by speakers in at least two domains: one of which concerning his or her own experiences and actions, the other 'meso' domain consisting of references to the participants' colleagues, newsroom policies or media organization (cf. structure). A third 'macro' domain can be mentioned as well, which would consist of specific comments and references made by the journalists to Dutch journalism in general, regarding for example abstract notions (the history of) journalism professionalism and remarks about 'the' Dutch media culture and its treatment of racism and extreme-right wing social movements. The participants – when considering questions regarding journalists' responsibilities in a multicultural society – predominantly applied statements located in this third domain. These domains coincide with the taxonomy of knowledge, representation, and responsibility.

Most of the findings of earlier studies – particularly content analyses – can be traced throughout the interviews. The main comment to be made here: all participants expressed a sometimes critical awareness of the pitfalls of (negative) stereotyping of minorities in the news, the somewhat exclusive selectiveness of sourcing, the predominance of 'white' views in mainstream news media and the misrepresentation of colleagues with an ethnic minority background.

This awareness is almost completely ignored in the contemporary research literature, as more recent overviews acknowledge (see Campbell, 1998; Cottle, 2000a). On the other hand, the experts did not seem to have more or less coherent knowledge about the position of for example their colleagues with an ethnic minority background, or about issues of representation in general. In The Netherlands this may be caused by a general lack of studies looking at the role perceptions, views and ethics of journalists explicitly working in the context of the multicultural society.

The repertoires found in the interviews closely connect to those found by similar media production studies conducted by Leurdijk (1999), Van Donselaar and Tanja (2000) and Costera Meijer (2001b). This suggests that media professionals in The Netherlands share similar dilemmas, challenges, norms and values when it comes to discussing and working with multiculturalism. Costera Meijer in particular concludes that the final media product in these circumstances is partly the result of conflicting repertoires (2001b: 22). The conflict in our repertoires lies mainly between perceptions of how journalism works or should work and less than clear-cut ideas on what journalism is and how to find a role therein as an individual media professional.

Both conclusions contribute to answering the question of how the ideology of journalism can be seen as challenged by the articulation of multiculturalism to Dutch journalism. Journalists provide a public service, but are also non-representative and selective (for example when it comes to sourcing). Journalists are neutral and objective but also share a more or less active anti-racist agenda. Journalists must enjoy editorial autonomy, yet explain themselves in terms of a negotiation between what they do as individual(ist)s and how they perceive (Dutch) journalism works. Journalists have a sense of immediacy, but it is exactly this time-pressure that is singled out as problematic in news coverage, sourcing and networking involving minorities and multicultural issues. Journalists have a sense of ethics and legitimacy, but discuss their audiences as well as news actors in terms of 'us' and 'them' and express an awareness towards this skewed relationship. Legitimacy therefore can be seen as in conflict with what one participant called the 'paper reality' of the Dutch press.

In all accounts the experts expressed the complex nature of working in a multicultural society. As the participants claimed that much has changed in the way Dutch media cover the multicultural society, the debate on journalism and challenges to its ideology can be seen as an ongoing clash of different, not altogether well-articulated views, norms and values. The topical categories and repertoires with which these are discussed by the multicultural experts may serve as a way to structure the developments in reporting on minority issues

(as Leurdijk suggests), or may even function as a transformative challenge to media professionals to reconsider their views (as Costera Meijer concludes). Such a discussion can now also be considered to be better informed regarding the situation of ethnic minority reporters in The Netherlands, which would help both the experts and journalists throughout the Dutch media to further discuss the changing nature of journalism in a multicultural society.