Beyond the Ethnic Divide

Toward a Cultural–Sociological
Understanding of Ethnocentrism

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De etnische scheidslijn voorbij
Naar een cultuursociologisch begrip van etnocentrisme

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To my beloved parents
Za tato i mama

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1. Why we need 'culture' to study ethnocentrism

Nothing that strikes our eyes or ears conveys its message directly to us. We always select and interpret our impressions of the surrounding world. Some message is brought to us by the "light without" but the meaning and significance we give to it are largely added by the "light within".

Allport 1979[1954]: 165

1.1 Introduction

Imagine you are sitting in a train and someone with another ethnic background than your own comes to sit opposite you. If asked to describe this person afterwards, would you remember this person's ethnic background, or would it be other characteristics that come to mind first? If this person would behave rudely, for example by talking on the phone very loudly, would you judge this person differently than you would have done if he had belonged to your own ethnic group? And would you think differently about this person if you knew he was highly or low skilled?

Just as in any other situation that concerns first-time encounters, the perspectives of the people involved in such a situation are essential for the evaluation of the newly met stranger. The evaluation of such a first-met stranger will take place by a process of social categorization (e.g. Fiske and Taylor 1991; see also Crisp and Turner 2007). Such categorization can be based on any personal cue that is picked up about the person. It therefore might concern a person's appearance, manner of talking, ethnic background, or any other clue that can be perceived and taken into account in such casual encounters. The lens through which such a situation is perceived by the person who has experienced it will define which elements will be taken into account when placing a person in a certain social category. Therefore, questions as asked above can only be answered when more is known about the frames of interpretations involved. Nevertheless, this general social insight is often times absent in the sociological study of interethnic contacts and their consequences for ideas about ethnic minorities.

Within the literature on the dynamics between interethnic contacts and ethnocentrism, which is understood in this study as a generalized negative predisposition towards out-groups (cf. Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014: 9; Kinder and Kam 2009)[1], two important perspectives can be distinguished. The first perspective, Group Conflict

Theory (Levine and Campbell 1972; Blumer 1958; Coser 1956; Blalock 1967), is mainly focused on economic factors. The main explanation for ethnocentrism in this perspective is held to be the feeling that one's economic position is threatened by ethnic minorities. The second perspective, Contact Theory, is directed to situations that can lead to reduction of negative ideas about ethnic minorities. Scholars involved in Contact Theory research typically expect that interethnic contacts, especially intimate ones such as friendships, will lead to prejudice reduction (e.g. Aberson, Shoemaker, and Tomolillo 2004; Levin, Van Laar, and Sidanius 2003; see also Pettigrew and Tropp 2011). They therefore expect that interethnic contacts will generally lead to less ethnocentrism.

As will become clear from a more detailed description of the theories in the following sections, there is one fundamental problem with both theories, namely their blind spot for the role of people's cultural values. This problem forms an obstacle to further understanding of how and under which conditions interethnic contact might lead to more or less ethnocentrism. In what follows, the argumentation of the two theoretical paradigms that are usually used to study opinions about ethnic minorities, Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory, will be explained. The problems that arise when interpreting the research results from such studies in which cultural value frames are ignored will be examined. Based on those insights, I will formulate an alternative theory, Ethnic Reification Theory, for studying interethnic contacts and their consequences for ideas about ethnic minorities.

1.2 Group Conflict Theory

The first theory that offers an explanation for understanding ideas about ethnic minorities is Group Conflict Theory. It follows an economic logic according to which resistance towards ethnic minorities is rooted in self-interest, either on the individual or on the group-level. Its basic idea is that negative opinions about ethnic minorities are a result of ethnic competition, which leads 'to attempts at exclusion of one group by another' (Olzak 1992: 163). This ethnic competition can be based either on real, 'objective' threats such as in realistic group threat theory (Blalock 1967) or on perceived threats, such as in group threat theory (Blumer 1958). Whereas the former assumes that ethnic competition has 'objective' sources, the latter mainly focuses on subjective perceptions of threat. Apart from this difference, however, '[r]egardless of the competition's actual or perceived nature, natives' reactions of exclusion and prejudice are expected to become manifest when their collective (…) interests are threatened' (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010: 318). Therefore, both approaches will be considered as

part of the same overarching theoretical tradition (cf. Della Posta 2013), which I refer to as Group Conflict Theory.

The rise of Group Conflict Theory was first and foremost rooted in the need for an explanation for differences in levels of ethnocentrism over time (cf. Quillian 1995). Since individual level explanations were unable to explain such differences, a context-based theory was proposed. The leading principle within this theory is that contexts of scarcity would trigger interethnic competition. After all, mainly when resources are scarce their distribution might lead to controversies and clashes of interests. One of the key indicators for economic scarcity is the country's economic outlook. What is expected in Group Conflict Theory is that economic indicators, such as the level of gross domestic product per capita or employment rates, will be negatively related to ethnic competition (Quillian 1995; Burns and Gimpel 2000; Coenders et al. 2008a; Lahav 2004; Semyonov et al. 2008). The better the economic circumstances in a country, the less competition for scarce resources, either 'real' or perceived, there will be, resulting in lower levels of ethnocentrism.

A similar logic is applied to the share of immigrants in a country. That is, Group Conflict Theory predicts that experiences of ethnic threat will be higher the greater the share of immigrants in a country. This will be mainly the case concerning immigrants in a weak economic position, such as less educated immigrants, because they are thought to compete with natives in a similar weak economic position. In this case, the same logic applies when the economic circumstances in a country deteriorate (e.g. Quillian 1995; Blalock 1967): economic resources such as low-skilled jobs and social housing get scarcer, which intensifies competition for such resources. Therefore, a relatively high share of less educated immigrants in a country would result in greater perceptions of ethnic threat and in more ethnocentrism.

In sum, Group Conflict Theory predicts that ethnocentrism is rooted in the experience of economic threat, which will mainly come to the surface under circumstances of scarcity. However, this theoretical paradigm does not explain why scarcity of resources should necessarily lead to perceptions of *ethnic* threat, and not in hostility towards other social 'out-groups'. It requires a previous sense of ethnically defined in-groups and out-groups for scarce circumstances to specifically lead to ethnic threat (cf. Allport 1979[1954]: 60). Put differently, only when already thinking in terms of an ethnic divide will less affluent economic circumstances lead to scapegoating of ethnic minority groups instead of other social groups. While essential for understanding the origins of ethnocentric ideas, such group division along ethnic lines is not explained by Group Conflict Theory. As such, this theory presupposes a latent ethnic divide that is assumed to be 'activated' in the light of relatively unfortunate economic circumstances or in times of greater presence of ethnic minorities.

1.3 Contact theory

1.3.1 Allport's contact hypothesis

Whereas Group Conflict Theory typically locates sources of ethnocentrism at the contextual level (i.e., circumstances of scarcity), the focus of Contact Theory is clearly on the individual level. In fact, the latter is not so much a theory that attempts to explain ethnocentrism per se, but rather it describes a particular mechanism that might lead to reduction of ethnocentrism. The basic argument of Contact Theory is that contact with ethnic minorities has the potential to influence people's opinions about ethnic minorities such that ethnocentric ideas will be reduced. The interest in such a role of interethnic contact on ethnocentrism arose after World War II, and some argue that this contact tradition was initially motivated by the postwar wish to prevent repetition of the holocaust (see Jackman and Crane 1986; Connolly 2000; Torre 2010).

The first ideas about such a prejudice-reducing role of interethnic contact were bundled by Gordon Allport in his seminal work *The nature of prejudice*. It is in this book that he formulated the 'contact hypothesis', based on which he is considered the founding father of the contact tradition. According to this 'contact hypothesis', interethnic contacts will produce less negative thinking about ethnic minorities, but only under four optimal conditions of contact: when the individuals involved in contact are from equal-status groups; when a common goal is pursued; when contact involves cooperation; and when institutional support for contact is present (cf. Allport 1979[1954]: 279). Under those four optimal conditions, interethnic contact would successively lead to more knowledge about ethnic minorities, to more understanding for them, and to more positive ideas about them. This hypothesis was based on previous research findings on interethnic contacts conducted among Marines (Brophy 1946); among undergraduates (Allport and Kramer 1946); and in the army (Stouffer et al. 1949), as well as on an early review of interethnic contact research conducted by Williams (1947).

Even though the contact hypothesis echoes a positive idea about the future prospects of interethnic relations, this is not true for other claims made by Allport. Indeed, Allport has suggested that with only occasional, superficial contacts, it would be impossible to overcome people's negative opinions about ethnic minorities. In such superficial contact situations interethnic contact would ultimately reproduce an individual's initial ideas about ethnic minorities (Allport 1979[1954). Moreover, Allport has stated that interethnic contact in general might not work for everyone. He concluded that 'contact, as a situational variable, cannot always overcome the personal

variable in prejudice. This is true whenever the inner strain within the person is too tense, too insistent, to permit him to profit from the structure of the outer situation' (Allport 1979[1954]: 280-281). Such a statement is characteristic of Allport's seminal work, in which he not only proposed the contact hypothesis, but also reflected upon it critically and placed it within other insights on the formation of ethnic prejudice. As such he acknowledges the importance of cultural values for understanding people's interpretations of interethnic contacts and its consequences for ideas about ethnic minorities. Despite its later canonization, in which just his contact hypothesis was picked up, *The nature of prejudice* may well be seen as a work that reflects the richness of ideas about ethnic prejudice that existed at the time of writing.[2]

1.3.2 Pettigrew's Contact Theory

The further development of interethnic contact research has been, for an important part at least, put forward by social psychologists. One of the most productive authors in this respect is Thomas Pettigrew, who in fact claims to have reformulated Allport's contact hypothesis into Contact Theory (Pettigrew 1998: 75-78). Pettigrew and colleagues have not only created an extensive body of research within the intergroup contact tradition, but have dominated the field as well. This dominant version of Contact Theory is studied and further elaborated here.

The logic of Contact Theory departs in two important aspects from the traditional contentions in intergroup contact research. First, the role of Allport's four optimal conditions of contact is downplayed within Contact Theory. Allport stated that the failure to meet those optimal contact conditions might lead to interethnic contact having no effect on ideas about ethnic minorities, or in some cases even to the increase of negative ideas (Allport 1979[1954]: 279). Nevertheless, contact scholars claim to have found that even in the absence of Allport's four optimal conditions reduction of ethnocentrism through interethnic contacts takes place (e.g. Pettigrew and Tropp 2008; Stein et al. 2000). As affirmed by Husnu and Crisp, 'while there may be facilitating conditions that improve its effectiveness, contact basically *works*' (Husnu and Crisp 2010: 943, italics in original). Therefore, the research focus of Contact Theory turned away from Allport's four optimal conditions, and less and less emphasis is placed on studying the conditions under which interethnic contact works.

The second difference between Allport's ideas and the logic of Contact Theory exactly concerns the questions of how and why interethnic contacts influence ideas about ethnic minorities. Allport pictured the influence of interethnic contacts on ideas about ethnic minorities as some chain in which interethnic contact under the four

optimal conditions would create more knowledge of ethnic minority cultures, which would therefore result in more understanding for, and ultimately more positive thinking about ethnic minorities (Allport 1979[1954]). Pettigrew seems to have interpreted this 'chain' as a purely cognitive explanation, about which he states that '[c]ognitive analyses are not so much wrong as they are incomplete. Other processes are also involved' (Pettigrew 1998: 71).

In the context of an extensive meta-study on intergroup contact research, Pettigrew and Tropp claim to have shown that such knowledge mediation does take place, but is less important than the mediating effect that works through empathy and perspective taking (Pettigrew and Tropp 2011). Therefore, in Contact Theory mainly intimate contacts, such as interethnic friendships, are expected to lead to reduction of ethnocentrism (Pettigrew and Tropp 2011; McLaren 2003). From this perspective, contact will mostly lead to reduction of negative ideas about ethnic minorities when it offers the possibility of empathizing with out-group members and their concerns (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008: 923). Such intimate contacts would lead to overthrowing the idea that members from ethnic minority groups have different morals and values than in-group members (McLaren 2003: 913), which should result in blurring the boundary between in-groups and out-groups[3]. This does, however, not answer the essential question of how such intimate contacts come into being.

Altogether, Contact Theory, as put forward by Pettigrew and colleagues, predicts that interethnic contacts, especially intimate ones, will lead to less ethnocentrism. Its debates, as argued by Connolly (2000), 'are clearly grounded in social psychological perspectives, which focus on an individual's potential for attitudinal change within inter-group contact' (Connolly 2000: 175). By focusing on such an allegedly universal potential for attitudinal change that is thought to be present among all individuals, Contact Theory research 'has tended to create a rather self-referential field where the core assumptions and beliefs that underpin the Contact Hypothesis are simply taken for granted and thus remain unchallenged' (Ibid). More specifically, this means that Contact Theory research has assumed rather than critically studied the idea that interethnic contact can actually produce changes in ideas about ethnic minorities among all individuals. As such, the logic of Contact Theory assumes that interpretation of interethnic contacts will have a universal effect on ethnocentrism, irrespective of the social or cultural background of individuals. In addition, although Contact Theory itself claims that its arguments apply mainly to intimate contacts, in research practice its insights are extrapolated to all sorts of interethnic contacts. This is for example reflected in the claim, already cited above, that 'while there may be facilitating conditions that improve its effectiveness, contact basically *works*' (Husnu and Crisp 2010: 943, italics in original) for reducing prejudice.

1.4 The role of cultural values in studying ethnocentrism

1.4.1 Beyond sociology's blind spot for culture

As follows from the foregoing, both Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory neglect the role of people's cultural values for understanding ethnocentrism. For the former this is reflected in the assumption that people by definition think and perceive of reality in terms of ethnic divisions. For the latter this is crystalized in the idea of an allegedly universal 'beneficial' effect of interethnic contact. As such, both leading theories in studies on ethnocentrism have a blind spot for culture, a characteristic they share with many other social scientific research traditions. Indeed, it was only since the 1970s and 1980s that a renewed attention to 'culture' emerged within the social sciences. This 'cultural turn' (see for example Friedland and Mohr 2004; Nash 2001; Chaney 1994) was aimed as a critique of the positivist logic that had been dominating the social sciences. This positivist nature of the discipline implied a theoretical preference for everything that is 'hard' and can be measured 'objectively'.

The 'cultural turn' meant a radical break with such a positivist logic, its core idea being that no 'hard' and 'objective' social facts can exist in social science, since the social is always defined through human subjective experience (see for example Houtman 2003b: 38-39; Houtman and Achterberg 2012: 389). Such an emphasis on subjectivity 'allows us to look beyond the material understanding of "society" to the realm of meaning' (Sherwood, Smith and Alexander 1993: 374). Therefore, social science can only study what meaning people attach to things in life, instead of attempting to uncover an underlying 'objective' reality (e.g. Houtman 2008; Houtman and Achterberg 2012: 392). Instead of seeing only 'hard' factors, such as a person's economic position, as being real, the 'cultural turn' thereby paved the way for introducing into sociological research the idea that cultural structures have real effects.

This notion of the autonomy of 'culture' and the working of 'culture' as an independent variable, rather than as only a dependent variable, is the vital insight that has led to the revival of cultural sociology.[4] As stated by Friedland and Mohr (2004), this cultural sociology should not be seen as an emphasis on cultural research topics, but as a new paradigm for sociology as a discipline. The fundamental idea behind such a cultural sociological paradigm is that 'culture is not a thing but a dimension, not an object to be studied as a dependent variable, but a thread that runs through, one that can be teased out of, every conceivable social form' (Alexander 2003: 7). As such, it has gained importance within the sociological discipline in the past fifteen years as 'a field at the crossroads of sociology (…) its prominence results from the disciplinary gaps it

has filled' (Jacobs and Spilman 2005: 2), namely by understanding cultural processes as 'the switch point' between structure and agency (Ibid: 3).

It is in this sense that a cultural sociological approach can lead to advances in the study of ethnocentrism. As stated by Lamont, '[a] focus on meaning-making is also likely to enrich the study of racism and anti-racism (…) we need to gain purchase on the broad cultural frameworks that facilitate it' (Lamont 2000: 604). Indeed, Allport, contact tradition's founding father, already acknowledged that 'a person's prejudice is unlikely to be merely a specific attitude toward a specific group; it is more likely to be a reflection of his whole habit of thinking about the world he lives in' (Allport 1979[1954]: 175). It is exactly this 'habit of thinking', the cultural values that serve as frames of interpretation through which people perceive the world and the experiences they have, that is many times neglected in studies on opinions about ethnic minorities. In the following, we will see how this is true for Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory respectively.

1.4.2 The cultural gap in Group Conflict Theory

In recent years, more and more research evidence emerged showing that more than economic threats, cultural threats function as driving forces behind negative ideas about ethnic minorities (see for example Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Malhotra, Margalit and Hyunjung Mo 2013, for an overview of such studies). At the same time, the logic of Group Conflict Theory has been extended to resources other than purely economic ones, such as the defense of the ethnic majority culture (e.g. Sides and Citrin 2007; Schneider 2008). Indeed, Biggs and Knauss (2012) do not stand alone in preferring 'a generic formulation of threat, for the prediction about numerical size should hold whether the majority feels threatened in economic, political or cultural domains' (Biggs and Knauss 2012: 634).[5]

The common assumption among Group Conflict scholars is that cultural threat works through the same mechanism as economic threat. Indeed, when referring to intergroup competition for scarce resources, Schlueter and Scheepers (2010) argue that '[i]ssues at stake in such intergroup competition can refer to tangible (e.g. housing or labor market issues), as well as intangible, goods (e.g., religious or language issues' (Schlueter and Scheepers 2010: 286). In such an approach, cultural resources are framed in the perspective of scarcity as well. It is, however, not self-evident to assume that cultural resources can be scarce. Whereas economic resources can be limited, cultural resources are in principle infinite. This goes for example for the belief in a God; for common rituals regarding important life-events such as death; and for eating prac-

tices, with which I do not mean eating manners, but rather the role of food(sharing) in social life and ideas about what constitutes 'good food'. Those examples have in common that different ways of acting on those subjects do not necessarily stand in each other's way and are in that sense infinite. Because of this infinite nature of cultural resources, an additional explanation that links cultural resources to ethnic competition is required.

An attempt to offer such an additional explanation was made by Coenders et al. (2008b). They argue that economic threat is based on realistic group conflict only, whereas cultural threat can be understood through social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979) and people's wish for a positive group identity (see Coenders et al. 2008b). This distinction, however, does not seem to solve the core problem at hand. After all, if competition for economic resources should be explained from realistic conflict theory only, it can be doubted whether this should necessarily result in *ethnic* competition. As Allport argues, 'even in so realistic a situation we note the essential illogicality of regarding only the man of the *other* race as a threat (…) There must be also a previous sense of in-group and out-group rivalry before the lines of competition can be perceived as ethnic' (Allport 1979[1954]: 60). Similarly, if cultural threat should be based only on the longing for a positive group identity, a more profound explanation is needed to understand why this group identity should necessarily be based on ethnic background.

As such, decomposed under the pressure of the evidence for 'cultural threat', a fundamental flaw of Group Conflict Theory comes to light. In an attempt to explain ethnocentrism, Group Conflict Theory in fact presupposes a perception of society which is divided along ethnic and racial lines. As such, Group Conflict Theory in fact presupposes ethnocentrism. After all, it assumes that a positive group identity is by definition based on an ethnic group identity. This is furthermore confirmed by the statement that economic threat can as well be rooted in realistic conflicts that might have 'objective' sources. This would work such that '[e]ven when members of the majority group do not have strong discriminative views against immigrants, they may become xenophobic because some specific objective conditions incline them to feel threatened about losing the resources they have' (Hjerm and Nagayoshi 2011: 817). How else could this be true, if not by presupposing an ethnic divide? It is at this point exactly, where the need for a cultural sociological perspective comes to light.

1.4.3 A cultural sociological critique of Contact Theory

Whereas the blind spot of Group Conflict Theory for culture, as we have seen, ulti-mately results in presupposing the very issue it aims to study, Contact Theory's neglect of 'culture' results in an overestimation of the potential of interethnic contact to reduce ethnocentrism. Even though Contact Theory in the end expects that interethnic con-tacts can change people's ideas and values, it ignores the frames of interpretation con-stituted by people's cultural values through which interethnic contacts are evaluated. Contact Theory seems to adhere to a stimulus response-like approach instead, in which interethnic contact has a given effect that is the same for everyone. This approach disregards Allport's initial idea that contact might not work the same for everyone. Even though this idea was underlined by Pettigrew himself when stating that 'prior attitudes and experiences influence (…) what the effects of the contact will be' (Pet-tigrew 1998: 77), it has not been incorporated into Contact Theory.[6]

This fundamental difference of Contact Theory vis-à-vis Allport's initial ideas uncovers an essentially different perception of the mechanism that underlies interpre-tations of interethnic contact situations. What is overlooked in Contact Theory is that contact, just like any other event, is not 'objectively' projected onto people, but is experienced through people's subjective frames of interpretation, through which peo-ple make sense of all external influences. In the context of interethnic contacts, such frames of interpretation will most likely be constituted by people's values concerning cultural differences. This will work such that those more culturally tolerant will be more likely to evaluate contact in a positive sense than those more culturally intoler-ant. When interested in understanding how and why interethnic contact might pro-duce changes in the way individuals think about ethnic minorities, it is therefore important to study how such an influence of interethnic contact differs according to individuals' cultural values, or, put differently, how the evaluation of interethnic con-tact is culturally moderated.

The importance of considering cultural moderation of interethnic contacts is fur-ther underlined by the common interpretation of the relationship between interethnic friendship and ethnocentrism. A common finding in research on Contact Theory, as shown before, is that mainly interethnic friendships are associated with reductions of negative ideas about ethnic minorities. This finding has been interpreted as strongly supportive of Contact Theory. However, it can as well be argued that the relationship between interethnic friendships and less negative thinking about ethnic minorities is the ultimate consequence of the problem of self-selection in interethnic contacts. This problem of self-selection concerns the causal direction between contact and ethno-

centrism: interethnic contact may lead to ethnocentrism, but the inversed causal path is as plausible.

Although commonly acknowledged within interethnic contact research (McLaren 2003; Dixon 2006; Sigelman and Welch 1993; Aberson et al. 2004), this problem is mostly approached from a methodological perspective. For long it has therefore been asserted that the path from contacts to ethnocentrism is stronger than the reversed path, based on evidence from testing the strength of both paths within the same sample using structural equation modeling (e.g Pettigrew 1998; McLaren 2003). Besides the doubts one can cast on using a statistical construct for addressing such an essential problem, there is an alternative theoretical approach that can be applied for testing the seriousness of the selection problem of Contact Theory. This alternative, proposed by Ethnic Reification Theory which is further elaborated in the following section, considers people's cultural values as central not only to the interpretation of interethnic contact, but also to the selection of interethnic ties.

1.5 Constructing Ethnic Reification Theory as an alternative explanation for ethnocentrism

1.5.1 The 'cultural' in studies on ethnocentrism

As has been argued so far, both Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory have a blind spot for people's cultural values. This is problematic because it obstructs further understanding of the dynamics between interethnic contact and ethnocentrism. In this section Ethnic Reification Theory is presented as a theoretical alternative based on a cultural sociological approach in which people's cultural values are the main explanatory factor and are as such taken seriously.

Earlier studies have already suggested the importance of taking 'culture' seriously when studying ethnocentrism. This is demonstrated by previous findings indicating that immigrants are perceived as a 'cultural threat' rather than an economic one as predicted by Group Conflict Theory (Schneider 2008; Sniderman et al. 2004; O'Rourke and Sinnot 2006; Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007). Furthermore, several authors have argued that the negative relationship between educational level and ethnocentrism, many times interpreted as supportive of Group Conflict Theory (e.g. Scheepers et al. 2002; Eisinga and Scheepers 1989; Lubbers and Scheepers 2002; Kunovich 2004; Hello et al. 2006), should not be understood in an economic, but rather in a cultural, sense (see Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007, 2010; Citrin et al. 1997;

Burns and Gimpel 2000; Espenshade and Calhoun 1993; Van der Waal and Houtman 2011). As stated by Hainmueller and Hiscox, '[t]he conventional story appears to be based on a fundamental misinterpretation of the available evidence' (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007: 401). Hence, as their findings indicate, 'a large component of the effect of education on individual attitudes towards immigrants is associated with differences among individuals in cultural values and beliefs' (Ibid: 401-402). This is in line with earlier studies in which it was shown that education is not only an indicator of class or socioeconomic position, as conventionally assumed, but also of one's cultural position (cf. Houtman 2003, 2001). In line with this cultural explanation of the relationship between education and ethnocentrism, Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) conclude that cultural factors are more important for explaining ethnocentrism than economic factors, and Malhotra et al. (2013) assert that, while findings are rather mixed for Group Conflict Theory, cultural explanations are consistently supported.

Altogether, ample empirical evidence is thus available that suggests a greater role for people's cultural values in explaining ethnocentrism. However, 'the cultural (…) approaches that are typically vindicated by empirical testing lack the theoretical precision of the self-interest [Group Conflict] approach' (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014: 3). Indeed, a closer look at the cultural interpretation of the educational effect on ethnocentrism reveals that several mechanisms are claimed to be at work. The relationship between education and ethnocentrism is for example stated as a consequence of cognitive sophistication (e.g. Bobo and Licari 1989; Espenshade and Calhoun 1993); of the liberalizing effect of education (e.g. Espenshade and Calhoun 1993); and of a greater predisposition towards ethnic and racial tolerance (e.g. Espenshade and Calhoun 1993; McLaren 2001; Citrin et al. 1997). Only rarely are these differing mechanisms underlying the cultural interpretations of the educational effect on ethnocentrism further developed, thereby leaving somewhat unclear what exactly is the cultural interpretation of the educational effect on ethnocentrism.

The theoretical imprecision in studies claiming a 'cultural' explanation for ethnocentrism becomes even more apparent when looking at the interpretations offered for the influence of contextual sources on ethnocentrism. The main context factor that was studied from a cultural perspective for its influence on ethnocentrism is the share of immigrants in a country. As stated above, it is found that when the share of immigrants is positively related to ethnocentrism, this is mainly through increased feelings of cultural threat. Acknowledging the existence and importance of 'cultural threat', mostly understood as the feeling that the 'national identity' and the 'traditional way of life' are being threatened, is arguably a step forward compared to purely economic interpretations of the influence of immigration on ethnocentrism. Nevertheless, this does not mean that in accounts of 'cultural threat' the 'cultural' is understood in a cul-

tural sociological sense. More specifically, acknowledging 'cultural threat' as important for ethnocentrism does not imply that people's cultural values are thought to function as interpretative frames through which reality – the immigration context in this case – is perceived and provided with meaning. This becomes for example clear from the suggestion that '[i]f correct information about immigrant stock and flows reached the general public (…) the sense of threat might wane, mitigating hostility towards immigrants' (Sides and Citrin 2007: 501). Such a statement neglects the idea that even though '[s]ome message is brought to us by the "light without" (…) the meaning and significance we give to it are largely added by the "light within' (Allport 1979[1954]: 165). Neglecting this idea is, in the end, the same as neglecting the cultural values that serve as frames of interpretation through which people perceive the world, which I have so far identified as the main problem in studies on ethnocentrism.

In sum, not only is it unclear what exactly is the 'cultural interpretation' of the educational effect on ethnocentrism, it is also not explicitly taken into account that contexts - as well as contacts for that matter - are not 'cultural' in and of themselves, but are interpreted through people's cultural values. The following section explains how those two elements – the cultural interpretation of the educational effect on ethnocentrism and the interpretation of contexts through people's cultural values - are combined in Ethnic Reification Theory. Thereafter, it is explained what should be studied in order to test Ethnic Reification Theory against Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory respectively, and how such a test will be developed throughout this dissertation.

1.5.2 Ethnic Reification Theory

The core idea of Ethnic Reification Theory is that the extent to which people hold an ethnic reified worldview both explains ethnocentrism and serves as a frame of interpretation through which interethnic contacts and immigration contexts are interpreted. Those two issues which are explained by ethnic reification correspond with the two elements named above, that is, the cultural interpretation of the educational effect on ethnocentrism and the interpretation of contexts through people's cultural values, which are combined in Ethnic Reification Theory.

Let us consider the first element: the cultural interpretation of the educational effect on ethnocentrism. The well-established finding that less educated people have more ethnocentric ideas than more highly educated people have, as we have already seen above, has been interpreted as being a consequence of the 'liberalizing effect of education'; of cognitive sophistication; and of a greater disposition towards ethnic and

racial tolerance. Although these seem to be different interpretations of the educational effect on ethnocentrism, with the exception of cognitive sophistication, they might fit together into one overarching idea as to why highly educated people are more ethnically tolerant than less educated people. The key to such an overarching idea is to see education as an indicator of cultural capital, understood here as ´the ability to recognize cultural expressions and to comprehend their meaning´ (cf. Van der Waal et al. 2010: 352). Some previous studies have already suggested that the greater ethnic tolerance among more educated people should be understood from their ample amount of cultural capital (e.g. Van der Waal and Houtman 2011; Van der Waal et al. 2010). This is because cultural capital, in modern liberal democracies that is, stimulates a de-naturalized idea of culture, as opposed to a reified view of culture which can be found among less educated people with corresponding limited amounts of cultural capital (cf. Gabennesch 1972; Van der Waal et al. 2010).

Reification is a 'view of social reality as if it were fixed instead of in process, absolute instead of relative, natural instead of conventional, and in general, as a product of forces which are more than human' (Gabennesch 1972: 863). Such a view of social reality will go along with a static idea of the own culture as being 'natural' and as something that should be preserved in its current form. Furthermore, within a reified worldview ethnicity and culture will be seen as fixed combinations: someone with a Dutch ethnic background will by definition adhere to Dutch culture, whereas someone with a Turkish background will by definition adhere to Turkish culture, etc. From such a perspective, anyone with a different ethnic background than the own will be thought to hold a 'deviating' culture. When holding the opposite of a reified view, a de-reified worldview so to speak, it will be acknowledged that no such thing as a fixed culture exists. Instead, people holding a de-reified worldview will perceive cultural differences as legitimate and as embedded in the workings of society itself. Furthermore, instead of assuming that ethnicity 'naturally' comes together with a certain cultural story, when holding a de-reified view it is acknowledged that all people, irrespective of ethnic background, can ascribe to any cultural story to make sense of the world around them. As a result, those with a de-reified view on ethnicity are more likely to accept, or even appreciate, various cultural expressions, and will consequently be more tolerant towards cultural differences. By contrast, people with an ethnic reified worldview will be more likely to reject cultural differences since those are considered to be a threat to the naturalized cultural order.

Two value patterns can be expected to vary with the extent to which one holds an ethnic reified worldview: authoritarianism and distrust. Concerning the first, being reluctant to accept cultural differences and perceiving those as infringements on the natural order will be likely to go hand in hand with an emphasis on rules and order.

Since such an emphasis on rules and order is what authoritarian values stand for, people with an ethnic reified view will be more likely to hold authoritarian values, the opposite being true for those holding a de-reified view. For the second, distrust, since every 'faux-pas' in terms of what is considered the 'natural' order is seen as threatening, people with a reified worldview will be more likely to hold feelings of personal distrust. Hence, any person could potentially form a threat to what is considered 'normal', especially those who are thought to ascribe to different norms and values than the own, which from a reified perspective is true for people with another ethnic background than one's own. As such, people holding a reified view of reality will be more likely to distrust others than people with a de-reified view.

In sum, ethnocentrism can thus be understood by the extent to which one holds an ethnic reified worldview. Such a worldview will be prevalent among the less educated and will go hand in hand with authoritarian conceptions and with greater feelings of distrust. The cultural interpretation of the educational effect on ethnocentrism is thus based on the principle of ethnic reification. This same principle also serves to explain how immigration contexts and interethnic contacts are interpreted and related to ideas about ethnic minorities, which is where the second element of Ethnic Reification Theory comes into play. Instead of considering such contexts as 'objective' sources of ethnocentrism, it is focused on how people themselves make sense of those contexts through the relevant cultural values that serve as frames of interpretation. A certain context, such as the share of immigrants in a country, will only be related to ethnocentrism when interpreted through a frame which is itself related to ethnocentrism. The most important frame in this respect, following Ethnic Reification Theory, is the extent to which people have an ethnically reified view of reality, or, put differently, the extent to which people think in terms of an ethnic divide.

Ethnic Reification Theory thus holds that ethnocentrism can be understood by the extent to which one has an ethnically reified view of reality, and that such a reified view, which is mainly found among less educated people as a consequence of their limited amount of cultural capital, forms the cultural values that serve as frames of interpretation through which both immigration contexts and interethnic contacts will be interpreted. To study whether this is indeed the case, Ethnic Reification Theory will be contrasted with Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory respectively. This study is therefore composed of two empirical parts in which Ethnic Reification Theory will be further developed and tested alongside Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory, respectively. Thereby, I attempt to offer an alternative for the problems signaled in Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory. In the following I further elaborate upon the approach followed in this study, including the corresponding research questions that are the focus of the chapters to come. The order in which these

are presented matches the ordering of the empirical chapters. Altogether, these specific elements should enable me to formulate an answer to this study's main research question, which is as follows: *Under which circumstances does interethnic contact lead to either more or less ethnocentrism, and how can this be explained?*

1.5.3 Contrasting Group Conflict Theory and Ethnic Reification Theory

In the elaboration of Ethnic Reification Theory it was argued that on the individual level people's cultural values are more important for explaining ethnocentrism the economic logic of Group Conflict Theory. However, when attempting to explain differences in ethnocentrism over time or between countries, the picture is not yet as clear. In order to understand such differences in ethnocentrism contextual characteristics should be taken into account, the two main characteristics used being national economic circumstances and immigration context. Especially when looking at the former, the national economic context, a confusing picture arises: although research has presented mixed findings concerning the relationship between economic affluence and ethnocentrism (e.g. McLaren 2001), it is generally considered that ethnocentrism will mostly thrive under less affluent economic circumstances (e.g. Burns and Gimpel 2000). There is indeed evidence available showing that economic fluctuations are related to ideas about immigration (e.g. Harwood 1983; Lapinski et al. 1997). More recent examples can be found as a consequence of the recent financial crisis: lower levels of economic prosperity turned out to be related to the rise of extreme right-wing nationalist parties, such as the Golden Dawn in bankrupt Greece (see Ellinas 2013). Such findings are generally interpreted as supportive of Group Conflict Theory. However, it is not clear yet how this can be matched with the well-established finding (cf. Malhotra et al. 2013; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014) that on the individual level cultural values are more important than economic interests for explaining ethnocentrism.

Whereas Group Conflict Theory expects that less affluent economic circumstances will be related to more ethnocentrism because natives will feel more threatened in their economic position, a cultural sociological perspective of the account would hold that if people's ideas about ethnic minorities are not so much rooted in economic interests, it is unlikely that economic context will be interpreted from an economic interest perspective. The alternative possibility, following Ethnic Reification Theory, is that people's ideas about cultural differences and distrust will be more strongly linked to ethnocentrism under less affluent economic circumstances. As such, unfavorable economic tides cannot only activate economic interests that are related to ethnocen-

trism, but might just as well reinforce the cultural mechanism that leads to negative ideas about ethnic minorities. In order to further understand how ethnocentrism is influenced by economic fluctuations, this study considers *to what extent the relationship between economic context and ethnocentrism can be understood through individuals' economic and cultural position*. This question will be examined in the second chapter.

The second context characteristic deemed important for people's ideas about ethnic minorities is immigration context. The studies performed on the relationship between the share of immigrants in a country and ethnocentrism are more diverse than the ones concerning national economic context, and more attention has been paid to the idea of 'cultural threat' in addition to 'economic threat'. Nevertheless, whether argued from an economic or a cultural threat perspective, such studies still seem to assume that contexts function as 'objective' sources of ethnocentrism. This becomes for example clear by the use of the terms 'actual economic threat' and 'actual cultural threat' as labels for the immigration context in a country. Instead of assuming that certain immigration contexts function as 'objective' ethnic threats that invoke ethnocentric ideas, Ethnic Reification Theory proposes to study how people's cultural values, namely their ideas about cultural differences and their amount of distrust, serve as frames of interpretation through which national immigration contexts are interpreted. As such, while a greater presence of immigrants according to Group Conflict Theory will lead to more negative ideas about ethnic minorities among people with a low socio-economic position, following Ethnic Reification Theory this will be true for people with an ethnically reified worldview, expressed in high amounts of authoritarianism and distrust. The third chapter is therefore dedicated to understanding the influence of immigration on opinions about ethnic minorities by studying the following question: *to what extent does the share of immigrants in a country influence ethnocentrism, and how can this be explained by people's economic interests and by their cultural values?*

1.5.4 Contrasting Contact Theory and Ethnic Reification Theory

Whereas the first empirical part of this study is thus dedicated to contrasting Ethnic Reification Theory with Group Conflict Theory, the second empirical part concerns a test of Ethnic Reification Theory as an alternative interpretation of the relationship between interethnic contact and ethnocentrism. This is important since ignoring the role of individuals' cultural values might have obscured the seriousness of the problem of self-selection in interethnic contacts. Not only might contact experiences be interpreted differently according to individuals' ideas about cultural differences, it can also be true that those individuals who are more open to cultural differences will be more

willing to have interethnic contacts and would therefore be more likely to have intimate interethnic contacts, such as friendships, than people who are less open to cultural differences. Chapter three will therefore study *to what extent self-selection can be distinguished from 'genuine' contact effects by distinguishing the double role of people's cultural values as drivers for self-selection and as frames of interpretation for interethnic contacts.*

Thereafter, the idea that interethnic contacts will be interpreted through people's frames of interpretation will be studied for the evaluation of imagined interethnic contacts. The latter is a rather new component of the contact tradition, which, it is claimed, would help reduce prejudice. This is presented as an ideal policy tool for improving interethnic relations, because it can be applied, so it is claimed, even to people who are normally unwilling to engage in interethnic contact because of their prejudice (cf. Husnu and Crisp 2010). Such a statement clearly unmasks the problem with imagined contact research. After all, if one is too prejudiced to engage in interethnic contacts, how could such a person imagine a contact situation that will take away initial resistance? In order to show that, from an Ethnic Reification perspective, this is unlikely to take place, a vignette experiment of an imagined contact situation was conducted which studies *to what extent imagined contact situations are interpreted through people's amount of openness towards cultural differences.* This question is addressed in chapter five.

1.5.5 Overview of data used

All four empirical chapters described above are based on quantitative data. Where possible, data from the Netherlands are used, namely in chapters three and four, which is the preferred option since this research project is developed within a Dutch context, and by using Dutch data its results could be more readily translated to everyday situations. However, the data needed were not available for the Netherlands for all empirical chapters. Therefore, data for the United States and for 18 European countries were used as well. This should not be problematic since the underpinnings of individual attitudes towards ethnic minorities are found to be similar in Western countries (cf. Citrin and Sides 2008). Moreover, the theoretical rationale studied here is expected to work alike in all Western societies.

The first empirical study in chapter two uses data from the United States. This is because longitudinal data on ethnocentrism and all other relevant variables are needed, which are not available in a long enough time-span for the Netherlands. The best available time-series data that include all relevant variables have been found in the US General Social Survey (Smith et al. 2013), which are therefore used. The choice for

data for the second empirical study in chapter three was driven by the availability of information on the share of less educated and non-Western immigrants in a country. Since there is no information on those two measurements for the Netherlands nor for any other Western country over a longer time-span, the only viable option was to use a country comparative approach. The first wave of the European Social Survey (Jowell et al. 2003) is then the preferred option, which resulted in a country comparative study using 18 European countries including the Netherlands. The third empirical study in chapter four is also based on the first wave of the European Social Survey. However, since no country characteristics are needed here, only the Dutch sample of this dataset was used. Finally, the fourth study described in chapter five is based on data from the Netherlands as well. This is the only empirical study that was based on primary data. One module of the dataset used, which is the third wave of the CROCUS Survey on Worldviews in the Netherlands (Achterberg et al. 2012), was especially designed for this study.

2. Economic Contexts and Ethnocentrism: A Non-Economic Relationship

2.1 Introduction

Trends in ethnocentrism tend to be explained following an economic logic. Arguing along the lines of Group Conflict Theory (e.g. Blumer 1958; Blalock 1967; Levine and Campbell 1972), the main argument for such an economic interpretation is that in times of economic hardship, when resources are more scarce, natives will feel more threatened in their economic position (e.g. Blalock 1967).[7] As a consequence, they will try to preserve the resources available to the group they identify with as their in-group. This is expected to lead to a more reluctant stance towards ethnic minorities, and thus, to more ethnocentrism[8].

Indeed, a comparison of trends in ethnocentrism and the level of per capita gross domestic product, as shown in Figure 2.1, indicates that those trends are roughly inverted. At first sight, it therefore seems true that higher levels of per capita GDP are associated with lower levels of ethnocentrism and vice versa. Similar trends have been reported by Lapinski et al. (1997) and Wilkes et al. (2008). Furthermore, the current financial crisis has been shown to go hand in hand with the growth of nationalist, anti-immigrant parties and movements, such as the Golden Dawn in Greece, which has grown considerably since the country has gone bankrupt (Ellinas 2013). Thus, an economic explanation for the relationship between economic circumstances and ethnocentrism as proposed by Group Conflict Theory seems plausible.

Nevertheless, such an economic explanation is not self-evident. To understand the relationship between economic circumstances and ethnocentrism it is vital to look at the way in which people interpret and relate economic contexts to their political attitudes. Such an interpretation cannot just be 'objectively' assigned by scholars by simply basing it on the nature of the context in question, but should be studied. In the case of the relationship between economic circumstances and ethnocentrism, the interpretative frames that are likely to be important should be based on the individual-level mechanisms that are considered relevant for explaining ethnocentrism.

Figure 2.1: Trends in Ethnocentrism and GDP per capita, US 1972-2002
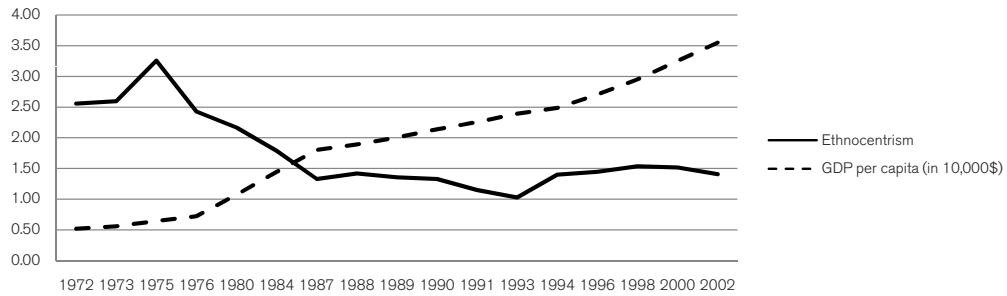
Source: General Social Survey, cumulative file 1972-2012; own calculations.

The two individual-level mechanisms that are considered most important for explaining ethnocentrism are based on an economic and a cultural logic respectively. The first is derived from Group Conflict Theory and holds that ethnocentrism will be mainly rooted in experiences of economic threat. The second can be placed under Ethnic Reification theory and holds that ethnocentrism is mainly explained by people's stance towards cultural differences. Whereas the economic interest-based logic has received ample attention over the years, more and more studies emphasize that it is of relatively small importance for explaining ethnocentrism (e.g. Malhotra et al. 2013; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014). The cultural explanation for ethnocentrism is found to be far stronger (cf. Malhotra et al. 2013: 392).

As a consequence, economic circumstances might not be related to ethnocentrism through economic interest frames, but rather through frames of interpretation constituted by people's cultural values. Hence, even though the economy might by definition be considered economical, this does not preclude an interpretation by means of a cultural logic as well. Therefore, before concluding that fluctuations of the economy and ethnocentrism that go hand in hand should be interpreted through an economic logic only, it is important to consider the possibility that economic hardship functions as a condition under which mechanisms of cultural threat are especially invoked. This chapter therefore studies two explanations of how economic prosperity influences ethnocentric ideas.

2.2 Two interpretations of the relationship between economic context and ethnocentrism

A general idea that links economic circumstances to ethnocentrism is that of scapegoating. The basic principle is that under less affluent circumstances people will searched for individuals or groups of people to blame for those circumstances. Group Conflict Theory assumes that such scapegoats will most likely be ethnic minority groups, because under less affluent circumstances, natives will try to preserve economic resources for their own in-group, resulting in more ethnocentrism. However, instead of working strictly through an economic logic, it could also be true that those holding an ethnic reified worldview will become more ethnocentric under less affluent circumstances. Both interpretations of the relationship between economic circumstances and ethnocentrism are further elaborated below.

2.2.1 The economic interests approach

The idea that economic contexts influence political attitudes is not exceptional in sociology. In fact, it is a dominant thread running through a great variety of sociological research fields. It can be linked back to both Marxist and rational choice paradigms. Furthermore, it is a common feature of the positivist tradition in sociology in which mainly 'hard', exogenous forces that can be measured 'objectively' are used as explanations for 'soft' phenomena such as values and opinions. As such, several studies have for example argued that the economic context influences voting behaviour (e.g. MacKuen, Erikson and Stimson 1992; Lewis-Beck 1988) and levels of postmaterialism (e.g. Duch and Taylor 1993; Clarke and Dutt 1991). There is thus widespread agreement, not restricted to the study of ethnocentrism alone, upon the idea that economic structures have an important impact on individual's values and opinions. Researchers studying ethnocentrism are therefore not exceptional in stating that 'clearly the economy is important in determining people's attitudes and behaviors' (McLaren 1999: 169).

This importance of the economy for ethnocentrism is, following Group Conflict Theory, attributable to the idea that contexts of scarcity will trigger interethnic competition. Blumer (1958) was one of the first influential scholars that developed such a theory. His main contribution to the field is the idea that ethnocentrism should be mainly understood from a sense of group position. According to Blumer ethnocentrism would therefore be rooted in a sense of perceived ethnic threat that results in the

wish to preserve resources for the in-group. This idea forms the basis of what is labeled group threat theory.

Later on, the focus was shifted from perceived ethnic threat to realistic ethnic threat (Bobo 1983; Levine and Campbell 1972; Hjerm and Nagayoshi 2011). This can be linked to a positivist logic according to which opinions are mainly affected by 'objective' sources. As stated by Hjerm and Nagayoshi, realistic group threat theory 'leads to an important insight: anti-immigrant attitudes might have *objective sources*. Even when members of the majority group do not have strong discriminative views against immigrants, they may become xenophobic because some specific objective conditions incline them to feel threatened about losing the resources they have' (Hjerm and Nagayoshi 2011: 817).

Although '[d]ebates exist on whether the circumstances favoring intergroup hostility need to be real (…) or just imagined' (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010: 318), in the end both branches of Group Conflict Theory are used within the same line of argumentation. Some scholars connect those branches by stating that perceived ethnic threat is rooted in 'real' ethnic threat (e.g. Coenders and Scheepers 2003). Others explicitly merge both approaches; for instance Velásco Gonzalez et al. (2008) state that '[t]he core issue here is (perceived) competition over scarce resources' (Velásco Gonzalez et al. 2008: 669), thereby suggesting that both realistic and perceived threat function similarly.

In sum, both branches of Group Conflict Theory expect that the amount of economic prosperity is negatively related to ethnocentrism as a result of ethnic competition over scarce resources (e.g. Blalock 1967; Quillian 1995; Coenders and Scheepers 1998). Such competition over economic resources is argued to be stronger among natives with a weak economic position than among those with a strong economic position, because competition for resources will be most severe for people holding economic positions similar to those of ethnic minorities. As most ethnic minorities in Western societies hold 'weak to very weak' economic positions (Coenders, 2001; Scheepers et al., 2002; Gijsberts et al. 2004), it is primarily natives in a low economic position with whom they compete over scarce resources. Consequently, for the most part, people in a low economic position will adopt a negative stance towards ethnic minorities in order to protect their own, or their own group's, position.

Following this line of reasoning implies that we cannot expect economic contexts to have the same effect on ethnocentrism across the whole population. Since the Group Conflict explanation for the relationship between economic circumstances and ethnocentrism is based on a logic of economic interest, and given that those economic interests will be mostly present among people in a low economic position, less affluent economic circumstances should lead to more ethnocentrism among natives in a low

economic position. Based on Group Conflict Theory the hypothesis concerning an explanation for the relationship between economic circumstances and ethnocentrism should thus be as follows: the less affluent the economic circumstances in a country, the more people in a low economic position, as measured by low income and a weak labor market position, will be inclined to have ethnocentric ideas (*hypothesis* 1). Technically speaking, it can therefore be expected that the relationship between economic position and ethnocentrism will be stronger the less affluent the economic circumstances in a country are.

2.2.2 The cultural values approach

Although it might be true that living in times of economic recession leads to a stronger inclination towards protection of economic resources, there are reasons to argue that this economic interest-based theory does not tell the whole story. In effect, research has shown that on the individual level cultural concerns are more important for explaining ethnocentrism than the Group Conflict explanation (cf. Malhotra 2013: 392; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007, 2010; Citrin et al. 1997; Burns and Gimpel 2000; Espenshade and Calhoun 1993; Van der Waal and Houtman 2011). If we want to understand how economic contexts influence ethnocentrism, this cultural explanation for ethnocentrism should also be considered when studying the relationship between economic prosperity and ethnocentrism.

The common finding in research on ethnocentrism that an individual's educational level is most strongly related to the opinion about ethnic minorities (e.g. Coenders and Scheepers 2003; Hello et al. 2004; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010) serves as a starting point for such a cultural interpretation. This educational effect has many times been interpreted as an effect of an individual's economic position (e.g. Scheepers et al. 2002; Eisinga and Scheepers 1989; Lubbers and Scheepers 2002; Kunovich 2004; Hello et al. 2006). However, research has shown that a person's educational level is not only an indicator of economic position, but of the extent to which a person possesses cultural capital as well (Houtman 2001: 177-178; Kalmijn 1994; De Graaf and Kalmijn 2001; Houtman 2000: 42). This implies that the negative relationship between education and ethnocentrism on the individual level can also be explained through a cultural logic.

The rationale behind this cultural logic, which forms one of the two elements of Ethnic Reification Theory discussed in the former chapter, is that highly educated people in liberal Western democracies, due to their ample amount of cultural capital, are better able to recognize cultural expressions and to understand their meanings.

They therefore hold a de-reified worldview and are thus less inclined to reject deviant life styles, more willing to value cultural diversity and to accept cultural differences (Gabennesch 1972). The opposite is true for less educated people with limited cultural capital, who will tend to hold an ethnic reified worldview in which every deviation from what is seen as the 'natural order' will be rejected. Such a tendency to reject all that is different from what is deemed 'natural' is likely to go together with feelings of distrust towards other people. This is because everyone could potentially cause an infringement on the natural order and might therefore initially be seen with suspicion. As a consequence, feelings of distrust will be more present among less educated people without ample cultural capital. Such feelings of distrust are then likely to be translated into intolerance towards ethnic minorities, which has indeed been shown by previous research (Achterberg and Houtman 2009; Blank 2003; Derks 2006; Eisinga and Scheepers 1989; Elchardus and Smits 2002; McDill 1961; Roberts and Rokeach 1956; Srole 1956).

Such an Ethnic Reification explanation of ethnocentrism matches more recent developments within the study of ethnocentrism, in which cultural factors were found to be more important for explaining ethnocentrism than other factors such as economic ones. Hainmueller and Hiscox (2010) have for example shown that the relationship between education and ethnocentrism is rooted in cultural values. Furthermore, Velásco Gonzalez et al. (2008) state that '[o]utgroups that have a different world view can be seen as threatening the cultural identity of the in-group' (Velásco Gonzalez et al. 2008: 669). Various other studies have shown that such a cultural threat is related to more negative ideas about ethnic minorities (e.g. Sniderman, Hagendoorn and Prior 2004; Esses, Hodson and Dovidio 2003). As a consequence, based on a review of almost a hundred studies, Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) conclude that cultural factors do a better job of explaining ethnocentrism than economic ones.

From the previous it can be concluded that a cultural, Ethnic Reification explanation for ethnocentrism is indeed important, and it might well be true that the cultural concerns in which ethnocentrism is rooted come mainly to the fore under less affluent economic conditions. Hence, just like Group Conflict's rationale that economic concerns will be most salient under less affluent economic circumstances, it can also be true that under relatively scarce economic circumstances ethnocentrism will be invoked among people experiencing high amounts of distrust and that as such a sort of 'cultural scapegoating' takes place. As a consequence, it can be expected that the effect of cultural values on ethnocentrism will be stronger under less affluent economic conditions. The corresponding hypothesis therefore holds as follows: the less affluent the economic circumstances in a country, the more people holding an ethnic reified view, as indicated by a low educational level and high level of distrust, will be

inclined to have ethnocentric ideas (*hypothesis 2*). Technically speaking, it can therefore be expected that the relationship between cultural position and ethnocentrism will be stronger the less affluent the economic circumstances are.

2.3 Data and measures

2.3.1 Data

The data used in this study are taken from the cumulative file of the United States General Social Survey 1972-2012 (Smith et al. 2013). It includes a total of 57,061 completed interviews carried out in the months of February, March and April in 29 different years.[9] In all years independent samples were drawn from the English-speaking population aged 18 years and older living in non-institutional arrangements in the US. From 2006, sampling was extended to the Spanish- speaking population. The cumulative file is prepared in such a way that it is suitable for trend analysis. No extensive procedures were, therefore, needed for using the same variables in different years.

Because not all the variables of interest for this study were included in all 29 survey years, the analysis was restricted to 17 years from 1972 to 2002.[10] Furthermore, since our theories are aimed at explaining the influence of economic circumstances on ethnocentrism among natives, all non-whites were excluded from the analyses. In addition, since some variables of interest had missing values, the total N used in the analyses was further reduced to 25,443 respondents. The individual level data were complemented with year level statistics for the country's economic outlook. Those data were taken from the World Bank and from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

2.3.2 Dependent variable: ethnocentrism

The dependent variable *ethnocentrism* is measured with a scale composed of four items.[11] The exact formulation of those items can be read in Table 2.1, in which the results of a factor analysis on those items are shown. This analysis indicates that the four items tap into one dimension. Reliability analysis has confirmed that the four items together form a reliable scale (Cronbach's alpha is .73). Since not all items of this scale were measured in every year, a scale score was calculated for each respondent with at least two valid scores. Scale scores are computed as the mean score on those items, ranging from zero to six. A higher score stands for more ethnocentrism.

Table 2.1: Principal factor analysis on items for *ethnocentrism*, N=7,819

Item	Factor score
1. Blacks shouldn't push themselves where they're not wanted	.60
2. White people have a right to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods if they want to, and blacks should respect that right	.74
3. How strongly would you object if your family wanted to bring a Black friend home to dinner?	.60
4. Do you think there should be a law against marriages between Blacks and whites?	.63
Eigenvalue	1.67
R²	.42

Source: General Social Survey cumulative file 1972-2012; own calculations.

2.3.3 Individual level variables

On the individual level four independent variables and two control variables were used. The four independent variables on the individual level are *education, income, unemployment,* and *distrust*. The first independent variable, *education*, is measured as the highest degree obtained. This variable consists of five categories which are scored as follows: zero is 'lower than high school'; score one stands for 'high school'; score two refers to 'junior college'; score three is 'bachelor level'; and score four refers to 'graduate'.

Income is measured as the total family income per month. It is composed of twelve categories that range from lower than 1,000 US dollars to 25,000 US dollars or more.[12]

Unemployment is a binary variable in which we have coded those that are unemployed as score two and all others as score one. This resulted in 2.8 percent of the respondents included in our sample being unemployed.[13]

Distrust was measured as a scale of three items. Factor analysis, the results of which are shown in Table 2.2, indicates that all items taps into one dimension. The three items form a reliable scale, as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha of .66. Scale scores have been computed as the mean score of answers on the items for each respondent with at least two valid answers. A higher score on this scale stands for more distrust. The scale for *distrust* ranges from one to three.

The control variables used are *age* and *sex*. *Age* was measured in years and ranges from 18 to 89 years. *Sex* measures whether a respondent is female (score 2) or male (score 1). The distribution of this variable in the sample used is as follows: 55 percent female and 45 percent male.

Table 2.2: Principal factor analysis on items for *distrust*, N=28,401

Item	Factor score
1. Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly just looking out for themselves?	.62
2. Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, or would they try to be fair?	.69
3. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?	.58
Eigenvalue	1.20
R²	.40

Source: General Social Survey cumulative file 1972-2012; own calculations.

2.3.4 Year level variables

Two independent variables are used on the year level, namely *GDP per capita* and *unemployment rate*. Statistics for the gross domestic product per capita were taken from the Worldbank database (Worldbank 2013). It is measured as the absolute level based on current US dollars and expressed in thousands of dollars. Within the 17 years studied, the level of per capita GDP ranges from 5.20 to 35.50 thousand dollars.

The *unemployment rate* stands for the percentage unemployed persons of the total labor force. Those data were taken from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Within the 17 years studied, the unemployment rate ranges from 4.10 to 9.50 percent.[14] In order to cover the time period until the effect of economic circumstances can be translated into values and attitudes, I did not measure the economic indicators in the year of the survey, but rather the mean score for the two years before the survey year.[15]

2.4 Results

In order to test the hypotheses two-level hierarchical linear regression analysis was used. The design is composed of a sample of 25,443 individuals nested in 17 years. Tables 2.3 to 2.6 show the results of this analysis. To facilitate comparison of the relative strength of each effect within a model, standardized variables were used. First, it will be tested whether there is indeed a multilevel problem; thereafter I will look at the fixed effects both on the individual and year level, followed by the core of the analysis which focuses on the cross-level interactions between economic year characteristics and individual level mechanisms.

The first model in Table 2.3 is an intercept only model in which the total variance of ethnocentrism is divided between the individual level and the year level. As can be calculated from the variance components shown in this first model, 9.33 percent of the total variance is located at the year level, which means that there is indeed a multilevel problem. In the second model the fixed effects of the individual level variables are shown. Those individual-level variables explain about 22 percent of the variance in ethnocentrism on the individual level, as well as about 22 percent of the year level variance. Therefore, about a fifth of the fluctuation of ethnocentrism over time can be attributed to the composition of the population. The elements that are most important in this respect are age, educational level and the amount of distrust. From the indicators of economic position only income has a significant effect on ethnocentrism. The income effect is also considerably smaller than the effect of education and distrust. This replicates previous findings in which such cultural factors were also found to be more important predictors of ethnocentrism than purely economic indicators (cf. Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; see Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007, 2010; Citrin et al. 1997; Burns and Gimpel 2000; Espenshade and Calhoun 1993; Van der Waal and Houtman 2011).

After including the economic indicators in the third model in Table 2.3, the year-level variance of ethnocentrism is further reduced by 53 per cent of the total year-level variance. This means that more than half of the variance in ethnocentrism over the years can be explained by national economic circumstances. Those economic circumstances are thus clearly important for understanding trends in ethnocentrism. This is true for both GDP per capita and for unemployment rates, since both are significantly related to ethnocentrism. The effect of per capita GDP is the strongest predictor in this model (the coefficient is -.68, p<.001) and is in line with the trend pictured in Figure 2.1 in the introduction. The higher the level of GDP per capita, the lower the scores on ethnocentrism are. Remarkably, the indicator for unemployment rate (the coefficient is -.21, p<.05) functions exactly opposite to what would be expected

according to the economic logic: the higher the unemployment rate, the lower the scores on ethnocentrism. Even though the unemployment rate is a renowned indicator for the economic situation of a country, it does not function as expected when following an economic logic.

Table 2.3: Multi-level regression on *ethnocentrism*, fixed effect models

	M1	M2	M3
(Constant)	1.76***	1.78***	1.55***
Income		-.07***	-.07***
Unemployed (1=no, 2=yes)		-.02	-.02
Education		-.47***	-.47***
Distrust		.28***	.29***
Year variables			
GDPlevel			-.68***
Unemployment rate			-.21*
Control variables			
Age		.53***	.53***
Sex (1=male, 2=female)		-.07***	-.07***
Variance components			
Individual level (N=25,443)	3.12	2.42	2.42
Year level (N=17)	.32	.25	.08
-2LL	47245.58	44270.21	44252.30

Source: General Social Survey, cumulative file 1972-2012; own calculations.

*p<.05; ***p<.001

One possible interpretation of this contradictory finding, which would also be in line with Group Conflict Theory, is that at higher unemployment levels in a country fewer ethnic minorities will be present on the labor market. This would imply that there will be less ethnic competition among the general population, and more ethnic competi-

tion among those unemployed. Whether this alternative interpretation for the contra-
dictory effect of unemployment rate on ethnocentrism holds will become clear from
what follows.

Table 2.4: Model fit overview random slope models

	-2LL	Δ-2LL	d.f.=Δm	p
M3: all fixed effects	44252.30	-	-	-
M3a: M3 + slope income	44252.21	.09	1	n.s.
M3b: M3 + slope unemployed	44252.30	0	1	n.s.
M3c: M3 + slope education	44233.28	19.02	1	.001
M3d: M3 + slope distrust	44249.63	2.67	1	.10[*]

Source: General Social Survey, cumulative file 1972-2012; own calculations.

N=25,433 individuals, 17 years; -2LL=-2*loglikelihood; m=number of estimated parameters

In models 3a to 3d I tested whether the individual-level effects of economic and cul-
tural factors differ among the 17 years studied. For this purpose, each individual-level
predictor was allowed to vary randomly over the years in a separate model. The model
fits for those tests can be found in Table 2.4, in which each random slope model is
compared in terms of model fit to the model with all fixed effects (model 3 in Table
2.3).[16] If the model fit of a random slope model is significantly higher than that of
model 3 which functions as a base model here, this means that the corresponding
variable does indeed vary randomly over the 17 years of study. Significance of this
change in model fit was tested by applying a chi-square test. What can be told from
this assessment is that only the effect of education on ethnocentrism varies signifi-
cantly among the years. This implies that it is rather unlikely that the other three indi-
cators will significantly influence the relationship of national economic indicators and
ethnocentrism. The cross-level interactions tested below will show whether this is
indeed the case.

Table 2.5 serves to test the first hypothesis which is derived from Group Conflict
Theory, according to which less affluent economic circumstances will lead to more
ethnocentrism mostly among those in a low economic position. As already expected

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*This is the rounded p-value; the exact value is .1022. Therefore, the random slope of distrust is an instance of border-
line significance.

from the insignificant random slopes, none of the four cross-level interactions are significant, meaning that the hypotheses based on Group Conflict Theory should be rejected. This is also true for the alternative interpretation suggested for the contradictory direct effect of unemployment rate on ethnocentrism: It is not true that higher unemployment rates lead to less ethnocentrism among the general population and to more ethnocentrism among those unemployed. Displacement of ethnic competition from within the working native population towards the unemployed native population is therefore unlikely to take place and cannot serve as an alternative explanation for the contradictory effect of unemployment rate.

Altogether, although my findings clearly show that national economic circumstances are important for explaining trends in ethnocentrism – as we have seen those explain more than half of the variance in ethnocentrism over the years – this influence cannot be understood from Group Conflict Theory's economic logic. The hypothesis that less affluent economic circumstances lead to more ethnocentrism because of concerns over economic resources is, therefore, not supported.

In Table 2.6 it is tested whether the importance of economic circumstances for ethnocentrism can be understood through a cultural logic. The second hypothesis, which is based on Ethnic Reification Theory, predicts that mostly among those less educated and with more feelings of distrust will less affluent circumstances ignite ethnocentric ideas. The corresponding cross-level interactions with education are shown in the first two models of this table, models 1a and 1b. As can be read from the table, the unemployment rate does not affect the relationship between education and ethnocentrism, whereas the cross-level interaction with GDP per capita is significant. Figure 2.2 is a graphical representation of this interaction effect, which facilitates its interpretation. It clearly shows that the difference in ethnocentrism between lowest and highest educated is greater at the minimum level of GDP, which is in line with the second hypothesis. Although some might see this finding as fitting the Group Conflict paradigm as well, there are two reasons to dismiss such an economic interpretation of this educational effect: first, as stated before, previous studies have consistently shown that education functions as a cultural mechanism in the context of out-group attitudes (cf. Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Van der Waal et al. 2010; Malhotra 2013). Second, if the economic interpretation were valid, how then could we explain that the other indicators for economic position, namely income and unemployment, do not operate in the same way?

Table 2.5: Multi-level regression on *ethnocentrism*, economic cross-level interactions

	M1a	M1b	M2a	M2b
(Constant)	1.55***	1.55***	1.55***	1.55***
Income	-.09***	-.08**	'-.07***	-.07***
Unemployed (1=no, 2=yes)	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.02*
Education	-.47***	-.47***	-.47***	-.47***
Distrust	.29***	.29***	.29***	.29***
Year variables				
GDPlevel	-.68***	-.68***	-.68***	-.68***
Unemployment rate	-.21*	-.21*	-.21*	-.21*
Cross-level interactions				
Income*GDPlevel	-.02			
Income*Unemp.rate		.00		
Unemployed*GDPlevel			.00	
Unemployed*Unemp.rate				.01
Control variables				
Age	.53***	.53***	.53***	.53***
Sex (1=male, 2=female)	-.07***	-.07***	-.07***	-.07***
Variance components				
Individual level (N=25,443)	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42
Year level (N=17)	.08	.08	.08	.08
Slope income*10^{-2}	.00	.00		
Slope unemployed*10^{-2}			.00	.00
-2LL	44251.25	44252.20	44252.29	44251.57

Source: General Social Survey, cumulative file 1972-2012; own calculations.

One-sided test, *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Table 2. 6: Multi-level regression on *ethnocentrism*, cultural cross-level interaction models

	M1a	M1b	M2a	M2b
(Constant)	1.54***	1.54***	1.55***	1.55***
Income	-.07***	-.07***	-.07***	-.07***
Unemployed (1=no, 2=yes)	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.02
Education	-.42***	-.47***	-.48***	-.47***
Distrust	.28***	.28***	.23***	.28***
Year variables				
GDPlevel	-.67***	-.67***	-.67***	-.67***
Unemployment rate	-.20*	-.20*	-.21***	-.21*
Cross-level interactions				
Education*GDPlevel	.11**			
Education*Unemp.rate		.01		
Distrust*GDPlevel			-.09***	
Distrust*Unemp.rate				-.00
Control variables				
Age	.52***	.53***	.53***	.53***
Sex (1=male, 2=female)	-.07***	-.07***	-.07***	-.07***
Variance components				
Individual level (N=25,443)	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42
Year level (N=17)	.07	.07	.08	.08
Slope education*10^{-2}	.21	.83		
Slope distrust*10^{-2}			.00	.20
-2LL	44223.46	44233.22	44234.95	44249.62

Source: General Social Survey, cumulative file 1972-2012; own calculations.

One-sided test, *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Figure 2.2: Effect of GDP on *ethnocentrism*, minimum and maximum conditions of education
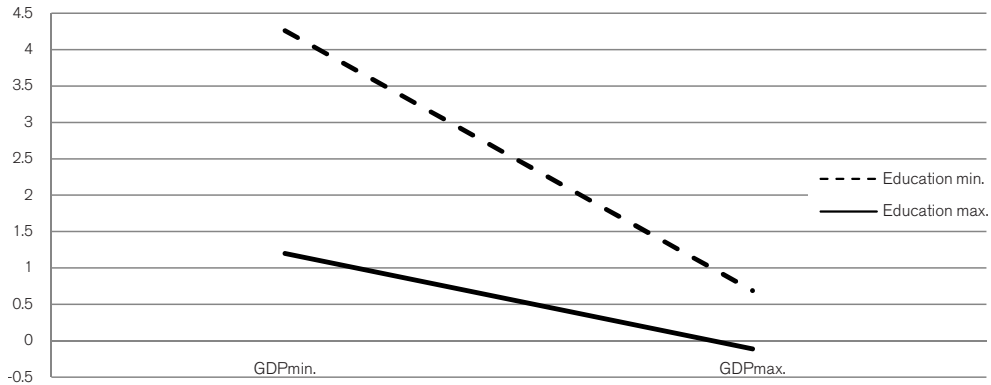
Figure 2.3: Effect of GDP on *ethnocentrism*, minimum and maximum conditions of distrust
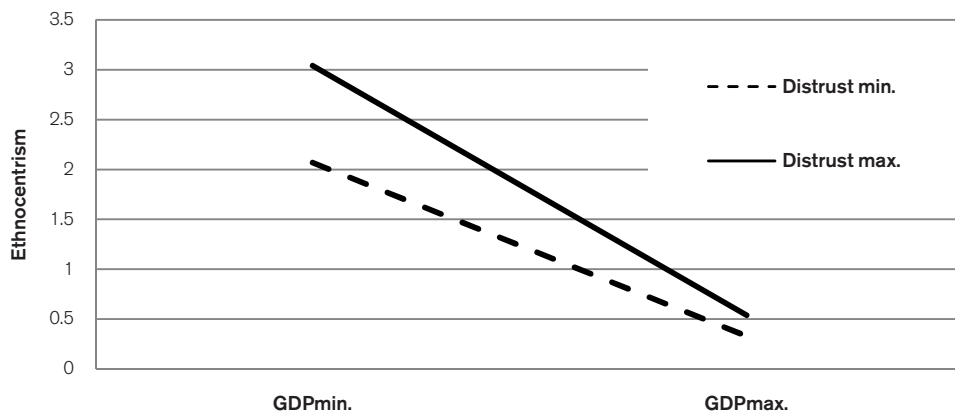
This latter argument could as well be used against the cultural interpretation of the educational effect found if distrust turns out to show different results. Models 2a and 2b in Table 2.6 reveal that this is not the case. A significant interaction is found for GDP level and distrust, which is pictured in Figure 2.3. The effect of less affluent economic circumstances (minimum level of GDP) on ethnocentrism is strongest among those experiencing most distrust, which also supports the second hypothesis. Similar to the cross-level interaction with educational level, the relationship between unemployment rate and ethnocentrism does not depend on people's amount of distrust. What thus becomes clear from the results presented in this last step of the analysis is that under harsh economic circumstances the cultural mechanisms that evoke ethno-

centrism will be more strongly present, whereas the economic competition based logic can be rejected. Whereas economic circumstances do indeed serve to explain trends in ethnocentrism, this explanation is not economic, but cultural in nature.

2.5 Conclusion and discussion

In this chapter the relationship between the economic situation in a country and ethnocentrism was studied. Even when such a relationship exists, this does not necessarily mean that it should be interpreted through an economic logic. In order to understand what such a relationship means, it has to be opened up, and the underlying theoretical mechanisms for such a relationship should be studied.

Based on a longitudinal analysis for the United States, the two most relevant of such theoretical mechanisms were studied here: Group Conflict Theory and Ethnic Reification Theory. The general conclusion of the results obtained is that the economy mainly affects ethnocentrism by activating the cultural processes that are associated with ethnocentric ideas. Under relatively unfortunate economic circumstances, those people who are less open towards cultural differences and who hold stronger feelings of personal distrust will translate those feelings more strongly into ethnocentric ideas than those who are more open towards cultural diversity and less distrusting. Therefore, although the economic context of a country is indeed linked to ethnocentrism and even explains more than half of its variance over the years, this does not mean that this relationship can be understood though an economic rationale.

A first implication of these findings is that the basis of Group Conflict Theory is further eroded. As stated above, many scholars have already signaled that on the individual level, Group Conflict Theory is rather unimportant for explaining ethnocentrism. The findings in this chapter show that even a relationship that might intuitively be seen as economic does not operate through an economic rationale. One might, therefore, start to wonder how it is possible that much of the research on ethnocentrism still 'has remained fixated in the theoretical soil of competitive threat' (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010: 310). Indeed, it can be stated that 'the potential for cross-national explorations of public views towards immigrants 'has been constrained because of (…) reluctant extensions of the theoretical models researchers have traditionally relied upon' (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010: 323). Further theoretical development will be difficult to achieve if scholars keep relying on Group Conflict Theory as the most important source for understanding (fluctuations in) ethnocentrism.

Another implication of the findings presented here concerns the distinction between economic and cultural domains. Although in studies on ethnocentrism the

cultural explanation is often times presented as opposed to the economic interpretation, this does not mean that the economic and the cultural are unrelated to each other. As shown in this chapter, feelings of distrust do not exist in a vacuum, but can be more or less salient depending on economic circumstances. Therefore, by definition favoring economic approaches above cultural ones or vice versa can be unproductive. Instead, it is important to be aware of the possible dynamics between economic and cultural domains.

As a final remark, it is important to note that this study is an example of how for studying contextual influences on people's ideas and beliefs, subjective interpretations of those contexts are more important than the 'objective' interpretations that are applied to contexts by scholars. We have indeed seen that contexts do not bring along meaning in themselves, but that their interpretations depend on the frames of interpretation through which they are perceived.

3. Immigration and Ethnocentrism: Beyond the idea of 'actual threat'[17]

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we have seen that economic circumstances are related to ethnocentrism through a cultural mechanism rather than through an economic one. People who experience more distrust generally express more ethnocentrism in times of less affluent economic circumstances. This finding is supportive of the idea that instead of functioning as an 'actual threat' that invokes a direct reaction aimed at protecting people's economic interests, a certain context will be viewed according to people's frames of interpretation. The present chapter builds upon this idea for studying how the share of immigrants in a country is related to ethnocentric ideas.

The relationship between immigration context and ethnocentrism has been widely studied in recent years, which is not surprising given the increase in immigration to Western countries over the past few decades (e.g. Davidov et al. 2008; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Castels and Miller 2003). The focus of such studies can be mainly located within the Group Conflict perspective. Even though originally this Group Conflict perspective led to the prediction that immigration will cause people to experience a threat to their economic resources (e.g. Quillian 1995; Semyonov et al. 2006; Scheepers et al. 2002; Kunovich 2002), nowadays many studies acknowledge that immigration can also be seen as a cultural threat and will therefore be positively related to ethnocentrism (e.g. Coenders et al. 2008b; Scheepers et al. 2002).

At first sight, this two-sided approach to studying the relationship between immigration context and ethnocentrism seems to match the previous chapter's approach, in which the economic explanation of Group Conflict Theory was compared with the Ethnic Reification explanation. However, a closer look at the studies that distinguish between economic and cultural explanations for the relationship between immigration context and ethnocentrism reveals an important problem: by generally defining it in terms of 'actual economic' and 'actual cultural threat', the share of immigrants in a country is many times treated as an objective source of ethnocentrism. Possibly as a consequence of the former, knowledge of the individual-level mechanisms that should serve to further understand the relationship between immigration and ethnocentrism is limited. Although Group Conflict Theory does offer an account of the economic

mechanisms that can be expected to play a role, one can doubt whether these mechanisms are indeed 'economic', as suggested by the previous chapter as well as by numerous other studies (see Malhotra et al. 2013; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Citrin et al. 1997; Burns and Gimpel 2000; Espenshade and Calhoun 1993; Van der Waal and Houtman 2011). Following Ethnic Reification Theory offers a way of studying the cultural mechanism as well.

This chapter therefore studies how immigration contexts can be linked to ethnocentrism, and for whom this is mainly the case. In the following, I will first elaborate upon the conceptualization of the share of immigrants in a country and how this is thought to be linked to ethnocentrism. Next, I will explain which individual-level mechanisms might be involved in people's evaluation of immigration contexts. These two elements come together when formulating hypotheses on how immigration contexts are linked to ethnocentrism and how this can be understood through Group Conflict Theory and Ethnic Reification Theory respectively. The hypotheses derived from these interpretations are tested using comparative data for 18 European countries. Altogether, this should result in greater insight into the way in which immigration contexts are related to ethnocentric ideas.

3.2 Economic and cultural forms of 'actual ethnic threat'

In studies on ethnocentrism it is generally acknowledged that negative ideas about ethnic minorities tend to be based on two types of concerns: economic interest-based and identity-based. These are characterized by the fear of losing material resources and the fear of losing cultural resources respectively. Despite widespread agreement on the existence of both forms of concern (Sides and Citrin 2007; Semyonov, Raijman and Gorodzeisky 2006), this distinction often remains implicit when dealing with the concept of 'actual ethnic threat' which is claimed to be formed by the share of immigrants in a country. Hence, its conceptualization is usually limited to the percentage of non-EU citizens in a country (e.g. Quillian 1995; cf. Schneider 2008). This is problematic, as Schneider (2008) states, since such a conceptualization represents a culturally different out-group and not an out-group that might invoke fears of losing material resources.

To do justice to both economic and cultural concerns as a consequence of the share of immigrants in a country, Schneider suggests a conceptualization that allows for distinguishing between 'actual economic threat' and 'actual cultural threat'. Applying this conceptual distinction, Schneider (2008) has found that the size of the economically threatening out-group is not related to greater perceptions of ethnic threat. Such

perceptions of ethnic threat are rather related to the size of the culturally different out-group. Therefore, Schneider concludes that identity-based questions are more important for ethnocentrism than economic interest-based questions.

Although this more precise conceptualization of the share of immigrants in a country is already a step forward compared to previous research, an additional step is needed when attempting to understand how people make sense of immigration contexts. A closer look at the way in which the share of immigrants is conceptualized, namely as an 'actual economic threat' or an 'actual cultural threat', reveals that scholars dealing with such concepts somehow assume that these can be 'objectively' found in social reality, and as such follow a positivist logic. As for Group Conflict Theory, such a positivist logic is basically intertwined in the theory's very logic. This is especially true for realistic group threat theory, which, as we have seen before, argues that ethnocentrism is rooted in objective sources of economic threat (e.g. Hjerm and Nagayoshi 2011; Coenders et al. 2008; Blalock 1967; Levine and Campbell 1972). But it also applies to the economic approach in general. Hainmueller and Hiscox for example argue that an economic explanation for ethnocentrism is unlikely because there is almost no real economic impact of immigration (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). In other words, it is not all that important if people themselves think that a greater share of immigrants in a country might affect the economy; what is thought to count most is whether there actually is a real, 'hard' effect of immigration on the economy.

In the literature on cultural threat some examples of assuming 'objective' cultural threat can be found as well. In a well-cited study by Sniderman et al. (2004) they distinguish between galvanizing and mobilizing effects of situational triggers, of which the share of immigrants in a country is an example. Whereas in galvanizing effects situational triggers mostly affect those already concerned about an issue, in mobilizing effects a situational trigger 'may mobilize citizens whether or not they were already disposed to be concerned about the problem' (Sniderman et al. 2004: 36). Applied to issues concerning immigration, they then argue that a mobilizing effect of situational triggers is more likely than a galvanizing effect, both for concerns about the economy and about the national culture (Sniderman et al. 2004: 36). This argument is actually quite similar to the logic of realistic group conflict theory, according to which objective sources may invoke ethnocentrism even among those individuals who are not predisposed to hold such negative ideas about ethnic minorities (cf. Hjerm and Nagayoshi 2011). The closing of their article furthermore suggests that Sniderman et al. adhere to an essentialist logic. Sniderman et al. argue that the findings in their study 'point to the possibility that the strains over immigration in Western European democracies are rooted in a genuine conflict of values' (Sniderman et al. 2004: 47). Talking about a 'genuine conflict of values' suggests there is also such a thing as a false conflict

of values. Such a distinction would only be made when believing in a 'real' reality that goes beyond people's interpretation of the reality.

In sum, research that has studied the relationship between the share of immigrants in a country and ethnocentrism seems, in more explicit or more subtle ways, to be drenched with the idea that immigration contexts can somehow be objectively linked to ideas about ethnic minorities. Such an approach might also explain the number of studies that have only studied direct effects of the share of immigrants in a country on ethnocentrism (e.g. Schneider 2008; Coenders and Scheepers 1998, 2008a). By contrast, one of the two elements that underlines Ethnic Reification Theory and that forms the basic focus in this chapter is that contexts can only acquire meaning through people's subjective interpretations. As such, what is needed to gain further understanding about the relationship between the share of immigrants in a country and ethnocentrism is to study the frames of interpretation that are salient for the issue at hand. In the following, I will therefore elaborate upon the individual processes that are likely to be important for the interpretation of immigration contexts.

3.3 Economic and cultural explanations for ethnocentrism

As in the previous chapter, the two individual-level mechanisms that are studied to further understand the relationship between a context characteristic and ethnocentrism are based on Group Conflict Theory and Ethnic Reification Theory respectively. Whereas the former holds that the evaluative consequences of the share of immigrants in a country on ideas about ethnic minorities will be based on economic interests, according to the latter this will be based on cultural interests. Both interpretations are elaborated below.

3.3.1 The Group Conflict approach

As stated in the previous chapter, Group Conflict Theory explains ethnocentric ideas following an economic logic. As such, negative ideas about ethnic minorities will be rooted in the fear of losing economic resources which can be present in a self-interest-based form, as well as on a form based on the economic interests of the social group with which one identifies. The core idea is that 'competition for resources leads to attempts at exclusion of one group by another' (Olzak 1992: 163). This competition will be strongest among people with a similar socio-economic position as ethnic minorities, the latter mostly having weak or very weak socio-economic positions and

being generally less educated (Coenders 2001; Scheepers et al. 2002). Therefore, ethnocentrism will be mostly found among individuals in a low economic position.

A general – although not often studied - assumption within Group Conflict Theory is that authoritarianism intervenes in the relationship between natives' socio-economic position and their stance toward ethnic minorities. Research has indeed shown that authoritarianism is strongly and positively related to negative feelings regarding ethnic minorities (Grabb 1979; Felling, Peters and Scheepers 1986). The idea that authoritarianism mediates the relationship between economic position and ethnocentrism resonates with Lipset's idea of working class authoritarianism (Lipset 1959). Hence, Lipset has already argued that the working class is characterized by authoritarian ideas because of their weak labor market position. However, as Eisinga and Scheepers (1989: 65) state, belonging to a certain social class does not directly lead to the formation of authoritarian attitudes. Authoritarianism is rather invoked by feelings of status fear and status frustration (see Feldman and Stenner 1997; Scheepers, Felling and Peters 1990) and will thus mainly rise out of dissatisfaction with precarious circumstances, and out of fear that those will further deteriorate as a consequence of immigration (Pedahzur and Canetti-Nisim 2004; Tolsma, Lubbers and Coenders 2008). It is therefore suggested that individuals in precarious economic positions are more authoritarian because of their economic position and that this authoritarianism is translated in a negative stance toward ethnic minorities.

Thus, following an economic logic, Group Conflict Theory predicts that the interpretation of the share of immigrants in a country depends on economic interests. This interpretation will be such that mostly people in a low economic position and with authoritarian conceptions will perceive a greater presence of immigrants as an economic threat. Therefore, a greater share of immigrants in a country will be related to more ethnocentrism for those in a weak economic position with significant authoritarian ideas.

3.3.2 The Ethnic Reification approach

Next to this economic explanation, it can also be argued that the share of immigrants will be interpreted through people's cultural values as predicted by Ethnic Reification Theory. The most important evidence for such a cultural interpretation can, as we have previously seen, be found in the negative relationship between education and ethnocentrism. As was also discussed in the previous chapter, this relationship is often used as supporting evidence for Group Conflict Theory. However, as stated by Hainmueller and Hiscox (2007), 'contrary to the conventional wisdom, the connection

between the educational (…) attributes of individuals and their views about immigration appears to have very little, if anything, to do with fears about labor-market competition' (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007: 401). Instead, educational level is positively related to ethnic tolerance and a preference for cultural diversity (e.g. Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Citrin et al. 1997; Fetzer 2000; Van der Waal et al. 2010). This idea was further elaborated within the framework of Ethnic Reification theory, resulting in the claim that less educated people will be more inclined to hold ethnocentric ideas due to their ethnic reified worldview. Following this argument, we can not only understand why education would be related to a greater preference for cultural differences and therefore a more positive stance towards ethnic minorities, but also why it serves to further define who might be inclined to hold ethnocentric ideas and for whom this may be less plausible.

Such further refinement can be obtained by focusing on the concepts of distrust and authoritarianism. Concerning the first, it is likely that people who experience distrust will be more reluctant towards cultural differences, since they place an even greater burden on the number of cultural expressions such people have to deal with. This idea is supported by previous research which has shown that distrust is indeed positively related to authoritarianism and cultural intolerance (Achterberg and Houtman 2009; Blank 2003; Derks 2006; Eisinga and Scheepers 1989; Elchardus and Smits 2002; McDill 1961; Roberts and Rokeach 1956; Srole 1956). As for the second, even though according to Group Conflict Theory authoritarianism is seen to be rooted in a weak economic position, another interpretation is that authoritarian conceptions are rooted in a weak cultural position. As such, authoritarian ideas can be expected among individuals who have relatively little cultural capital, of which education forms an important part, at their disposal. Hence, characterized by difficulties with managing cultural differences, these individuals are likely to favor clear rules and orders and to oppose cultural differences, which is what authoritarian values stand for. Supportive of this interpretation, previous research has shown that authoritarianism is related to a person's educational level, representing institutionalized cultural capital (Stubager 2009), and to an individual's amount of cultural participation, which stands for embodied cultural capital (Houtman 2003a; Achterberg and Houtman 2006).

To sum up, according to Ethnic Reification Theory ethnocentrism will be mainly found among less educated people without cultural capital as a consequence of an ethnic reified worldview, which is accompanied by a stronger inclination towards distrust and authoritarianism. Applied to the evaluative consequences of the share of immigrants in a country on ideas about ethnic minorities, it can therefore be expected that this will mostly lead to more ethnocentrism for less educated people with more authoritarian conceptions and who are culturally insecure.

3.4 Economic and cultural interpretations for the relationship between share of immigrants and ethnocentrism

The two above named individual-level explanations for ethnocentrism suggest that the share of immigrants in a country will not influence in the same way the opinions of all people about ethnic minorities. The relationship between immigration context and ethnocentrism is expected to depend on people's economic interests and on their cultural values which serve as the frames through which immigration contexts are interpreted.

Following the individual-level explanation of Group Conflict Theory for ethnocentrism, primarily people with a weak economic position and with ample authoritarian conceptions should view the presence of immigrants as a threat to their socio-economic positions. However, this should only be the case when it concerns immigrants that can be considered a threat to scarce economic resources. Therefore, mainly low-skilled immigrants should be considered a potential economic threat, which, following Schneider's conceptualization, should be the percentage of less educated immigrants in a country. Similar to the case of deteriorated economic circumstances described in the previous chapter, a relatively high share of less educated immigrants in a country would intensify competition for economic resources among people with a weak economic position and with ample authoritarian conceptions.[18] Therefore, I hypothesize that people in a weak economic position, namely with a low income, a weak labor market position, and a high level of authoritarianism, will hold more ethnocentric ideas *(hypothesis 1)*. Furthermore, it is expected that a greater percentage of less educated immigrants will lead to more ethnocentrism among those in a weak economic position and with ample authoritarian conceptions *(hypothesis* 2). Technically speaking, I thus expect that the relationship between economic position and authoritarianism with ethnocentrism will be stronger when the share of less educated immigrants in a country is higher.

Arguing along the lines of Ethnic Reification Theory, it can be expected that mainly individuals in a weak cultural position[19], with ample authoritarian conceptions and experiencing more distrust will equate a greater share of immigrants in a country with more ethnocentric ideas. This will be mostly true for the percentage of non-Western immigrants in a country, since non-Western immigrants can arguably be seen as more culturally different from natives in Western countries than Western immigrants are. Hence, a greater share of non-Western immigrants supposes a larger input of different cultures within society, which can be expected to invoke resistance towards ethnic minorities among those in a weak cultural position, with ample authoritarian

conceptions and distrust. As a consequence, I hypothesize that people in a weak cultural position, namely with a low educational level and a low occupational educational level, and with high levels of authoritarianism, and high levels of distrust, will show greater amounts of ethnocentrism (*hypothesis 3*). Furthermore, it is expected that a greater percentage of non-Western immigrants will lead to more ethnocentrism among those less educated, with a low occupational educational level, with ample authoritarian conceptions and with high levels of distrust (*hypothesis 4*). Technically speaking, I thus expect that the relationship between cultural position and cultural values will be stronger when the share of non-Western immigrants in a country is higher.

3.5 Data and Operationalization

3.5.1 Data

The data used for the analyses are taken from the first wave of the European Social Survey (Jowell et al. 2003). Due to extensive use in studies in the field of interethnic relations, it has been shown that these data are of high quality (e.g. Meuleman 2009). The database is composed of survey data from 21 European countries and Israel. Four countries are dropped because of lacking relevant data. The remaining 18 countries used are: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. A total of 30,949 respondents completed the questionnaire in those countries[20]. The ESS 2002 sample is complemented with contextual data from Schneider (2008) based on the OECD database on immigrants and expatriates (2005), and own calculations based on this same database.

3.5.2 Operationalization

The dependent variable *ethnocentrism*[21] is measured using six items in which respondents are asked if: *immigrants take away jobs or rather create new jobs* (1); *immigrants use more taxes than they contribute* (2); *immigration is good or bad for the economy* (3); *the country's cultural life is undermined or enriched by immigrants* (4); *immigrants make the country a worse or better place to live* (5); and if *immigrants make the country's crime problems worse or better* (6) . A factor analysis on those six items is shown in Table 3.1. While one might argue

that those items actually include perceptions of both economic (items 1, 2 and 3) and cultural threat from immigrants (items 4 and 5), the results of the factor analysis show that both forms of threat are part of one underlying construct. As such, in people's ideas about ethnic minorities, there is no clear distinction between an economic and a cultural dimension of ethnocentrism. If people are inclined to say that immigrants are a threat for the nation's economy, they will also be inclined to state that immigrants pose a threat to the nation's cultural identity and vice versa. One way of interpreting this finding is that economic and cultural threat usually go hand in hand and are therefore found to tap into one underlying dimension. Another interpretation is that individuals themselves do not differentiate between both forms of threat in their judgment about ethnic minorities. To put it bluntly, they either like 'them' and therefore do not have any clearly negative thoughts about ethnic minorities, or they do not like 'them' and are willing to relate ethnic minorities to all sorts of negative judgments.

Given the results of the factor analysis discussed above, it may come as no surprise that the six items produce a highly reliable scale (Cronbach's alpha is 0.84). The scores for this scale of *ethnocentrism* are calculated as the mean score on those items. Scale scores are calculated for each respondent with at least three valid answers; a higher score stands for a greater amount of perceived ethnic threat.

Table 3.1: Principal factor analysis on items for *ethnocentrism*

Item	Factor score
1. Immigrants take away jobs or rather create new jobs	.64
2. Immigrants use more taxes than they contribute	.63
3. Immigration is good or bad for the economy	.78
4. The country's cultural life is undermined or enriched by immigrants	.72
5. Immigrants make the country a worse or better place to live	.78
6. Immigrants make the country's crime problems worse	.56
Eigenvalue	3.37
R^2	56.10

Source: European Social Survey 2002; own calculations.

Income is measured as the net household income per month. Using a show card, respondents could indicate to which category their net household income belongs. Differing answer categories have been used for income in France, Hungary and Ire-

land. All categories have therefore been replaced by their median, such that an approximate monthly net household income of €500 to under €1,000 now corresponds to the value of €750, an income of €1,000 to under €1,500 to the value of €1,250, etc.

Labor market position is measured as a dichotomous variable that distinguishes between those currently unemployed and all other respondents. This is because following Group Conflict Theory mainly unemployed people who are actively looking for a job will feel threatened by a greater share of immigrants in a country who can be considered a competitive threat in their job search.[22]

Educational level is measured in two ways. First, a straightforward measurement of educational level as the number of years of full-time school attendance is used. All scores above 28 years have been set to 28, which is a reasonable amount of time in which to have reached the highest educational level available.

The second way of measuring educational level is through an individual's *occupational educational level*, which does not measure formal education, but 'on the job training,'[23] and can be seen as a more refined measurement of educational level. It is measured as a combination of the ISCO-88 occupational groups and the years of full-time education attended (cf. De Graaf and Kalmijn 1995, 2001; Kalmijn 1994). The occupational groups have been reduced to the two-digit level. For each group then, the average years of full-time school attendance is calculated. A score of 10 on this variable for occupational educational level thus corresponds to an average of ten years of full-time schooling within the occupational category a respondent belongs to.

Authoritarianism is measured using the following six items: 'it is important to do what you are told and to follow the rules' (1); 'it is important to be humble and modest (2); 'it is important to have a strong government that ensures safety' (3); 'it is important to live in a safe environment' (4); 'it is important to behave properly' (5); 'it is important to follow traditions and habits' (6). On all items, respondents indicated to what extent they find those applicable to themselves using a range from 'not at all applicable' (score 1) to 'very much applicable' (score 6). The items form a reliable scale (Cronbach's alpha is 0.80), the scores of which are calculated by taking the mean scores on all items for every respondent with at least four valid scores. The scale ranges from one to six, a higher score standing for a greater amount of authoritarianism.

Distrust is measured as in the previous chapter by using the following three items: *Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly just looking out for themselves? (1); Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, or would they try to be fair? (2); Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? (3).* As in the previous chapter, factor analysis has shown that those three items tap into one dimension. Reliability analysis has shown those to form a reliable scale (Cronbach's alpha is .78). Scale

scores are calculated as the mean score on the items for each respondent with at least two valid scores.

Table 3.2: Principal factor analysis on items for *authoritarianism*

Item	Factor score
1. It is important to do what you are told and follow the rules	.54
2. It is important to be humble and modest	.46
3. It is important to have a strong government that ensures safety	.62
4. It is important to live in a safe environment	.61
5. It is important to behave properly	.68
6. It is important to follow traditions and habits	.51
Eigenvalue	2.64
R^2	44.07

Source: European Social Survey 2002; own calculations.

On the individual level we control for *age* (in years, ranging from 14 to 102), and *gender* (man=0, woman=1) as previous research has shown those variables to be important for the way people think about ethnic minorities (Coenders 2001; Quillian 1995; Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2009).[24]

For the measurement of the *share of less educated immigrants*[25] I have used Schneider's *percentage less educated immigrants*. This is measured as the percentage foreign born with a low educational level. A low educational level is defined as having completed secondary education or less (ISCED levels 0, 1 and 2, cf. Schneider 2008).

The measurement for the *share of non-Western immigrants* is also Schneider's original measurement, the *percentage non-Western immigrants* in a country, which is the percentage non-Western, foreign-born inhabitants[26]. Western countries are: the EU-15, the EFTA-countries, Europe's microstates, North America, Australia and New Zealand. This measurement is based on the same OECD database (2005).

As a control variable on the country-level I have used the *real Gross Domestic Product per capita* (rGDP/c) in thousand constant international US dollars (referred to the year 2000 exchange rate). This is taken from Schneider (2008) and represents a harmonized version of the GDP, calculated by using purchasing power parities and weights for the population size, thus ensuring international comparability.

3.6 Results

The central point in this chapter is to investigate whether the share of immigrants in a country, interpreted through economic interests or cultural values, influences the amount of ethnocentrism people experience. Answering this research question requires solving a multi-level problem, which is analyzed using multi-level analysis tools[27]. For reasons of clarity only relevant results are shown.[28] All predictors and control variables have been standardized, allowing for comparison of the coefficients within a model in terms of their respective strength.[29]

3.6.1 The roots of authoritarianism and distrust

Since Group Conflict Theory and Ethnic Reification Theory both hypothesize a positive relationship between authoritarianism and ethnocentrism and consider this as an interpretative frame for the share of immigrants in a country, in a first step it is tested whether authoritarianism is rooted in a weak economic or a weak cultural position. The results for this test are presented in Table 3.3. In the first model the variables for economic position are included. Both income and being unemployed are significantly related to authoritarianism. Whereas the income effect is in the right direction – the higher one's family income the less authoritarianism – the effect of unemployment is contrary to what is expected in Group Conflict Theory – those unemployed have less instead of more authoritarian conceptions.

In the second model authoritarianism is explained from a weak cultural position. Both educational level and occupational educational level are significantly related to authoritarianism, the direction of both effects being in line with the expectations. The model fit of this model is significantly better than the first model (chi-square value is 220.28, p<.001), which implies that one's cultural position is more important for authoritarianism than one's economic position. One might find this conclusion unconvincing since education is known to serve as an indicator for economic position as well. The third model serves to shed further light on this matter. If the educational effect functions mostly as an economic indicator, it should be true that its effect will be minimized when including other more direct indicators for economic position. However, model three shows that this is only slightly the case, thus implying that education functions mainly as a cultural indicator here. Therefore, it seems safe to conclude that authoritarianism is more strongly rooted

in a weak cultural position than in a weak economic position, which is in line with previous research on this matter (cf. Houtman 2003a).

Table 3.3 Multi-level regression analysis on *authoritarianism*, standardized regression coefficients

	M1	M2	M3
(Constant)	4.21***	4.20***	4.20***
Income	-.09***		-.05***
Unemployed	-.02**		-.02***
Education (in years)		-.10***	-.09***
Occupational educational level		-.04***	-.03***
Control variables			
Age (in years)	.23***	.21***	.20***
Sex (male is reference)	.01**	.02**	.01**
Variance Components			
Individual (N=20,532)	.63	.62	.62
Country (N=18)	.07	.08	.07
-2LL	48765.35	48545.07	48475.55

Source: European Social Survey 2002; own calculations.

**p<.01; ***p<.001

For completeness, a similar analysis is done for distrust, the results of which are shown in Table 3.4. Whereas both economic and cultural indicators are related to distrust, the effects of the cultural indicators are clearly stronger, thus suggesting that distrust is mainly rooted in a weak cultural position.

Table 3.4 Multi-level regression analysis on *distrust*, standardized regression coefficients shown

	M1	M2	M3
(Constant)	4.73***	4.72***	4.72***
Income	-.15***		-.06***
Unemployed	.07***		.06***
Education		-.18***	-.16***
Occupational educational level		-.15***	-.13***
Control variables			
Age (in years)	-.07***	-.13***	-.13***
Sex (male is reference)	-.06***	-.05***	-.06***
Variance Components			
Individual (N=20,532)	2.87	2.83	2.82
Country (N=18)	.81	.79	.75
-2LL	80041.45	79720.70	79672.04

Source: European Social Survey 2002; own calculations.

***p<.001

3.6.2 Economic and cultural explanations for ethnocentrism

Table 3.5 shows the results for testing the individual–level explanations for ethnocentrism[30]. The first model only includes a random intercept and serves to show that we do indeed face a multi-level problem (11 percent of the total variation in ethnocentrism can be attributed to differences between countries). The first hypothesis derived from Group Conflict Theory is that ethnocentrism can be explained from a weak economic position and high authoritarian conceptions. Whereas the latter was shown to extent economically rooted only to a small extent, model 2 in which only the economic indicators are included suggests that at least for a person's economic position this hypothesis is quite strongly supported. However, after including the other indicators in model 5, the effects of economic indicators remain rather weak compared to the other explanatory variables. So, yes, a weaker economic position is related to more ethnocentrism;

however, the relevance of this relationship is relatively small, which is in line with previous research findings (e,g, Sides and Citrin 2007; Sniderman et al. 2004).

The results show that the Ethnic Reification hypothesis which predicts that ethnocentrism can be explained from a low educational level, a low occupational educational level, high authoritarian conceptions and high amounts of distrust is quite strongly supported. All four relevant indicators are significantly related to ethnocentrism and all directed as expected. The effects found are rather strong, the strongest being distrust, followed by authoritarianism and educational level. Those findings are supportive of an Ethnic Reification explanation for ethnocentrism. As such, negative ideas about ethnic minorities are mainly rooted in reluctance towards cultural differences.

Table 3.5: Multi-level regression on *ethnocentrism*, individual level models

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
(Constant)	5.52***	5.51***	5.49***	5.50***	5.48***
Income		-.20***			-.04**
Unemployed		.06***			.03**
Education (in years)			-.35***		-.28***
Occupational educational level			-.18***		-.13***
Authoritarianism				.26***	.21***
Distrust				.49***	.43***
Control variables					
Age (in years)		.11***	.01	.08***	-.01
Sex (male is reference)		.01	.02*	.03**	.02*
Variance Components					
Individual (N=20,532)	2.42	2.37	2.22	2.16	2.05
Country (N=18)	.30	.24	.30	.12	.18
-2LL	76527.59	76062.09	74756.92	74184.42	73063.98

Source: European Social Survey 2002; own calculations.

One-sided test, *p<.05, **p<.01; ***p<.001

3.6.3 The share of less educated and non-Western immigrants

What should now be tested is whether these economic and cultural effects on ethnocentrism condition the interpretation of the share of immigrants in a country. Before turning to the corresponding cross-level interaction hypotheses, the direct effects of the country-level variables are calculated in model 1 of Table 3.6. None of these direct effects is significant. However, this does not mean that the share of immigrants in a country is unrelated to ethnocentrism. Since we have conditional hypotheses, it is not until we test the cross-level interactions with both measurements of immigration context that we can assess its influence. Before doing so, we must test separately for all individual-level whether the effects of these vary over countries. The corresponding results can be found in Table 3.7. The change of the goodness of fit measurement when comparing model 1 of Table 3.6 with each of the random slope models shows that for all the individual-level predictors the relationship with ethnocentrism varies among countries. However, this is stronger for education, occupational educational level, authoritarianism and distrust than it is for income and unemployment. For the latter, it is interesting to note that in the previous chapter, the effect of unemployment on ethnocentrism did not vary across contexts, whereas here it does vary significantly. This might be due to the fact that chapter two concerned a comparison over time within the same country, whereas this chapter studies differences between countries at the same point in time. It is plausible that unemployment regimes vary more between countries than within countries over time, which might explain this difference in findings between the two chapters.

Having assessed the random slope variances, we can turn to the cross-level interactions, which in the end form the core part of this analysis. Only significant interactions are shown, namely in models 2a to 2c in Table 3.6. None of the strictly economic interactions, namely the percentage of less educated immigrants with income and with unemployment, yielded significant results. Together with the previous finding that authoritarianism and education function as cultural rather than economic indicators in this context, this means that hypothesis 2 should be refuted. The Group Conflict logic according to which a greater share of economically threatening immigrants should lead to greater perceptions of ethnic threat among those in a weak economic position is therefore not corroborated. Apparently, people do not place emphasis on a country's immigration context in terms of potential economic loss.

Table 3.6: Multi-level regression on *ethnocentrism*, cross-level interaction models

	M1	M2a	M2b	M2c
(Constant)	5.48***	5.49***	5.49***	5.49***
Individual level variables				
Income	-.04**	-.04**	-.04**	-.04**
Unemployed	.03**	.03**	.03**	.03**
Education (in years)	-.28***	-.28***	-.28***	-.28***
Occupational educational level	-.13***	-.13***	-.13***	-.13***
Authoritarianism	.21***	.20***	.20***	.20***
Distrust	.43***	.42***	.42***	.42***
National level variables				
% Less educated	-.10	-.09	-.09	-.09
% Non-Western	.12	.11	.11	.11
Cross-level interactions				
Authoritarianism*%less educated		.05*		.00
Authoritarianism*%non-Western			.07**	.06*
Control variables				
Age (in years)	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01
Sex (male is reference)	.02*	.02**	.03**	.03**
GDP per capita	.04	.02	.03	.02
Variance Components				
Individual (N=20,532)	2.05	2.04	2.04	2.04
Country (N=18)	.17	.17	.17	.17
Slope authoritarianism*10-2		.68	.54	.54
-2LL	73063.39	73007.85	73004.87	73004.86

Source: European Social Survey 2002, Schneider 2008, OECD 2005; own calculations.

One-sided test, *p<.05, **p<.01; ***p<.001

What I did find was support for a cultural interpretation of the relationship between immigration and perceived ethnic threat. Models 2a to 2c show the significant cross-level interactions for authoritarianism that were found. Initially, a significant cross-level interaction with authoritarianism was found both for the percentage of less educated immigrants and for the percentage of non-Western immigrants. However, when including both cross-level interactions in model 2c, only the one with the percentage of non-Western immigrants remained significant. Furthermore, the model fits of the cross-level interaction models indicate that model 2b should be the preferred model. This serves to further underline that mainly the share of non-Western immigrants will be interpreted through a cultural frame, which supports hypothesis four.

Figure 3.1: Effect of % non-Western immigrants on *ethnocentrism*, minimum and maximum conditions of authoritarianism
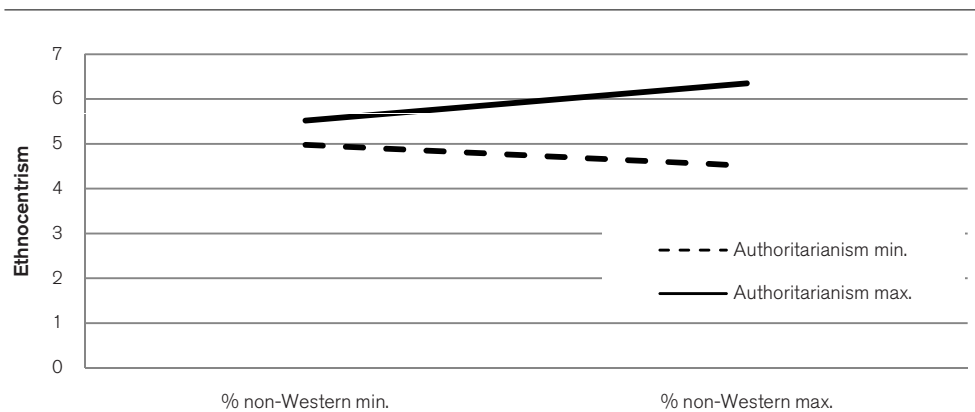
A clearer picture of the significant cross-level interaction arises by using a graphical representation, which is shown in Figure 3.1. This figure shows that whereas for those highest in authoritarianism, a greater presence of non-Western immigrants is related to more ethnocentrism, the opposite is true for those lowest in authoritarianism. It thus becomes clear that the evaluative consequences of the share of immigrants in a country depend on people's cultural values: People who are uncomfortable with cultural differences will have stronger ethnocentric ideas the greater the percentage of culturally different immigrants in a country. The opposite is true for those who favor cultural differences; for them a greater presence of culturally different people in a country leads to less ethnocentrism. Given that a greater presence of culturally different people in a country generally leads to increased possibilities of interethnic contact (see Meuleman 2009; Schlueter and Wagner 2008; Della Posta 2013; Laurence 2013; Bowyer 2009), it is unclear how this finding should be interpreted from a Contact

Theory perspective. Contact Theory assumes that interethnic contact will have a universal prejudice-reducing effect on ethnocentrism; however, the finding that the relationship between the share of immigrants in a country and ethnocentrism depends on people's ideas about cultural differences suggests something else is going on here.

Table 3.7: Model fit overview random slope and cross-level interaction models

	-2LL	Δ-2LL	d.f.=Δm	p
M1: individual and national fixed effects	73063.39	-	-	-
M1a: M1 + slope income	73056.40	6.99	1	.05
M1b: M1 + slope unemployed	73058.79	4.60	1	.05
M1c: M1 + slope education	72984.18	79.21	1	.001
M1d: M1 + slope occupational educational level	72992.43	70.96	1	.001
M1e: M1 + slope authoritarianism	73012.84	50.55	1	.001
M1f: M1 + slope distrust	73048.03	15.36	1	.001
M2a: M1 + authoritarianism*%less educated	73007.85	55.54	2	.001
M2b: M1 + authoritarianism*%non-Western	73004.87	58.52	2	.001
M2c: M1 + significant interactions	73004.86	58.53	3	.001

Source: European Social Survey 2002, Schneider 2008, OECD 2005; own calculations. N=20,548, 18 countries

-2LL=-2*loglikelihood; m=number of estimated parameters

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter studied to what extent the share of immigrants in a country influences ethnocentrism and how this can be explained following an economic and a cultural logic. To this end, Schneider's (2008) distinction between the share of immigrants that may be seen as a burden to economic resources and the share of immigrants that is culturally different was applied. This was taken one step further by arguing that what is to be studied is not so much whether a certain immigration context can be seen as an 'objective' source of ethnocentrism, but rather that it is more insightful to study which frames of interpretation are used to make sense of immigration contexts. To this end it was tested whether a country's immigration context is interpreted from an economic interests perspective or according to people's cultural values, derived from a Group Conflict rationale and an Ethnic Reification explanation respectively.

The findings indicate that one's stance towards cultural differences is important for the interpretation of immigration contexts. The greater the presence of culturally different immigrants, the more ethnocentrism will be found among those with negative attitudes toward cultural differences as compared to less ethnocentrism among those in favor of cultural differences. This is roughly in line with earlier findings by Stenner (2005) showing that menaces to social cohesion are associated with greater intolerance among authoritarians and with greater tolerance among libertarians. Moreover, on a more general note, it can be concluded that instead of attempting to 'objectively' assess immigration contexts in terms of 'actual economic threat' and 'actual cultural threat', it is more fruitful to consider the ways in which immigration contexts are interpreted through the relevant frames of interpretation.

An implication of this chapter's findings is that immigrants do not function as an economic threat. No direct effect of the percentage of less educated immigrants on ethnocentrism was found, which excludes the possibility of an economic interpretation of ethnocentrism following a collective economic interests rationale. Furthermore, personal economic interest also did not appear to function as a condition under which the share of immigrants in a country is interpreted. Combined with the fact that economic indicators on the individual level were of relatively small importance for explaining ethnocentric ideas, this study is another example of the relative unimportance of Group Conflict Theory for explaining ethnocentrism. As such, recalling the interpretation of the factor analysis for the items of *ethnocentrism*, which include both economically and culturally characterized items, it does not appear to be true that economic and cultural threat go hand in hand. Since no strong influence whatsoever of economic interests on ethnocentrism was found, it seems more plausible that individuals do not really differentiate between economically and culturally based ideas about ethnic minorities. People's stance towards ethnic minorities seems to be mostly defined by their perception of culture and their ideas about cultural differences.

Another implication of this chapter's findings concerns the role of interethnic contact within the explanatory framework for the consequences of immigration on perceptions of ethnic threat. As the share of immigrants is positively related to possibilities of intergroup contact (see Meuleman 2009; Schlueter and Wagner 2008; Della Posta 2013; Laurence 2013; Bowyer 2009), a greater share of immigrants in a country should be related to lower perceptions of ethnic threat according to a straightforward interpretation of Contact Theory. Hence, the original contact hypothesis predicts that interethnic contact will ultimately result in the tempering of ethnocentric reactions (Allport 1979[1954]; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). Although some research findings support such an individual contact effect, this is not unequivocally accompanied by lower averages of perceived ethnic threat, or other measurements related to ethnocen-

trism, on the country level (McLaren 2003; Schlueter and Scheepers 2010). The effect of interethnic contact on people's opinion about ethnic minorities might thus differ along social groups. Based on this study's research findings one can tentatively suggest that this might be explained through the cultural predispositions individuals hold. This issue will be studied in further detail in the two chapters to come.

4. Why There is Less Supportive Evidence for Contact Theory Than They Say There Is

4.1 Introduction

The two previous chapters have been dedicated to studying how economic contexts and immigration contexts affect people's ideas about ethnic minorities. By testing both Group Conflict Theory and Ethnic Reification Theory simultaneously, it became clear that national contexts affect ethnocentrism by activating cultural mechanisms, more than economic. Basically, contexts are by definition interpreted through people's frames of interpretation, and it was demonstrated that when it comes to ethnic minorities, people's ideas about cultural differences are more important than their economic interests. This basic idea can also be applied when studying the influence of interethnic contacts on people's ideas about ethnic minorities. It is yet to be seen what will be left of Contact Theory when applying this basic insight. The next chapter will address this question for a specific type of interethnic contact, namely imagined contact. The present chapter concentrates on distinguishing between self-selection effects and culturally framed effects of interethnic contacts on ethnocentrism.

The central idea of Contact Theory is that interethnic contact will lead people to think more positively about ethnic minorities. A vast amount of research evidence shows that contact with ethnic minority group members is related to less negative thinking about ethnic minorities (e.g. Schalk-Soekar, Vijver, and Van de Hoogsteder 2004; Wagner et al. 2003; see Pettigrew and Tropp 2006 for an overview). However, the existence and strength of the association between interethnic contact and opinions about ethnic minorities vary among different types of contact. What is most commonly found is that interethnic friendships are more strongly related to less negative thinking about ethnic minorities than other types of contact, such as with colleagues and neighbors (e.g. Aberson, Shoemaker, and Tomolillo 2004; Levin, Van Laar, and Sidanius 2003; see also Pettigrew and Tropp 2011).

In the Contact Theory literature this differing influence of interethnic friendships compared to other types of interethnic contact is often attributed to the fact that friendship is a more intimate form of contact. McLaren, for example, holds that 'if a contact situation provides an opportunity to see that beliefs are actually similar, prejudice should be reduced. The primary type of contact that should provide this oppor-

tunity is intimate contact, such as friendship' (McLaren 2003: 913). Recognizing that beliefs may not be completely similar, Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) suggest that '[i]ntergroup contact, and especially, close, cross-group friendship, may enable one to take the perspective of outgroup members and empathize with their concerns' (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008: 923). It might thus not be surprising that a growing number of studies on interethnic contact has been focusing on interethnic friendships (Pettigrew and Tropp 2011: 121).

Nonetheless, an alternative explanation for the frequently found association between interethnic friendships and ethnocentrism may be applicable. This alternative explanation is based on the idea that friendship is the type of contact that is most prone to self-selection. The problem of self-selection resides in the fact that it is as plausible to argue that interethnic contact leads to less negative thinking about ethnic minorities, as it is to hold that negative thinking about ethnic minorities will lead to avoidance of interethnic contact. Consequently, when finding a negative association between interethnic contact and ethnocentrism, this may very well be due to the fact that those with positive thoughts about ethnic minorities will be more likely to choose members of ethnic minority groups among their friends. It is, hence, not clear how this association between interethnic friendship and thinking about ethnic minorities should be interpreted.

Since self-selection is an obvious problem in interethnic contact research, the issue of self-selection is commonly acknowledged within Contact Theory research (Aberson et al. 2004; Dixon 2006; McLaren 2003; Sigelman and Welch 1993). What seems to be under-acknowledged, however, is that the problem of self-selection will be most important in interethnic friendships. As De Souza Briggs (2007) states, '[w]hile homophily shapes many types of relationships, it appears to act more powerfully on close or strong ties, including marriage and friendships, than on acquaintanceships or other "weak" ties' (De Souza Briggs 2007: 267; cf. Granovetter 1973; Marsden 1988). Accordingly, if self-selection were to be an issue within interethnic contact research, it should be most salient within interethnic friendships.

The conclusion that interethnic friendship has the strongest influence on the way individuals think about ethnic minorities thus seems premature, given the fact that friendships are most prone to self-selection. It calls for a greater understanding of the phenomenon of self-selection in interethnic contact research. In this chapter I therefore attempt to further explore the extent to which self-selection is important for interethnic contacts and their influence on the way individuals think about ethnic minorities. This is done following Ethnic Reification Theory by introducing educational level, known as one of the most important predictors of cultural tolerance, as a means of theoretically hypothesizing about self-selection effects in cross-sectional

datasets. The data used for testing this are taken from the first wave of the European Social Survey in the Netherlands. Altogether, this should enable to exemplify the role of self-selection in interethnic contacts and the extent to which the commonly found evidence for Contact Theory can indeed be attributed to interethnic contact.

4.2 Self-selection and contact effects: three elements for their distinction

4.2.1 A theoretical approach to self-selection

The idea that people may choose to avoid interethnic contacts and that this avoidance may be higher among individuals who dismiss ethnic diversity constitutes the core principle of the problem of self-selection within interethnic contact research. The soundest solution to this selection problem, in methodological terms, would be to perform panel studies by which causality can be assessed directly. Panel data for interethnic contacts are, however, quite rare. This has recently been confirmed by Pettigrew and Tropp, who have done an extensive meta-analysis including more than 500 studies on Contact Theory (Pettigrew and Tropp 2011: 118). The few studies available that incorporate changes over time have typically shown that the path from contact to prejudice is about equally strong as the path from prejudice to contact (Binder et al. 2009; Levin, Van Laar and Sidanius 2003; Sidanius et al. 2008; Van Laar et al. 2005; Van Laar, Levin, and Sidanius 2008; cf. Pettigrew and Tropp 2011)[31]. As such, these findings suggest that self-selection alone cannot account for all the direct relationships between contact and prejudice found in intergroup contact research.

It is, however, problematic to generalize upon the few longitudinal studies available because they are mostly based on limited research samples. The types of samples used are mostly composed of college students (Eller and Abrams 2003, 2004; Binder et al. 2009) or undergraduates (Levin, Van Laar and Sidanius 2003; Sidanius et al. 2008; Van Laar et al. 2005; Van Laar, Levin and Sidanius 2008). For both types of samples different results can be expected than for the general population. As to the former type, this is because samples based on college students have a tendency 'to yield stronger mean effects than adults [which] is consistent with Sears' (1986) contention that college students' attitudes are typically more flexible and open to change than those of older adults' (Pettigrew and Tropp 2011: 58). The latter type of sample is biased because it studies only more highly educated individuals. These are known to differ from the general population in important aspects as well, which has been convincingly shown

by Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan (2010). Concerning the use of American under-graduates as the subpopulation on which the empirical foundation of the behavioral sciences is principally based, they state '[i]t is not merely that researchers frequently make generalizations from a narrow subpopulation. The concern is that this particular population is highly unrepresentative' (Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan 2010:79). This leads the authors to conclude that undergraduates may be 'one of the worst sub-populations one could study for generalizing' (Ibid). It therefore seems premature to discard the importance of self-selection on interethnic contact research based only on the few limited longitudinal studies available to date.

It follows from the above that, ideally, panel studies using general population samples would be needed. In the absence of such data and given that a majority of the empirical studies on Contact Theory are based on cross-sectional data, an alternative for assessing self-selection in contact research has been suggested: testing whether the path of contact to prejudice is stronger than the reversed path, hereby using structural equation modeling. The findings obtained from applying this technique show that the path from interethnic contact to reducing prejudice is indeed stronger than the reversed path from prejudice to contact (Pettigrew 1997, 1998; Van Dick et al. 2004). This finding has been used as evidence for the idea that self-selection does not completely underlie the contact effects found and has furthermore served as justification for not assessing self-selection in one's own analyses (e.g. Biggs and Knaus 2012; Dhont and Van Hiel 2009; Escandell and Ceobanu 2009). Given the importance of self-selection as a problem in interethnic contact research and its potential for distort-ing interpretation of the results obtained in research on the influence of interethnic contacts so far, it is questionable whether using a statistical construct, as is done by measuring both causal paths through structural equations modeling, suffices as a solu-tion to the problem.

From this perspective, the current state of interethnic contact research seems unable to solve the problem of self-selection in methodological terms. Therefore, theoretical solutions for this problem have been suggested. As such, Pettigrew (1998) has proposed to compare different types of contact, distinguishing between those that are and are not prone to self-selection[32] (see also Welch and Sigelman 2000; Wilson 1996). McLaren has furthermore suggested including variables in the analysis that are theoretically prior to prejudice (McLaren 2003). These two suggestions have been combined by Dixon and Rosenbaum (2004) who have studied types of contact that are less open for choice combined with statistically controlling for individuals' unwillingness to have interethnic contact by including variables prior to prejudice (Dixon and Rosen-baum 2004: 261). This combination used by Dixon and Rosenbaum seems useful

since it can determine whether contact effects differ amongst choice and restricted choice contacts, and also if this is influenced by factors prior to prejudice.

In this chapter, I will pursue a similar path as suggested by Dixon and Rosenbaum (2004). However, one crucial element is lacking in their theoretical solution. This deficiency stems from the common assumption in interethnic contact research, rooted in the neglect og Contact Theory for the role of cultural values, that such contacts will have a direct influence on opinions about ethnic minorities. What has sometimes been suggested (e.g. Pettigrew 1998), but rarely incorporated into Contact Theory research (cf. Hodson, Harry and Mitchell 2009), is the idea that interethnic contact will be interpreted according to the way people think about ethnic minorities. In other words, it is probable that the evaluative consequences of interethnic contact will depend on people's ideas about cultural differences which form the frames through which such contacts are interpreted. Such frames of interpretation, as argued within the Ethnic Reification framework, will be constituted by people's stance towards cultural differences and will most likely coincide with the 'factors prior to prejudice' mentioned above. This is because the same views that serve as a framework for interpreting interethnic contacts function as a selection mechanism on which the willingness to engage in interethnic contacts depends. Therefore, the interpretation of interethnic contact through framing should be distinguished from the direct influence of such frames on the selection of interethnic contacts.

It is therefore necessary to distinguish three elements, which will be further elaborated in the following sections: the amount of choice in contacts; cultural preferences for contact selection; and the interpretation of interethnic contacts through framing. Combining these three elements should open the door for dealing with the problem of self-selection in cross-sectional data (see also Welch and Sigelman 2000), not in methodological terms, but by theoretically reasoning upon an individual's motivation to avoid or engage in interethnic contacts[33].

4.2.2 Self-selection in different types of contact

The first of the three elements that need to be distinguished consists of a comparison of types of interethnic contact according to their degree of eligibility. In studies on the influence of interethnic contact it has been frequently emphasized that as a rule interethnic friendships are associated with less negative thinking about ethnic minorities. Numerous studies have in fact shown such a negative relationship between interethnic friendships and ethnocentrism (e.g. Aberson, Schoemaker and Tomolillo 2004; Levin, Van Laar and Sidanius 2003; Paolini et al. 2004; Pettigrew 1997, 1998;

Powers and Elison 1995; Wagner et al. 2003). Moreover, previous evidence of the significance of interethnic friendships for less negative opinions about ethnic minorities is sometimes used for narrowing the scope of Contact Theory research. McLaren (2003), for example, justifies her choice of testing only interethnic contact with friends in her research by stating that this form of contact will most likely induce perceptions of similarity between members of ethnic minority groups and the self.

The common idea that underlies the importance attached to intimate contacts in Contact Theory is that it offers the possibility of perceiving more similarities between the self and the 'other'. Such an argument is contrary to Allport's (1979[1954]) line of reasoning, according to which interethnic contact serves to provide people with more knowledge of, therefore more understanding for, ethnic minorities, which should result in more positive ideas about them. Instead, that intimate contacts provide individuals with the opportunity to empathize with out-group members and their concerns is considered to be more important (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008: 923). Such intimate contacts would invalidate the idea that members from ethnic minority groups have different morals and values than in-group members (McLaren 2003: 913), which should result in blurring the boundary between in-groups and out-groups[34]. This mediational effect of empathy and perspective taking is found to be operating independently from the effect of knowledge mediation and would furthermore be significantly more important than other mediating processes (cf. Pettigrew and Tropp 2008). This should then result in more positive thinking about members of ethnic groups other than one's own group in general.

However, contrary to the idea that the intimacy of interethnic friendship would result in more positive ideas about ethnic minorities, it can be argued that interethnic friendship *presumes* low degrees of ethnocentrism. Hence, as Kinder and Kam emphasize when citing Brewer and Campbell (1976), 'the fundamental distinction between in-group and out-group is captured by feelings of trust, familiarity, and personal security' (Kinder and Kam 2009: 49). Since friendship is typically based on these kinds of feelings, it is highly unlikely that people will actively perceive their friends as members of an out-group. Given that ethnocentric reactions are by definition accompanied by negative out-group perceptions, high levels of ethnocentrism would be incompatible with interethnic friendships. In other words, it can be assumed that friendships are based on mutual trust and empathy, making it highly unlikely that a person with negative ideas about ethnic minorities will have an ethnic minority friend at all. Rather than assuming a reduction of ethnocentric conceptions through interethnic contacts, as is common practice within Contact Theory research, another possibility is therefore that interethnic friendships are by definition accompanied by a positive stance towards ethnic minorities.

From the above it follows that interethnic friendships will be primarily based on self-selection. The same does not hold true for other types of interethnic contact, such as with neighbors[35] and colleagues, which are typically more restricted by contact opportunities and individuals' social environments. Of course, the social environment will influence friendship choice to some extent as well, hence '[w]hile friends reflect an element of personal choice, they do not reflect a free choice: we are most likely to become friendly with those who are thrown consistently in our path' (Jackman and Crane 1986: 467). Furthermore, Kalmijn's work on assortative mating has indeed shown the importance of contact opportunities and third parties in interethnic marriage, second to the importance of individual preferences (Kalmijn 1998; see also 1991, 1994) and it has been argued that these findings can be extended to other forms of interethnic contact (cf. Martinovic, Van Tubergen and Maas 2009). Nonetheless, the degree of eligibility is quite certainly higher when it comes to interethnic friendships than in the case of less intimate interethnic contacts such as with neighbors and with colleagues. On the whole, it may thus be expected that self-selection plays a decisive role for interethnic friendships, while this is not true for interethnic contact with neighbors and with colleagues. Since this self-selection is mostly determined by individual cultural preferences, an explanation for understanding these individual preferences will be developed below.

4.2.3 Cultural preferences for interethnic contact selection

The second element to be distinguished in this discussion of self-selection and contact effects focuses on how self-selection can be understood. This element fulfills the same function as 'adding variables prior to prejudice', suggested by McLaren (2003) and adopted by Dixon and Rosenbaum (2004), albeit integrated within a broader theoretical framework. In previous research it has been argued that the process of contact-selection is a cultural process. Hence, as Vaisey and Lizardo (2010) emphasize when citing Thompson et al. 'routines of contact-selection enable actors to 'seek out social relationships that are compatible with their [cultural] bias and shun those relations in which they feel less at home' (Thompson et al. 1990: 266, in: Vaisey and Lizardo 2010: 1602). Similarly, Douglas (1978) has emphasized that the friendship choice process is inherently culturally biased. Moreover, research has shown that 'highly prejudiced individuals engage in less intergroup interaction, finding contact undesirable and aversive' (Hodson, Harry and Mitchell 2009, see also Altemeyer 1998; Hodson 2008; Pettigrew 1998). Indeed, if any pattern in preferences for having contact with ethnic minorities were to be found, such a pattern would most likely be driven by individu-

als' stances towards cultural diversity. Since interethnic contact presumes having contact with individuals from a different cultural background, it can be expected that individuals who have a negative attitude toward cultural differences will be less inclined to have interethnic contact than individuals who are more open to such differences.

Previous research has shown time and again that education is highly important for the tolerance of cultural differences (e.g. Emler and Frazer 1999; Stubager 2008, 2009). Accordingly, numerous studies have shown that highly educated individuals tend to have less negative opinions about ethnic minorities than less educated ones (e.g. Kunovich 2004; Scheepers, Gijsberts and Coenders 2002). This was confirmed by the previous two chapters. Those chapters have furthermore shown that this educational effect is to be understood in a cultural sense such that the more highly educated will have less ethnocentric ideas because they are more likely to value cultural diversity and to accept cultural differences. It is therefore likely that an individual's educational level will be decisive for the cultural preference for avoiding or embracing interethnic contacts. Following this line of reasoning we may expect that less educated individuals will be more reluctant to accept ethnic diversity and will therefore attempt to avoid interethnic contacts. More highly educated people, on the contrary, are expected to be more receptive of ethnic diversity and would thus tend to embrace interethnic contacts.

4.2.4 Distinguishing self-selection from contact effects

So far I have argued that self-selection will be paramount for the existence of interethnic friendships, whereas it will be less important for interethnic contacts with colleagues and with neighbors. Moreover, I have contended that self-selection, which is caused by a preference for engaging (or not) in interethnic contact, can be understood through an individual's educational level. Combining these two elements is, however, neither sufficient for testing the extent to which self-selection plays a role in different types of interethnic contact, nor for determining to what extent the common findings in research on Contact Theory are attributable to interethnic contact or to self-selection. To accomplish this, one crucial element in the discussion of self-selection and contact effects needs to be added. This third element is based on the idea that education plays a double role in this puzzle: we need to distinguish between direct effects of a person's educational level on ethnocentrism and contact-related effects on this opinion. Such a distinction can be made through a contextualization of Contact Theory in which individuals' cultural frames function as the contexts in which interethnic contacts are interpreted.

Relatively little research attention has been paid to the idea that interethnic contact might be interpreted differently according to the social groups people belong to (cf. Hodson, Harry and Mitchell 2009). But some authors have mentioned the possibility that individuals react differently to interethnic contact according to the predefined ideas they have about ethnic minorities. Pettigrew has, for example, suggested that interethnic contact will not influence individuals' opinions about ethnic minorities in a direct sense, but rather that it would reaffirm their 'initial attitudes' (Pettigrew 1998). From this perspective, variation in reactions to interethnic contact is not only informed by the type of contact, as would be the case when contact is expected to affect opinions about ethnic minorities in a direct sense. But it is at least as plausible that such variation comes from a different interpretation of contact because of individuals' cultural values. An alternative theory about the way in which interethnic contact might affect opinions about ethnic minorities is therefore needed.

Instead of looking at interethnic contacts as stimuli to which only one 'natural' response is possible, an alternative way is to perceive these contacts as any situation that would, according to the ideas of framing analysis (Gitlin 1980; Goffman 1974), be interpreted by means of individuals' cultural frames. These frames are understood here as 'principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters' (Gitlin 1980: 6). When applying this idea of framing to interethnic contact, it implies that such contact would reaffirm the ideas about ethnic minorities that individuals already have. In other words, in similar conditions of interethnic contact, individuals might have different interpretations of such contact according to their previous stance towards ethnic minorities. Consequently, we may expect that individuals who already think negatively about ethnic minorities interpret their contact in a negative sense and find their negative ideas about ethnic minorities reaffirmed. For people who have positive ideas about ethnic minorities, we expect that interethnic contact will reaffirm these positive ideas.

Within the framework of Ethnic Reification Theory, it was argued that individuals' stances towards ethnic minorities will be mainly related to their educational level because highly educated people have ample cultural capital and will therefore be more likely to hold a de-reified worldview, whereas the opposite will be true for those less educated. As a consequence, among people from different educational levels clear differences can be expected in the extent to which they are open toward people from an ethnic background other than their own. Given that the less educated will be more negative toward ethnic minorities than the highly educated, following the ideas of framing analysis results in the expectation that interethnic contact will lead to more positive thinking about ethnic minorities among more highly educated individuals, while leading to more negative opinions about ethnic minorities among less educated

individuals. The third element needed for distinguishing between self-selection and 'genuine' contact effects thus consists of the idea that the effect of interethnic contact, in principle, will be conditional on an individual's cultural values, here indicated by a person's educational level.

4.2.5 Hypotheses

To summarize: in order to distinguish between contact and self-selection effects, the expectation of the conditional role of education for contact effects should be combined with the distinction among types of contact according to their degree of eligibility and with the role of education as a driving force for self-selection. Taken together, these three elements allow for formulating hypotheses according to the following general logic: in types of interethnic contacts which people are able to select themselves, the role of education will be exercised in the self-selection process. And no more framing can be expected after such a selection. After all, when one selects his or her friends, one generally already 'knows' the contacts with these friends are going to be pleasurable and fully in line with pre-existing cultural values. On the contrary, for interethnic contacts that are not so much prone to self-selection, the role of education will be mainly exercised within the interpretation of those contacts. For only when confronted with contacts with ethnic minorities one did not select will someone's pre-existing cultural values help interpret these contacts.

When these ideas are applied to ethnocentrism, two clusters of hypotheses can be formulated. The first cluster of hypotheses applies to interethnic contacts that are prone to self-selection, namely interethnic friendships. We expect to find that people who are open to ethnic diversity will tend to engage in interethnic friendships, while those who are less open to it will tend to avoid such contacts. This should result in finding a positive association between education and interethnic friendships (*hypothesis 1*) and a negative relationship between interethnic friendship and ethnocentrism (*hypothesis 2*). Furthermore, since the individual's stance toward ethnic minorities will have driven the very existence of the friendship, we do not expect to find framing effects for interethnic friendships. Therefore, we do not expect to find a significant influence of interethnic friendship on the relationship between educational level and ethnocentrism (*hypothesis 3*). Technically speaking, we thus expect no interaction effect of education and interethnic friendship on ethnocentrism. Only when all three hypotheses are corroborated would we conclude that interethnic friendship effects found in interethnic contact research are attributable to self-selection.

The second cluster of hypotheses concerns interethnic contacts in which choice is restricted, namely contacts with colleagues and neighbors. Since I have argued that self-selection will not be very important to these contacts, I do not necessarily expect to find an association between interethnic contact with colleagues and educational level, nor with interethnic neighborhood contact and education. Based on the idea that interethnic contact will not influence the opinion about ethnic minorities directly, I do not necessarily expect to find a significant direct effect of interethnic contact with colleagues and with neighbors on ethnocentrism, as is the case for interethnic friendships. It was argued instead that choice-restricted contacts will influence individuals' initial ideas about ethnic minorities. Therefore, I hypothesize that interethnic contact with colleagues and neighbors will strengthen the negative relationship between an individual's educational level and ethnocentrism (*hypothesis 4*). Technically speaking, a significant interaction effect for education and interethnic contact with colleagues on ethnocentrism should thus be found, and the same goes for interethnic neighborhood contact and education on ethnocentrism.

4.3 Data and Operationalization

4.3.1 Data

As in the previous chapter, the data used in this paper are taken from the first wave of the European Social Survey (Jowell et al. 2003). Since the hypotheses only include individual-level relationships, I have chosen to use data for one country of the dataset, namely the Netherlands. Using data from the Netherlands is convenient since numerous other studies in the field of research on interethnic contact have used data from this country, which allows for comparison of our results as well as detection of possible anomalies in our data as compared to previous research findings. A total number of 2,364 respondents are included in the Dutch dataset. This dataset is especially apt to use in this chapter as it contains measurements of the three forms of interethnic contact to be studied.

4.3.2 Operationalization[36]

The dependent variable *ethnocentrism* is measured using six items in which respondents are asked if *immigrants take away jobs or rather create new jobs* (1); if *immigrants use more*

taxes than they contribute (2); whether *immigration is good or bad for the economy* (3); if *the country's cultural life is undermined or enriched by immigrants* (4); whether *immigrants make the country a worse or better place to live in* (5); and if *immigrants make the country's crime problems worse or better* (6). These six items together produce a highly reliable scale (Cronbach's alpha is 0.84). The scale score is calculated by taking the mean score on those items. A scale score is calculated for each respondent with at least three valid answers on the set of six items; a higher score stands for a greater amount of perceived ethnic threat.

Interethnic contact is measured in three ways: with friends, with colleagues at work, and in the neighborhood. Respondents were asked if they have any immigrant friends (1 *yes, several*, 2 *yes, a few*, 3 *no, none at all*); if they have any immigrant colleagues (1 *yes, several*, 2 *yes, a few*, 3 *no, none at all*; 4 *not currently working*); and if there are people of a minority race or ethnic group in their current living area (1 *almost nobody*, 2 *some*, 3 *many*). All three variables were recoded into dichotomous variables that indicate if a respondent does (2) or does not (1) have this type of interethnic contact.

Educational level is measured in two ways. The first one concerns *formal educational level* (in the results referred to as 'education'), which stands for the number of years that a respondent has attended full-time schooling. The educational level of the respondents in our sample ranges from three up to 25 years of full-time schooling, the median being 13 years.

The second way of measuring educational level is through an individual's *occupational educational level*, which does not measure formal education, but 'on the job training'[37] and can be seen as a more refined measurement of educational level. It is measured as a combination of the ISCO-88 occupational groups and the years of full-time education attended (cf. De Graaf and Kalmijn 1995, 2001; Kalmijn 1994). The occupational groups have been reduced to the two-digit level. For each group then, the average years of full-time schooling attendance is calculated. A score of 10 on this variable for occupational educational level thus corresponds to an average of ten years of full-time schooling within the occupational category a respondent belongs to.

The control variables included are *age* (in years, ranging from 15 to 91), *gender* (man=0, woman=1), *living environment* (city=1, village=0), *income* (as net household income per month), and *labor market insecurity* (ranging from 0 to 3), as previous research has shown these variables to be important for the way people think about ethnic minorities (e.g. Coenders 2001; Quillian 1995; Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2009). All variables have been standardized, allowing for comparison of the coefficients within a model in terms of their respective strength as well as for preventing problems with multicollinearity when calculating interaction terms.

4.4 Results

The analyses are performed in two steps. First, we look at the results that would be obtained by the conventional way of testing Contact Theory. Second, we study the interactions of the three types of interethnic contact with the two measurements of educational level. Table 4.1 shows the results of the first step in our analysis, which is a linear multiple regression model of the direct effects of the three types of interethnic contact on ethnocentrism, including the control variables. From this model one would conclude that only interethnic contact with friends is significantly, and quite strongly, related to ethnocentrism. This finding corroborates our second hypothesis expecting a negative relationship between interethnic friendship and perceived ethnic threat. More important, however, is that the conclusion based on Table 4.1 is that interethnic friendships effectively lead to lower amounts of ethnocentrism, while the other forms of interethnic contact do not. This finding is perfectly congruent with the common emphasis in interethnic contact studies on the importance of interethnic friendships for reducing negative thoughts about ethnic minorities. After testing the remaining hypotheses in the following, we will see whether this conclusion will still be supported.

The second step in the analysis entails a test of the influence of the three types of interethnic contact on the relationship between educational level and ethnocentrism. For this purpose multiple linear regression analysis is used. Table 4.2 corresponds to the results concerning the influence of interethnic friendships: again, a rather strong and negative direct effect of interethnic friendship on ethnocentrism is found. More important, there is no significant influence of interethnic friendship on the relationship of each of both indicators of educational level with ethnocentrism. This corroborates our third hypothesis and suggests that it is indeed true that the commonly found relationship of interethnic friendship with less ethnocentrism is mainly attributable to self-selection, and not as much to contact effects. Nevertheless, there is one more test needed for this conclusion to be convincing: it should be true that there is a significant relationship between an individual's educational level and interethnic friendships, as predicted by our first hypothesis, for if it is not we would have no empirical evidence for the idea that selection of interethnic friendships is driven by cultural preferences. The correlations in Table 4.3 indicate that there actually is such a positive relationship between education and interethnic friendship. Together with the lack of a framing effect, this validates the conclusion that the strong influence of interethnic friendship on ethnocentrism is mainly attributable to self-selection.

Table 4.1 Regression on *ethnocentrism*, direct contact effects-model

	Standardized coefficient
(Constant)	5.47***
Contact	
Friends	-.19***
Colleagues	-.05
Neighbors	.03
Education	-.24***
Occupational educational level	-.13**
Control variables	
Income	-.04
Insecurity	-.03
Age	-.05
Gender (man=reference)	-.02
Living area (city=1, village=0)	.04
R^2	.08
N	1.578

Source: European Social Survey 2002; own calculations. **p<.01; ***p<.001

Now that we know how selection works for interethnic friendships, it is time to turn to interethnic contact with colleagues (Table 4.4) and with neighbors (Table 4.5). In both cases a direct relationship between contact and ethnocentrism is lacking, while we do find a framing effect for both types of contact on the relationship between educational level and ethnocentrism. Our fourth hypothesis is therefore also corroborated, although in the case of contact with colleagues this is only true for occupational educational level. Further research is needed to explain why only this measure of educational level works for contact with colleagues. Nevertheless, our results provide significant evidence for the idea that interethnic contact, when not formed by self-selection, is interpreted according to individuals' cultural frames.

Table 4.2 Regression on *ethnocentrism*, interethnic friendship models

	Model 1	Model 2
(Constant)	5.47***	5.47***
Contact		
Friends	-.18***	-.18***
Colleagues	-.05	-.05
Neighbors	.03	.03
Education	-.24***	-.24***
Occupational educational level	-.13**	-.13**
Control variables		
Income	-.04	-.04
Insecurity	-.03	-.03
Age	-.05	-.05
Gender (man=reference)	-.02	-.02
Living area (city=1, village=0)	.04	.04
Interactions		
Education*friends	-.02	
Occupational educ.*friends		-.01
R²	.08	.08
N	1.578	1.578

Source: European Social Survey 2002; own calculations. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

A visual representation for one of these interactions, namely for the influence of neighborhood contact on the relationship between occupational educational level and ethnocentrism, is given in Figure 4.1. It clearly shows that for individuals with the lowest occupational educational level more contact is associated with more ethnocentrism, while the opposite is true for individuals with the highest occupational educational level. A similar picture applies to the interactions with occupational educational level and colleagues and with education and neighborhood contact. This means that interethnic contact that is not prone to self-selection reaffirms individuals' initial ideas

about ethnic minorities. It is thus clear that more interethnic contact in restricted choice situations leads to greater polarization of ethnocentric ideas along the lines of individuals' educational level.

Table 4.3 Pearson's correlations cultural indicators with interethnic friendship

	Friends	Education
Education	.14**	
Occupational educational level	.11**	.43**

Source: European Social Survey 2002; own calculations. **p<.01

Since it is known that friendships tend to rise from everyday encounters such as previous contacts with neighbors and with colleagues, some might argue that restrictions play a more important role for friendships than we have argued up to now. However, our results concerning the effect of contact with colleagues and with neighbors on the relationships of educational level with ethnocentrism indicate that even if friendships grow mainly out of neighborhood and workplace contacts, this would mostly be the case among higher educated individuals. This point reaffirms our previous findings which indicate that interethnic friendships are mostly attributable to self-selection.

Figure 4.1: Effect of neighborhood contact on *ethnocentrism*, minimum and maximum conditions of occupational educational level
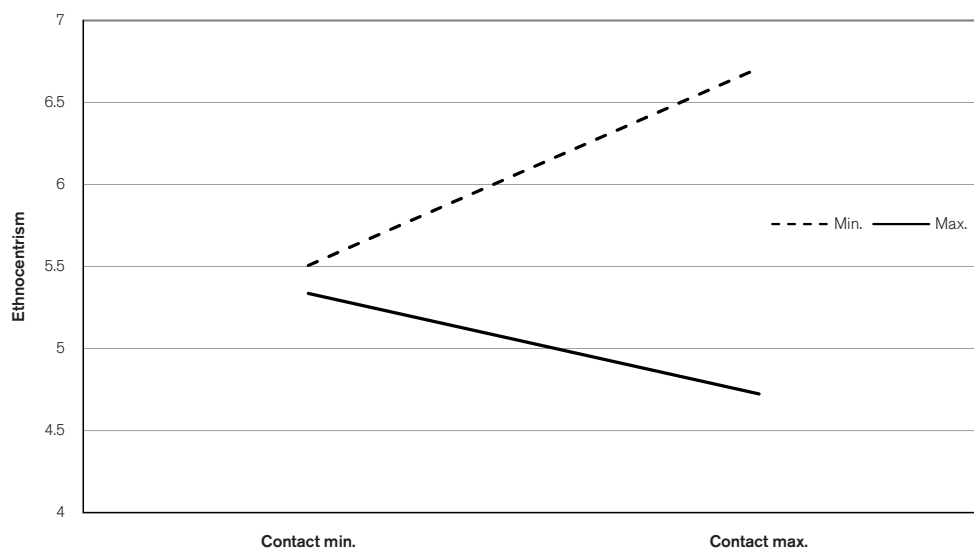
Table 4.4 Regression on *ethnocentrism*, contact with colleagues models

	Model 1	Model 2
(Constant)	5.47***	5.48***
Contact		
Friends	-.19***	-.19***
Colleagues	-.05	-.02
Neighbors	.03	.03
Education	-.24***	-.24***
Occupational educational level	-.13**	-.13***
Control variables		
Income	-.04	-.04
Insecurity	-.03	-.03
Age	-.05	-.05
Gender (man=reference)	-.02	-.02
Living area (city=1, village=0)	.04	.04
Interactions		
Education*colleagues	.00	
Occupational educ.*colleagues		-.08*
R^2	.08	.09
N	1.578	1.578

Source: European Social Survey 2002; own calculations. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Table 4.5 Regression on *ethnocentrism*, contact with neighbors models

	Model 1	Model 2
(Constant)	5.47***	5.47***
Contact		
Friends	-.19***	-.19***
Colleagues	-.05	-.05
Neighbors	.04	.07
Education	-.24***	-.24***
Occupational educational level	-.13**	-.13**
Control variables		
Income	-.05	-.04
Insecurity	-.03	-.03
Age	-.06	-.06
Gender (man=reference)	-.02	-.02
Living area (city=1, village=0)	.03	.04
Interactions		
Education*neighbors	-.07*	
Occupational educ.*neighbors		-.12***
R²	.09	.09
N	1.578	1.578

Source: European Social Survey 2002; own calculations. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

4.5 Conclusion and discussion

In this chapter my aim was to study the role of self-selection in interethnic contacts while using cross-sectional data. To this end, a distinction has been made between (i) types of interethnic contact that are and are not prone to self-selection; (ii) the role of an individual's educational level in selecting interethnic contacts; and (iii) cultural framing of the interpretation of interethnic contacts in restricted choice situations.

Our results have shown that selection of interethnic contact concerning individual preferences can indeed be understood through an individual's educational level. As such, we have shown that the relationship between interethnic friendship and the opinion about ethnic minorities is attributable to cultural self-selection. Furthermore, for the types of contact that are less open to self-selection, we have found interethnic contact to reaffirm individuals' initial ideas about ethnic diversity. Hence, greater polarization in ethnocentrism was found: individuals with a lower educational level have more ethnocentric ideas when they have many interethnic contacts with neighbors and colleagues, while individuals with a higher educational level will have less ethnocentric ideas through such contacts.

These findings have implications for three aspects of the Contact Theory literature. First, the findings strongly point towards the idea that the often found 'beneficial effect' of interethnic friendships on the way people think about ethnic minorities can be attributed to the fact that such friendships are chosen by individuals who already think positively about ethnic minorities. In other words, self-selection in interethnic friendships plays a greater role than commonly suggested in the literature. Of course replication of this study using data for other countries is needed before extracting strong conclusions from the results presented here. However, I have no theoretical reasons to expect that such replications would lead to different results than those obtained here. I therefore think it safe to object to the idea that 'especially, close, cross-group friendship, may enable one to take the perspective of outgroup members and empathize with their concerns' (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008: 923). The results presented in this chapter indicate that those individuals who are already empathetic toward culturally different people are more likely to engage in interethnic contact, which explains the strong, direct and often found association between interethnic friendships and positive opinions about ethnic minorities. Therefore, it can be doubted whether the emphasis on interethnic friendships in the Contact Theory literature is legitimate.

Second, the results indicate that interethnic contact reaffirms already existing ideas about ethnic minorities and as such, confirms a frame-analytic approach to the influence of interethnic contact on the way people think about ethnic minorities. These results contradict earlier findings on this issue, which showed that interethnic contact leads especially to less prejudiced thinking among individuals who have the strongest authoritarian conceptions (Dhont and Van Hiel 2009; Hodson, Harry and Mitchell 2009). The results of these studies suggest that interethnic contact leads to an inversion of individuals' initial stance towards ethnic minorities, which is diametrically opposed to our findings. One possible explanation for these contradictory results is that the previous studies are based on a small sample of college students. As mentioned before, college student samples are likely to show greater contact effects than the general

population (cf. Pettigrew and Tropp 2011). Furthermore, given that the sample is composed of more highly educated individuals who are in general already more empathetic towards ethnic minorities, a similar effect as suggested by Pettigrew and Tropp (2011) concerning attitudes towards elderly might be applicable: 'there may be a ceiling effect that makes it more difficult for contact to enhance attitudes that are already largely positive' (Pettigrew and Tropp 2011: 54).

Third and finally, it was shown that the method of measuring both causal paths within a cross-sectional dataset may not be a sufficient solution to the problem of self-selection. When using the alternative method as followed in this chapter, it becomes clear that the importance of self-selection has been underestimated in previous research. Of course panel data for the general population would be, purely methodologically speaking at least, the soundest way of assessing whether the often found relationship between interethnic contact and individuals' opinion about ethnic minorities is attributable to contact effects or to self-selection. However, given that such panel data are mostly absent, the alternative of inserting a concept through which self-selection and 'genuine' contact effects can be theoretically disentangled in cross-sectional datasets, as presented here, seems to offer a valuable solution to the problem of self-selection in contact research. In this study, at least, such a solution has led to results that put into question the tenability of the core idea of Contact Theory that interethnic contact would in itself positively influence the way individuals think about ethnic minorities.

5. Why Imagined Contact Does Not Always Help

5.1 Introduction

In recent years, a new policy instrument has been promoted by Contact Theory scholars: imagined contact. By letting people imagine interethnic contact situations, for example through a short text in which people are asked to think of an encounter with an out-group stranger they sit next to on the bus, it is claimed that people's ideas about interethnic contacts are positively influenced. More specifically, such imagined contacts would provide the opportunity to show people that 'positive' encounters with out-group members are possible (Crisp and Turner 2009), to increase willingness to engage in future contacts (Husnu and Crisp 2010), and to lead to reduced intergroup anxiety (Turner, Crisp and Lambert 2007). In short, imagined contact is claimed to be 'the strongest possible testament to the power, flexibility and enduring appeal of the contact hypothesis' (Crisp et al. 2008).

As such, scholars studying imagined interethnic contacts seem to reproduce Contact Theory scholars' often made claim that interethnic contact is 'one of the most widely used interventions for the reduction of prejudice and the improvement of intergroup relations' (Turner, Crisp and Lambert 2007: 428, see also Oskamp and Jones 2000; Brambilla, Ravenna and Hewstone 2012), and 'while there may be facilitating conditions that improve its effectiveness, contact basically *works*' (Husnu and Crisp 2010: 943, italics in original). However, the previous chapter has shown that such statements are likely to be overstated. By following Ethnic Reification Theory, self-selection was shown to be a bigger problem than usually acknowledged in the literature, and the interpretation of interethnic contacts was shown not to be universal but dependent on people's cultural values. Therefore, it can be questioned whether results obtained so far from imagined contact studies will remain stable once imaginary interethnic contact has been studied from an Ethnic Reification perspective.

In this chapter, I will therefore test Ethnic Reification Theory as an explanation for the evaluative consequences of imagined interethnic contact. More specifically, I will study the question of whether the evaluation of persons met in an imaginary contact situation is culturally moderated. To do so, I use a vignette experiment carried out among a representative sample of the Dutch population. The results thus obtained will be compared with studies on imagined interethnic contact conducted up until now

and will enable assessment of the tenability of claims about the potential of imagined interethnic contact as a tool for improving interethnic relations.

Such an approach furthermore enables a more direct test of Ethnic Reification Theory as an explanation for the interpretation of interethnic contact. In the previous chapter this explanation was studied indirectly, through people's educational level. A vignette experiment among a representative sample of respondents offers the possibility to directly assess whether interpretation of interethnic contact actually works through people's cultural values as predicted in Ethnic Reification Theory. Hence, such a research design serves to rule out the problem of self-selection and allows for testing causal ordering. As such, survey experiments can overcome a common criticism directed at 'cultural' explanations, which is that such explanations are tautological because they attempt to explain a certain set of attitudes with another set of attitudes. Indeed, survey experiments are the method par excellence to show that culture can have real effects and functions as an independent variable (cf. Houtman et al. 2013; Houtman and Achterberg 2012).

5.2 Reincorporating cultural values in studying imagined contact

5.2.1 Imagined interethnic contact research

Up until now, imagined interethnic contact has been studied mainly in the context of lab experiments performed among small samples of undergraduates (Stathi and Crisp 2008; Husnu and Crisp 2010; Turner, Crisp and Lamberts 2007). The design of such experiments is usually as follows: the research sample is divided into two groups. Both groups will be asked to imagine a certain situation, which is followed by a set of questions that addresses respondents' opinions about out-groups in general (e.g. Turner, Crisp and Lambert 2007), projection of positive traits onto out-group members (Stathi and Crisp 2008), willingness to engage in future interethnic contact (e.g. Husnu and Crisp 2010) and the like. One group will function as a control group and will be asked to imagine a situation that has nothing to do with an interethnic contact situation. The treatment group will be asked to imagine an interethnic encounter which is typically said to be a pleasant meeting in which nice things are learned about the person in the vignette. A general formulation used for such vignettes is as follows: "We would like you to take a minute to imagine yourself meeting [an out-group] stranger for the first

time. Imagine that the interaction is positive, relaxed, and comfortable." (taken from Crisp and Turner 2009: 234).[38]

Such studies on imagined interethnic contact are typically considered part of '[o]ne intriguing line of research [that] considers whether *indirect* forms of intergroup contact, interventions derived from the contact hypothesis but not involving face-to-face contact, are sufficient to reduce prejudice' (Turner and Crisp 2010: 130, italics in original). Imagined contact has furthermore been 'proposed as a further implementation of Contact Theory that can capitalize on the benefits of contact, even where opportunities for contact are unlikely or impossible' (Birtel and Crisp 2012: 745). In addition, imagined contact is seen as a 'versatile experimental paradigm for exploring the psychological processes underlying the impact of social contact' (Husnu and Crisp 2010: 943). Scholars studying imagined intergroup contact thus explicitly place their work within the paradigm of Contact Theory.

Given this placement within the Contact Theory tradition, it may come as no surprise that the same two problems I have previously signaled in Contact Theory research, which result from the neglect of the role of people's cultural values, also appear in imagined contact research. Those two problems are self-selection and the assumption of universality of contact effects. Concerning the former, the experimental design generally used for testing imagined contact excludes the possibility of encountering self-selection effects. Nevertheless, there is still a selection problem in such studies, namely the use of pre-selected research samples. Similar to what is general practice in Contact Theory research, in which studies are mostly based on limited samples of college students (e.g. Eller and Abrams 2003, 2004; Binder et al. 2009) or, more specifically, undergraduates (Levin et al. 2003; Sidanius et al. 2008; Sidanius et al. 2004; Van Laar et al. 2005; Van Laar, Levin and Sidanius 2008), imagined contact research is mostly based on small samples of undergraduates (e.g. Husnu and Crisp 2010). Recent research has shown that such samples are highly unrepresentative (Henrich et al. 2010). This is all the more pressing for interethnic contact research since educational level is strongly related to ideas about ethnic minorities, which can influence the evaluative consequences of interethnic contact. After all, as shown in the previous chapter, among those 'self-selected' samples of more highly educated respondents, it is more likely that contact will 'work' than it is among the general population.

The latter idea leads to the second problematic characteristic of Contact Theory research that also applies to studies on imagined interethnic contact: the assumption of universal contact effects. Although this assumption is not stated explicitly by Contact Theory scholars[39], it can be inferred from the way in which Contact Theory is usually tested, namely by expecting direct relationships between a certain type of intergroup contact and ethnocentric ideas. Those 'main contact effects' are only interesting under

the assumption that the effect of contact on ideas about ethnic minorities has a universal nature. Furthermore, only when assuming that contact works the same for everyone can results obtained from highly selective populations be claimed to hold for the population in general, so as to allow the statement that 'contact basically *works*' (Husnu and Crisp 2010: 943, italics in the original). These problems are reflected in imagined contact research as well, since most of such studies assume direct imagined contact effects (cf. Brambilla et al. 2012). Furthermore, despite being tested among small 'self-selected' samples of undergraduates, scholars studying imagined interethnic contact do not hesitate to sing its praises as a policy tool for improving interethnic relations.

5.2.2 Cultural moderation in imagined interethnic contacts

Contrary to the universalist, stimulus-response-like approach in Contact Theory, Gordon Allport, founding father of the contact tradition, has already concluded that 'contact, as a situational variable, cannot always overcome the personal variable in prejudice. This is true whenever the inner strain within the person is too tense, too insistent, to permit him to profit from the structure of the outer situation' (Allport 1979[1954]: 280-281). This suggests a distinction between two elements of contact situations, namely the 'objective' structure of the contact situation and the personal subjective interpretation of contact: not in all cases can the 'objective' conditions of contact mitigate prejudice. As such, this implies that intergroup contacts that are the same in terms of their 'objective' structure will not be interpreted by every person in the same way. Rather, the evaluative consequences of such contacts will depend upon people's initial ideas about ethnic minorities.

The importance of including such initial ideas in the study of the evaluative consequences of interethnic contact can be exemplified when thinking of Contact Theory research that distinguishes between 'positive' and 'negative' intergroup contacts (e.g. Bekhuis, Ruiter and Coenders 2013; see also Pettigrew and Tropp 2011). It is claimed that only 'positive' contacts work for prejudice reduction, but the list of conditions that are regarded as 'positive' does not take into account that these 'objective' conditions might not result in a 'positive' experience for everyone. There are of course social conventions of politeness that are more or less generally shared, so that following them is generally experienced as 'positive'. Yet, in intergroup contact situations ethnic background may for some be a strong enough trigger to disturb this process. This will typically depend on the cultural frames of interpretation involved in such evaluations.

To understand which cultural frames will operate in the evaluation of interethnic contacts, it is important to realize how attitudes towards ethnic minorities are consti-

tuted. The previous chapters have shown that a person's cultural position is most important for understanding people's ideas about ethnic minorities. Both leading to ethnic reification, distrust and authoritarianism were found to be most strongly related to ethnocentric ideas. This is in line with previous studies which have shown in various ways that cultural intolerance is most important for having negative ideas about ethnic minorities: ethnic intolerance is mainly directed toward groups that are most culturally distant from the in-group population (e.g. Dustmann and Preston 2007; Fuchs, Gerhards and Roller 1993), and ethnic intolerance among in-group members is mainly rooted in perceiving immigrants as a cultural threat (see chapter three as well as for example Kluegel and Smith 1983; O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006; Van der Waal et al. 2010; Van der Waal and Houtman 2011).

Given the former, it can be expected that people's ideas about cultural differences will function as the frame of interpretation through which an interethnic contact situation is evaluated. In a general sense, those who are more culturally tolerant will be likely to interpret interethnic contact in a more positive way than people who are more uncomfortable with cultural differences. I can therefore expect that contact will mostly 'work' for people who are already relatively culturally tolerant.[40] Translated to the evaluation of a non-Western person in a vignette 'met' in an imaginary contact situation, it can be expected that this newly-met person will be judged as being more sympathetic the more culturally tolerant one is.

This argument can be further extended to consider the evaluative consequences of intergroup contact in situations that develop either 'positively' or 'negatively' in terms of social conventions of politeness. The expectation is that in such situations the evaluative consequences of contact will also depend on the receiver's stance towards cultural differences. More specifically, it is likely that 'negative' intergroup contacts are judged more negatively by those who are culturally intolerant than by those who are more open toward cultural diversity. Following the same logic, it can be expected that 'positive' intergroup contacts will lead to more positive judgments among people who embrace cultural tolerance than among those more uncomfortable with cultural differences. Such differentiating between contact situations that develop either 'positively' or 'negatively' in terms of social conventions of politeness is important, since it can then be shown that 'positive' situations are not by definition evaluated 'positively' and vice versa for 'negative' situations. As such, the tendency of Contact Theory to ascribe the failure of contact to 'work' for reducing prejudice to characteristics of the contact situation itself can then be properly contrasted with the emphasis put on the subjective interpretation of situations as put forth by Ethnic Reification Theory.

In sum, the core idea of cultural moderation within the Ethnic Reification approach to the evaluative consequences of interethnic contact is that those consequences will

depend upon a person's stance towards cultural differences. When translated to imagined interethnic contacts, this means that I expect imagined contact with a non-Western person in a vignette to be evaluated more negatively than contact with a Western person in a vignette by culturally intolerant persons. Furthermore, I expect that violations of social conventions of politeness will result in more negative evaluations of non-Western than Western persons in vignettes the more culturally intolerant one is. The two hypotheses derived from Ethnic Reification Theory for understanding the evaluative consequences of imagined interethnic contact are therefore as follows: Cultural intolerance will lead to more negative evaluative consequences for imagined contact with non-Western persons than with Western persons (*hypothesis 1*). Furthermore, cultural intolerance will lead to stronger negative evaluative consequences for imagined contact with non-Western persons who deviate from the social convention of politeness (*hypothesis 2*).

5.3 Research design

5.3.1 Data collection

For a valid test of the hypotheses data are needed from a population that varies in terms of cultural intolerance. This study is therefore based on data collected from a representative sample of the Dutch population. The data have been specifically designed and collected for this study and are part of a larger survey on religion, politics and the European Union (Achterberg et al. 2012). The data collection was carried out by CentERdata (University of Tilburg) by means of an online survey in the months of June and July of 2012. CentERdata is an institute for data collection that specializes in online research. Its aim is to maintain a panel of respondents aged 16 years and older representative of the Dutch population. The questionnaire was presented to 1,707 panel members, of whom 1,302 completed the questionnaire. The corresponding response rate is therefore 76.3 percent. For this specific study respondents with a non-Dutch background were excluded. In accordance with the definition of the Dutch Bureau for Statistics (CBS), these are respondents at least one parent of whom was born outside the Netherlands or who have themselves been born and raised outside of the Netherlands. This reduces the number of respondents to 1,177 which in the final analysis has been further reduced to an N of 1,103 due to respondents with missing values on some of the relevant variables.

5.3.2 The vignette experiment

The core part of the data collection used for this study is a vignette experiment, in which respondents are presented with a vignette (e.g. a short text) that describes a hypothetical situation. This situation is then evaluated by the respondents, for example by judging the desirability of the situation expressed in the vignette. All aspects of interest to the researcher are varied randomly among the vignettes,[41] and all vignettes are assigned randomly to respondents. Such a vignette experiment enables two types of comparisons within the data: comparisons between vignettes and comparisons between respondent characteristics. The first type of comparisons allows the assessment of whether certain vignette characteristics affect the evaluation of the vignette, whereas the second type allows the determination of whether respondent characteristics affect vignette evaluations. Of course, and this is an important asset, interactions between respondent characteristics and vignette characteristics can be tested as well.[42] These features make such vignette experiments especially suitable for cultural sociological studies aimed at testing whether elements of the situation are evaluated differently when perceived through a different frame of interpretation.

The vignettes used vary in four aspects, two of which will be included in the analysis.[43] The total number of different vignettes that were created can be calculated by multiplying the number of options per vignette characteristic used. For the total of four characteristics this amounts to 280 different vignettes (based on 5x2x14x2 options). The vignette characteristics were included in a textual description of a contact situation. The aim was to create a situation that would be realistic both in terms of the place of encounter and in the way in which information about the person in the vignette is revealed. Therefore, I have chosen to use an encounter situated in a train with a stranger who is having a telephone conversation. For illustrative purposes, an example of two of the vignettes used can be found in Figure 5.1 below. All respondents were asked to take a moment to read the text and to imagine the situation described in it.

Only the two characteristics that are relevant for this specific study were included in the analysis. The first characteristic concerns the *nationality* of the person in the vignette. Five different nationalities were used, namely Dutch, Scandinavian, Eastern-European, Surinamese and Northern African. These have been converted into a dummy variable that distinguishes between Western (Dutch, Scandinavian) and non-Western (Eastern European[44], Surinamese and Northern African), scored one and two respectively.

The second characteristic measures the reaction of the person in the vignette to the respondent's request to lower his voice. A dummy variable is used for measuring this

whereby score one stands for a willing reaction including apologies from the person in the vignette, whereas score two stands for an unwilling reaction in which the individual simply continues his telephone conversation in the same way as before the respondent's request. I will refer to this variable as *negative reaction*.

The vignette was followed by a set of questions that are aimed at evaluating the respondents' opinion about the person they experienced the imagined contact with. Each respondent evaluated only one vignette. All respondents were asked to answer questions on political and cultural attitudes as well, including their ideas about ethnic minorities. For half of them this was done after the vignette experiment, whereas the other half of the respondents first answered those questions and thereafter completed the experiment.

Figure 5.1 Two examples of vignettes

> During a train journey a middle-aged Eastern European man comes to sit facing you. He has a telephone conversation in a loud voice. From this conversation you can tell that he works as a journalist. You are bothered by the conversation and ask him to lower his voice. The man reacts unwillingly and continues his telephone conversation with the same tone.

> During a train journey a middle aged Scandinavian man comes to sit facing you. He has a telephone conversation. From this conversation you can infer that he works as a road worker. You are bothered by the conversation and ask him to lower his voice. The man reacts willingly and immediately offers apologies.

5.4 Measures

5.4.1 Dependent variable: vignette evaluation

The dependent variable used consists of five items that evaluate the person in the vignette on the extent to which he is seen as sympathetic (i.e. is he trustworthy, do you feel safe with him, would you like to talk to him again, etc.). The answer categories used for each item range from 1 'absolutely not applicable' to 9 'very much applicable'. All items used for the dependent variable and the corresponding results from factor and reliability analysis can be found in Table 5.1. The results of these analyses show that all items tap into one dimension and that a reliable scale can be formed (Cronbach's

alpha is .87). A scale score was calculated for every respondent with a valid score on all five items and consists of the mean score on those items. A higher score on this scale stands for a greater amount of sympathy for the person in the vignette.

Table 5.1 Principal factor analysis on items for *sympathy*,
Cronbach's alpha is .87, N is 1,177

	Positive
This man can be trusted	.74
I would like to talk to this man again	.74
I feel safe with this man	.85
I feel related to this man	.69
This is a nice man	.76
Eigenvalue	2.88
R^2	.58

Source: CROCUS Survey on Worldviews in The Netherlands III 2012; own calculations.

5.4.2 Respondent variables

For testing Ethnic Reification Theory a cultural value scale was constructed composed of two subscales. The first subscale is a measurement of *authoritarianism* which is a short version of the F-scale that has been validated by previous research (for use of the same scale in the Netherlands see De Koster et al. 2010). The scale is composed of 7 items that tap into one dimension. A Cronbach's alpha of .77 indicates that they form a reliable scale. The scores are computed as the mean score on all items for each respondent with at least five valid answers; a higher scale score stands for more authoritarianism.

The second subscale, *ethnic intolerance,* was measured using the six items that are listed in Table 5.2. This table shows that these items tap into one underlying dimension and form a reliable scale. All six items are based on five answer categories that range from 1 'completely disagree' to 5 'completely agree'. Scale scores are calculated as the mean of those items for each respondent with a valid answer on all six items. A higher scale score stands for a greater amount of ethnic intolerance. Both value scales were taken together into one variable. This is legitimate because both scales tap into the same overarching theoretical concept[45]. The final cultural value variable is calculated

as the mean score of both subscales and will be further referred to as *cultural intolerance*. A higher score on this scale stands for more cultural intolerance.

Table 5.2 Principal factor analysis on items for *ethnic intolerance*,
Cronbach's alpha is .87, N = 1,115.

	Factor
Foreigners carry all sorts of dirty smells with them.	.76
With Moroccan people you're never sure whether they will suddenly become aggressive.	.84
Most Surinamese people work rather lazily.	.84
Most Turkish people are rather easy-going at work.	.82
Foreigners who live in the Netherlands should adopt Dutch customs and habits.	.52
The Netherlands should actually have never brought in foreign guest workers.	.58
Eigenvalue	3.32
R^2	.55

Source: CROCUS Survey on Worldviews in The Netherlands III 2012; own calculations.

5.4.3 Control variables

Since the vignette experiment followed a random design, no association is expected between the vignette characteristics, nor between vignette characteristics and respondent characteristics. An inspection of the bivariate correlations for all vignette characteristics as well as four respondent background variables - age, gender, income, and educational level – shows that randomization has been successful.[46] Therefore, no extensive control variables were used in the analysis. However, because half of the respondents answered attitudinal questions before the vignette experiment, while the other half did so after the experiment, I did control for question ordering. Since this did not alter the results for the variables of interest, it is not included in the results presented in the following.

5.5 Results

Tables 5.3 and 5.4 show the results of OLS regression analysis on the extent to which the person in the vignette was seen as sympathetic. First, Table 5.3 serves as the base–

line model in which the direct relationship between vignette characteristics and evaluation of the imagined person was estimated. A remarkable finding is that on average in the vignettes non-Western persons tend to be judged more positively than Western persons. This could be an indication of socially desirable answering. However, a closer look at the second and third models in Table 5.3 shows that this is unlikely to be the case: the second model in Table 5.3 shows that a 'negative' encounter, in which the person in the vignette reacts unwillingly to the respondent's request, clearly leads to perceiving that person as less sympathetic. The third model shows that this effect of 'positive' versus 'negative' contacts occurs for Western and non-Western imagined persons alike, as indicated by the non-significant interaction term. This is not what one would expect to find when social desirability had an important role in the evaluation of non-Western persons in the vignettes. Hence, in the latter case 'negative' contacts with non-Western persons in the vignette should have been evaluated less negatively than 'negative' contacts with Western persons in the vignette.

Table 5.3: Direct effect models, OLS regression on *sympathy*, non-standardized regression coefficients shown

|	M1	M2	M3
(Constant)	3.51***	6.55***	6.50***
Vignette characteristics			
Non-Western	.22*	.31***	.34
Negative reaction		-2.10***	-2.06***
Interaction term			
Non-Western*negative reaction			-.02
N	1.108	1.108	1.108
R²	.00	.38	.38

Source: CROCUS Survey on Worldviews in The Netherlands III 2012; own calculations

*p<.05; ***p<.001

In Table 5.4 the results for a test of Ethnic Reification Theory are shown. First it was expected that more cultural intolerance will lead to a less positive evaluation of Non-Western imagined persons. The first model of Table 5.4 shows the results for the test

of this hypothesis. The significant interaction effect indicates that the interpretation of imagined interethnic contacts is indeed culturally moderated. Hence, the more culturally intolerant one is, the stronger the tendency to evaluate a non-Western person in a vignette more negatively than a Western. A visual representation of this interaction effect is included in Figure 5.2 in which the relationship between vignette nationality and sympathy felt for the person in the vignette is plotted for the minimum and maximum values of cultural intolerance. Looking at the evaluation of non-Western persons, Figure 5.2 shows that those most culturally intolerant tend to find non-Western persons less sympathetic than Western in these vignettes, whereas for people most culturally tolerant this effect is reversed. This supports the first hypothesis and is a clear indication that imagined interethnic contacts are culturally moderated.

Figure 5.2 Influence of vignette nationality on *sympathy*, minimum and maximum conditions of cultural intolerance
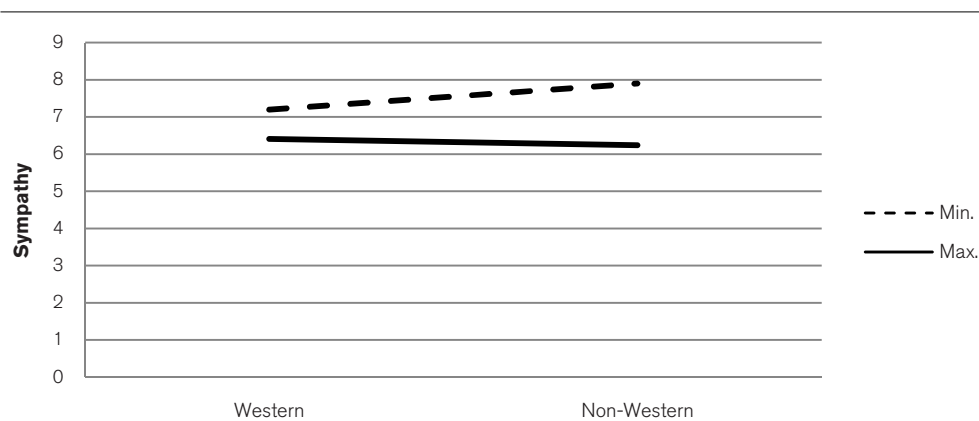
In model 2 of Table 5.4 the second hypothesis is tested which concerns the extent to which the sympathy felt for the vignette person depends upon the interplay between the person in the vignette's type of reaction and the respondents' amount of cultural intolerance. I expected to find that more cultural intolerance will lead to a stronger penalization of a negative reaction given by a non-Western person than by a Western . To test this, the sample was split into two parts, namely one part with respondents that were confronted with a Western person, and a second part in which respondents had to imagine a contact situation with someone from a non-Western background[47]. For respondents confronted with a non-Western person, a significant interaction effect was found which is in line with the second hypothesis: whereas an uncooperative reaction by the person in the vignette always results in less sympathy felt by the respondent, this is more strongly the case for those with high scores on cultural intol-

erance than with low scores, but only when confronted with a non-Western person. Figure 5.3 shows this interaction effect more clearly. The line between a willing and an unwilling reaction for those in the maximum condition of cultural intolerance is much steeper than for respondents in the minimum condition. This means that an unwilling reaction is indeed penalized more strongly for non-Western persons by more culturally intolerant people than by those who are more culturally tolerant.

Table 5.4 Cultural moderation models, OLS regression on *sympathy*, non-standardized regression coefficients shown

| | M1 | M2 | M2 |
		Western	*non-Western*
(Constant)	6.49***	7.08***	7.20***
Vignette characteristics			
Non-Western	.95*		
Negative reaction	-2.10***	-1.89**	-1.32**
Cultural framing			
Cultural intolerance	.02	-.08	-.01
Non-Western*cultural intolerance	-.23*		
Negative reaction*cultural intolerance	--	-.09	-.29*
N	1.108	439	669
R²	.40	.40	.39

Source: CROCUS Survey on Worldviews in The Netherlands III 2012; own calculations.

One-sided test: *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

All in all, the findings are thus supportive of Ethnic Reification Theory, because they show that cultural moderation is important for the evaluative consequences of imagined interethnic contacts. These findings not only contradict the universalistic approach to the interpretation of imagined interethnic contacts propagated by Contact Theory so far, they also underline the importance of testing the role of imagined contact for ideas about ethnic minorities among representative samples of the population. After

all, the interaction effects have shown that mainly those who are already tolerant towards cultural differences will feel more sympathy for the non-Western person in the vignette. Therefore, when testing this theory among selective samples composed of people who are already receptive of cultural differences, one might be able to conclude that imagined contact 'works'. My findings, however, show that it is too soon to praise the potential of imagined intergroup contact for improving intergroup relations.

Figure 5.3 Influence of vignette reaction on *sympathy*, minimum and maximum conditions of cultural intolerance
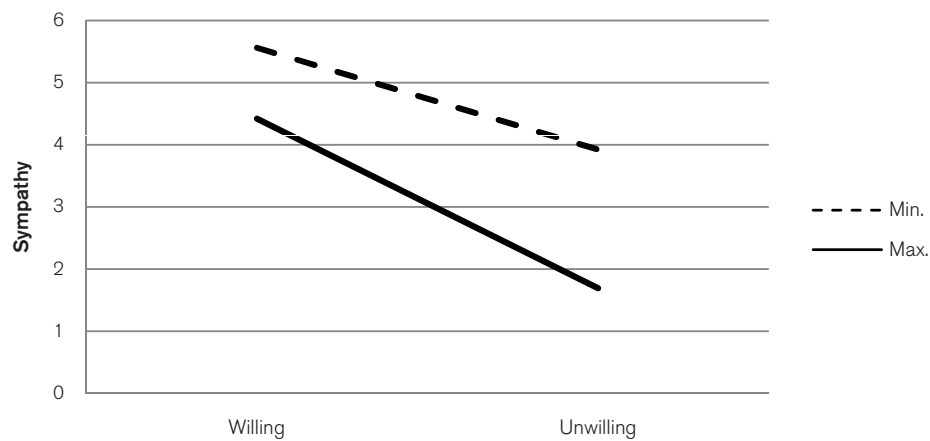
5.6 Conclusion and discussion

In this chapter Ethnic Reification Theory was tested as an interpretation of how imagined interethnic contact is evaluated in terms of the way people think about ethnic minorities. A greater understanding of how specific interethnic contact situations are related to ideas about ethnic minorities can be attained, so I have argued, by taking into account the interpretative frames in which such contacts are evaluated. The results are supportive of such logic of cultural moderation: I have found that people with more culturally intolerant ideas tend to see non-Western persons in vignettes as less sympathetic than Western persons, which is not true for people with culturally tolerant ideas. Furthermore, my results show that the interpretation of the 'objective' situation of contact depends on those cultural value frames as well. In effect, whereas deviation from social conventions in general leads to less sympathy for non-Western persons than for Western persons in vignettes, this effect is stronger the more culturally

intolerant one is. In other words, the more culturally intolerant values one holds, the greater the tendency to judge 'negative' behavior by non-Western persons more negatively than 'negative' behavior by Western persons in vignettes. This finding serves to show that characteristics of contact situations do not serve as 'objective' determinants of the evaluation of contact situations, but are subjectively interpreted. The results thus indicate that imagined intergroup contacts are interpreted differently according to individuals' cultural value frames concerning ideas about cultural differences.

These findings have several implications for research on the relationship between imagined interethnic contact and ethnic intolerance. First, this study shows that it is important not only to look at 'objective' contact situations, which in the case of Contact Theory is usually exemplified through a distinction between 'positive' and 'negative' contacts, it is also important to theorize about cultural moderation effects in the subjective interpretation of interethnic contacts. Indeed, as described by Zaller, any opinion is 'a marriage of information and predisposition: information to form a mental picture of the given issue, and predisposition to motivate some conclusion about it' (Zaller 1992:6). Therefore, not only imagined contact research but also further research into the relationship between other forms of interethnic contact and ethnic tolerance can benefit from incorporating the idea that contacts are interpreted differently according to the interpretative frames that are salient in that specific contact situation.

Second, the present study shows that the enthusiasm for 'imagined contact' as a tool for improving interethnic relations needs to be tempered. The findings indicate that the extent to which imagined contact will 'help' improving interethnic relations depends on people's cultural (in)tolerance previous to the imagined contact. Hence, it was found that imagined contact only 'helps' for those who are already culturally tolerant. Furthermore, when it concerns 'negative' imagined contacts with non-Western persons, I have found that those are weighted more negatively by the culturally intolerant, and even though the differences are smaller, the 'positive' imagined contacts with non-Western persons were evaluated more positively the more culturally tolerant one is. It is therefore too soon to praise imagined interethnic contact as a tool in the process of improving interethnic relations.

Third, this study, like all studies on imagined contact, is limited in the sense that only a rather superficial form of contact could be simulated through the vignettes used. As stated by Allport, such contacts might actually do more harm than good, especially among prejudiced individuals (Allport 1979[1954]: 263-264). On the one hand, this might serve to downplay the consequences of my findings for interethnic contacts in general. Hence, it was only shown that the evaluative consequences of imagined interethnic contacts are culturally moderated. One might therefore argue

that in real world experiences and in more extensive contacts, the contact effects that have been shown to be dependent on people's cultural values will be less strong, or more easily overcome, since only then will contact really get a chance to do its work.

Nevertheless, according to the cultural sociological perspective that has informed Ethnic Reification Theory 'every action (…) is imbedded to some extent in a horizon of affect and meaning' (Alexander and Smith 2003: 12). In other words, each kind of condition will eventually be evaluated through people's cultural frames. Such cultural moderation can therefore be expected to work not only for imaginary exercises like imagining intergroup contact, but also in real life intergroup contacts. Additionally, it is often stated that the first impression is quite important in determining the extent to which a person will be willing to engage in more extensive contact. If the vignette simulation performed here can be compared to any real life situation, it might be most similar to such a first impression. In fact, this is what scholars studying imagined contact seem to have claimed so far, since they tend to see imagined contacts as the first step in a chain that should ultimately lead to high quality in-depth interethnic relations (e.g. Husnu and Crisp 2010). Contrary to what is suggested in the literature on imagined contact, however, such first impressions, even if placed in a 'positive' context (i.e. the person in the vignette reacts willingly), do not always lead to the intention to further engage in such contact. In many ways, therefore, this study has shown that interethnic contact might not always 'help'.

6. Conclusion: The Cultural Dynamics Between Interethnic Contact and Ethnocentrism

This study has been dedicated to further understanding under which circumstances interethnic contact leads to more or less ethnocentrism and how this can be explained. Two commonly used theories in this research field, Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory, were critically assessed. A common problem in both theories, as I have argued, is that the role of cultural values is by and large ignored. In Group Conflict Theory this can be seen from the main focus of the theory on economic factors, thereby leaving 'little room for the systematic and comparative study of how ideological structures and cognitive heuristics are used to frame attitudes towards immigration' (Pardos-Prado 2011: 1000). In Contact Theory the under-acknowledgment of cultural values is demonstrated by the fact that this perspective focuses mainly on situations where durable interethnic contacts, such as friendships, are already established. The mechanisms operating in such durable contact situations are then either extrapolated to first time encounters, or such casual contacts are simply dismissed as being not effective for improving interethnic relations. In both cases, failing to include people's cultural values as an explanation for the relationship between interethnic contact and ethnocentrism is problematic, since it can lead to misinterpretations of common research findings and can moreover form an obstacle to critical theorizing within the research field.

With the aim of overcoming this problem, a cultural sociological alternative was developed in the realm of this research project, which was labeled Ethnic Reification Theory. This alternative is based on the idea that any situation, be it in national contexts or personal encounters, will be interpreted through people's cultural value frames, which makes it vital to include such frames as explanatory variables to understand the dynamics between interethnic contact and ethnocentrism. Four empirical studies were performed to test this theory, as described in the previous chapters. In this chapter, I will first recapitulate the main findings of those empirical studies and use those to answer this study's main research question. Thereafter, I will discuss the implications of those findings for research on the dynamics between interethnic contact and ethnocentrism. Subsequently, I will critically reflect upon the moral dimension of such research, followed by some ideas for future research and some thoughts on the importance of cultural sociological research in general.

6.1 Main research findings

The empirical analysis of this study consists of two parts, each consisting of two chapters. The first empirical part, which comprises chapters two and three, is dedicated to studying how national contexts affect ideas about ethnic minorities. Predictions about the influence of such contexts were derived from both Group Conflict Theory and Ethnic Reification Theory.

First, in chapter two, I studied the influence of national economic circumstances on ethnocentrism. While the country's economic situation did have a direct effect on ethnocentrism and explained more than half of the variance in ethnocentrism over years, this turned out not to be rooted in an economic mechanism. Instead, the relationship between economic context and ethnocentrism was conditional on people's cultural values. More specifically, those experiencing more distrust were found to be more ethnocentric the less affluent the economic circumstances in a country were. Based on these findings, I conclude that less affluent economic circumstances do not serve as a trigger for ethnic competition over scarce economic resources, but rather reinforce the negative effect of distrust on ideas about ethnic minorities. This means that, different from what is predicted by Group Conflict Theory (e.g. Quillian 1995; Blalock 1967; Levine and Campbell 1972), the relationship between national economic context and ethnocentrism should not be interpreted as being constituted by an economic mechanism. Instead of increasing economic competition over scarce resources, less affluent economic circumstances increase the extent to which feelings of distrust are translated to ethnocentric ideas. As a consequence, it can be doubted whether anti-immigrant attitudes actually have 'objective sources' as for example argued by Hjerm and Nagayoshi (2011: 817). Furthermore, whereas it was shown that the economy is indeed 'important in determining people's attitudes and behaviors' (McLaren 1999: 169), it was also shown that this does not necessarily work through an economic mechanism.

In the third chapter I studied the influence of immigration context on ethnocentrism. The basic idea in this chapter is that instead of expecting immigration context to act as an 'objective' force on ethnocentrism, which frames of interpretation the evaluative consequences of the share of immigrants in a country will be constituted should be studied. Following Group Conflict Theory and Ethnic Reification Theory respectively, economic interest-based and cultural values-based interpretations were distinguished. Whereas the economic interest approach turned out to be relatively unimportant for explaining ethnocentrism, the cultural values approach was all the more important. It might therefore come as no surprise that for the interpretation of the relationship between share of immigrants in a country and ethnocentrism, eco-

nomic interests turned out to be of no importance. Hence, I did not find that a greater presence of immigrants in a country was associated with more ethnocentrism among those in a lower economic position. I did find such a framing effect for the Ethnic Reification interpretation: the greater the presence of culturally different immigrants in a country, the more ethnocentric ideas will be found among those with high authoritarian conceptions. Thus, what the third chapter has shown is that Group Conflict Theory is relatively unimportant for understanding ethnocentrism and the relationship between immigration contexts and ethnocentrism. It seems, individuals do not really differentiate between economically and culturally based ideas about ethnic minorities. On the contrary, people's stance towards ethnic minorities and the extent to which this is influenced by immigration contexts is mostly defined by their perception of culture and their ideas about cultural differences.

The second part of the empirical analysis, composed of chapters four and five, is a test of Ethnic Reification Theory for the interpretation of individual interethnic contacts, which is contrasted with what is generally claimed in the Contact Theory tradition. First, in chapter four, it was studied to what extent self-selection plays a role in interethnic contacts. This is not a new topic in studies on interethnic contact; nevertheless, my findings indicate that it has been treated too lightly in a great number of studies. To study this I distinguished among three elements: type of contact according to the extent to which these contacts are prone to self-selection; the cultural values that drive self-selection; and the cultural values that serve as frames through which interethnic contacts are interpreted. Combining those three elements allowed for distinguishing between self-selection and interpretation of interethnic contacts.

What was found is that intimate contacts such as interethnic friendships are mainly related to low levels of ethnocentrism because such relationships are mostly started by people who are already open to cultural differences. For the types of contact that are less prone to self-selection, which in this study is contact with neighbors and with colleagues, I found that the interpretation of those contacts is dependent on people's level of education. While for those highest in education contact with colleagues and neighbors was associated with somewhat less ethnocentrism, such contact was associated with clearly more ethnocentric ideas amongst the less educated. This serves to indicate that the interpretation of casual interethnic contacts depends upon people's cultural tolerance, an aspect that is by and large ignored in studies based on Contact Theory. Furthermore, while Contact Theory researchers claim that mainly interethnic friendships lead to prejudice reduction (see Pettigrew and Tropp 2011 for an overview), the analysis in chapter four shows that those types of interethnic contact are especially influenced by self-selection. The cultural sociological approach used in this

study thus leads to a fundamentally different interpretation of a common research finding.

Chapter five further elaborates upon this idea that people's cultural values form the interpretative frames through which interethnic encounters are evaluated. Using a vignette experiment in which respondents had to imagine a meeting with a stranger in the train, I found that those low in cultural tolerance judge non-Western persons in a vignette more negatively than people who are more culturally tolerant. Furthermore, behavior that goes against social conventions of politeness was judged more negatively when done by non-Western persons in a vignette by people low in cultural tolerance. The latter serves to further contradict the contention of Contact Theory that characteristics of the contact situation are 'objectively' related to the evaluation of the situation. All in all, I have therefore shown that, contrary to the assumption that contact basically works as a prejudice-reducing instrument (see for example Husnu and Crisp 2010; Turner, Crisp and Lambert 2007; and Stathi and Crisp 2008), the interpretation of interethnic contacts depends on the cultural values that function as frames through which a contact situation is interpreted.

I can therefore conclude that cultural values are essential for understanding under which circumstances interethnic contact will lead to more or less ethnocentrism. This idea is by and large ignored in the two commonly used theories for studying the dynamics between interethnic contact and ethnocentrism. The logic of Group Conflict Theory explains ethnocentrism as a phenomenon that mainly arises under circumstances that incite feelings of ethnic competition (cf. Hjerm and Nagayoshi 2011; Quillian 1995; Blalock 1967). Studies based on Contact Theory operate under the assumption that contact works for everyone in the same manner[48], thereby ignoring the idea that contacts, just like any other event, are evaluated through people's cultural frames of interpretation. Contrary to Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory, the present study has shown that people with an ethnic reified worldview, which are mostly less educated people, with low amounts of cultural capital, high amounts of distrust, and high amounts of authoritarianism, will evaluate interethnic contacts more negatively than those who are more highly educated, with higher amounts of cultural capital, lower amounts of distrust and holding less authoritarian values. There are certain circumstances under which this basic difference will come most pronouncedly to light: this is when economic circumstances in a country are less affluent, when the share of immigrants, both less educated and non-Western, is higher, and when social conventions of politeness are broken by non-Western individuals. Intimate interethnic contacts have been presented as ways to overcome such reluctant reactions towards ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, I have found that such intimate contacts are basically

self-selected. This means that those who do not favor cultural differences will tend to be unwilling to engage in such intimate interethnic contacts.

Returning to the example at the beginning of this study of a meeting in a train with a stranger who has an ethnic minority background, I can conclude that the interpretation of this situation does indeed depend on people's frames of interpretation. Not for all people will such a meeting be necessarily seen in terms of an *interethnic* meeting. This will most likely be the case for those with an ethnically reified worldview who are not open to cultural differences. It is therefore likely that the interpretation of such a meeting will differ according to individuals' cultural tolerance. For those most culturally intolerant, such a meeting would probably lead to a negative judgment of the just-met stranger, whereas the opposite is true for those most culturally tolerant. As such, the dynamics of interethnic contact and ethnocentrism are in many ways dependent upon cultural values that serve as frames of interpretation through which immigration contexts as well as interethnic contacts are interpreted, just as predicted by the cultural sociological Ethnic Reification approach adopted in this study.

6.2 Implications for research on ethnocentrism

Even though the logic of Group Conflict Theory rightly assumes that national contexts affect ethnocentrism, I can only agree with Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) who, based on an overview of a great number of Group Conflict studies, conclude that it is not so much economic threat, but rather cultural threat which underlies ethnocentrism and moderates those contexts effects. It is, however, not sufficient to simply add cultural threat to the competitive logic of Group Conflict Theory. For the logic of Group Conflict Theory presupposes an ethnic divide and assumes that economic and immigration contexts can have an 'objective' influence, be it in terms of economic or cultural interests, that exists beyond people's subjective interpretations of such contexts. Such a positivist approach toward the relationship between economic and immigration contexts and ethnocentrism is contradicted by the cultural sociological Ethnic Reification approach that I have introduced in this study. This approach is an attempt to treat belief in an ethnic divide as an explanatory variable by taking into account people's ideas about cultural differences, which has shown to lead to a greater understanding of ethnocentrism and how it is influenced by economic and immigration contexts. Further research on contextual influences on ethnocentrism should take this vital insight into account.

A second implication of the research findings of this study concerns the use of interethnic contact in sociological research. Whenever interethnic contact is incorpo-

rated in sociological studies on ideas about ethnic minorities, it is the straightforward version of Contact Theory, as described in this study, that is usually applied (e.g. Savelk- oul et al. 2011; Tolsma et al. 2008; Schneider 2008; McLaren 2003; Schlueter and Scheepers 2010). This means that sociological studies in which Contact Theory is tested mainly look at direct contact effects , thereby following the assumption of Con- tact Theory that interethnic contact works the same for everyone. By showing that the evaluation of interethnic contact is dependent on the cultural frames through which this contact is interpreted, this study underlines the idea that the universal assumption underlying Contact Theory is overly naïve. Furthermore, by showing that interethnic friendships are mainly based on self-selection, this study calls into question the inter- pretation that a negative relationship between interethnic friendship and ethnocen- trism indicates a 'genuine' contact effect (such as for example claimed by McLaren 2003). In sum, the use of Contact Theory in sociological research should therefore be critically revised.

6.3 The moral dimension of ethnocentrism research

During the course of this study, in which I have read both classical works as well as a vast number of more recent studies on the dynamics between interethnic contact and ethnocentrism, I could not help but think that our sociological predecessors under- stood things better than we do nowadays. Many of the insights that I have used to formulate Ethnic Reification Theory are taken from those classical works[49], of which recent research seems to have distilled only some specific elements. Indeed, I am not the first one to notice that Allport's seminal work has later on been canonized in a rather simplified manner, its main inheritance being the contact hypothesis (e.g. Torre 2010; Bramel 2004). Although not claimed explicitly as was done for Allport's work, the same can probably be stated for the Group Conflict perspective. Max Weber's ideas about 'social closure' which he describes as 'the process by which social collectivities seek to maximize rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles' (Parkin 1979: 125), are, for example, virtually unrepresented in the Group Conflict literature. This is remarkable since Weber's ideas on social clo- sure both echo the importance of competition intended as 'the closure of social and economic opportunities to *outsiders*' (Ibid, italics in original), and already call into question the assumption within Group Conflict Theory that such closure should nec- essarily be ethnically defined by stating that it can be based on 'virtually any group attribute' (Ibid). Therefore, the ethnic divide that is presupposed in Group Conflict

Theory is highly questionable and can to some extent be seen as a form of ethnocentric thinking itself.

Such theoretical simplification might be a consequence of the positivist logic that has reigned over sociology in the past decades (see for example Houtman 2009). Nonetheless, I would say there is yet another reason for the relative lack of critical theorizing in the research field dedicated to the dynamics between interethnic contact and ethnocentrism. Especially after the Second World War, social science researchers were concerned with improving interethnic relations. Indeed, as Torre states, '[t]he atrocities of World War II and the lingering racial segregation in the United States ignited the field of intergroup relations' (Torre 2010: IV). Furthermore, Connolly echoes some critical voices in the social sciences when stating that '[f]or many commentators (…) it is not the simplicity of the Hypothesis that has ensured its popularity within academic and political circles so much as its underlying ideological premises (Connolly 2000: 170). Allport himself had been among the first to state a desire for improving interethnic relations. Although such a drive might be considered valuable from a personal perspective, it can be detrimental for scientific research, '[f]or when he [the expert] begins to care too much, he begins to see what he wishes to see, and by that fact ceases to see what he is there to see' (Lippmann 1997[1922]: 241).

This moral dimension of research on the dynamics between interethnic contact and ethnocentrism can be discerned by the eagerness with which Contact Theory scholars formulate policy recommendations directed towards improving interethnic relations. As we have seen when discussing imagined contact research in chapter five, those involved in research on imagined contact have not hesitated to praise it as a new policy tool for increasing probabilities of interethnic contact and for improving interethnic relations (e.g. Crisp and Turner 2009; Turner, Crisp and Lambert 2007; Husnu and Crisp 2010; Crisp et al. 2008). This was done despite the fact that no research evidence is available that describes the long-term effects of imagining such interethnic contacts, and despite the fact that those studies were mostly performed among selective research samples of students who are more willing to engage in interethnic contacts in any case.

Moreover, some scholars take their role of social engineers even a step further by testing the influence of taking propranolol – a drug that works as a beta-blocker and is also used as a tranquilizer – on explicit and implicit prejudice (Terbeck et al. 2012). It was found that taking propranolol reduces implicit bias, which is suggested to be useful in interethnic contacts among people who are reluctant to engage with ethnic minorities and might therefore normally experience anxiety during such contacts. Despite their warning that it requires careful ethical consideration, the authors do state their 'findings might also be of practical interest' (Terbeck et al. 2012: 424).

Although the moral dimensions of Group Conflict Theory are not as explicitly formulated as in Contact Theory, there is an important assumption in it that seems to transcend the level of scientific thought. As argued before, in Group Conflict Theory it is taken for granted that group divisions are essentially and necessarily constituted by ethnic background. To my knowledge, none of the recent studies on Group Conflict Theory presents a critical reflection upon this assumption. A pessimistic take on this would be that scholars in this field are probably aware of the fact that such a critical reflection would imply the erosion of the core foundation of the theory. A more realistic view of this matter, however, might be that scholars in this field are not aware of this assumption and somehow presuppose such an ethnic divide themselves. If so, this means they are in a way reproducing the status quo on this issue, instead of taking the objective distance needed to study ethnocentrism scientifically.

As follows from the foregoing, some moral issues seem to have a part in both Contact Theory and Group Conflict Theory. These moral issues might have formed an obstacle to critical theorizing in studies on ethnocentrism. Indeed, it would not be the first time that sociological development is endangered by its vulnerability to politicization (as for example argued by Lipset 1994). Then, whereas many sociologists might in theory subscribe to Max Weber's urge for value-free scientific work, it might not always be easy to live up to this in research practice. In my opinion, the cultural sociological approach used in this study offers a sound starting point for putting value-free scientific work into practice. This is because it puts people's own ideas in the forefront in attempting to understand how ethnocentric ideas come about. When doing so, the interpretative gap between what can be observed and what it means is reduced, leaving less room for the scholar's own values to interfere in this process.

6.4 Ideas for future research

This study's research findings not only close the door on important aspects of Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory, they also open up new questions that have not been addressed in this study. The first thing that comes to mind is the current debate on the seeming contradiction between Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory. How might an Ethnic Reification approach contribute to this debate? Moving a bit away from more 'traditional' ways of studying ethnocentrism, a fundamental question is that of the extent to which evaluations of face-to-face contact situations are translated into more general ideas about ethnic minorities. Research so far, including this study, has assumed that such translation works the same for everyone. This assumption can, however, be questioned and requires further study. In addition, another area that

has been disregarded in this study, as well as in others, is that of interethnic contacts through media and how those are related to ideas about ethnic minorities. The situation in terms of contact opportunities has changed, and continuous developments in the field of new media are now 'transforming communication across cultures and (…) have dramatically increased contact between individuals and groups from different cultures' (Shuter 2012: 219). One could therefore state that the interpretations of face-to-face contacts can no longer be made in a vacuum and that it is at least as important to gain further insights in the interpretation of so-called mediated contacts. In the following I will develop some concrete ideas for research dedicated to the issues just named and explain how such research might lead to further insights into the ways in which interethnic contacts are related to ethnocentrism.

6.4.1 An Ethnic Reification answer to the contradiction between Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory

A comparison between Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory leads to an interesting contradiction: as we have seen before, Group Conflict Theory predicts that a greater presence of immigrants will lead to more ethnic threat and thus more ethnocentrism. This is diametrically opposed to Contact Theory's prediction according to which a greater presence of immigrants should be related to lower levels of ethnocentrism, and as such, this contradiction needs further exploration. Many scholars studying opinions about ethnic minorities have acknowledged this contradiction (e.g. Bowyer 2009; Oliver and Wong 2003; Biggs and Knauss 2012), and many studies have been devoted to resolving it (for an overview see Della Posta 2013: 253). The general conclusion of such studies is that both group conflict and contact mechanisms operate simultaneously, but at different levels of analysis (Della Posta 2013; Laurence 2013; Biggs and Knaus 2012; Oliver and Wong 2003). Whereas Group Conflict Theory is found to work mostly in larger geographical units, such as the effect of the share of immigrants in a country on ideas about ethnic minorities, contact effects are mostly found at smaller units of analysis, for instance at the neighborhood level.

Based on those research outcomes, scholars are generally advised to 'employ geographic units of analysis appropriate to the actual loci of group conflict, such as political jurisdictions or housing or labor markets' (Bowyer 2009: 563). Similarly, '[w]hen comparing the impact of contact and conflict across racial environments, the racial composition of both the micro and macro contextual unit needs to be considered' (Oliver and Wong 2003: 570). It should be furthermore considered that 'what generates hostility is not just a large minority population, but also a high degree of segrega-

tion' (Biggs and Knaus 2012: 644), thereby suggesting that ethnic threat and contact mechanisms actually interact.

Despite those insights, it remains somewhat unclear exactly how we should understand the finding that both ethnic threat and contact mechanisms operate simultaneously. Della Posta (2013) explains this by stating that contact mechanisms can only work on smaller levels, whereas threat mechanisms can work on all levels. Nevertheless, he only hypothesizes a contact mechanism on the lowest level, without explaining why the economic threat mechanism would not work on this lowest level. Two things are unclear here: first, why should contact mechanisms prevail over threat mechanisms on the lowest level? And second, lower levels are by definition embedded in higher levels. Given this, it is unclear how Della Posta's views can disentangle 'purely' higher level effects from aggregated lower levels. The latter point is somewhat clarified by Oliver and Wong (2003), who state that ethnic spacial and social isolation should be taken into account. But more than anything this refers to conditions in which contact mechanisms cannot operate and does not really explain why both mechanisms are actually found. Laurence (2013) attempts to resolve this matter by claiming that within certain communities, namely those more economically deprived, both contact and threat mechanisms operate at the same time, whereas in other communities none of these two mechanisms are found (Ibid). If this is true, we still do not know to which people from those communities the respective mechanisms apply. The core of the matter is, therefore, left unanswered.

Even though the previous research findings show how Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory can be reconciled statistically, the theoretical explanation of this phenomenon is still rather unclear. Most importantly, research that has studied this contradiction between these theories has to date been unable to explain which mechanisms work for whom and at what contextual levels. This is not surprising, since the theories involved in those studies, as I have argued throughout this book, in fact do not offer a full answer to this question themselves. Whereas Group Conflict Theory fails to offer further understanding of who might be more inclined to define group divisions foremost along ethnic lines, Contact Theory does not further theorize upon the idea that interethnic contacts might not be perceived by everyone in the same way. These issues are resolved by Ethnic Reification Theory; therefore, applying this theory to the apparent contradiction between Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory might offer an important step forward towards resolving the issue theoretically.

6.4.2 From specific interpretations to general ideas about ethnic minorities

The present study has laid the foundation for acknowledging that interethnic contacts are interpreted differently according to the cultural value frames in which those contacts are evaluated. A next step would be to find out how evaluations of specific contact situations are translated into more general and abstract ideas about ethnic minorities. After all, it is not self-evident that interethnic contacts, even intimate ones such as friendships, will change the more general ideas that people have about ethnic minorities. Some interpretative process of translation should take place here, which will not necessarily work the same for everyone.

What is, therefore, needed to gain further insights into the conditions under which interethnic contacts might lead to changes in ethnocentrism is research that focuses on the interpretative process that takes place when translating specific interpretations into more general and abstract ideas. Such a study should go beyond the common practice in Contact Theory research of simply measuring the 'effect size' of contact on measurements of the opinions about ethnic minorities, in which 'explanations as to why particular respondents have experienced attitudinal change are not derived from a careful examination of their own experiences and perspectives but are simply "read off" from the presence of particular conditions existing within the contact' (Connolly 2000: 176). After all, such measurements are imposed on individuals by researchers and therefore obscure other interpretative processes possibly left unnoticed in predefined questionnaires. A qualitative research approach would therefore be more adequate here.

An example for such qualitative research is to investigate intimate interethnic contacts both by people who are otherwise uncomfortable with cultural differences, and by those more open toward cultural differences. Even though this study has shown that those more open toward cultural differences will be more likely to have interethnic contacts, examples of culturally intolerant people who are engaged in durable, intimate interethnic contacts do exist. What comes to mind in this respect are everyday examples of interethnic friendships or neighborhood contacts in which the member of an ethnic minority group is seen as an atypical member of this ethnic group. The line of reasoning associated with such an idea could be something like the following: 'my friend Mohammed is not like those Islamic extremists, he is a good person'; 'Jeffrey, my neighbor is a really decent and hard-working person, he is nothing like those lazy Surinamese'.

Studying such examples and contrasting those with intimate interethnic contacts among more culturally tolerant people might lead to important insights on two points.

First, it will provide further insight in the different mechanisms that people use to translate, or not translate, their interpretation of specific interethnic contacts into more general ideas about ethnic minorities. Second, studying such specific examples of intimate interethnic contact among people who tend to be reluctant to engage with cultural differences can offer insights into the conditions under which they might be willing to engage in durable interethnic contacts after all. Therefore, instead of assuming that intimate contacts work, as is done in Contact Theory, studying such examples offers the possibility of investigating how, why, and on what level those durable contacts work.

6.4.3 Interethnic contacts in media contexts

Another line of research that would be worth pursuing is the one that focuses on mediated interethnic contacts. This is not only important because mediated interethnic contacts, be it through news media, social media or other types of media, can be as prominent in people's lives as face-to-face contacts. Studying the influence of different forms of mediated interethnic contact has the potential to broaden our understanding of the dynamics between contact and ethnocentrism even further, which might be especially true for social media, an example of which is given below.

Some recent studies have investigated the relationship between immigration-related news reports, share of immigrants and ethnocentrism (see for example Schlueter and Davidov 2013). A still rather unexplored area of research is that of interethnic contacts through social media. The internet has the advantage over face-to-face contacts and, for example, news media contacts, in that it can offer situations in which people get to know each other before having any background information, and thus before knowing the other person's ethnic background. This can for example be the case in thematic internet forums that attract people who have an interest in a certain topic. Based on the conversations on that forum people can create a relationship even before having much knowledge of the other person's background. Such situations are ideal for testing whether bonding on a topic of shared interest can overcome the burden of ethnic background for people who would otherwise be inclined to avoid interethnic contacts. Such research therefore has the potential to offer further insight into the conditions under which interethnic contacts can be formed and how interethnic contacts influence ideas about ethnic minorities when the ethnic dimension of those contacts is known only in a later stage of the relationship.

6.5 On the importance of cultural sociology

In this study I have critically assessed two commonly used theories for explaining the dynamics between interethnic contact and ethnocentrism. It was shown that, contrary to what is usually expected following Group Conflict Theory and Contact Theory, the relationship between interethnic contact and ethnocentrism can be best pictured as based on a process of cultural dynamics. It was proven fruitful to take into account people's ideas about cultural diversity, which have been shown to structure the way in which interethnic contacts are evaluated. This study's findings, therefore, not only offer greater insight into the circumstances under which interethnic contact leads to more or less ethnocentrism, but they can also serve as a testament to the importance of a cultural sociology.

Contrary to its critics who claim that a cultural sociological approach can be at most useful for describing social situations, but not for explaining them, this study is an example of cultural sociological research that is fundamentally explanatory. This might be most convincingly underlined by the vignette experiment used in chapter five. Since experimental designs are especially apt for testing causal explanations, this vignette experiment has shown that cultural value patterns have real causal effects on the evaluation of contact situations. On a more abstract level, this experiment has therefore shown that 'culture' can work as an explanatory, dependent variable as well (cf. Houtman et al. 2013). This idea, however, is still not widely shared in sociology.

Too often, culture is still perceived as a 'residual category' that cannot have any explanatory power in itself. As stated by Alexander (2005), 'Sociology has never allowed culture to speak its name (…) It has been reduced to ideology or to values, and its contents have largely been read off the architecture of other structures, as a reflection or an inverted mirror' (Alexander 2005: 22). This study has shown that such a subordinated role for culture is unfortunate and that it is indeed fruitful to assume that 'if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences' (Thomas and Thomas 1928: 572). Although this statement, better known as Thomas' theorem, is world-famous, it is all too often trespassed in sociological research. This is unfortunate to say the least: as shown in this study, taking Thomas' theorem seriously and putting people's own ideas in the center of analysis cannot only 'also answer the "why" questions implied by causal claims' (Jacobs and Spilman 2005: 11), it can do this even better than other sociological approaches can.

Notes

CHAPTER ONE

1 Other studies have defined ethnocentrism in a more narrow way by stating that it combines out-group derogation with in-group favoritism (e.g. Coenders 2001). However, in research practice several kinds of attitudes towards ethnic minorities which do not neatly follow this narrow definition have been presented under the flag of ethnocentrism (e.g. Eisinga and Scheepers 1989). Furthermore, some studies have even shown that in-group favoritism and out-group derogation do not necessarily go together (see for example Brewer 2007), which argues against this narrow definition of ethnocentrism.

2 In fact, Allport's formulation of the contact hypothesis shows remarkable resemblance to the ideas of another scholar in his time. In his 1950 book Homans formulated what is now called Homans' Law, which is described by Collins (1994) as such: 'Homans's Law, states that the more individuals interact with each other, the more they come to like one another, the more similar they become to one another, and the more they tend to conform to a common standard. In other words, if a bunch of people are thrown together so that they have to interact – by working on the same job in the same place, by living in the same neighborhood or village – they start becoming a cohesive group; they develop a group culture that didn't exist before, and they enforce their standards upon each other. (…) Homans's Law explains how group pressures emerge from interaction. His principle has one crucial proviso, however: this process of group-formation occurs *only* if the members of the group start off as equals' (Collins 1994: 134-135).

3 The authors following this rationale seem to assume that interethnic friendships should necessarily lead to the sharing of beliefs and values. It can, however, be questioned whether perceiving beliefs and values as similar is a necessary condition for friendship. Another possibility is that differing opinions on certain issues are acknowledged and accepted without adopting the befriended person's view.

4 Cultural sociology is not a new branch of sociology, since it has existed before, mainly in the 1930s. Different from the cultural sociology presented here, this older type of cultural sociology was seen as being rather conservative and filled with moral connotations.

5 Blumer already anticipated a broader definition of ethnic threat since he argued that ethnocentrism not only could be rooted in economic fears, but also in fears that immigrants may affect the prevailing way of life and the sense of national identity (Blumer 1958). Since this idea was only relatively recently reintroduced in Group Conflict studies, this is another example of how mainstream scientific forces can lead to theoretical simplification.

6 Only recently some authors have tested whether the interpretation of interethnic contacts differ among people according to the extent to which they hold authoritarian conceptions (e.g. Hodson 2008; Hodson et al. 2009; Dhont and Van Hiel 2010). Unfortunately, those recent studies are based on limited samples from undergraduates, which makes generalizations of the research findings highly problematic (e.g. Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan 2010).

CHAPTER TWO

7 There has been much less research attention to this specific role of economic conditions than to the presence of immigrants. In fact, in a 1995 publication, when the research tradition was already well developed, Quillian stated that whereas many scholars expressed this relationship between economic circumstances and ethnocentrism, it was still rarely studied explicitly (Quillian 1995).

8 Please note that 'ethnocentrism' as used in this paper does not refer to the strict definition of this concept in which it is understood as a negative stance toward the out-group *combined* with a more posi-

tive stance towards the in-group. Just like in many other studies, we rather use it as an umbrella term that refers to all sorts of racist/xenophobic ideas and opinions. A prerequisite for such opinions, so we argue, is to perceive of, categorize and judge people based on their racial/ethnic background.

9   The years in which the survey was conducted are: 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2012.

10 The 17 years included in the analyses are: 1972, 1973, 1975, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002.

11 Looking at the items used one might argue that 'racism' would be a better label for this variable. Although racism might have been used as such in previous research, I have chosen to label this variable ethnocentrism to ensure continuity throughout the book. I believe this is justified given the broad definition of ethnocentrism that I use, namely a general negative predisposition towards out-groups, under which racism can be placed.

12 The exact categories for total family income in US dollars are: 1 'less than 1,000'; 2 '1,000 to 2,999'; 3 '3,000-3,999'; 4 '4,000-4,999'; 5 '5,000-5,999'; 6 '6,000-6,999'; 7 '7,000-7,999'; 8 '8,000-9,999'; 9 '10,000-14,999'; 10 '15,000-19,999'; 11 '20,000-24,999'; and 12 '25,000 and more'.

13 An alternative measurement of unemployment is possible here which would include those defined as 'temporarily not working'. Defined such the percentage of unemployed in our sample would increase up to five percent. However, performing the analyses with a broader definition of unemployment does not lead to substantially different results. Therefore I chose to stick to the most strict measurement of unemployment.

14 Please note that the unemployment rate in the data sample used here is on average lower than the overall unemployment rate taken from the official statistics. This difference may be due to the fact that in the data sample I use all non-white persons are excluded.

15 It is unknown what period is the optimal period in which transition of 'objective' situations into subjective judgments will take place. Decisions on the time lag between economic indicators and survey answers are, therefore, by definition arbitrary. To assure the robustness of our results, we have also run the analyses using t-1 and t-2 respectively as time lags for the economic indicators. This did not significantly alter my results.

16 For reasons of clarity I did not report the full random slope models. Hence, all fixed effects will remain unchanged in the random slope models, so the only information needed in this step is the model fit value (-2*loglikelihood).

CHAPTER THREE

17 This chapter is a revised version of an article by Manevska and Achterberg (2013) that was published in the European Sociological Review.

18 The extent to which the share of less educated immigrants is considered an economic threat might depend on the total number of low-skilled individuals in a country. Furthermore, it can be argued that as a consequence of discrimination, language differences, and labor market and integration policies, educational level of immigrants might be less predictive of their economic position than it is for natives. However, a test of those alternative conceptualizations did not lead to significantly different results. For reasons of comprehensibility, I have chosen not to include those alternative measurements in the analyses presented in this chapter.

19 For reasons of clarity, 'weak cultural position' is used to indicate individuals who are prone to experiencing distrust. Naturally, I do not wish to suggest that those individuals have less culture than people in a 'strong cultural position'.

20 Since differing results are expected for non-natives compared to natives, the former have been deleted from the sample. From all 35,582 respondents 4,633 were non-natives (measured as having at least one parent born in a foreign country).

21 Some authors have used this scale or a similar one as a measurement of 'perceived ethnic threat' (e.g. Schneider 2008; Scheepers et al. 2002; McLaren 2003). Others have used such a scale as a measurement for anti-immigrant prejudice (e.g. Quillian 1995). Both cases match the definition of ethnocentrism used here, which is a negative stance toward out-groups in general.

22 I have also performed analyses with a broader measurement of labor market position by including a wider range of categories than just unemployment, as well as a subjective measurement in terms of perceived labor market insecurity. Since those analyses did not result in significantly different findings, I have chosen to use only a measurement of unemployment which enhances comprehensibility of the analyses and furthermore puts less pressure on the statistical model which includes only 18 cases at the highest level and therefore requires a parsimonious use of parameters. Such a dichotomous approach to labor market position is even preferred by some authors (e.g. Semyonov et al. 2006, 2008) 'for accentuating the differences between contrasting groups' (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010: 319).

23 Usually, occupational educational level is referred to as a person's cultural occupational status. We believe our interpretation of the measurement neither violates nor contradicts this original interpretation.

24 In a more extended version of the analyses, living environment, which distinguishes between living in a city and in a rural area, and religiosity were also included. Since those did not significantly alter the results, I have chosen not to include them in the final analysis for reasons of parsimony.

25 A rather elevated correlation between the *share of less educated immigrants* and the *share of non-Western immigrants* (0.81) exists. This might seem troublesome for the analyses. However, the same data have been used by Schneider (2008) and yielded interpretable results. Similarly, no problems with collinearity have arisen from the analyses (see also note 31).

26 It might be suspected that the percentage of non-Western foreign born is virtually the same as the total percentage of foreign born. This is not true: the total percentage of foreign born shows a stronger correlation with the percentage of less educated immigrants than with the percentage of non-Western immigrants.

27 Comparing the model fit of an empty model with a fixed intercept (model 0) with an empty model with a random intercept (model 1) shows a statistically significant improvement. The differences in the average perceptions of ethnic threat in the 18 countries are thus statistically significant. Eleven percent of the total variance on ethnic threat can be attributed to differences between countries.

28 Full models can be obtained upon request.

29 Although often recommended in the literature (Enders and Tofighi 2007; Paccagnella 2006), we have chosen not to center the individual level predictors to the group mean. Hence, this would lead to testing a model in which the relationship between an individual's relative group position on an individual-level predictor and perceptions of ethnic threat is tested, while the theories under scrutiny do not hypothesize such effects.

30 Since the standard errors of the individual-level predictors are rather stable throughout all models, no problems with multicollinearity between individual-level variables are suspected. Furthermore, no excessively high correlations were found between individual-level variables (e.g. the Pearson's r for education and authoritarianism is -.24, and for the latter and ethnocentrism it is .20).

CHAPTER FOUR

31 In these studies contact is operationalized variably: sometimes as contacts with friends sometimes with neighbors and/or colleagues. The results produced by these different types of operationalization do not differ markedly.

32 In a meta-analysis of interethnic contact studies, Pettigrew et al. (2011) compare contacts open to choice with no-choice contacts, holding that 'no choice eliminates the possibility of selection bias' (Pettigrew at al. 2011: 274). They claim to find stronger contact effects for no-choice contacts, 'just the opposite as what we would expect from a strong selection bias' (Ibid). However, they do not elaborate upon the way in which choice and no-choice contacts are measured. As a consequence, it is rather complicated for the reader to judge the legitimacy of their claim.

33 At this point, one might wonder why I wish to pursue a solution of the self-selection problem that is methodologically speaking inferior to the ideal solution. This can be understood by placing the problem in its scientific context: studies on the influence of interethnic contact are rather popular and are many times based on cross-sectional data. Even if not the ideal, any advancement that can be made to further understand the extent to which self-selection plays a role is therefore of great importance. This is especially important in the case of Contact Theory studies in which rather bold claims are made concerning the 'beneficial effects' of interethnic contact for people's ideas about ethnic minorities, a claim that may in the end be based on the underestimation of the self-selection problem.

34 The authors following this rationale seem to assume that interethnic friendships should necessarily lead to the sharing of beliefs and values. It is, however, questionable whether perceiving beliefs and values as similar is a necessary condition for friendship. Another possibility is that differing opinions on certain issues are acknowledged and accepted without adopting the befriended person's view.

35 For an interesting view on the implausibility of self-selection in neighborhoods, see: Putnam (2007: 153-154).

36 Most of the variables overlap with those discussed in the previous chapter. However, since there are not very many variables to discuss and for ease of reading I have included the operationalization of those variables here as well.

37 Usually, occupational educational level is referred to as a person's cultural occupational status. We believe our interpretation of the measurement neither violates nor contradicts this original interpretation.

CHAPTER FIVE

38 Variations on this general formulation have been studied as well. It was, however, concluded that difference in formulation such as providing more detailed descriptions of the situation did not result in different findings (Crisp and Turner 2009).

39 Pettigrew himself has stated that previous experiences and predispositions towards ethnic minorities are likely to influence the way in which interethnic contacts are interpreted (Pettigrew 1998).

40 I realize that I differ here from previous research in which it was claimed that contact would mainly work for those most prejudiced (see Hodson 2011).

41 In some cases, for example, when the researcher wants to prevent inconsistent combinations within a vignette, deviations from random assignment of vignette characteristics to vignettes can take place.

42 Unlike in 'classical' experiments, no control group is needed in a survey-based vignette experiment. This is because all necessary comparisons can be made within the complete sample. A simple example may serve to further substantiate this claim: consider the situation that one would like to assess whether feminine or masculine vignettes are evaluated differently by men and by women. To be able to test this, you would need to have examples of men and women both assessing the feminine vignette and of men

and women both assessing the masculine vignette. This is provided for in the design itself. Therefore, all comparisons that can possibly be needed are included within the design, so no control group is required.

43 The other two vignette characteristics are first, the vignette person's economic position, which varies as follows: 1 'has dropped out from school and is still looking for a job'; 2 'has graduated from university and is looking for a job'; 3 'works as a bank director'; 4 'works as manager of a factory for dairy products'; 5 'works as stockbroker at the stock market'; 6 works as the manager of a big commercial company'; 7 'works as a journalist at a renowned national newspaper'; 8 'works as a psychiatrist'; 9 'works as a teacher'; 10 'works as artistic director of a theatre'; 11 'works as a car mechanics'; 12 'works as a road worker'; 13 'works as a cleaner'; 14 'works as a plumber'. And second, the tone in which the telephone conversation was held, which was either not mentioned, or mentioned as being held in a 'loud tone'. Although talking loudly on the phone might arguably be seen as a form of breaking social conventions, I have chosen to use only the negative reaction to the respondent's request. This is because the latter is explicitly directed to the respondent and in that sense provides a stronger treatment.

44 Given the way in which Eastern Europeans are currently framed in public debates in the Netherlands, it is justified to categorize them as 'non-Western'.

45 The correlation between both scales amounts to .59 (p<.01).

46 Results are available upon request.

47 Ideally speaking, one would want to test a three-way interaction here. However, this resulted in problems with collinearity that I was unable to resolve. I have therefore chosen a statistically less sophisticated method, which nevertheless also serves for testing the hypothesis.

CHAPTER SIX

48 As explained in chapter 5, this is mostly not explicitly stated in Contact Theory research. It can be inferred from the ways in which Contact Theory is usually tested. For a more detailed description see chapter 5, pp. 91.

49 Many times when presenting my work at conferences I would get the comment that my work is not really 'new', a remark that mostly comes with some kind of apology. Apparently, some scholars think it is an insult when your ideas are judged as being not 'new'. I would say that, quite on the contrary, it is not so important if certain ideas have never been heard before, but rather it is all the more important what place they take within a scientific debate. So, yes, indeed, the cultural sociological approach that I present here is based on 'old' ideas, but they are generally absent in today's 'mainstream' research practice that studies the dynamics between interethnic contact and ethnocentrism, and I have shown that reinvigorating those 'old' ideas leads to important new insights.

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Dutch summary

De etnische scheidslijn voorbij. Naar een cultuursociologische verklaring van etnocentrisme

Stel je voor dat je in de trein zit en een man met een andere etnische achtergrond komt tegenover je zitten. Als je later gevraagd wordt deze man te beschrijven, zou je dan als eerste aan zijn etnische achtergrond denken, of zouden er eerst andere kenmerken in je opkomen? Als deze man zich onbeleefd zou gedragen, zou zijn etnische achtergrond dan uitmaken voor jouw oordeel over hem? Voorgaande vragen kunnen slechts beantwoord worden als er meer bekend is over de frames van interpretatie die betrokken zijn bij de beoordeling. Immers, het vormen van een oordeel over iemand die je voor het eerst ziet gebeurt via een proces van sociale categorisering, gebaseerd op kenmerken van de persoon die door de waarnemer belangrijk geacht worden. Het kan gaan om iemands uiterlijke verschijning, manier van praten, etnische achtergrond, of welk ander kenmerk dan ook dat opgemerkt kan worden en meegenomen kan worden bij de beoordeling van dergelijke terloopse ontmoetingen. Welke elementen meegenomen worden bij dergelijke categorisering is afhankelijk van het betekeniskader van waaruit die beoordeling plaatsvindt. Hoewel het hier beschrevene beschouwd wordt als een algemeen geldend principe, is het idee dat frames van interpretatie van belang zijn vaak niet terug te vinden in onderzoek naar de invloed van interetnische contacten op denkbeelden over etnische minderheden.

In *hoofdstuk één* wordt beschreven hoe culturele waarden die fungeren als betekeniskaders genegeerd worden in de twee leidende theorieën in onderzoek naar etnocentrisme, wat in dit onderzoek in brede zin begrepen wordt als een negatieve houding tegenover etnische minderheden. Terwijl de groepsconflicttheorie vooral gericht is op economische factoren als een verklaring voor etnocentrisme, bestudeert de contacttheorie met name hoe etnocentrisme verminderd kan worden door contact met etnische minderheden. Het kernidee van de groepsconflicttheorie is dat negatieve denkbeelden over etnische minderheden een gevolg zijn van etnische competitie om schaarse goederen. Dergelijke competitie zou vooral voorkomen bij mensen met een zwakke economische positie omdat deze vergelijkbaar is met de economische positie van de meeste minderheden en zij dus waarschijnlijk om dezelfde schaarse goederen moeten strijden. Een probleem met de etnische competitietheorie is echter dat deze niet uitlegt waarom schaarste van goederen per definitie zou leiden tot intensivering van etnische competitie en niet in een vijandige houding tegenover andere sociale groepen. Immers, alleen wanneer men al denkt in termen van etnische scheidslijnen

zal schaarste van goederen ervoor zorgen dat etnische minderheden en niet andere sociale groepen tot zondebok gemaakt worden.

De contacttheorie is gebaseerd op Gordon Allports contacthypothese volgens welke interetnische contacten zullen leiden tot vermindering van etnocentrisme wanneer deze contacten plaatshebben tussen individuen van een gelijke status, wanneer een gezamenlijk doel wordt nagestreefd, wanneer er samengewerkt wordt, en wanneer er institutionele steun voor het contact bestaat. Deze contacthypothese is later verder uitgewerkt tot de contacttheorie, waarbij het werk van Thomas Pettigrew en collega's leidend is geweest. In de contacttheorie is de nadruk vooral komen te liggen op intieme interetnische contacten, zoals vriendschappen, omdat met name dergelijke contacten de mogelijkheid zouden bieden mee te leven met iemand van een andere etnische groep en als dusdanig de scheidslijn tussen *ingroup* en *outgroup* te vervagen. Hoewel Allport, die als grondlegger van de contacttraditie gezien wordt, benadrukte dat in gevallen waarin mensen sterk bevooroordeeld zijn het onwaarschijnlijk is dat interetnisch contact zal leiden tot reductie van etnocentrisme, gaat men er in onderzoek naar de contacttheorie vanuit dat reductie van etnocentrisme via interetnische contacten algemeen geldend is en wordt derhalve niet in aanmerking genomen dat culturele betekeniskaders, en dan met name de houding ten aanzien van culturele verschillen, interpretaties van interetnische contacten kunnen beïnvloeden.

Het negeren van culturele waarden in de groepsconflicttheorie en de contacttheorie kan ertoe leiden dat veel gevonden onderzoeksresultaten, zoals de negatieve samenhang tussen opleiding en etnocentrisme en de negatieve samenhang tussen interetnische vriendschap en etnocentrisme, onjuist geïnterpreteerd worden. De alternatieve theorie die in dit onderzoek ontwikkeld is, de etnische reïficatietheorie, is erop gericht dit probleem op te lossen door culturele waarden die van belang zijn voor het denken over etnische minderheden op te nemen als verklaring voor etnocentrisme. In verscheidene eerdere studies naar etnocentrisme is gesuggereerd dat 'cultuur' een belangrijke rol speelt voor het verklaren van etnocentrisme. Echter ontbreekt er nog een eenduidig theoretisch perspectief waaronder culturele verklaringen voor etnocentrisme geplaatst kunnen worden. Het ontbreken hiervan is door sommige onderzoekers aangeduid als reden dat de rol van cultuur nog altijd onderbelicht is in onderzoek naar etnocentrisme. Een dergelijk eenduidig theoretisch perspectief kan geformuleerd worden vanuit een cultuursociologische benadering waarin twee elementen gecombineerd worden: een culturele interpretatie van de relatie tussen opleidingsniveau en etnocentrisme, en het idee dat contexten geen betekenis van zichzelf hebben maar slechts betekenis krijgen op basis van culturele interpretatiekaders. Deze twee elementen samen vormen wat ik de etnische reïficatietheorie heb genoemd.

Het kernidee van de etnische reïficatietheorie is dat de mate waarin iemand een etnisch gereïficeerd wereldbeeld heeft zowel het hebben van etnocentrische denkbeelden verklaart als fungeert als frame waardoor interetnische contacten en immigratiecontexten worden geïnterpreteerd. De welgevestigde bevinding dat opleiding negatief samenhangt met etnocentrisme kan begrepen worden aan de hand van de mate waarin iemand een etnisch gereïficeerd wereldbeeld heeft. Het is namelijk aannemelijk dat laatstgenoemde samenhangt met opleidingsniveau. Dit kan als volgt begrepen worden: hoewel opleiding veelal gebruikt wordt als indicator voor iemands economische positie, fungeert opleiding ook als indicator voor culturele positie. Opleiding is namelijk ook een indicator van cultureel kapitaal, dat in deze context zoveel behelst als het vermogen om culturele expressies als dusdanig te herkennen en de betekenis ervan te begrijpen. Cultureel kapitaal wordt, in moderne liberale democratieën tenminste, geacht een gedenaturaliseerd idee van cultuur te stimuleren, wat het tegenovergestelde is van een gereïficeerd beeld van cultuur.

Met een gereïficeerd wereldbeeld wordt bedoeld dat de werkelijkheid gezien wordt als statisch, natuurlijk en onveranderlijk. Een dergelijk idee van de sociale werkelijkheid gaat goed samen met een beeld van de eigen cultuur als iets 'natuurlijks' en iets wat onveranderd behouden moet blijven. Een dergelijk gereïficeerd wereldbeeld gaat ook samen met het idee dat etniciteit en cultuur vaststaande combinaties zijn, waarbij gedacht wordt dat iemand met een Nederlandse achtergrond per definitie de Nederlandse cultuur zal aanhangen, iemand met een Turkse achtergrond de Turkse cultuur, enzovoorts. Vanuit een dergelijk etnisch gereïficeerd perspectief wordt iedereen met een andere etnische achtergrond gezien als drager van een 'deviante' cultuur. Het tegenovergestelde is waar voor mensen met een gedereïficeerd wereldbeeld. Zij zullen culturele verschillen als legitiem zien en als vast onderdeel van de samenleving. Ook zullen mensen met een gedereïficeerd wereldbeeld etniciteit niet zien als iets wat op 'natuurlijke' wijze samenhangt met een bepaald cultureel verhaal. Zij zullen eerder geneigd zijn te denken dat ieder mens een eigen cultureel verhaal aan kan hangen om de wereld mee te duiden, ongeacht etnische achtergrond. Samengenomen zullen mensen met een gereïficeerd wereldbeeld dus eerder geneigd zijn om culturele verschillen af te wijzen, terwijl mensen met een gedereïficeerd wereldbeeld culturele verschillen eerder zullen omarmen.

Het is te verwachten dat twee waardepatronen samengaan met de mate waarin iemand een gereïficeerd wereldbeeld heeft: autoritarisme en wantrouwen. Dit is voor eerstgenoemde het geval omdat het afwijzen van culturele verschillen en deze zien als schending van de natuurlijke orde naar alle waarschijnlijkheid samen zal gaan met een voorkeur voor orde en regels. Een gereïficeerd wereldbeeld zal ook samengaan met wantrouwen jegens anderen aangezien elke persoon in potentie een bedreiging kan

vormen voor wat als 'normaal' gezien wordt, waarbij dit met name het geval is voor mensen met een andere etnische achtergrond omdat zij per definitie gezien worden als dragers van een 'deviante' cultuur.

Samenvattend kan dus gesteld worden dat etnocentrisme verklaard kan worden uit de mate waarin iemand een etnisch gereïficeerd wereldbeeld heeft, wat samenhangt met opleidingsniveau, cultureel kapitaal, autoritarisme en ervaren wantrouwen. De culturele interpretatie van de negatieve relatie tussen opleidingsniveau en etnocentrisme is dus gebaseerd op het principe van etnische reïficatie. Ditzelfde principe is ook van toepassing op het tweede element van de etnische reïficatietheorie, namelijk de interpretatie van interetnische contacten en immigratiecontexten. Dergelijke contexten zullen alleen gerelateerd zijn aan etnocentrisme als deze geïnterpreteerd worden door een frame wat zelf gerelateerd is aan etnocentrisme. Het meest belangrijke frame in dit opzicht is volgens de etnische reïficatietheorie de mate waarin iemand een etnisch gereïficeerd wereldbeeld heeft, of anders gezegd, de mate waarin iemand de werkelijkheid ziet in termen van etnische scheidslijnen.

In dit onderzoek wordt de etnische reïficatietheorie systematisch getoetst ten opzichte van respectievelijk de groepsconflicttheorie en de contacttheorie. De onderzoeksvraag die hiermee beantwoord wordt luidt als volgt: *Onder welke omstandigheden leidt interetnisch contact tot meer of minder etnocentrisme en hoe kan dit verklaard worden?* In vier empirische hoofdstukken worden deelvragen onderzocht waarbij de fundamentele elementen uit de groepsconflicttheorie en de contacttheorie worden gecontrasteerd met de etnische reïficatietheorie. In alle hoofdstukken wordt gebruik gemaakt van kwantitatieve data. Waar mogelijk is steeds Nederlandse data gebruikt, voor hoofdstuk twee en drie moest echter uitgeweken worden naar respectievelijk Amerikaanse data, namelijk het *General Social Survey,* en landen vergelijkende data, met inbegrip van Nederland, uit de eerste wave van het *European Social Survey*. Het vierde hoofdstuk gebruikt eveneens het *European Social Survey* maar dan alleen data die betrekking hebben op Nederland. Waar de eerste drie empirische hoofdstukken dus gebaseerd zijn op secundaire data, is het laatste empirische hoofdstuk gebaseerd op primaire data verzameld binnen de derde wave van het *CROCUS Survey on Worldviews in the Netherlands*.

Hoofdstuk twee bestudeert in hoeverre de relatie tussen economische context en etnocentrisme begrepen kan worden uit iemands economische of culturele positie. Het is een bekend fenomeen dat onder relatief onfortuinlijke economische omstandigheden gezocht wordt naar een zondebok, maar het is nog onduidelijk of dit fenomeen ingegeven wordt door economische of culturele motieven. In dit hoofdstuk wordt dan ook bestudeerd *in hoeverre de relatie tussen economische context en etnocentrisme begrepen kan worden uit de economische of culturele positie van individuen*. Volgens de groepsconflicttheorie zouden relatief onfortuinlijke omstandigheden leiden tot meer etno-

centrisme omdat economische bronnen, zoals laaggeschoolde banen en sociale huisvesting, dan schaarser worden wat leidt tot intensivering van competitie om schaarse goederen. Dit zal vooral het geval zijn bij mensen met een zwakke economische positie omdat zij in sterkere mate afhankelijk zijn van dergelijke bronnen. De groepsconflicttheorie voorspelt dan ook dat hoe slechter de economische omstandigheden zijn, des te meer mensen in een zwakke economische positie, gemeten als een laag inkomen en een zwakke arbeidsmarktpositie, er etnocentrische denkbeelden op na zullen houden. Echter, aangezien eerder onderzoek heeft aangetoond dat culturele motieven op individueel niveau belangrijker zijn dan economische motieven als verklaring voor etnocentrisme, zou het ook zo kunnen zijn dat relatief slechte economische omstandigheden het culturele mechanisme wat leidt tot etnocentrisme versterkt. Het kan dan ook zo zijn dat onder relatief slechte economische omstandigheden mensen met een etnisch gereïficeerd wereldbeeld in sterkere mate etnocentrisch zullen zijn dan onder meer voorspoedige economische omstandigheden. Oftewel, op basis van de etnische reïficatietheorie kan verwacht worden dat het effect van opleiding en wantrouwen op etnocentrisme sterker zal zijn naarmate de economische omstandigheden in een land slechter zijn.

Hoewel uit de analyses is gebleken dat de economische situatie een direct effect heeft op etnocentrisme en meer dan de helft van de variantie in etnocentrisme over de tijd verklaart, is dit effect niet het gevolg van een economisch mechanisme zoals te verwachten volgens de groepsconflicttheorie. In plaats daarvan bleek de relatie tussen economische context en etnocentrisme af te hangen van de culturele waarden die mensen erop nahouden, namelijk doordat onder minder fortuinlijke economische omstandigheden diegenen die minder vertrouwen in andere mensen hebben in sterkere mate etnocentrische denkbeelden hebben dan onder relatief voorspoedige economische omstandigheden. Op basis van deze bevindingen concludeer ik dat minder fortuinlijke economische omstandigheden niet zozeer werken als een impuls voor etnische competitie om schaarse goederen, maar met name het positieve effect van wantrouwen op etnocentrisme versterken. De bevinding dat slechte economische omstandigheden samenhangen met meer etnocentrisme kan dus niet verklaard worden door de economische logica van de groepsconflicttheorie, maar door een culturele logica zoals verwacht volgens de etnische reïficatietheorie.

In *hoofdstuk drie* wordt op een vergelijkbare manier de etnische reïficatietheorie getoetst ten opzichte van de groepsconflicttheorie, ditmaal in relatie tot het aandeel immigranten in een land. De vraag die hierbij centraal staat is *in hoeverre het aandeel immigranten in een land etnocentrisme beïnvloedt en hoe dit verklaard kan worden op basis van economische of culturele motieven*. Volgens de groepsconflicttheorie zou een groter aandeel immigranten in een land leiden tot meer etnische competitie en dus tot meer

etnocentrisme. Dit zal vooral het geval zijn als het gaat om immigranten met een zwakke economische positie, zoals laagopgeleide immigranten, omdat verwacht wordt dat er dan competitie plaats zal vinden tussen hen en autochtonen in eenzelfde zwakke economische positie. Dezelfde logica kan hierop toegepast worden als wanneer nationale economische omstandigheden verslechterd zijn: economische bronnen, zoals laaggeschoolde banen en sociale huisvesting, worden schaarser wat leidt tot intensivering van competitie om schaarse goederen. Een relatief hoog aandeel immigranten in een land zal er dan ook toe leiden dat in sterkere mate etnische dreiging ervaren wordt, resulterend in meer etnocentrische denkbeelden. De bijbehorende hypothese is dat mensen met een laag inkomen, een zwakke arbeidsmarktpositie en een sterke mate van autoritaristische denkbeelden er meer etnocentrische ideeën op na zullen houden en dat dit sterker het geval zal zijn hoe groter het aandeel laagopgeleide immigranten in een land.

Volgens de etnische reïficatietheorie wordt de immigratiecontext van een land niet geïnterpreteerd volgens een economische logica, maar hangt interpretatie ervan af van de mate waarin iemand een etnisch gereïficeerd wereldbeeld heeft. Voor mensen met een etnisch gereïficeerd wereldbeeld mag verwacht worden dat een groter aandeel niet-Westerse immigranten zal leiden tot meer etnocentrisme, omdat een dergelijk groter aandeel immigranten in sterkere mate een schending van de 'natuurlijke' orde betekent en in sterkere mate gezien wordt als het onder druk zetten van de eigen cultuur. De resultaten van de empirische analyse wijzen erop dat de economische interpretatie van de groepsconflicttheorie niet ondersteund wordt. In plaats daarvan bleek het zo te zijn dat een groter aandeel cultureel verschillende (niet-Westerse) immigranten in een land leidt tot meer etnocentrische ideeën onder mensen die in sterke mate autoritaristische denkbeelden hebben. Het lijkt er dus op dat mensen niet zozeer onderscheid maken tussen economische en culturele ideeën over etnische minderheden, maar dat het voor de interpretatie van immigratiecontexten vooral van belang is hoe men denkt over cultuur en over culturele verschillen, ofwel, in hoeverre men een etnisch gereïficeerd wereldbeeld heeft.

Hoofdstuk vier is gericht op het vraagstuk van zelfselectie in interetnische contacten. Dit is een welbekend probleem bij het bestuderen van de relatie tussen interetnische contacten en etnocentrisme. Het punt is dat de causale volgorde niet eenduidig is: volgens de contacttheorie leidt interetnisch contact tot minder etnocentrisme, het is echter ook aannemelijk dat etnocentrisme leidt tot minder interetnisch contact. Ondanks verscheidene inspanningen om dit zelfselectie probleem op te lossen, zijn er aanwijzingen in de literatuur dat dit probleem nog altijd onderschat wordt. Het is namelijk zo dat intieme interetnische contacten, zoals vriendschappen, aangemerkt worden als het type contact waarbij reductie van etnocentrisme het sterkste plaats-

vindt. Dit is echter ook het soort contact waarbij zelfselectie het meest waarschijnlijk is. Oftewel, het is nog onduidelijk of de sterke negatieve samenhang tussen interetnische vriendschap en etnocentrisme geïnterpreteerd moet worden als contacteffect of als effect van zelfselectie. Om dit probleem op te lossen worden in dit hoofdstuk drie elementen onderscheiden: het type contact naar ruimte voor zelfselectie; culturele voorkeuren voor zelfselectie; en culturele interpretatie van interetnische contacten. De deelvraag die in dit hoofdstuk beantwoord wordt luidt dan ook als volgt: *In hoeverre kunnen zelfselectie en 'echte' contacteffecten onderscheiden worden door de dubbele rol van opleiding als drijfveer achter zelfselectie en als basis voor de interpretatie van interetnische contacten te bestuderen?*

Omdat typen contact verschillen in de mate waarin er ruimte is voor zelfselectie wordt er een onderscheid gemaakt tussen interetnische vriendschappen enerzijds, en buurtcontact en contact op het werk anderzijds. Bij laatstgenoemde twee vormen van contact zal er minder ruimte zijn voor zelfselectie dan het geval is bij interetnische vriendschappen. Het tweede element dat onderscheiden wordt betreft de culturele voorkeuren op basis waarvan zelfselectie plaats zal vinden. Het is te verwachten dat ideeën omtrent culturele diversiteit zelfselectie aan zullen sturen. Aangezien interetnisch contact vereist om te gaan met mensen met een andere culturele achtergrond, ligt het in de lijn der verwachting dat mensen die minder open staan voor culturele verschillen minder geneigd zullen zijn om interetnische contacten aan te gaan dan mensen die in sterkere mate open staan voor culturele verschillen. Aangezien eerder onderzoek heeft aangetoond dat de mate waarin iemand open staat voor culturele verschillen positief samenhangt met opleidingsniveau, valt het te verwachten dat laagopgeleiden sterker geneigd zullen zijn interetnische contacten te vermijden, terwijl hoogopgeleiden eerder geneigd zullen zijn interetnische contacten aan te gaan.

Opleiding speelt echter niet alleen een rol bij selectie van contacten, het is ook te verwachten dat de interpretatie van interetnische contacten afhangt van iemands opleidingsniveau. Dit kan begrepen worden vanuit een *framing* perspectief: het is aannemelijk dat interpretatie van interetnische contacten, net als elke andere situatie, af zal hangen van de culturele waarden die fungeren als culturele interpretatiekaders van waaruit situaties geduid worden. Toegepast op interetnisch contact valt op basis van een *framing* perspectief dus te verwachten dat hoe men denkt over etnische diversiteit herbevestigd wordt via interetnisch contact. Oftewel, individuen kunnen dezelfde contactsituatie verschillend van elkaar interpreteren afhankelijk van de manier waarop zij tegen etnische diversiteit aankijken. Ook hier is een centrale rol weggelegd voor opleiding: hoger opgeleiden zullen positiever staan tegenover etnische minderheden dan laagopgeleiden, interetnisch contact bij hoogopgeleide autochtonen zal dus samengaan met minder etnocentrisme dan interetnisch contact bij laagopgeleiden.

Op basis van deze drie elementen kunnen twee clusters van hypothesen afgeleid worden, respectievelijk van toepassing op contact dat vatbaar is voor zelfselectie (interetnische vriendschappen) en contact waarbij dit niet zozeer het geval is (buurtcontact en contact met collega's). De drie hypothesen uit het eerste cluster luiden als volgt: Er is een positieve relatie tussen opleiding en interetnische vriendschap; er is een negatieve relatie tussen interetnische vriendschap en etnocentrisme; er treedt geen *framing* op waardoor het niet zo is dat het hebben van interetnische vriendschappen de relatie tussen opleidingsniveau en etnocentrisme versterkt. Alleen als al deze drie hypothesen bevestigd worden kan men concluderen dat de relatie tussen interetnische vriendschap en etnocentrisme voornamelijk toe te schrijven is aan zelfselectie. Het tweede cluster hypothesen heeft betrekking op buurtcontact en contact met collega's. Aangezien verwacht wordt dat zelfselectie hier geen grote rol speelt wordt er niet noodzakelijkerwijs een relatie verwacht tussen opleidingsniveau en deze twee vormen van contact. Aangezien verwacht wordt dat deze vormen van contact verschillend geïnterpreteerd zullen worden, kan ook geen relatie voorspeld worden tussen deze twee vormen van interetnisch contact en etnocentrisme. Er wordt wel verwacht dat interetnisch contact met buren en met collega's ervoor zal zorgen dat de negatieve relatie tussen opleidingsniveau en etnocentrisme sterker zal zijn, dit omdat dergelijke contacten al bestaande denkbeelden over etnische minderheden zullen herbevestigen.

Uit de resultaten blijkt dat intieme interetnische contacten, zoals vriendschappen, met name gerelateerd zijn aan een mindere mate van etnocentrisme omdat zulke relaties voornamelijk worden aangegaan door mensen die al een open houding hebben ten aanzien van culturele diversiteit. Voor de typen contact waarbij zelfselectie minder een rol kan spelen, zoals bij buurtcontact en bij interetnisch contact op het werk, heb ik gevonden dat de interpretatie van dergelijke contacten afhankelijk is van iemands opleidingsniveau. Terwijl interetnisch contact met collega's en met buren voor hoogopgeleiden in geringe mate samen bleek te hangen met minder etnocentrisme, was er voor laagopgeleiden sprake van meer etnocentrisme bij het hebben van dergelijke interetnische contacten. Deze bevinding toont aan dat de interpretatie van terloopse interetnische contacten afhankelijk is van de mate waarin men cultureel tolerant is, een aspect wat goeddeels genegeerd is in onderzoek gebaseerd op de contacttheorie. Daarnaast heeft de analyse in dit hoofdstuk aangetoond dat met name interetnische vriendschappen onderhevig zijn aan zelfselectie, dit terwijl onderzoekers naar de contacttheorie claimen dat vooral interetnische vriendschappen leiden tot reductie van etnocentrisme. Mijn onderzoeksbevindingen geven reden tot het betwijfelen van deze claim en de cultuursociologische benadering die in dit onderzoek is toegepast leidt dan ook tot een fundamenteel andere interpretatie van een vaak gevonden empirische relatie.

In *hoofdstuk vijf* wordt de etnische reïficatietheorie ten slotte getoetst voor de interpretatie van ingebeelde interetnische contacten. Onderzoekers binnen de contacttraditie hebben de laatste jaren de loftrompet geblazen over de potentie van ingebeeld interetnisch contact als manier om het terugdringen van etnocentrische ideeën te bevorderen. Echter, net als ander onderzoek in de contacttraditie, zijn onderzoekers er steeds vanuit gegaan dat ingebeeld interetnisch contact een algemeen geldend effect heeft. De etnische reïficatietheorie suggereert echter dat interpretatie van interetnische contacten afhankelijk is van culturele waarden die fungeren als interpretatiekaders. Om dit te toetsen heb ik gebruik gemaakt van een vignetexperiment waarin respondenten zich een ontmoeting inbeeldden met een onbekende die tegenover hen kwam zitten in de trein en een telefoongesprek voerde. In het vignet werd onder andere de etnische achtergrond van de onbekende gevarieerd, alsook de reactie van de onbekende op het verzoek van de respondent om zachter te praten. De analyseresultaten wijzen erop dat mensen met weinig culturele tolerantie niet-Westerse vignetpersonen negatiever beoordelen ten opzichte van Westerse vignetpersonen dan het geval is bij mensen die in sterke mate cultureel tolerant zijn. Daarnaast werd gedrag wat ingaat tegen conventionele beleefdheidsnormen sterker veroordeeld bij niet-Westerse vignetpersonen door mensen die in mindere mate cultureel tolerant zijn. Laatstgenoemde bevinding weerspreekt de veelgemaakte claim in onderzoek naar de contacttheorie dat kenmerken van interetnische contactsituaties op een 'objectieve' manier verbonden zijn aan evaluaties van dergelijke situaties. Op basis van deze bevindingen kan de veelgemaakte claim dat contact simpelweg werkt als een instrument om etnocentrisme te reduceren dan ook in twijfel getrokken worden. Interpretatie van ingebeelde contacten is afhankelijk van culturele waarden die fungeren als frames waarbinnen contactsituaties geïnterpreteerd worden. Dit is in hoofdstuk vier aangetoond voor terloopse contacten als buurtcontact en contact met collega's en in hoofdstuk vijf voor ingebeeld contact.

Samenvattend kan ik dus concluderen dat culturele waarden essentieel zijn om te verklaren onder welke omstandigheden interetnisch contact tot meer of minder etnocentrisme zal leiden. Dit idee is grotendeels onderbelicht gebleven bij de twee leidende theorieën over de relatie tussen interetnisch contact en etnocentrisme. Binnen de groepsconflicttheorie wordt etnocentrisme verklaard als een fenomeen dat met name opkomt onder omstandigheden die aanleiding geven tot het ervaren van etnische competitie om schaarse goederen. Onderzoek in de contacttraditie is goeddeels gebaseerd op de assumptie dat interetnisch contact voor iedereen op dezelfde manier werkt, waarbij het idee genegeerd wordt dat evaluatie van contacten, net als van elke andere situatie, gebaseerd is op culturele interpretatiekaders. Tegengesteld aan de groepsconflicttheorie en de contacttheorie heeft dit onderzoek aangetoond dat men-

sen met een etnisch gereïficeerd wereldbeeld, met name laagopgeleiden, met een geringe hoeveelheid cultureel kapitaal, een grote mate van wantrouwen, en sterke mate van autoritaristische ideeën interetnische contacten negatiever zullen beoordelen dan hoger opgeleiden, met meer cultureel kapitaal, weinig wantrouwen, en weinig autoritaristische denkbeelden.

Onder bepaalde omstandigheden komt dit verschil tussen mensen met een gereïficeerd wereldbeeld en met een gedereïficeerd wereldbeeld het sterkst naar voren. Dit is het geval als economische omstandigheden relatief slecht zijn, als het aandeel immigranten in een land hoger is, en als sociale beleefdheidsconventies geschonden worden door personen met een niet-Westerse etnische achtergrond. In eerder onderzoek werden intieme interetnische contacten gepresenteerd als manieren om afwijzende reacties jegens etnische minderheden terug te dringen. Mijn bevindingen wijzen er echter op dat dergelijke intieme contacten met name bestaan bij de gratie van zelfselectie, wat betekent dat mensen die negatief staan tegenover culturele diversiteit niet snel geneigd zullen zijn om intieme interetnische contacten aan te gaan.

Teruggrijpend op de ontmoeting in de trein met een onbekende man van een andere etnische achtergrond, zoals in het begin beschreven, kan ik concluderen dat de interpretatie van deze situatie inderdaad afhankelijk is van iemands interpretatieframes. Niet iedereen zal een dergelijke ontmoeting per definitie zien als een inter*etnische* ontmoeting, dit zal vooral het geval zijn bij mensen met een etnische gereïficeerd wereldbeeld die afwijzend staan tegenover culturele verschillen. Het is dan ook waarschijnlijk dat de interpretatie van een dergelijke ontmoeting zal verschillen naar de mate van culturele tolerantie die iemand erop nahoudt. Een dergelijke ontmoeting zal voor personen die in hoge mate cultureel intolerant zijn waarschijnlijk leiden tot een negatieve beoordeling van de onbekende persoon, terwijl het tegenovergestelde het geval zal zijn voor mensen die in sterke mate cultureel tolerant zijn. De dynamiek tussen interetnisch contact en etnocentrisme is dus in vele opzichten afhankelijk van culturele waarden die fungeren als kaders waarbinnen zowel migratiecontexten als concrete situaties van interetnisch contact geïnterpreteerd worden, zoals voorspeld in de cultuursociologische etnische reïficatiebenadering die in dit onderzoek is toegepast.

Hoewel in verscheidene eerdere onderzoeken de houdbaarheid van de groepsconflicttheorie als verklaring voor etnocentrisme in twijfel is gesteld, blijft onderzoek vanuit deze theoretische benadering schijnbaar onverminderd populair. Middels de etnische reïficatietheorie ontwikkeld in deze studie heb ik getracht een cultuursociologisch alternatief voor het verklaren van etnocentrisme te bieden, wat inzicht geeft in de condities waaronder en de personen waarbij etnocentrisme met name op zal komen. In plaats van het denken in termen van etnische scheidslijnen als gegeven te

nemen stelt deze cultuursociologische benadering etnische reïficatie juist centraal als verklarende variabele. Deze studie heeft aangetoond dat een dergelijke benadering leidt tot een beter begrip van etnocentrisme en van hoe etnocentrische denkbeelden worden beïnvloed door economische en immigratie contexten. Het zou dan ook vruchtbaar zijn om een dergelijke cultuursociologische benadering in vervolgonderzoek over te nemen.

Ook het gebruik van de contacttheorie in sociologisch onderzoek naar de relatie tussen interetnisch contact en etnocentrisme zou op basis van mijn onderzoeksbevindingen herzien moeten worden. Wanneer interetnisch contact wordt opgenomen in sociologisch onderzoek naar denkbeelden over etnische minderheden wordt over het algemeen de eenvoudige versie van de contacttheorie zoals hier beschreven gebruikt. Dit houdt in dat over het algemeen alleen directe relaties tussen interetnisch contact en etnocentrisme bestudeerd worden, waarbij de a-sociologische assumptie gehanteerd wordt dat interetnisch contact voor iedereen op dezelfde manier werkt. Een dergelijke assumptie is echter een te naïeve benadering van de werkelijkheid, wat ondersteund wordt door mijn bevinding dat interpretatie van interetnische contacten afhangt van culturele betekeniskaders. Op basis van mijn bevindingen kan bovendien de claim in twijfel getrokken worden dat de negatieve relatie tussen interetnische vriendschap en etnocentrisme toe te schrijven is aan 'echte' contacteffecten, zoals veelal beweerd wordt in onderzoek naar de contacttheorie. Immers, gebleken is dat interetnische vriendschappen voornamelijk bestaan bij de gratie van zelfselectie op basis van culturele voorkeuren, waardoor interetnische vriendschappen met name voorkomen bij mensen die al open staan ten opzichte van etnische minderheden in plaats van dat interetnische vriendschappen zorgen voor minder negatieve denkbeelden over etnische minderheden. Kortom, ook het gebruik van de contacttheorie in sociologisch onderzoek naar etnocentrisme zou kritisch herzien moeten worden.

Naast bovengenoemde implicaties voor onderzoek naar etnocentrisme kunnen mijn onderzoeksbevindingen ook dienen als een bevestiging van het belang van cultuursociologie. Tegengesteld aan de vaak geuite kritiek op cultuursociologisch onderzoek dat dit slechts gebruikt kan worden voor het beschrijven van sociale situaties en niet zozeer voor het verklaren ervan, is mijn studie een voorbeeld van cultuursociologisch onderzoek dat fundamenteel verklarend is. Dit wordt wellicht het meest onderstreept door het vignetexperiment wat gebruikt is in hoofdstuk vijf. Experimentele designs zijn bij uitstek geschikt om causale verklaringen te toetsen. In mijn vignetexperiment is dan ook aangetoond dat culturele waardepatronen daadwerkelijk een causaal effect hebben op de beoordeling van contactsituaties. Op een abstracter niveau heeft dit experiment dan ook aangetoond dat 'cultuur' kan fungeren als een verklarende variabele in plaats van slechts als te verklaren fenomeen, een idee dat nog niet

wijd verbreid is binnen de sociologie. In tegendeel, cultuur wordt nog vaak gezien als niet meer dan een 'restcategorie' waarvoor geen verklarende rol is weggelegd. Deze studie heeft aangetoond dat een dergelijke ondergeschikte rol voor cultuur onfortuinlijk is omdat het geleid heeft tot onjuiste interpretaties van veel gevonden onderzoeksbevindingen. Het heeft ook aangetoond dat de cultuursociologie, wellicht zelfs beter dan andere sociologische benaderingen, wel degelijk in staat is om verklarende vragen te beantwoorden.

About the author

Katerina Manevska (1985) started her studies in Sociology at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in Spain. After two years she continued her Bachelor's degree in Sociology at Radboud University Nijmegen, which she completed in 2008 (*cum laude*). In 2009 she started a Master's degree in Cultural Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam, while at the same time working as a student assistant at the same University. She obtained her Master's Degree in 2009 (*cum laude*) and in the same year she received a research grant awarded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) for a PhD-research. Having completed her PhD thesis at Erasmus University, she continues to work there as a postdoctoral researcher in which she will study the link between globalization and the education gap in nationalism.

For more up to date information about Katerina's research you can visit her website: www.katerinamanevska.com.

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