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IMISCOE

Migration and Integration Research

Filling in Penninx's Heuristic Model

ANJA VAN HEELSUM & BLANCA GARCÉS-MASCAREÑAS (EDS.)



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7 The ‘ethno-cultural position’ reconsidered

An investigation into the usefulness of the concept
when it comes to Moroccans

Anja van Heelsum

7.1 Introduction

In 1997 I argued that the concept *ethno-cultural position* – introduced as part of Penninx’s heuristic model in 1988 – should be used instead of the concept *ethnic identity* (Van Heelsum 1997). I had used this new term to find out how second-generation Surinamese in the Netherlands define themselves, and in particular how they are influenced by others in their self-definition. Fifteen years later, I want to investigate how the concept of *ethno-cultural position* functions with another ethnic group and a larger data set.

I will explain my assumptions about the advantages of the concept of *ethno-cultural position* compared with the concept of *ethnic identity* and see whether this reasoning holds for Moroccans. Firstly, some theoretical elaborations should make clear what the two concepts encompass and where they differ. *Ethnic identity*, a term that refers – according to an often-cited author in this field, the British psychologist Jean S. Phinney – to claims of a common ancestry one shares, at least a similar culture, race, religion, language, kinship or place of origin within the context of a group (Phinney 2003). She maintains that “ethnic identity is a dynamic, multidimensional construct that refers to one’s identity or sense of self as a member of an ethnic group” (2003: 63).

Ethnic identity is not very obvious for a person when everyone around him or her shares the same culture, but the awareness of it and its salience increases in the immigration context, since immigrants usually live in a country where they are not the majority group. Native inhabitants of countries with only one national group tend to think less about their ethnic identity than those in countries where more than one ethnic group reside, since in the latter there is more reason to think about specific ethnic group characteristics. What differentiates them? Is it culture, language, experience? Immigrants can choose to define themselves mainly in terms of their country of origin, but also in terms

of the new country, or as usually happens, in both terms. But what is most important depends on a lot of factors.

As the above situation shows, ethnic identities are defined in relation to others. Decisions on how to define oneself are made by individuals but are strongly influenced by the opinions of those whom people consider part of their 'own' group – the in-group – as well as those whom they consider members of the out-group. The ethnic and religious identities of a person are some of the many social identities with which people define themselves in relation to their chosen group membership (Tajfel & Turner 1986). Boundary setting is part of determining where the difference between one's in-group and the out-groups lies, as stated in one of the classics in the field, Frederik Barth's *Ethnic groups and boundaries* (1969).

Most authors on this subject agree that ethnic identity formation is a dynamic process; the subjective belief of being part of a certain group with certain reasoning about the common origin, descent and history is determined by wider social and material circumstances, cultural meanings and historical conditions (Verkuyten 2005: 80). Just like identity in general, ethnic identity should not be considered a stable characteristic, since it can be redefined when circumstances change. For instance, a Moroccan immigrant can arrive in the Netherlands as a not very religious young man, interested in work and the adventure of moving to a new country, but after having lived in the new context for 30 years, he might become more aware of the Muslim aspect of his roots and decide that this is a central aspect of his identity.

In some cases, cultural and religious elements are intertwined or might fight for prioritisation. This might be the case for the Muslim groups in this study. The question to what extent it is more important to identify as a national group or as a religious group or maybe as one of the religious denominations becomes relevant. In the case of Muslims in Western Europe, stigmatisation seems to have increased in the last ten years (Shadid & van Koningsveld 2002; Saeed 2007). Consequently, the attention of the ethnic groups in this study might have shifted into putting more emphasis on the religious aspect of their belonging – related to a more defensive attitude to defend their faith than was necessary in their country of origin.

The concept of *ethno-cultural position* was introduced by Rinus Peninx in his dissertation in 1988. The ethno-cultural position relates to defining oneself AND being defined as a member of a specific group. That is very near to how ethnic identity is defined, but the advantage of this concept is that, in addition to what he calls position acquisition – i.e. the way in which people define themselves – an explicit element

of his model is the element of position allocation, i.e. the way in which *others* see them.

The way in which people see themselves is on the one hand determined by views they develop independently or among in-group members, but in addition to this there are the positive and negative views that out-group members have that influence their thinking. In the migration context, stigmatisation of newcomers is rather common. Cultural differences are easily perceived as negative and sometimes even as threatening by members of the host society. Penninx argues that this element is so important that it should not be seen independently from the ethnic self-definition.

A last relevant point is that the actual acceptance of immigrants or ethnic minorities by the host society might not be the same as the acceptance that immigrants perceive. A lack of perceived acceptance might lead to negative feelings and frustrations, and in some cases the negative image of the out-group becomes so important that it is internalised. This is a phenomenon that has been described for African Americans in the United States and colonial minorities in Europe. Whether this process has also become relevant for Muslims in Europe remains an open question. In this chapter I pay attention to both the actual acceptance as reported by members of the receiving society and the perceived acceptance as reported by immigrants.

I configure a model that includes both position acquisition – i.e. the ethnic identity element – and the new element of position allocation. I will use data gathered in the EURISLAM project concerning Moroccans in Europe. In addition to survey data among Muslims and natives in six European countries (France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, the UK and Switzerland), data were also gathered on claims concerning Muslims in the newspapers in these countries (see Tillie, Koomen, Van Heelsum & Damstra 2013). Using both survey and newspaper data, I will test whether position allocation is indeed as relevant and interconnected as Penninx states, and to what extent the results from the much smaller study of Van Heelsum (1997) can be confirmed. If position allocation is as highly correlated and interrelated as in the earlier study, the conclusion would be confirmed that *ethno cultural position* is a better alternative to *ethnic identity*.

7.2 Conceptualisation and method

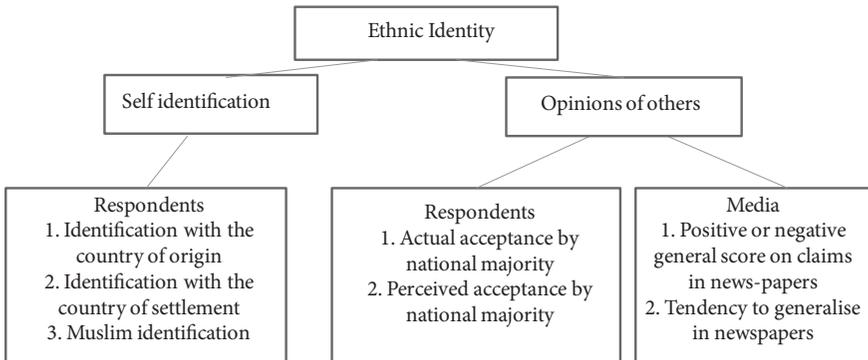
The conceptualisation I used in 1997 was based on one single indicator for position allocation, namely a set of questions on experienced dis-

crimination (Van Heelsum 1997: 30). In the current analysis, more data of a more varied nature are available. This enables me to improve the conceptualisation, particularly with regard to the position allocation. From the EURISLAM survey data, I have selected the 1,513 Moroccan respondents (about 250 per country). The four variables that I have selected for this paper are: 1) identification with Morocco, 2) identification with the country of origin, 3) identification as a Muslim, and 4) perceived acceptance by the national majority.

For the fourth indicator, I have used the answers of 2,314 respondents from the national majority group for the variable 'acceptance of immigrants'. Having both the perceived and the actual acceptance adds to the strength of the model.

The fifth and sixth indicators are drawn from the EURISLAM media data, namely the mean tone of the debate in every country and the mean tendency to generalise on Muslims in every country. The assumption is that the tone of the debate and the tendency to generalise in the newspapers are good indicators of the position allocation in a country. This means I have a more elaborate model and a higher number of indicators on position allocation than was the case in 1997. The relations between these indicators are graphically displayed in figure 7.1.

FIGURE 7.1 *Elements of the ethno-cultural position as operationalised in this chapter*



7.3 Results

I will now test the conceptual model using the EURISLAM data, interpreted as indicators to measure the ethno-cultural position of Moroccans in Europe. But first, I will discuss the results on self-definition (po-

sition acquisition). Then the opinions of others as seen by respondents in the survey will be presented (indicator of position allocation), and in a third section the opinions as presented in the media are discussed (indicator of position allocation). After that the internal consistency of the model and its indicators will be tested to see whether our reasoning on position acquisition and position allocation holds.

POSITION ACQUISITION:

ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF MOROCCANS

As explained in section 7.2, ethnic self-identification encompasses several elements that are at play at the same time: the element of the country of origin, the country of settlement and, in the case of Moroccans, the religious element. In the survey, three questions were asked that I will now consider: 1) To what extent do you see yourself as a member of the Moroccan community? 2) To what extent do you identify with the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, UK, Belgium or France (respectively)? 3) To what extent do you see yourself as a Muslim?

The percentages of people who agree or strongly agree to these questions are given in table 7.1. The table presents the combined scores of those who strongly and very strongly agree with the statement: "To what extent do you see yourself as a member of the ... community?" (strongly agree, agree, somewhat, hardly, not at all).

TABLE 7.1 *Identification of Moroccans with their country of origin, country of settlement and religious identification (% of those who strongly + very strongly agree with the questions stated below)*

	NL	DE	CH	UK	BE	FR
1. To what extent do you see yourself as a member of the community of your country of origin?	64%	60%	83%	81%	76%	83%
2. To what extent do you see yourself as Dutch, German, Swiss, British, Belgian or French?	66%	45%	63%	33%	58%	43%
3. To what extent do you see yourself as a Muslim?	71%	57%	74%	71%	73%	81%

As table 7.1 shows, the extent of identification with the Moroccan community is in nearly all cases slightly higher than the identification with the country of settlement or the religious identification. Only in the Netherlands is there a slightly higher identification with the country of settlement (66 per cent) than with the Moroccan community (64 per cent).

POSITION ALLOCATION: HOW ARE IMMIGRANTS SEEN
BY THE MAJORITY AND TO WHAT EXTENT DO THEY FEEL ACCEPTED?

After having seen how Moroccans in this study define themselves, I will now turn to the way they are seen by the majority and the extent to which they feel accepted. We first look at the actual acceptance by majority group members based on the survey and then at the perceived acceptance by Moroccans themselves, also based on the survey.

Respondents from the national majority group were asked to what extent they see immigrants who permanently live in the Netherlands, for instance, as Dutch. This question was not asked for Moroccans separately but for all immigrants. As table 7.2 shows, the replies given by the majority respondents in the six countries vary significantly, with respondents in the United Kingdom showing the least degree of acceptance of immigrants (9.4 per cent). Those in Germany, Belgium and Switzerland were in between, while the French and Dutch showed the most acceptance (France 59.4 per cent). Given the issues surrounding the wording of the questions in the UK (see note under table), we should be careful about concluding that there are serious discriminatory problems in the UK.

TABLE 7.2 *Acceptance by the national majority and perceived acceptance by Moroccans (% of those who strongly + very strongly with the questions stated below)*

	NL	DE	CH	UK**	BE	FR
<i>National majority:</i>						
To what extent do you see immigrants who permanently live in the Netherlands/Germany/etc. ... as Dutch/German/etc ... ?*	56.3%	37.6%	46.1%	9.4%	36.0%	59.4%
<i>Moroccans:</i>						
'To what extent do Dutch/ etc. ... people see you as a Dutch/ etc. ... man or woman?	38.4%	35.8%	55.1%	13.5%	43.4%	32.8%

* This question refers to all immigrants, and not only to Moroccans.

** Note that the results may have been influenced by an unintended question wording effect. First, the term immigrants may have a different meaning in different countries – for instance in the UK, colonial minorities such as Pakistani are usually not considered immigrants. Second, the question 'To what extent do English people see you as English' might not include all UK citizens, which would suggest that all kinds of minority groups, including the Scots and the Welsh, are not part of the English.

The second row in the table shows the acceptance by the host society that Moroccans perceive, which shows a similar pattern as on acceptance of the majority group. Again, the UK stands out with an exceptionally low perceived acceptance level (13.5 per cent). In between are (in increasing order) France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium and the highest acceptance level is found in Switzerland (55.1 per cent).

POSITION ALLOCATION: MUSLIMS AS SEEN IN THE NEWSPAPERS

The second element of position allocation that might relate to perceived acceptance by the majority is the image of Muslims in the media. Media portrayal might be a factor that immigrants consider when talking about their ethnic identity. It is often stated that: a) Muslims are pictured negatively in the media, and b) that the differences that exist among them are ignored into a generalised picture that fits all (Vanparys et al. 2013).

The newspaper articles that were gathered by the EURISLAM team were coded in such a way that a score could be calculated to indicate how positive or negative the claims made about or by Muslims were. A score between -1 and +1 was given to each claim. By averaging the scores thus attributed across all claims, we obtained a raw yet helpful overall indicator of the discursive context in this field. The general indicator per country is presented in table 7.3.

TABLE 7.3 *Mean position (positive/negative) of the claims on Muslims found in national newspapers*

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>n</i>
Netherlands	.23	.792	805
Germany	-.17	.951	769
Switzerland	.03	.888	775
United Kingdom	.23	.560	1141
Belgium	.09	.815	784
France	.26	.679	426

The first conclusion we can make is that the mean score on this index is in general nearer to zero than to minus one or plus one. That indicates that, although there are a lot of positive and negative scores on each claim separately, overall there is a balance between the number of positive and negative claims. The six countries can be placed into three groups: 1) countries that offer a relatively open and “positive” context

(France, the Netherlands and the UK), 2) countries that are more closed but still on the positive side (Belgium and Switzerland) and 3) countries with a particularly closed and “negative” context (Germany). Consequently, Muslims in different countries face very different discursive contexts, which might influence their ability to integrate socially, politically and culturally. In addition, positions are more polarised in certain countries than in others, as indicated by the standard errors. Specifically, claim-making in this field seems most polarised in Germany and least so in the UK and France, where a larger consensus seems to converge towards a positive stance vis-à-vis Muslims.

TABLE 7.4 *Objects of claims found in newspaper articles on Muslims (in percentages)*

	NL	DE	CH	UK	BE	FR
Muslims as actors	60.4	89.9	78.1	63.8	79.4	41.0
All Muslims in general	32.3	12.6	42.3	26.5	23.8	22.0
Majority/most Muslims	2.6	1.7	1.5	1.4	3.1	1.1
Minority / a small group / a particular categorical group of Muslims	12.6	50.1	14.4	18.3	36.7	6.8
Individual Muslims	11.4	22.2	18.4	15.1	15.3	8.3
Unclassifiable Muslims	1.5	3.3	1.5	2.5	.5	2.8
Islam as religion	10.5	7.6	14.6	2.9	8.9	18.4
Islam in general	7.0	2.3	11.9	2.0	7.6	10.2
Islam mainstream	.1	.1	.3	.0	.0	2.1
Minority currents within Islam	2.0	.0	1.0	.0	.2	1.1
Specific religious stream/movement within Islam	.9	5.2	1.4	.8	.9	4.1
Unclassifiable Islam	.5	.0	.0	.1	.2	.9
No Muslim object	29.2	2.4	7.3	33.4	11.7	40.7
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	888	784	790	1173	812	469

Now I will use the media data to find out whether Muslims are really treated as one single category as often as some authors assume. Analysing what the objects of the claim in the newspapers were, I can draw conclusions about the percentage of claims that address Muslims in general or Islam in general, without distinction or subgroups. As table 7.4 shows, in the Netherlands Muslims in general were mentioned in 34.9 per cent of the cases (upper two rows)

and Islam in general 7.1 per cent, which together add up to 42 per cent of generalising statements. Specific statements were made in 12.6 per cent of the cases, where a minority or a small/particular group was addressed, and in 2 per cent of the cases a minority current in Islam was addressed, which together make up 14.6 per cent. This means that in more than half of the claims, actors in newspaper articles refer to Muslims as one category and do not differentiate between radical Muslims and mainstream Muslims, for instance. The implication of speaking of Muslims as one category is that a stereotypical image of Muslims is presented in the newspapers and that the more liberal Muslims are often ignored.

The row with 'minority/a small group/a particular categorical group of Muslims' reveals that there were more of these specific claims in Germany and Belgium, while the opposite is true for the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and France. Talking about Islam in general compared to minority currents within Islam takes place more often in Switzerland and France than in the other countries.

THE INTERNAL CONSISTENCY OF THE MODEL

To make the different types of data comparable for analysis in one model, I have added the newspaper variables per country to the survey data set: the indicator for the tone of the debate and the indicator for generalisation in the debate (this is the added percentage of codes on generalisation). This means that the data set on newspapers was added to the survey data set. Altogether, therefore, I have seven indicators in my model, as I suggested theoretically in figure 7.1. To find out how the indicators are related, I have calculated the correlations between these seven indicators in the same manner as I did in my 1997 study (Van Heelsum 1997: 112). The results are presented in table 7.5.

The correlation matrix shows a less clear-cut pattern than in my earlier study of second-generation Surinamese (Van Heelsum 1997: 114), where all indicators were positively correlated with each other, including the experienced discrimination. In the current case, there are 14 significant correlations out of 21. Considering only the significant correlations, the table shows that those who identify more with Morocco also identify more as Muslims and in that case they identify less with their country of settlement. A positive identification with Morocco is correlated with a negative tone in the debate and more generalisations in the debate. That not all correlations are significant might mean that some indicators of the ethno-cultural position do not fit so well with the concept.

TABLE 7.5 *Correlations between the seven variables*

	1. id Mar	2. id Eur	3. id Mus	4. accept	5. feelac	6. tone	7. general
1. id Mar	1.000						
2. id Eur	**-.204	1.000					
3. id Mus	** .310	** -.132	1.000				
4. accept	** .111	-.017	.032	1.000			
5. feelac	-.080	** .317	** -.094	** -.106	1.000		
6. tone	** -.164	** .001	** -.195	** -.453	.060	1.000	
7. general	** -.096	.062	-.023	** .523	-.051	** -.546	1.000

1 = identification with Morocco; 2 = identification with the country of settlement; 3 = Muslim identification; 4 = acceptance score national majority per country; 5 = feeling of acceptance; 6 = tone of debate, positive/negative mean score of the tone of articles per country; 7 = tendency to generalise in newspaper articles per country

n is at least 1174, * p<.01 ** p<.001

Using once again the same method as I did in 1997 (Van Heelsum 1997: 113), I will check with an exploratory factor analysis how much the indicators have in common, and whether it makes sense to divide figure 7.1 of the ethno-cultural position into two factors, namely position acquisition and position allocation. A factor analysis method searches for a similar variance in the responses that could indicate an underlying latent variable. The outcomes are presented in table 7.6 and show that all indicators load in a three-factor model: not a single indicator drops out, which means that they form a set – which was not visible in the correlations in table 7.5. Three main factors turn out behind the list of seven indicators, so there is one extra factor compared with the theo-

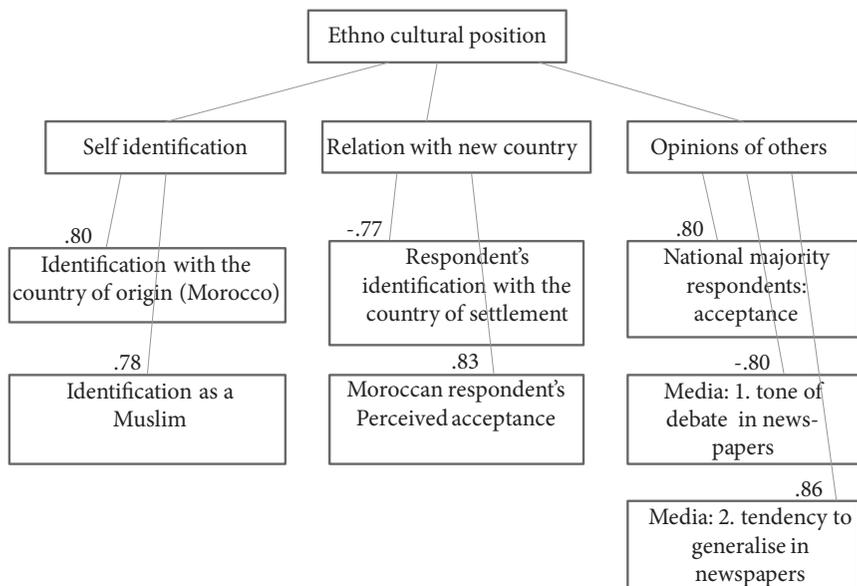
TABLE 7.6 *Scores of factor analysis (principal component analysis, varimax rotation)*

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1.id Mar	-.014	.802	-.111
2.id Eur	.093	-.202	.771
3.id Mus	.072	.783	-.041
4.accept	.801	.018	-.086
5.feelac	-.111	.035	.834
6.tone	-.795	-.275	-.042
7.general.	.863	-.167	.029
Explained variance	29 %	20 %	19 %

retical model. This combination of three factors explains 68 per cent of the variance, and the factor loadings on these factors are high (around .80), which is a good result.

The three high factor loadings on factor 1 are: acceptance by the majority population (+), tone of debate (-) and the tendency to generalise in the debate (+). So this first factor seems to represent a latent variable concerning the opinions of others (position allocation), namely dominant views in the societies in which Muslims live. Factor 2 seems to be the position acquisition: indicators that load high on the second factor are identification with Morocco (+) and identification as Muslim (+). Factor 3 is something I did not expect, namely a combination of the identification as a member of the country of settlement (+) and the feeling of acceptance (+). One could maybe call this the relation with the country of settlement. In figure 7.2, these results are presented in a graphic manner and I have reconstructed the model that I had earlier suggested, taking into account the three factors that appeared in the factor analysis.

FIGURE 7.2 *New model of the ethno-cultural position*



The figure makes clear that identification with Morocco and identification with the country of settlement are not part of the same factor. I expected respondents' identification with the country of settlement to be part of self-identification (position acquisition), and the perceived

acceptance to be part of the second factor – i.e. opinions of others (position allocation). The relation with the country of settlement – though correlated with identification with Morocco and identification as Muslim – seems conceptually part of a third factor together with perceived acceptance. The earlier model, used in 1997 for second-generation Surinamese, does not exactly fit the case of Moroccan respondents in the EURISLAM survey and needs adjustment.

7.4 Conclusion and discussion

In this paper I have tested an operationalisation of the model of the ethno-cultural position on a large data set with Moroccan respondents in six European countries. The model did not function in the same manner as in the earlier study among second-generation Surinamese, but the two main factors – position acquisition and position allocation – turned out to be relevant again. The central question of this chapter was: is the use of the concept of *ethno-cultural position* still relevant or should we revert to the concept of ethnic *identity*? As explained earlier, the extent to which position allocation is connected to and interrelated with position acquisition is the decisive issue. The conclusion that we may draw is first that the model of the ethno-cultural position is effective also in the case of Moroccans, though not quite in the same way as for Surinamese. We may even conclude that position allocation – the influence of the opinion of others – has become more relevant to include due to the current climate of considerable prejudice or due to the fact that we are analysing Moroccans, a different ethnic group. For sure, position allocation is highly interrelated with position acquisition.

But what can explain the differences between the earlier study of Surinamese and the current study on Moroccans? There are a few explanations related to content that could clarify the new findings, such as the difference between the Surinamese and the Moroccans, and the difference between the time period in which the studies were conducted (1993 and 2011 respectively). There are also a few method-related explanations.

The first content-related factor is related to differences between the Surinamese and the Moroccans. It could be argued that Surinamese (of any generation) have more reasons to be resentful of the history of Surinam as a Dutch colony, with borders that were created by the colonisers and with a majority of the population either being imported as slaves or workers or immigrating independently. This context could create a very different feeling of belonging than in the case of Morocco,

an ancient kingdom that was colonised by the French, where the effect of the colonists on Moroccans was probably less destabilising. Second, the Surinamese often mention that they do not feel fully recognised as Dutch in the Netherlands and become irritated with the often-asked question 'Where do you come from?', which indicates to them that the native Dutch see them as outsiders. In France, there is an official discourse and ideology of equality – though of course this doesn't mean that Moroccans are actually equal to the native French. Altogether, it does not seem illogical that for the Surinamese, particularly the second generation, self-identification and their relationship with the country of settlement are more strongly related, while in the case of Moroccans these two factors are more independent of each other.

The second content-related factor that could explain the difference between the findings is the year in which the two surveys took place. The survey of the Surinamese took place in 1993 at a time when the atmosphere in the Netherlands was relatively friendly to immigrants, while the survey of the Moroccans took place in 2011 when prejudice and negative attitudes towards immigrants and particularly towards Muslims were rather common. Anti-Islamic viewpoints had become common in the political debate by then. It is possible that these negative attitudes have the effect of disconnecting Moroccans' attitude towards their country of settlement from their self-identification.

Then there are two explanations that relate to methodological differences. The first difference lies in the indicators that were not exactly the same. The 1997 study used more indicators for position acquisition and only personal opinions from a survey, while the 2011 study on Moroccans include more indicators for position allocation and both personal opinions from the survey by both Moroccans and majority respondents and a mean country indicator deducted from newspaper data. As I argued earlier, this new conceptualisation is better. There are, however, no obvious reasons why the different indicators would cause a side-effect.

The second methodological issue is that the Netherlands (in the case of the Surinamese) is compared to six European countries (in the case of the Moroccans). The main purpose of this paper is to test a theoretical model for Moroccan respondents and not to compare countries, but the results might have been different if we had compared one country to one other country. Then the question would have remained whether comparing both groups in the Netherlands would be more suitable or whether comparing the country of the coloniser for both groups would be more suitable. I have chosen to use the large data set and see this as an advantage, since specific country effects were eliminated by using six countries.

I end with the conclusion that Penninx's views on these issues in 1988 showed great thoughtfulness and forward-looking insight into the relevant processes under consideration in the long run. His reasoning has stretched to a period with a completely different social setting for immigrants in Europe. And even for those researchers who prefer to keep using the more established term ethnic identity, it is worth considering whether to include elements of position allocation to be able to grasp people's consideration when forming their ethnic identity.

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