

SUMMARY

Young and Multi-Media: Media Use and Information Seeking among Adolescents and Young Adults, Especially among Muslim Youth in The Netherlands

RESEARCH REPORT

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The general problem statement underlying the studies reported here is how the media use of adolescents and young adults, especially among Muslim youth in The Netherlands looks like and to what extent the media play a role in their political and societal attitudes. This question was instigated by the societal unrest and worries that played a key role in The Netherlands since the attacks of 9/11 and especially after the murder on Van Gogh. Recurring themes in the societal debate are issues such as (in)tolerance, integration, ethnic conflicts, radicalization, and terrorism. The media repeatedly report the involvement of immigrant youth, in particular those with an Islamic background; immigrant adolescents and young adults are as easily called 'Muslim youth' in Dutch media. In the present report, we try to map the complex inter-relationships between specific media use (e.g., television, news papers, and websites), characteristics of the target group, individual differences in psychological states, and specific attitudes regarding politics and society. The target group of the current research consisted of adolescents and young adults, living in The Netherlands, aged 13 – 26 years, both Muslim and non-Muslims, both school youth (13 – 18 yrs.) and non-schoolers, employed and unemployed young adults (18 – 26 yrs.; indicated as young adults or 'older youth' in this report).

The general problem statement of the present research project has been split into sub-questions in order to systematically analyze media use of Dutch adolescents and young adults and to study possible relationships with their societal and political attitudes. The more specific research questions are arranged into five types of questions:

1. Research questions pertaining to already available reports and relevant scientific literature (chapter 2).
2. Research questions pertaining to current media use among youth in The Netherlands, while comparing Muslim youth with non-Muslim youth (chapters 3 and 4).
3. Research questions pertaining to possible relationships between specific media use and attitudes regarding politics and society (chapter 5).
4. Research questions pertaining to the contents of media relevant for Dutch (Muslim) youth (chapter 6).
5. Research questions pertaining to the motivations underlying specific media use of Muslim adolescents and young adults, including their judgment of specific media (chapter 7).

The research questions gave rise to apply several research methods: 1) a literature study; 2) a large scale paper-pencil survey among schoolers and an online survey among older youth and young adults who could not be reached via schools; 3) extensive, in-depth open interviews; and 4) extensive analyses of the contents of a large number of media products. The following is a summary of the various studies.

Based on the already *available reports on media use and relevant scientific literature*, we may conclude that although several things are known already about media use of adolescents



and young adults in The Netherlands, including immigrants, not much is known yet about media use among Muslim youth. Given the various types of media, television and the internet are most popular among youth, yet radio and news papers are also regularly used by adolescents and young adults. The majority of their media consumption, however, relates to entertainment-programming. Given the perspective of our central problem statement, especially regarding the question into possible relationships between media use and political and societal attitudes, the current research focused on media presenting news and background information. We therefore excluded entertainment programming. Not much was known yet about the media menu of specifically Muslim youth when we conducted our research project, thus, even less about the possible relationships between their media use and political and societal attitudes. The present report fills this void.

Scientific studies show that various factors play a role in a possible influence of media use on attitudes – this does not concern a simple direct effect however. Let alone the various kinds of media (such as television, games, internet, news papers) and the number of specific media offerings, resources and programs within each media type that further complicate studying possible influences of media use. In particular among adolescents and young adults, the internet becomes increasingly important for developing opinions and attitudes, for example exchanging ideas about hot issues via webfora. In view of the specific target group of our research, scientific studies thus far show that youth and adolescents *in general* are more susceptible to being influenced than others, older individuals or young adults, partly because of being in search for their identity. For example, while in search of ‘who am I’, they may look for attractive role models in the media. Specifically related to the target group of Muslim youth, studies thus far emphasize that ethnic and religious backgrounds are important to take into account when considering the developments of their identity and attitudes. Furthermore, the lower educated and those with a lower social-economic status (SES) seem more susceptible to media influences than the higher educated and those with a higher SES. Findings from various reports show that Moroccan youth in particular seem to belong to the groups with a lower SES (e.g., low level of education, many school-leavers, a high number of unemployed and low income households). Among Moroccan youth, quite a number also are Muslim youth.¹

Based on the findings of our literature study, we developed a model for media-influence (see ch. 2), which further guided our studies. This theoretical model for media-influence contains both personal factors (e.g., age, gender, education level, ethnic background) and specific media content in terms of focus and possible extreme contents of media fare. Furthermore, we assumed that the way in which media messages are processed also determines how media may possibly affect the user, such as through personal traits or states (e.g., feelings of uncertainty or insecurity), or social-psychological processes (here called process variables). The relationships in the theoretical model should be conceived of as reciprocal. Given the nature of our research methods, no claims about causality can be made.

Media use of adolescents and young adults, especially Muslim youth in The Netherlands

It should be emphasized that the large-scale survey-study that we conducted among youngsters at school (13-18 yrs.) and young adults (18 –26 yrs.), focused its questions about media use explicitly on consulting media resources in search for information about societal issues, politics, or religion. In all, almost 1600 paper-and-pencil questionnaires were completed

¹ To improve readability, we write ‘Moroccan (Muslim) youth’ and ‘Turkish (Muslim) youth’ when we in fact mean (Muslim) youth who live in the Netherlands and have Moroccan or Turkish parents (or ancestors). Likewise, we write ‘Moroccan websites’ and ‘Turkish websites’ when we in fact mean that such websites are mainly directed at youth/individuals (who live in The Netherlands) and have Moroccan or Turkish parents (or ancestors).



by adolescents at school (13 – 18 yrs), spread over the different educational levels we have in The Netherlands (i.e., from vmbo thru vwo) and the different areas in The Netherlands (both cities and the countryside, North as well as South, etcetera; see ch. 3). The educational level of Muslim youth is generally much lower than that of non-Muslim youth in The Netherlands. Despite a careful sampling procedure among schoolers nothing can be said, however, about the generalizability of the reported results because we cannot know whether our sample can be considered representative for Dutch Muslim youth in general. Too little is known about this population. To reach the young adults (18 – 26 yrs.), we conducted an online survey, which resulted in approximately 800 completed questionnaires. This sample cannot be considered representative for young Muslim adults in The Netherlands (e.g., they seem to be rather highly educated; 33% MBO-level and 33% HBO-level). Both samples contain over 10% Muslim respondents, which is more than could have been expected given estimates of the total number of Muslims in Dutch society. The majority of participating Muslim youth in our study has been born in The Netherlands themselves, while their parents have been born abroad. Most parents of the Muslim schoolers in our sample were born in Turkey or Morocco, while most parents of the young adults (18+) were born in Morocco. Muslim respondents with other than Turkish or Moroccan backgrounds were hardly included in our samples.

It is important to note that in our study 40% of the immigrant youth in our sample reports being Muslim. The 60% immigrants who are not Muslim appear to be from western and non-Islamic countries. The Muslim immigrant youth in our sample who are *non-western* show considerable overlap with the Muslim youth in our sample: 83% of the Muslim youth come from Turkish or Moroccan backgrounds. Results of extra analyses show that the media use of *non-Muslim immigrant adolescents* in our study is comparable to the media use of *non-Muslim adolescents* (non-immigrant). Therefore, the conclusions as summarized below about the media use of Muslim adolescents in The Netherlands specifically hold for this target group.

The data from our surveys have been analyzed in three ways: 1) to obtain a first, global impression of respondents' media use, we combined the data from the schoolers (< 18) and non-schoolers (young adults 18+) and expressed in percentages how much of all available media resources (as listed in our survey) has been used by them. 2) A comparison between Muslim youth and non-Muslim youth in how much they used media as analyzed per program or media resource separately, in percentages (e.g., whether a given news paper has actually ever been read). 3) A comparison between Muslim youth and non-Muslim youth in the extent to which they used a specific program or media resource (e.g., how often or with which intensity), separately for adolescents at school and (non-school) young adults.

In considering the results, please, note that more adolescents and young adults with a lower educational level use all kinds of media regularly, in particular local or Dutch TV-programming, commercial TV, and Turkish TV, while more adolescents and young adults with a higher educational level read news papers and watch English TV-programming. This is partly related to age, where a similar pattern is seen. TV-use differs significantly per educational level, such that they watch more TV at a lower level. The Dutch TV-program, '*De wereld draait door*', for example, is highly popular among the higher educational ability respondents while '*AT-5-nieuws*' is more common among the lower educational ability respondents. The Muslim schoolers (< 18 yrs) are more often focused on (local) television programming while the older ones, the young adults (18+) use all kinds of the other types of media. Muslim *girls* watch more often *Jeugdjournaal* and *AT5*, while the Muslim *boys* more often watch *Netwerk*. Note, however, that in most differences that we found in media use of Muslim youth as compared to non-Muslim youth, gender was not significant. The results reported below, should be viewed against the above mentioned background. In the statistical analyses to test for



differences between groups, we have controlled for the possible influence of educational ability levels (i.e., reported differences hold irrespective of possible differences in educational ability).

In general, the results show that Muslim adolescents and young adults not only use a broader scope of media offerings, but also that more Muslim youth make use of specific tv-programming, news papers, and websites. In all, analyzed over all media resources, Muslim youth use almost 5% more of media available in The Netherlands for seeking information about politics, religion, or society at large than non-Muslim youth. Remarkably, Muslim youth read almost 15% more of available Dutch news papers and watch almost 8% more of available English TV-programming than non-Muslim youth. Moreover, Muslim youth appear more regular or intensive users of media than non-Muslim youth when considering such news media (i.e., serving information seeking behavior related to politics, religion or society at large). In other words, Muslim youth report more often that they use such media ‘regularly’ in stead of just ‘once in a while’.

In all, the media use of Muslim adolescents and young adults in The Netherlands is characterized by an intense use of a broad array of media fare, both concerning specific Dutch and foreign television programming, news papers, and websites. Many Muslim youth consult foreign news media: Over all, more Turkish than Moroccan youth watch television from their country of origin (86% and 47%, respectively). However, 80% of Moroccan Muslim youth visit Moroccan websites as compared to 53% of Turkish Muslim youth visit Turkish websites. Importantly, following such foreign media does not affect their use of Dutch media. Based on the analyses, a picture emerges of Dutch Muslim youth consulting various media resources to inform themselves, significantly more than their non-Muslim counterparts. On average, almost each separate media source (as mentioned in the survey) is used more regularly by our Muslim respondents than by our non-Muslim respondents. Thus, results show not only more Muslim adolescents and young adults who use a broad array of various kinds of media, they also use such media more often. For example, a *larger percentage* reads a news paper and they read it also more *intensively* (see ch. 4).

Differences in attitudes between Muslim and non-Muslim adolescents and young adults

Before analyzing possible relationships between media use and attitudes, we first analyzed to what extent Muslim youth differ from non-Muslim youth in their attitudes relating to using violence, the Islam, and several aspects of Dutch society (such as legitimacy of the Dutch Government; see details in ch. 5).

Attitudes toward violence: In general, most respondents (including Muslim and non-Muslim adolescents and young adults) are rather negative about using violence in general as well as using violence for ideological purposes regarding the Islam. On average, Muslim youth show a less negative attitude toward using violence (both in general and toward ideological purposes for the Islam) than the non-Muslim youth in our study. In addition, Muslim youth can more often understand that someone becomes a terrorist and they less often agree that it is wrong for terrorists to use violence. Though, this concerns relatively small numbers of Muslim youth; the majority is against violence.

Attitudes toward Dutch society: The Muslim schoolers have a rather positive attitude toward relevant aspects of Dutch society (e.g., Dutch health care and the Dutch police) and they do not differ from their non-Muslim counterparts in this respect. However, more Muslim than non-Muslim youth believes that the freedom of speech is used to shock others and find that the Islam is negatively represented in news media. Furthermore, they more often agree that the Dutch government does nothing to solve the problems and that everything should change in The Netherlands. Interestingly, they, the Muslim youth, believe more strongly than the non-Muslims that it is wrong to protest against the (Dutch) government. Thus, while the Muslim



youth indicate more often that they trust the Dutch government than the non-Muslim youth, they also find more often that all kinds of things should change in The Netherlands.

Regarding the so called *process variables*, the results show that the Muslim respondents have stronger feelings of relative deprivation (e.g., feelings of being disadvantaged) than the non-Muslim respondents. Furthermore, they report a less strong national, Dutch identity, which is in agreement with the general literature (ch. 2). Unexpectedly, however, the Muslim youth show a stronger self-esteem and experience less negative emotions than the non-Muslim youth.

Relationships between media use and attitudes

To analyze the relationships between media use and attitudes, we distinguished eight types of media (public national TV, commercial national TV, English TV, national websites, websites targeting Moroccans, websites targeting Turks, Dutch news papers, and the Turkish news paper *Hürriyet*) as well as six attitudes (regarding the use of violence and trust in aspects of Dutch society). Below, we focus mainly on conclusions for Muslim youth. Please, note that although reported relationships are not very strong, they are significant. While analyzing, we controlled for possible influences of the background variables and so called process variables. That is, conclusions hold irrespective of other characteristics of respondents such as age or educational ability level.

Media use and attitudes toward violence and society. In general, results show that the respondents' media use is hardly related to certain attitudes regarding the use of violence (not among Muslim youth and not among non-Muslim youth). However, some exceptions must be reported. Watching Arab TV-programming and visiting websites targeted at Moroccans, sometimes also Turkish websites, can show a relationship with a more tolerant attitude toward using violence (violence in general as well as ideological violence on behalf of the Islam) and is related to the attitude toward Dutch news media as representing the Islam too negatively. In contrast, reading Dutch news papers, and also watching Turkish TV, goes together with a more negative attitude toward using violence.

Media use, attitudes and individual differences. Among Muslim youth, the reported stronger feelings of relative deprivation, a weaker Dutch identity, and stronger self-esteem are related to a more tolerant attitude toward using violence (both in general and ideological). Remarkably, this is also related to stronger feelings of trust in aspects of Dutch society and Dutch news media. In addition, watching national commercial TV-programming and reading Dutch news papers by Muslim youth, is related to *less* relative deprivation and a more *stable* Dutch identity, while visiting Dutch websites is related to *less* self-esteem. Furthermore, and in contrast, watching Turkish TV-programming is positively related to (a higher) self-esteem. However, visiting Moroccan websites more often is related to more relative deprivation.

In all, in considering relationships between specific media use and attitudes, and thus a possible influence of the media on youth, it is important to not only look at one specific media resource alone, but rather in relation to relevant background variables and so called process variables. In particular, the combination of being a man, a lower educational ability level, feeling disadvantaged (relative deprivation), a stronger self-esteem, and frequently consulting Moroccan or Arab websites, appears to be related more easily with a more tolerant attitude toward using violence among Muslim youth, which may be seen as indicative of developing more radical ideas. Furthermore, it should be noted that the way in which media use is related to attitudes among Muslim youth resembles that of non-Muslim youth in many respects.

Analyses of media content

In order to answer questions relating to the *focus* of media messages as consulted by Dutch youth, we conducted three different content analyses: 1) a concise sketch of media profiles, 2)



automatic content analyses of digitally available resources and 3) manual content analyses of several TV-programs (see ch. 6).

Ad 1). Analyses of 48 often used media resources, by Dutch youth, showed that those media contain a rather large amount of so called 'hard' news, especially the news papers and news broadcasts on television. That is, such news is not dominated by, for example, sports, lifestyle issues, or entertainment. The focus of Dutch news media is primarily on national events and affairs, although the consulted national and foreign news media also pay a substantial amount of attention to foreign affairs. In the 'free dailies' (e.g., *Spits*, *Metro*), that are often read by Muslim youth, information about sports and lifestyles plays a bigger role. In the webfora studied, the emphasis is more strongly on social issues, on interpersonal communication, and also on, for example, topics such as the Islam; most of the studied webfora show a lot of discussion about politics and societal issues following the news.

Ad 2). In seven digitally available news papers and six websites several thousands of messages have been searched by means of automatic content analyses using hundreds of search terms.

First, we analyzed the *NRC Handelsblad* (as being a representative news paper for Dutch national news messages) to map the past eleven years for news about immigration and integration. Although the *NRC Handelsblad* is not often read among the target group, Dutch youth, this news paper is digitally available over a long period of time and pays much attention to these relevant issues. The analysis of 11 years of news (from 1998 until 2008) shows how the focus has shifted over time. Following the attack on September 11 in 2001, the debate takes a turn and hardened the tone. Terrorism becomes the leading item on the media agenda and becomes associated with the Islam. Following the Van Gogh murder in 2004, the attention for the Islam as such also increases, while since 2006 the attention for terrorism decreases rather quickly. Since 2007, the media attention for political anti-immigration parties in The Netherlands increases considerably (e.g., the PVV of Wilders). It becomes visible in the analysis that the political parties, in particular the anti-immigration parties, increasingly repress the government in the media debate.

Second, seven digitally available news papers have been compared using automatic content analyses (from October 2006 until December 2008). Findings show that in the news messages, Islamic residents and immigrants are often related to, in various ways, terrorism, criminal acts, war violence, and ideological extremism. The distribution of attention over such issues differs more or less between the various media, but the order in which the issues are dealt with is more or less similar. The seven news papers clearly follow each other in how they shift their focus over time. The various news papers associate the subjects of immigration and integration with globally similar issues and actors, as analyzed per period. For that reason, it does not seem to make a real difference for the media agenda of Muslim youth which Dutch news media resource they use.

Next, six webfora that are popular among primarily Moroccan Muslim youth have been compared. On these webfora, they often discuss about the Islam, followed by topics such as terrorism, conflicts in Irak, Afghanistan and Israël, as well as the requirements for new immigrants. The agendas of these webfora clearly follow each other (show overlap), although less so than the analyzed news papers do. For example, politicians who attract a lot of attention in the news papers, such as Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, Verdonk and Wilders, at the same time are at the center of discussions on the internet. The conduct of such discussions on the web closely follows the debate in Dutch news media. The results of the content analyses of these webfora do not provide support to the idea that such online discussions would be primarily fed by foreign (Arab or Islamic) news media or extremist websites.



Ad 3). The content analysis of television programming focused on 14 programs, one episode per week, presenting news and background information during seven weeks following the events concerning Moroccan youngsters in the Dutch village Gouda. Results show how strongly the news may present a specific selection of facts within a specific frame; a local context in which problematic youth ‘terrorize’ the neighborhood with a simple problem definition (‘street terror’) as well as the at times extremely negative tone of the debate. Again, the various television programs, like the analyzed news papers, follow each other closely in focus and tone.

The question whether Muslim youth are following media message with *a more extremist content* has also been answered through automatic content analyses. Given the studied websites, only *Al-Yaqeen.com* is clearly focused at certain extremist contents, namely at more radical, salafist ideologies. The amount of attention devoted to more or less radical actors on the remainder of websites studied is on average a little less than in news papers, and the attention on websites for terrorism is even much less. The analysis cannot not exclude, however, that certain parts of such websites may contain some extremist contents or having radical actors or groups active on certain parts. For example, members of the Hofstad group have been discussing quite a lot on *Marokko.nl*.

It is remarkable that precisely the common news reports (as in news papers) pay quite some attention to the more extremist issues (24%) and more radical actors (24%). Dutch news media have increased their emphasis over time on more extreme opinions, on terrorism and the discussion appears to have hardened. From such results, it seems that Muslim youth receive through the regular news reports as much as (or even more) extremist content than they do through discussions on webfora. The continuing stream of media messages about terrorism, about anti-immigration-politicians, the hardening of the political debate, and the negative tone of voice, may all explain such a focus in the news. The comparison further shows that the paid news papers spend relatively little attention to extremist actors and extremist issues (e.g., terrorism). The ‘free dailies’ (like *Metro*), that are popular among Muslim youth, appear to be more strongly focused on more extremist contents. The content analyses of Arab and Turkish media were too small in scope to express any conclusions regarding their attention for more extremist content.

In closing this part on content analyses, we may observe that Muslim youth on webfora seem to bother about issues and actors that play a key role in the regular news, like discussions around Wilders (*Fitna*), Verdonk, and Hirsi Ali show. However, above all, this news is about them, Muslims, about their religion and their ethnicity, about the Islam and about the behavior of their peers. The webfora show how Muslim youth rebel against such news streams by consequently responding to it. Especially the Moroccan youth, who are named in the news over and over again, respond much more intense on the web than Turkish youth.

Motivations for media use and attitudes toward media among Muslim youth

In order to answer the research questions about the motivations of Muslim youth to use particular media and to find out what they themselves think of particular messages in the media, we held open in-depth interviews with over 40 Muslim adolescents and young adults (see ch. 7).

From the results of the survey, we already learned that Dutch Muslim youth generally have a broad and intensive orientation on the news. This can be understood from six motivations that came to the fore in the interviews. 1) A large need to follow the news in general. 2) The need for specific news about the Islam, Islam-related topics and Muslim countries (w.o. Irak, Afghanistan, Palestina) with which they feel strongly connected. 3) A motivation for the



interviewed Muslim youth to follow the Dutch news intensively (also the news about Wilders), is that they need to know how the Dutch citizens think about them, as expressed in the news (what is being said about Muslims). This includes the relevance for their identity, the need to belong and to take part in the debate. 4) Muslim youth also use foreign media, in addition to the Dutch media, because they distrust the media in general and believe that media are biased and one-sided. They observe that the Islam is continuously presented in a negative way in the Dutch news. Furthermore, because they notice that conflicts around their religion and the negative image building around the Islam particularly occurs in the Dutch media, they also address foreign media. 5) A fifth motivation is driven by the need for truth. In order to create a more complete and 'more true' picture, the Muslim youth believe it is not sufficient to follow just the Dutch news or just channels from *Al-Jazeera*. Therefore, they also follow the English language channels (e.g., *CNN* and *BBC*; an English language *Al-Jazeera* also exists). 6) Finally, a need for broadening and deepening one's perspective drives the interviewed Muslim youth to seek for information in various ways, often on the internet. However, for reliable information about the Islam and issues relating to their religion, they prefer to consult their parents or the imam.

The results of the interviews in answering the question what the Muslim adolescents and young adults think of the messages in various (news) media, can be summarized around three themes. 1) The Muslim youth consider the (Dutch) media rather selective, superficial, and sensationalist. They believe that the media present a biased, one-sided view and that the news in The Netherlands is made primarily by native Dutch people (and therefore journalists do not understand certain differences in culture and background). 2) The interviewed Muslim youth feel that Dutch media always express themselves in a negative sense about Muslims, immigrants, and Muslim-related countries, and as such present a biased view on the Islam and Muslims as a group. They notice that the media selectively pick specific individuals (especially such 'street kids') who are then considered representative for the group by the general public. 3) The interviewed Muslim youth clearly perceived the turn in a negative direction in the media messages following the attacks on 9/11 and the murdering of Van Gogh. After having experienced much frustration and grief in desperately following all the negative news about them and their group, acceptance and acquiescence slowly grows. In fact, now a turn takes place in themselves by taking a distance from the media. The interviewed Muslim youth show a remarkable understanding for the 'ignorant' Dutch people who are, in their view, negatively influenced by the one-sided, negative news reports about the Islam and Muslims in the Dutch media.

Mutual relationships between media use, media content, and attitudes

The various parts of the current research come together in answering the final research question (see ch. 8). As such, we discuss the mutual relationships between media use, media content, attitudes and motivations for media use, in particular among Muslim adolescents and young adults. The answer to the final research question is yes, we can discern mutual relationships between the broad, frequent, and intense media use of Muslim youth, the focus and (negative) attention in (Dutch) media for certain, sometimes extreme, content of messages about Islam and Muslims, and the motivations of Muslim youth to consult particular media resources. Specifically by consulting many different media, both national and foreign, Muslim youth strive after a more complete and 'more true' picture of the news than when they would by following only national media or only foreign media. On certain points, the media use of Muslim youth shows relationships with certain attitudes toward politics and society. In further considering mutual relationships between media use and attitudes, one needs to take relevant personal variables into account. The content analyses and the interviews indicate that precisely



the usually negative tone of voice in Dutch media messages about Muslims and, for them, relevant issues, motivate Muslim youth to choose particular and various media resources. The turn in the media messages has not only motivated Muslim youth to an increased sense of media awareness, but also to *nót* (wishing) to become one of them (i.e., one of ‘those problem youngsters in the media’) and to be ‘just a *góód* Muslim’.

Furthermore, we briefly discuss the strengths and weaknesses of our research methods in order to be able to judge the conclusions in its right merits. One of the stronger points of our research is the combination of various research methodologies and the volume of our datasets. By combining surveys and content analyses with open, in-depth interviews, we not only know which media are used to what extent by Muslim youth in The Netherlands, but also what content such media contain, to which content they respond, what the underlying motivations are for using particular media, as well as how they judge the media content. Despite our careful sampling procedure among the adolescents at schools, the absolute number of studied Muslim youth is not large (although the percentage of Muslims in the sample was higher than what could have been expected given the percentage of Muslims in The Netherlands). Too little is known about the population of Dutch Muslim youth to judge whether the sample is a representative sample. Furthermore, the content analyses are relatively limited as far as it concerns the profile analyses, which could only give a rather global sketch. The reliability of the content analyses is limited in respect to the studied differences between the various news papers, websites, and television programs. However, the automatic content analyses of the digitally available news papers and websites is reliable. These content analyses provide a rather precise picture of how the debate has evolved over the last decade. Furthermore, the number of Muslim adolescents and young adults that have been interviewed face-to-face was relatively large and profound for such additional data gathering. Their answers complement the research by providing in-depth insights in the underlying motivations and attitude toward national and international media. Given the consistency of the results of the interviews with the other results as well as the consistency over all in answering patterns of the various studies that are covered by the current research project, we believe to have provided a firm basis for our conclusions.

In several sub-sections, we position our conclusions within a societal and theoretical context and further discuss their wider meaning. We discuss how the broad and intense use of media among Muslim youth in The Netherlands could be interpreted in view of differences with previous reports as well as regarding the differences with non-Muslim youth. Muslim youth consume much news that often address their ethnicity and their religion, which motivates them to follow the news via various and certain media resources. Moreover, we discuss that the results actually indicate that this group is rather integrated in The Netherlands regarding their (Dutch) news consumption and participation in the public debate.

Next, we further discuss the role of the media in developing attitudes, opinions and possible radicalization while using our model of media-influence (ch. 2) as a guideline. The many variables in this model, both person-related (e.g., age, education, ethnic background), the specific media content, personal states (e.g., uncertainty) and social-psychological processes (e.g., relative deprivation) mutually interact. Thus, the model and results concern reciprocal relationships. For example, the content of the news influences one’s attitudes, yet their attitudes in turn influence their media choice. We discuss that based on just one momentary measurement, we can analyze relationships but we cannot draw any conclusions regarding causality. Furthermore, the diversity of various media contents makes it rather difficult to establish significant relationships. Against this background, we further reflect on some of the findings.

Finally, we review the results from the perspective of the concepts of media logics and polarization. After all, the good news is that the Dutch Muslim youth are closely involved in



the Dutch news and information media (in addition to their orientation on international news media), even more intensively than the Dutch non-Muslim youth are. The question, however, is to what extent or at which point this so called media mobilization can boomerang into or contribute to undesired polarization or radicalization. Such processes have been related to what is called media logics, in which a movement and a counter movement stimulate each other through the news in which they are portrayed. A small minority attracts a lot of attention in the news (e.g., by terrorist acts and criminal behavior), evoking strong responses (e.g., from anti-immigration parties), which in turn attract more news, and so on. All this news feeds stereotypes and prejudice among both immigrants and natives, who in turn confront themselves more strongly against each other. Some of them might radicalize and, for example, use violence, which again creates more news. Our combined research results point at such dynamics concerning the Dutch Muslim adolescents and young adults. The news about them mainly focuses on what goes wrong (e.g., criminal behavior) and much less on what goes well (e.g., integration regarding language and education). Our results indicate the negative spiral which characterizes the dynamics of such media logics. The Dutch Muslim youth in our open interviews recognize the particular media logics and ask for a positive turn.

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