

Becoming Dutch

An analysis of moral citizenship in the Netherlands

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Abstract

This thesis examines how a focus on moral aspects of citizenship in the Netherlands interacts with Syrian forced migrants' experiences. This is accomplished by analyzing the Participation Declaration Trajectory, a novel part of the civic integration exam that obliges newcomers to learn Dutch norms and values. Participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups are used to gain insight in the values that are presented in the Participation Declaration, the responses that are evoked and the long term effects that result from this. The conceptual tools of multiple secularities and homonationalism are applied to analyze if the Dutch identity is portrayed in opposition to an Islamic Other. The dialogical self theory is used to analyze how forced migrants position themselves in response to this. Although forced migrants find the content of the Participation Declaration Trajectory a truthful representation of the Dutch identity, we found that the trajectory elicits feelings of marginalization that are expressed by reserved or admmissive responses. The reserved response represents a form of counter positioning in this regard. These feelings of marginalization are mediated by the extent to which homonationalism and secularity for the sake of national integration or secularity for the sake of individual liberties are present in the sessions, as well as by the extent to which the content is perceived as repetitive. Overall, the main effect of the Participation Declaration is sending out the symbolic message that forced migrants will culturally adapt during their integration process. With this conclusion, this thesis criticizes the moral citizenship approach to integration. Instead of benefitting forced migrants, this approach leads to a distinction between first and second class citizens and contributes to exclusion and vulnerability of forced migrants.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Developing an effective approach to incorporate migrants into host societies is a major challenge for Europe today. The spiraling globalization that characterized the last centuries caused migration flows to reverse, with Europe transforming into a host region attracting migrants from diverse origins (Czaika, De Haas, 2014). As national borders became less important to limit the movement of ideas, goods and people, national identities became fragmented (Glick Schiller, 2004). In response, a sweeping wave of nationalism spread over Europe (BBC News, 2018). By drawing lines between “insiders” and “outsiders” and increasingly targeting “Muslim immigrants” as outsiders, nationalism tries to maintain a clear notion of the national identity (Verkaaik, 2009). Increasing support for nationalist parties during elections significantly impacts migration policies. A recent governmental policy that fits in this tendency is the Dutch Participation Declaration . Since 2017, migrants are obliged to learn the Dutch values as part of the civic integration exam (Rijksoverheid, 2016a). The assumption is this will help migrants integrate. However, with the Dutch national identity constructed around the idea that Muslim immigrants are outsiders, it is questionable what effects this policy brings about in reality. In this thesis, I analyze the Participation Declaration to understand how the Dutch national identity is presented and what effects this policy has on Syrian forced migrants.

1.2 Context

Over the last decades, technological revolutions lowered the costs of travel and communication across large distances, creating a more interconnected world (Castells, 1996). The increased flow of ideas, goods and people across national borders is termed globalization (Robertson, 1994). The main effect of globalization on migration worldwide is a change in directionality. While migration from Europe to other countries declined, migration towards Europe augmented and diversified (Czaika, De Haas, 2014). The migrant population in Europe augmented from 3.4% in 1960 to 9.5% in 2010 (U.N., 2009). In the Netherlands, the total migrant population (migrant defined as non-Dutch born) constitutes 11.7% of the population. The population of people with a migration background (one of the parents not born in the Netherlands) is 23% (C.B.S., 2018a). The population of the major Dutch cities Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague consists for over 50% of people with a migration background (Ersanilli, n.d.; C.B.S., 2018b). The perceived amount of people with a migration background can thus be high for native Dutch citizens living in these areas.

This diversification of the Dutch population has caused a fragmentation of the Dutch national identity (Glick Schiller, 2004). In response, there is an increasing tendency to divide society in insiders and outsiders, with especially Muslim immigrants being excluded as outsiders (Verkaaik, 2009). The dialogical self theory explains this trend to distinguish between insiders and outsiders. It argues that living at the interface of different cultures leads to multiple subject positions in the self, causing insecurity about the local identity. In response, people can engage in defensive localization: they emphasize their local identity and develop aversion against actors threatening their local way of living, in this case immigrants. By sharpening the boundaries between in- and out-group members, they reduce the complexities of social life and silence voices representing different subject positions (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010).

This insecurity about the local identity has enabled the expansion of nationalism. Nationalism is defined as a political movement seeking to exercise state power and justifying this by referring to three assumptions: a) there exists a nation with a peculiar character, b) the interests of this nation take priority over other interests and c) the nation must be as independent as possible (Breuilly, 1985).

Globalization impacts assumption a), the peculiar character of the nation is endangered by minority groups (Mahmood, 2016). To counter this reduced sense of national identity, nationalism emphasizes the national community. The central elements of this community depend on the type of nationalism. With ethnic or religious nationalism, the nation is defined as a large-scale ethnic or cultural group. With civic nationalism, the nation is perceived as a loyalty inspiring, territorial political unit, with nationality referring to legal citizenship, not cultural origin (Smith, 1969). Ethnic and religious nationalism are less inclusive than civic nationalism. However, they appeal by providing clear categories. While civic nationalism includes the diverse population of residents with legal citizenship into the national imaginary of the nation, ethnic and religious nationalism distinguish between insiders and outsiders of the nation, even if the outsiders have legal citizenship. Ethnic and religious nationalism thereby enable defensive localization against immigrants (Hermans, Hermans-Konopka, 2010).

While the dialogical self theory provides an explanation for the tendency to distinguish between insiders and outsiders, nationalism can be understood as the dominant mechanism through which this distinction is enacted. As ethnic and religious nationalism focus on common descent or cultural factors, it seems straightforward that immigrants are framed as outsiders of the nation. However, black Muslim immigrants are perceived more strongly as outsiders than, for instance, white Polish immigrants. Gloria Wekker offers an explanation for this phenomenon. Wekker argues that the Dutch colonial history imprinted the idea of superiority of the white race as compared to the black race onto the Dutch national identity. She illustrates this through the example of Sinterklaas and Black Pete, which is, according to Dutch natives who see themselves as open and tolerant, merely a national tradition and not racist (Wekker, 2016). Racist structures thus appear to be so embedded in Dutch culture that they are imperceptible to native Dutch people and are therefore easily perpetuated. Accordingly, native Dutch people could subconsciously consider black migrants an inferior category, even if on the surface, they promote equality. A supplementary explanation why specifically Muslim immigrants are targeted is the threat of Islamic terrorism. After 9/11 and the murders on two prominent Dutch political figures Pim Fortuyn (2002) and Theo van Gogh (2004), the climate towards Muslims became more hostile (Falk, 2017; Triadafilopoulos, 2011). Joan Scott adds to this explanation that while Muslim women are often framed as repressed subjects, Muslim men are framed as the agentic bearers of Islamic norms and values. Thus, male Muslims are perceived as extreme outsiders of Western culture (Scott, 2018).

The hostile public attitude towards immigrants should also be understood in the context of a Dutch political debate around immigration where multiculturalism was said to have “failed” (Bolkestein, 1991; Scheffer, 2000; Joppke, 2007). Most of the current Muslim population arrived with government-sponsored labor migration between 1960 and 1990 (Schuh, Burchardt & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2012). Since the migrants were assumed to return to their home country, they were accommodated within the pillarized system. This provided segregated accommodations such as state-funded ethnic-religious schools with education in the ethnic language (Mattei, Broeks, 2016). Gradually, the insight dawned that most migrants intended to stay in the Netherlands. High unemployment rates for former migrants (47% of those on social welfare being immigrants), high school dropout rates (19% for immigrants) and a prison population that consisted for 32% of foreigners led to the conclusion that multiculturalism had “failed” (Joppke, 2007). Multiculturalism was accused of putting migrants into parallel societies with poor socio-economic outcomes (Bowen, 2011). This debate about the alleged “failure of multiculturalism” together with the aforementioned increased hostility towards migrants had major political repercussions in the Netherlands. Right wing opposition parties arose that centered around hostility against Muslim immigrants (Schuh et al., 2012). The government decided to develop a new approach towards immigration. In 1998, “integration” was introduced, with at its basis the Newcomer Integration Law (*Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers*) or WIN. The WIN enabled the Dutch host society to formulate requirements which migrants had to fulfil in order to naturalize. Over time the WIN obliged migrants to succeed civic integration tests that focused on civic skills such as knowledge

of the country's language, history, culture and rules (Goodman & Wright, 2015). This tendency to focus on the acquisition of an individual's civic skills in order to naturalize, fits in a climate where the moral aspects of citizenship are increasingly emphasized (Schinkel, 2010).

The Participation Declaration represents a perpetuation of this focus on moral citizenship. Being officially instituted in 2017, it requires newcomers to sign a document stating that they respect the Dutch values of freedom, equality, solidarity and participation and that they intend to make an active contribution to Dutch society. The Participation Declaration was drafted with the following goals: *"everyone who lives in the Netherlands respects the basic principles of Dutch society such as freedom, equality, solidarity and everyone who settles here participates. This is, alongside strengthening the participation and the self-reliance, the most important goal of the civic integration policy and the Participation Declaration"* (Rijksoverheid, 2017). The obligatory signing of the Participation Declaration creates the impression that a primary goal of the Participation Declaration Trajectory is that migrants incorporate the Dutch norms and values. In the official letter to the Dutch parliament, it is stated that *"The chance that values stick is enhanced by repetition. In transferable sense, the repetition of core values and their meaning augments the chances of awareness and eventually sharing of these values"* (Rijksoverheid, 2015). Thus, the ultimate goal of the Participation Declaration seems to be that newcomers share the taught values. However, a different image arises from the parliamentary debate surrounding the institutionalization of the Participation Declaration. After a question how the Participation Declaration relates to freedom of conscience, it is stated that freedom of thought, conscience, religion and freedom of expression are primary Dutch values. *"These freedoms cannot be used to interfere with other people's freedoms, as the freedom of one person ends where the freedom of another person begins. The Participation Declaration does not have the goal or effect to intrude in these freedoms or bring people into moral conflict"* (Rijksoverheid, 2016b). Thus, the Participation Declaration does not have the goal or effect to intrude in participants' freedom of conscience: they are allowed to keep their own values. When combining these sources, it seems like, although newcomers cannot be forced to accept Dutch values because this would contradict liberal principles, the Participation Declaration implicitly does intend to enhance chances of newcomers sharing Dutch values. Since this cannot be an official goal, the official goals of the Participation Declaration are that participants respect the Dutch values, because this will increase their self-reliance and their participation in Dutch society. In total, this leads to three official goals that the Participation Declaration aims at: 1) respecting the basic principles of Dutch society, 2) strengthening participation and 3) strengthening self-reliance.

Research shows that governmental measures regarding civic integration can serve multiple functions. Some research shows that civic integration tests help migrants make contact and operate independently in society (Gelderloos, Van Koert, 2010). Other research shows that civic integration tests function as a gate-keeper that separates highly educated migrants from low educated migrants, while having no positive effect on socio-economic outcomes and integration (Goodman, Wright, 2015; Joppke, 2007). Still other research shows that civic integration policies function as symbolic politics that send the message that the government reduces migration and promotes assimilation, even if the policies do not actually achieve these effects (Permoser, 2012). In fact, civic integration tests may contribute to social exclusion and insecurity of vulnerable migrants by requiring them to understand national values (Carrera, Wiesbrock, 2009). The theoretical goals of the Participation Declaration are that migrants respect the basic principles of Dutch society and to strengthen their independence and participation (Rijksoverheid, 2015). However, since part of the Dutch national identity is constructed around the idea that Muslim immigrants are outsiders, this education of Dutch norms and values could elicit different effects in reality. The dialogical self theory argues that in response to being positioned in a certain manner, groups can engage in counter positioning (Hermans, Hermans-Konopka, 2010). The mere fact that migrants have to sign a document stating that they respect certain values and intend to make a contribution could resonate certain prejudices and thereby elicit unwanted responses such as a feeling of marginalization. In this thesis, I assess how the Dutch national identity is presented in the Participation Declaration Trajectory and

reflect on what effects this approach has on forced migrants in both the short term and the long term. My research question and sub-questions are:

How does the way the Dutch national identity is presented in the Participation Declaration Trajectory interact with the experiences of Syrian forced migrants of being a Dutch citizen?

- 1) What norms and values are presented as typically Dutch in the Participation Declaration Trajectory?*
- 2) How do forced migrants who currently participate in the Participation Declaration Trajectory perceive these norms and values?*
- 3) How do forced migrants perceive Dutch norms and values one year after completion of the Participation Declaration Trajectory?*
- 4) How do forced migrants assess the Participation Declaration Trajectory one year after completion?*

Chapter 2. Conceptual framework

2.1 Introduction

This section will introduce the conceptual tools that are used as an analytical lens to gain a deeper understanding of the data in this thesis. Firstly, we will elaborate on the difference between a migrant, a forced migrant and a refugee. Secondly, the concept of citizenship will be defined. Subsequently, the terms femonationalism and homonationalism will be introduced and their relationship with secularism will be elucidated. Next, different types of secularity will be presented. Lastly, the relation between the power of a structure and the agency of individuals to act within this structure will be discussed.

2.2 Concepts

Firstly, it is important to distinguish the difference between a migrant, a forced migrant and a refugee. In theory, what separates a migrant from a forced migrant and a refugee is the element of voluntariness (Wilson & Mavelli, 2017). In 1951, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees developed the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. This document defines who qualifies for refugee status (Loescher & Milner, 2011). According to the 1951 Convention, a refugee is *“Any person who...owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country”* (UNHCR, 1951). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) uses the term migrant as a broader term encompassing refugees as well as (voluntary and forced) migrants. It is defined as *“Any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person’s legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is”* (I.O.M., n.d.). Forced migration is defined by the IOM as *“A migratory movement in which an element of coercion exists, including threats to life and livelihood, whether arising from natural or man-made causes”*. Thus, forced migration is also a broader term which includes political reasons for migration as well as natural causes such as droughts (I.O.M., n.d.). Evidently, these categories should be seen as *“Weberian ideal types”*. As pointed out by several authors, motivations for fleeing are often blurred on the ground (Wilson & Mavelli, 2017; Carling, 2015; Betts, 2013; Squire, 2017). For this reason, I will use the broader term forced migrants when referring to the Syrian participants in my research.

The second concept that will be discussed is citizenship. Traditionally, citizenship referred to a set of legal rights and duties such as membership of the political order (Marshall, 1963; Schinkel, 2010). Citizenship was a measure of in- or exclusion of states that could be used to regulate border entrance. However, with increased migration flows and the tendency to live across national borders, this function of citizenship is disappearing. Citizenship is increasingly framed as emotional and symbolic belonging to the nation (Schinkel & van Houdt, 2010; Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2016; De Leeuw & Van Wichelen, 2012). Several authors described this tendency using the terms culturalization of citizenship, virtualization of citizenship and moral citizenship (Duyvendak, Geschiere & Tonkens, 2016; Schinkel, 2010; Geschiere, 2009; Duyvendak, 2011; Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012). The culturalization of citizenship is *“a process in which what it means to be a citizen is less defined in terms of civic, political or social rights, and more in terms of adherence to norms, values and cultural practices”* (Duyvendak, 2016, p2). Immigrants who obtain formal citizenship after naturalization threaten the identity of the host nation through their cultural, linguistic or ethnic difference (Mahmood, 2016). Therefore especially immigrants are expected to express belonging to the host

culture, preferably by upholding the culturally dominant norms and values. Critics of moral citizenship argue that this cultural adaptation is a racist and assimilationist approach forcing immigrants to disappear into the native culture (Lentin & Titley, 2012; Pakulski & Markowski, 2014). However, proponents argue that cultural adaptation benefits immigrants by increasing their chances of socio-economic integration and incorporation into the labor market (Swierstra & Tonkens, 2005; Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2016). In chapter seven we will return to the notion of moral citizenship to argue that this thesis supports arguments of opponents of this approach.

The values presented in the Participation Declaration are freedom, equality, solidarity and participation. The tendency to promote gender equality and tolerance for homosexuals as typically Dutch values can be conceptualized with the terms femonationalism and homonationalism (Ramberg, 2018; Bracke, 2012; Haritaworn 2008; Puar, 2007). With femonationalism and homonationalism, inclusion or exclusion into the national imaginary of citizenship is related to respect for equal rights for women and homosexuals. Through this discourse, Islamic women and gay people are framed as “in need of rescue”, while Islamic men are placed outside the boundaries of the nation. This discourse is criticized for causing exclusion of racial-sexual others as well as for creating the impression that women’s and gay emancipation are an intrinsic part of Dutch society and that these have been attained already (Bracke, 2012; Haritaworn, 2008). In chapter four, we will analyze if the discourses of femonationalism and homonationalism are reflected in the values of the Participation Declaration and how Syrian forced migrants experience this.

Underlying this discourse on female and gay rights is the secularist framework that became a central ideology in Dutch society. Nadia Fadil argues that the “microphysics of power” of the secular culture in which Muslim women in Western Europe live, subconsciously influence which values these women prioritize. She shows how Muslim women integrated rationality and autonomy in their thinking and use this to evaluate religious prescriptions such as the head scarf (Fadil, 2011). The secular also has the power to present values such as tolerance and equality as good or neutral, while other values can be framed as “false consciousness”, with the subject requiring “enlightenment”. This implies a position of moral superiority on account of the secular and precludes the ideological background of secularism (Bracke, 2012; Fadil, 2011). These concepts will be used to analyze if there is civilizational discourse in the Participation Declaration Trajectory.

The Participation Declaration can also be analyzed through the analytical framework of multiple secularities (Schuh et al., 2012). Secularity in the Netherlands started out after the Reformation and was designed to accommodate religious or ideological diversity. This model is called secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity. Within this framework, tolerance and social harmony are keywords. Free speech is limited: disruptive speech that can hurt religious feelings is not allowed. Most Dutch laws are based on this model of secularity. With the rise of a post-Christian secular majority that emphasized liberties regarding sexuality, abortion and gender, a new model of secularity emerged: secularity for the sake of individual liberties. Freedom and individuality are key in this model. As liberal individual autonomy and secular normativity became the basic societal ideology, secularity for the sake of national integration emerged. In this model, secularity is associated with progress and enlightenment and is used to promote national cohesion. This model is dominant in public discourse of right wing politicians. The last type of secularity, emphasizing institutional autonomy, rationality and efficiency, is secularity for the sake of the independence of institutional domains (Schuh et al., 2012). With this framework, I will assess which type of secularity is represented in the governmental material of the Participation Declaration as well as in the workshops executed by Vluchtelingenwerk. When assessing the Dutch naturalization ceremony, Oskar Verkaik observed a discrepancy between the way the ceremony was designed by anti-immigrant politician Rita Verdonk

and how it was executed by people committed to helping migrants (Verkaaik, 2009). This thesis will demonstrate that a similar discrepancy sometimes occurs in the Participation Declaration.

Finally, we will investigate how the structure of the Participation Declaration relates to the agency of forced migrants to position themselves in response to this structure. Saba Mahmood studied a women's piety movement in light of the Islamic revival in Egypt. The women in this movement performed religious actions to reorient their inner motivations, beliefs and emotions. Their agency lay in their deliberate choice to submit to the structure and use it for their own goals, namely the achievement of a pious self (Mahmood, 2001). When analyzing the Participation Declaration through this lens, it could be understood as a governmental measure to discipline forced migrants' moral self towards a more "Dutch" subject. However, migrants have the agency to choose their response to this moral education. They could use the structure to instill Dutch norms and values within themselves. Alternatively, perhaps in response to being positioned as an outsider through homonationalist and femonationalist discourses, they could reject the Dutch norms and values and engage in defensive localization. This could ultimately lead to fundamentalist responses (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Mahmood's theory will be used in chapter five to argue migrants can exert agency through their response to the Participation Declaration.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the conceptual tools of this research. It explained why the term forced migrants will be used. It unpacked the concept of moral citizenship and the terms femonationalism and homonationalism. The ideology underlying these two last terms is secularism. This was elaborated on by introducing the "microphysics of power" of the secular and the framework of multiple secularities. Finally, Mahmood's interpretation of agency in relation to a structure was explained. The upcoming chapter will present the methods that were used in this research.

Chapter 3. Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will explain the methodological approach of this thesis. It will outline the study design, the study context & population, the methods for data collection and the process of data analysis. Finally, it will describe the strengths and limitations of the collected data.

3.2 Study design

This research has a qualitative study design and fits in the interpretative research paradigm. Qualitative research helps explain people's behavior and beliefs and the context of people's experiences. Quantitative research, on the other hand, will quantify a problem using measurable aspects that can be extrapolated to a larger population (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). The focus of this research is to obtain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perceptions of our study population and how this interacts with the Participation Declaration. Therefore, qualitative research is the most productive approach. Participant observation, focus groups and semi-structured interviews are selected as data collection methods.

3.3 Study context & study population

The study was conducted in the northeastern part of the Netherlands in Emmen, a city near the German border with around 55.000 residents. This city was selected for its large regional center of the non-governmental organization Vluchtelingenwerk, the collaborating partner for this study. Vluchtelingenwerk provided a location to collect the data and co-operated in recruiting participants. The employees of Vluchtelingenwerk are a combination of former forced migrants and native Dutch citizens, with most project leaders being native Dutch citizens and most (voluntary) translators being former forced migrants. The data was collected between February and May 2019.

The study population initially consisted of Syrian Muslim forced migrants. This focus was chosen because there is an anxiety in society towards Muslims and because Syrians represent a large part of the current forced migrant population entering the Netherlands. During the research process, we decided to focus specifically on male Syrian Muslim forced migrants. The reason for this was that participant observation revealed that gender differences led to power inequalities, causing women often to agree with males when asked for their opinion. For instance, during one session of the Participation Declaration Trajectory, most answers were given by a male participant. The women in the group only responded with short affirmative answers when the group leader specifically asked their opinion. By conducting focus groups with participants of the same gender, power inequalities between participants were minimized. Males were chosen because especially this group is perceived as the outsider category in society (Scott, 2018).

3.5 Data collection methods

A session of participant observation in the design phase of this study revealed that the target population, coming from a background where espionage is common practice, tends to give socially acceptable answers. As we were interested in a sensitive topic, namely how a class in Dutch values commissioned by the Dutch government is experienced by the target population, care had to be taken in choosing appropriate data collection methods. In consultation with translators and group leaders, participant observation, focus groups and semi-structured interviews with translators were chosen. Participant observation was used to provide an initial introduction to the study context, to identify

silent norms and values and to provide a context to understand the issues discussed in the focus group. Focus groups were chosen because the group dynamics would lead to an open atmosphere, avoiding a situation where participants felt interrogated. We hoped this would enable them to open up. Furthermore, focus groups helped identify socio-cultural norms of the research population and enabled a wide range of views on the topic. In-depth interviews with key informants were used to deepen our understanding.

3.5.1 Key informants

The key informants in this research were translators. Being former forced migrants, they had access to the experiences of the participants of the Participation Declaration. Unlike group leaders, they did not suffer from a language barrier. This endowed them with more information and created a power dynamic, as translators could decide which information they shared with the group leader. For instance, a translator told me one participant said he would kill his son if his son told him he was gay. Upon this statement, all other participants urged the translator not to translate this. The participant quickly changed his statement to talking with his son. In this example, the translator had the power to decide whether or not to expose the participant. Furthermore, translators cooperated with the group leader directly and had a role in managing group dynamics. The translators could also be seen as role models of successful newcomers. Their Dutch skills were good and they had obtained a position in an organization as voluntary employees. However, I noticed that being able to talk about Dutch norms and values required openness from them. Both translators I interviewed were atheists. This became obvious to participants during Ramadan. Their lack of religion as well as their position as employees of Vluchtelingenwerk positioned them as outsiders of the participant group. This intermediate position created the possibility for observation through comparison, making them good informants.

3.6 Data collection process

3.6.1 Focus groups

Participants for the focus groups were recruited using the formal network of the NGO Vluchtelingenwerk. With the help of a project leader who functioned as a gate keeper, purposive recruitment was used to make two selections of participants. The first group of participants had completed the Participation Declaration Trajectory one up to six months ago, the second group of participants one year and three months up to two years and three months ago. Only male participants of Syrian background were invited to minimize power differences between participants and to create homogeneity, limiting the number of participants needed. The participants were invited through a letter from Vluchtelingenwerk. In this letter, it was stressed that the research was conducted by a student of Groningen University and that participation was voluntary. To check if all information had been understood and to maximize attendance, participants were contacted by phone a few days before the focus group.

The interview guide for the focus group discussions was developed in collaboration with the supervisor from Groningen University. Care was given to develop clear, non-personal and open questions. The research instrument was pilot-tested by reviewing the questions with an experienced male translator with a Syrian background. Upon his advice, some questions were rephrased with more informal language. Furthermore, it was decided to explain more elaborately that all data would be anonymized. The research instrument is included (in Dutch, the language in which the research was conducted) in appendix 2. To record the data, a voice recorder was used. Informed consent was sought prior to starting the recording. The primary researcher functioned as the moderator in the focus group discussion, a translator translated the questions and answers. A difficulty regarding the focus groups was that participants were hard to recruit. Absence of phone numbers and non-responsivity prevailed

and the selection criteria of nationality, time frame and gender limited the offer of participants. Initially, two thirds of the participants cancelled. To solve this problem, an extra focus group was held with participants from villages surrounding Emmen. In total, three focus groups were conducted. One group had participants who completed the Participation Declaration one up to six months ago and two groups had participants who completed it one year and three months up to two years and three months ago. In total 17 participants attended the focus groups.

3.6.2 Interviews

Two translators were interviewed. The interview guide was designed based on the instructions in Kvale (2007). Open questions were designed in clear, simple language. The interviews were held in a semi-structured manner, which allowed for spontaneity while ensuring that all relevant topics were covered. The interviews were held in a small room at Vluchtelingenwerk.

3.6.3 Participant observation

Participant observation was conducted at four sessions of the Participation Declaration Trajectory. Beforehand, a clinic was followed to practice participant observation. The primary researcher conducted moderate participation by positioning herself in the middle of the participants at the table, but not participating in the discussion. Prior to the start of the session, the purpose of the research was explained and consent was asked. The primary researcher wore modest clothing to correspond to group norms. The observations were recorded by making scrap notes during the session. The same evening or at latest the next day, these scrap notes were elaborated on to create detailed documentations. A difficulty during participant observation was that the translator muttered the translations. This problem was solved by changing seats to sit next to the translator.

3.7 Data analysis

Data was prepared for analysis by turning the recordings of the interviews into verbatim transcripts and elaborating on the scrap notes of participant observation. For the focus groups, transcripts were made of the Dutch translations of the recording. All personal information was removed from these transcripts. An iterative research approach was chosen as the analytic approach to the data. A codebook was developed based on deductive codes derived from the theoretical framework. During the process of coding the data in the program Atlas.ti 8.3, inductive codes were formulated from the data. Similar codes were grouped into broad categories. Subsequently, the data was conceptualized by analyzing the interplay between the inductive and the deductive codes. Conclusions were validated by discussing the initial research outcomes with supervisors from Vluchtelingenwerk and Groningen University, as well as by looking for parallels with existing literature.

3.8 Data quality and study limitations

The primary strength of the collected data is the high internal validity that is achieved through triangulation between participant observation, focus groups and in-depth interviews. The main drawback of the data is that due to its qualitative nature, it is not possible to extrapolate the findings of this research to other cities where the Participation Declaration is executed. Nevertheless, this research is an indication of the structure of the Participation Declaration and can be used to improve the trajectory in Emmen. A limitation of the data consists of the language barrier during participant observation and the focus groups. During discussions between participants, only a summary of the content was given by the translator, leading to a loss of data. Furthermore the translator affected the data because he inevitably interpreted discussions while translating. To minimize this influence, the purpose of the research and the importance of neutral and complete translation were discussed in a

separate meeting prior to the focus groups. A bias relating to the focus groups is that the gate keeper eliminated some participants from the selection of invited participants. Participants who would harm an atmosphere of safety and trust were not invited. This possibly caused a positive bias towards Vluchtelingenwerk in the results. Furthermore, it is possible that especially newcomers who felt attachment to Vluchtelingenwerk or were positive about the Participation Declaration chose to attend a focus group, causing further positive bias. Another limitation of the research consists of the background of the primary researcher. Observable characteristics of the primary researcher such as being white, a female and a fluent Dutch speaker, affected the way participants viewed the primary researcher. This has been described as the “interviewer-effect”. Research shows that this affects the answers during interviews (Schaeffer et al, 2010; Davis & Scott, 1995). The primary researcher came across as particularly ignorant when she put cookies on the table of a focus group during Ramadan. During this particular focus group, the interviewer effect may have had a particularly negative influence. Similarly, during participant observation the primary researcher experienced that when she asked participants about their opinions, the only answers she received ranged from “good” to “very good”. She felt like the distance between her and the participants caused participants to omit critiques. To minimize this effect, the primary researcher tried to establish trust by explaining how she took care of ethical issues, making a friendly appearance and attending multiple sessions in a row to create rapport. Furthermore, for the focus groups an experienced translator of Syrian background was deliberately chosen because he would be a familiar face to the participants. The focus groups were also deliberately held at the end of the period of participant observation so that the primary researcher had become familiar to some participants. As it turned out, every focus group had its own peculiar character, due to specific circumstances such as the group size, the translator being acquainted to participants, age differences of participants and the aforementioned cookie mistake during Ramadan. Therefore, in some focus groups participants were open to share their ideas and critiques, whereas in other focus groups, participants gave socially acceptable answers.

Chapter 4. Dutch core values

4.1 Introduction

The goal of this thesis is to answer the following research question: *How does the way the Dutch identity is presented in the Participation Declaration Trajectory interact with the experiences of Syrian forced migrants of being a Dutch citizen?* In this chapter, the first two sub-questions will be answered: 1) *What norms and values are presented as typically Dutch in the Participation Declaration Trajectory?* and 2) *How do forced migrants who currently participate in the Participation Declaration Trajectory perceive these norms and values?*

During the Participation Declaration Trajectory, four values were central: freedom, equality, solidarity and participation. This chapter will elaborate on each of these values by unpacking three distinct layers. Firstly, how the value was presented in the official text of the Participation Declaration and in the course material. Secondly, how the value was presented during the sessions. Thirdly, how participants responded to the value. Thus, both the values and how they were perceived by forced migrants will be treated in this chapter.

4.2 Core values

4.2.1 Freedom

As described in chapter two, Schuh et al. (2012) distinguish between four types of secularity. The value of freedom is a key domain where the different types of secularity come to expression. In the first model, secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity, freedom of expression is restricted by principles of tolerance and non-discrimination to facilitate harmony between different ideologies. The second model, secularity for the sake of individual liberties, emphasizes individual liberties regarding sexuality and gender relations. The third model, secularity for the sake of national integration, is popular among right-wing parties. In this model, freedom is part of a societal ideology that fosters national integration. The fourth model, called secularity for the sake of independence of institutional domains, focusses on institutional autonomy, rationality and efficiency.

The statement on freedom in the Participation Declaration can be seen as consisting of two parts, part a) and part b). It starts off with part a): *“In the Netherlands, everyone is free to think, do and say what they want. This means that: everyone can express their own opinion. Everyone can have their own religion and is free to believe or refrain from believing. Everyone can reveal their sexual orientation. Everyone has the right to independence and making their own choices.”* Subsequently, it continues with part b): *“There are also limits to this. What someone does or says can never be in contradiction with the law. For instance, you are not allowed to discriminate, incite hatred or cause hostility”* (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2016). This fragment reveals a balance between two different types of secularity. Part a) represents secularity for the sake of individual liberties. It stresses the freedoms individuals have in Dutch society. Part b) shows there are limits to these freedoms, notably pertaining to discrimination, hatred and hostility. This corresponds with secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity. This same balance emerges from the brochure “Core values of Dutch society” that is distributed among participants prior to the Participation Declaration Trajectory. The brochure states: *“Our country hosts people with different ideologies and of different nationalities. [...] It is important that you respect others despite these differences.”* This is an exemplification of secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity as it focuses on tolerance in spite of differences. Another quote from the brochure is: *“In the Netherlands, you are free to decide for yourself which choices you make in your life. We call this the right to self-determination. For instance, you are free to decide whether or not you want to commit to a religion. You are free to choose your own style of living. You are also free to decide with whom you want to marry and to disclose your sexual orientation.”* This fragment emphasizes the right to self-determination, reflecting

secularity for the sake of individual liberties. Thus, in the governmental material, secularity for the sake of individual liberties and secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity were equally present.

In the session of the Participation Declaration Trajectory that was attended, these two types of secularity were represented as well. However, the focus was more towards secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity. For instance, the group leader asked participants to consider the boundaries that should be set to freedom of speech and freedom of press. Thus, she implicitly conveyed the message that there should be limits to freedom of expression in order to facilitate tolerance between different ideological or religious groups. This fits with secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity. Furthermore, she repeatedly stressed the importance of dialogue. An example is the following situation that was observed during participant observation. *Two participants had a discussion. The woman says: "He never agrees with me." The group leader responds: "But you are able to keep talking to each other. To understand his fiqh [Arabic for jurisprudence/insight]: how and why he thinks the way he does."* Dialogue as a means to understanding different ideologies fits with secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity as it promotes peaceful co-existence. The topic of individual liberties was touched upon by the group leader when she asked the participants: *"Freedom is very important in the Netherlands. Homosexuality etcetera. Do you think there is maybe too much freedom?"* Although indicating that individual freedoms are important in the Netherlands, she allowed for dialogue, thus facilitating tolerance. With this discourse that corresponds with a form of secularity that privileges the accommodation of religious or ideological diversity, the group leader created a space in which newcomers could safely react to values that were sometimes new and challenging. Thus, in the sessions of the Participation Declaration that were attended, with this particular group leader, the dominant model of secularity was secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity.

The reaction of participants to the topic of freedom varied based on the dimensions of freedom, the group atmosphere and the role of the group leader. In general, participants found the political dimensions of freedom (freedom of press, freedom to criticize the government, freedom of religion) easy to understand. Syrian male participants were most eager to respond when the group leader asked for comparisons between the Netherlands and Syria. Syrian female participants generally displayed silent behavior on the topic of political freedom. This could be explained as a lack of motivation, but also as socially acceptable behavior that fits with typical gender roles in Middle Eastern countries. During the focus group discussion, the participants indicated that political freedom was very important to them. For instance, when asked what part of the Participation Declaration they found most important, one of the focus group participants unclicked his dentures while telling the following story: *"When he was in Syria, he had a big mouth, so he had a lot of criticism towards the government. And he was imprisoned many times and his teeth were broken by the police, the secret service in Syria. [...] Freedom and safety are very important to him."* Other participants indicated that *"If we would have had freedom in Syria, we would not have come here as forced migrants."* Political freedom was thus a value that was easy to support for the Syrian male participants.

However, in the Participation Declaration freedom had more dimensions than just political freedom. Other dimensions of freedom related to individual liberties such as gender roles, sexuality and homosexuality. According to translators, these liberties were difficult topics for some participants. A translator said: *"Because freedom, the people who come from the Middle East understand that freedom only means political freedom. They do not understand that freedom is a bigger subject. Freedom is about what you want to do, what you want to wear, who you want to marry, with whom you want to do..."* During the Participation Declaration Trajectory, women participated more actively on the topic of individual liberties. They indicated that for them, freedom had much to do with safety. A woman said: *"When I walk home later today, that I can walk over the street in safety."* Men generally

displayed less motivation on this subject and mainly contributed jokes such as *“When I ask my wife to make tea and she says no, I can do nothing in the Netherlands.”*. This confirms the statements of translators that for some participants, the equality resulting from individual liberties could be challenging.

4.2.2 Equality

In the Participation Declaration, equality is defined as follows: *“In the Netherlands, all citizens are treated equally. Discrimination on the grounds of gender, faith, race or sexual orientation is not tolerated”* (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2016). The brochure *“Core values of Dutch society”* states that all Dutch citizens are equal and are treated equally in equal situations. Furthermore, it explains that unfortunately, discrimination does exist but is unacceptable. It ends with three addresses where discrimination can be reported.

As mentioned in chapter one, there is an increasing tendency in Dutch society to distinguish between insiders and outsiders of the national imaginary of citizenship (Verkaaik, 2009). This is enacted through mechanisms such as racism, femonationalism and homonationalism (Wekker, 2016; Ramberg, 2018; Bracke, 2012; Haritaworn, 2008; Puar, 2007). Femonationalism and homonationalism designate the tendency to promote equal rights for women and homosexuals as typically Dutch values. The brochure *“Core values of Dutch society”* reveals traces of homonationalism. For instance, it states that *“The Netherlands was the first country on earth where this [gay marriage] was legally allowed”*. This shows national pride in tolerance for homosexuality, corresponding with the notion of homonationalism. The topic of homosexuality also appears in the PowerPoint that is provided by the government for the Participation Declaration Trajectory. This PowerPoint includes the question *“What would you do if your homosexual colleague invited you for a wedding with his husband?”* Depending on how much leeway is given to participants to freely formulate an answer, this question can result in homonationalist discourse. The discourses of homonationalism and femonationalism are academically critiqued in two ways. The first critique is that while the discourses lead to inclusion of women and gay people, they cause exclusion of sexual-racial others, such as Muslim men. The second critique is that by framing tolerance for women and homosexuals as an intrinsic part of Dutch values, the discourses ignore the fact that struggles for tolerance continue (Bracke, 2012). Although the brochure *“Core values of Dutch society”* ignores the fact that equality for women and homosexuals is not completely attained in the Netherlands, it does address the discrepancy between the theoretical legal equality of migrants and the reality that can involve discrimination with the following sentence: *“Unfortunately, you can be confronted with discrimination in practice. It occurs that employers rather hire a Dutch citizen than a Polish or Surinamese citizen. [...] This is unacceptable”* (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2014). Thus, although showing traces of homonationalist discourse, the governmental material also addresses a critique to these idealizing discourses.

Three dimensions of equality dominated in the Participation Declaration Trajectories that participants in this research attended. These were legal equality, the right to non-discrimination and equal rights for homosexuals. During participant observation, the group leader focused on legal equality and the right to non-discrimination. Regarding legal equality, she explained that even politicians have to abide by the laws and that the Dutch politician Geert Wilders is sued for a speech in which he called for *“Less Moroccans”* (Haenen, 2016). Regarding the right to non-discrimination, she informed participants about minimum wages and explained where discrimination can be reported. The only sign of homonationalist discourse that was observed during participant observation came from the governmental material, through the question *“What would you do if your homosexual colleague invited you for a wedding with his husband?”* in the PowerPoint. The group leader framed this question by informing participants about the equal rights of homosexuals in the Netherlands. She did not

portray respect for homosexuality as a core Dutch value. Thus, she mediated the homonationalist discourse of the governmental material. Translators and participants in the focus group indicated that in some other sessions, the focus on tolerance for homosexuals had been much stronger. In one session, the COC, the Dutch association for homosexuals, had given a presentation. In another group, participants indicated that tolerance for homosexuals had seemed the most important topic for the group leader. Depending on whether this tolerance was framed as a key marker of Dutch identity, these examples could be understood as signs of homonationalist discourse.

The reaction of participants to the concepts of legal equality and the right to non-discrimination was generally positive. During the focus group, participants recalled learning that Maxima had received a speeding fine. They explained that equality before the law was something they appreciated in the Netherlands. During the trajectory this appreciation was apparent from active participation in discussions. However, many participants noted that although the laws prohibit discrimination, in practice it does exist. This corresponds with the image of Dutch society as portrayed in the brochure "Core values of Dutch society". For instance, one woman recounted that her neighbors had bullied and threatened her because they did not want a foreigner in their neighborhood. After her story, the group engaged in vivid interaction. In general, the behavior that characterized the subtopics of legal equality and the right to non-discrimination was thus active participation.

The subtopic of homosexuality was more difficult for many participants. Participants in the focus group indicated that homosexuality was a sensitive topic for people from the Middle East. The translators indicated that in general, participants refrained from asking questions on this topic. During the sessions that were attended, some participants remained silent in response to this subject or gave affirmative answers. However, the majority of participants actively participated, but indicated that homosexuality was not part of their own values. The group leader may have favored active participation by showing no judgement about individual opinions but focusing on the Dutch rules regarding homosexuality. Overall, the session that was attended had a remarkably open atmosphere with active participation towards the topic of homosexuality. Based on the focus group discussion and interviews with translators, the most common reactions to homosexuality consisted of silence and affirmative answers to questions. These reactions show how a focus on homosexuality in the Participation Declaration causes reduced participation in the session by Syrian Muslim participants. This fits with the argument that homonationalism excludes Muslims from the national imaginary of the Dutch identity (Bracke, 2012; Haritaworn, 2008). Gloria Wekker (2016) argues that racist structures are so deeply embedded in Dutch culture that they are imperceptible for many people and therefore easily perpetuated. This section demonstrates that by focusing on equality for homosexuals, exclusion of Muslims even occurs in policies specifically designed for racial-cultural minority groups.

4.2.3 Participation & Solidarity

Participation and solidarity were mentioned together in the brochure as well as in the session and will therefore be treated together in this chapter. In the Participation Declaration, solidarity was described as follows: *"In the Netherlands, all citizens bear collective responsibility for the society. Citizens have the right to a safe living environment, decent housing, fair terms of employment, minimum wage when working, good education and good medical care. The government has the duty to protect people against exploitation and unequal treatment. In principle, citizens have to provide for their own income. If they are unable to do so, and there is no one to help them, the government provides help."* Participation was described as follows: *"In the Netherlands, we ask all citizens to contribute to a pleasant and safe society, for instance through work, education or by doing volunteer work. This can be in the neighborhood, at school or in an association. Speaking the Dutch language is thereby essential."* In the brochure, "Core values of Dutch society", solidarity and participation are discussed

under the header “Solidarity and work”. It discusses the role of taxes and how the state uses these to invest in common facilities. Subsequently it emphasizes the importance of volunteer work and the individual responsibility to provide for your own income. *“Only if you are really unable to earn your own money, the government will help you.”*. Finally, it discusses rules regarding minimum wage, holidays, work breaks and the possibility of contacting a labor union.

The statements on participation and solidarity in the Participation Declaration and the brochure echo a critique towards multicultural society that was mentioned in chapter one. Joppke (2007) described how multiculturalism was accused of creating parallel migrant societies with poor socioeconomic outcomes. The phrases *“Only if you are really unable to earn your own money, the government will help you”* and *“Speaking the Dutch language is thereby essential”* in the brochure and the Participation Declaration refer to this critique as they address an unspoken assumption that immigrants will make use of social welfare or have poor language skills.

During the Participation Declaration Trajectory, participation and solidarity were presented together by a native Dutch group leader. She started with the concept of solidarity. She distinguished between two types of solidarity: “solidarity of the heart”: helping family and friends because you care for them and “formal solidarity”: governmental support according to laws. She explained that formal solidarity in the Netherlands originated after the Second World War. Furthermore, she asked the participants from what sources they received money and made a list of all welfare providers. Subsequently, she talked about the aging population in the Netherlands and how this endangered the social welfare system. She asked participants if they could imagine how expensive the social welfare system was for the government. The session ended with the group leader asking each newcomer with what type of (volunteer) work they could contribute to Dutch society.

Overall, the reaction of participants to the values of solidarity and participation consisted of looking on their phone, silence, affirmative answers and active participation by some participants. Of these responses, silence and looking on their phone were most prominent. This could be explained by the fact that participants did not believe the Participation Declaration Trajectory offered useful tools for labor participation. Translators indicated that solidarity and participation were easy subjects for the newcomers. According to them, newcomers were motivated, but perceived many barriers for work. Thus, this topic reveals a tension between the way the newcomers reacted during the sessions Participation Declaration and translators stating that newcomers are motivated to work. This will be elaborated on in chapter six.

4.3 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to answer sub-questions 1) *What norms and values are presented as typically Dutch in the Participation Declaration Trajectory?* and 2) *How do forced migrants who currently participate in the Participation Declaration Trajectory perceive these norms and values?* Regarding sub-question 1), the values that are presented as the core Dutch values are freedom, equality, solidarity and participation. For the value of freedom, the governmental material revealed a balance between secularity for the sake of individual liberties and secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity. The session that was attended, however, revealed a focus on secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity. The dimensions of freedom that were stressed in the sessions were political freedom and individual liberties regarding gender roles, sexuality and homosexuality. For the value of equality, the focus was on legal equality, the right to non-discrimination and equal rights for homosexuals. For the values of participation and solidarity, the focus was on stimulating migrants to find volunteer work. Regarding sub-question 2), the responses varied depending on the specific value that was treated. In general, Syrian men displayed more active participation in reaction to values related to political freedom and democracy. When the values

reflected homonationalist or femonationalist discourses, or were not perceived as useful, participants displayed silent behavior or gave short affirmative answers. Sub-question 2) will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

Chapter 5. Key responses to the Participation Declaration Trajectory

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described the Dutch core values in the Participation Declaration and the responses of participants to these values. A close analysis of these responses reveals that certain types of responses were commonly expressed. This chapter will classify the different responses into four “key responses” of participants to the Participation Declaration Trajectory. These key responses can be understood as ideal types (Weber et al., 1968). The four key responses that will be defined are: the reserved response, the admmissive response, the honest/critical opinion and active participation. These key responses can be understood as subject positions within a dialogical self (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). According to the dialogical self theory, multiple voices can exist in parallel within the self of a person. These internal voices can engage in dialogue and the dominant voice can alternate. Similarly, a person can move between the different key responses depending on his internal dialogue.

To better grasp the life world of our participants, this chapter will start off by describing the start of a session of the Participation Declaration Trajectory. In this description, three out of the four key responses can be observed: reserved responses, admmissive responses and honest/critical opinions. The description will be followed by a characterization of each of the key responses and an explanation how they were present in the sessions.

5.2 Start of the session. Good morning - Salaam Alaikum

Thursday morning, 9.15 o'clock. I walk into an empty room with yellow walls and a long white table that provides space for 14 people. A beamer stands at the front end of the table. I sit down on a chair at the middle of the table.

9.20 o'clock. An older man with a slightly tinted skin color, a grey moustache, a black coat and a scarf walks into the room. In his hand he holds an unfolded letter. “PVT?” he says with an interrogative look on his face. I smile and say “Yes”. The man sits down at the far end of the table. Next an older woman with a wrinkled face and black headscarf walks into the room. “Salaam alaikum” she says to the older man. She opens her bag and shows me a letter. “PVT?” she asks. “Yes,” I respond. The older woman sits down two chairs away from the man, also at the far end of the table. One by one, the following participants drop in. A woman with a dark skin, golden earrings, a head scarf and a white coat. A man with a lightly colored skin, black hair that is slightly retreating and a Hummel T-shirt. A young man with dark hair wearing a black sweater. All participants but the woman with the golden earrings greet each other with “Salaam alaikum”.

9.25 o'clock. Silence. The woman with the golden earrings and the man with the Hummel T-shirt look at their phone. The older man and woman stare into space.

9.28 o'clock. Rumors from the hallway enter the room. A man walks into the room. He sees me and aggressively walks up to me. “My wife must be here, but no day care center for our child. Can she leave?” I stutter that I am not the group leader, but that I am sure she will arrive soon. The man leaves.

9.31 o'clock. The group leader enters the room. She is a slim woman with an African appearance of around 30 years old with dark curly hair that frames her face in an afro haircut. She opens her bag and presses the power button on the beamer.

9.36 o'clock. The translator enters the room. “Salaam,” he greets the participants, and walks up to the front of the room. He and the group leader softly talk to each other.

9.38 o'clock. The group leader opens a PowerPoint presentation. “Okay, welcome everyone. As you all know you are required to follow this training. I will pass on an attendance list. Put your signature behind your name, then we will inform the municipality you were here. My name is “Group leader 1” and I am from East Africa. I have worked with Vluchtelingenwerk for ten years now. Let’s start this session with a round of introduction.”. The woman with the dark skin and the golden earrings starts:

“My name is “Woman with the golden earrings”, I am from Congo and I have lived in the Netherlands for three years.”. One by one the participants introduce themselves. The older man, the man with the Hummel T-shirt and the older woman are from Syria. The young man is from Kosovo. The older man has lived in the Netherlands for two years, the man with the Hummel T-shirt for three years, the older woman for four years and the young man for one year and a half.

9.40 o'clock. The group leader reshuffles her papers and says “Okay, thank you all. Now, before we start, I want to stress that this is a dialogue, an encounter. You are from Syria, you can tell us what it is like in Syria. Your input is very important. We are here to learn and increase our understanding. There are no wrong answers.”. The translator translates this into Arabic. All participants lean back in their chairs, while the group leader, the translator and I lean forward. The group leader says: “We will discuss what values are and do a few exercises.”. The man with the Hummel T-shirt says something in Arabic. The translator says: “He asks how many weeks this training is.”. The group leader responds: “It says so in his letter. Migrants have to come two times, refugees four times. But we can discuss this in the break” The translator translates this. The group leader says: “What is your opinion on the Participation Declaration?” No one responds. The group leader looks around the group and says: “What do you think of the Participation Declaration?” The woman with the golden earrings looks at her phone. The older man says something in Arabic. The translator translates: “He says we already know all the norms and values and to learn them you should talk with people. Outside, not here in a room. To learn values, you talk with people outside.”. The man with the Hummel T-shirt responds to the older man and what follows seems to be a heated discussion in Arabic. The man with the Hummel T-shirt makes broad gestures with his hands. The translator translates: “He said, you should not say that!” The group leader responds: “It is safe here, you can say whatever you want. I understand that you are afraid, but you don't have to be.”. The man with the Hummel T-shirt says: “Is good.”. He stares at the table and smiles.

5.3 Types of key responses

This fragment of the Participation Declaration Trajectory has shown reserved responses, admmissive responses and an honest/critical opinion. In the sections below, these responses as well as the fourth key response of active participation will be unpacked. It will be argued that both reserved responses and an honest or critical opinion can be understood as forms of agency.

5.3.1 Reserved response

Oskar Verkaaik researched Dutch naturalization ceremonies and observed “a mild, not unfavorable alienation” (Verkaaik, 2009, p.11) towards the ceremony on behalf of the participants. In contrast, the Participation Declaration Trajectory was, if anything, characterized by reserved responses. The reserved response designates a lack of interest and participation in the session that was dominant during participant observation. From the group leader's point of view, this behavior would be called unmotivated. However, as we argue from the point of view of the participants, it will be called a reserved response here. I will argue that this response can be understood as a form of agency on behalf of the migrants. In the fragment above, the reserved response was apparent from the question how many weeks the training lasted and the lack of response to the group leader. In general, the reserved response was expressed by passive attitudes, participants giving little response, looking at their phones and trying to negotiate longer breaks. During the focus groups, participants explained that since they had already lived in the Netherlands for several years when following the Participation Declaration Trajectory, they had learned the Dutch values through ordinary contact with Dutch society. This negatively affected their motivation. Translators indicated that many participants viewed the Participation Declaration Trajectory solely as a compulsory measure. According to them, participants complained that it overlapped with information given in the asylum seekers' center and in part of the civic integration exam called “*Knowledge of Dutch Society*” (Kennis Nederlandse Maatschappij).

Furthermore, the sessions were sometimes given during hours that participants had Dutch classes. All these factors detracted from participants' motivation and led to the reserved response.

The reserved response can be explained as a form of agency on behalf of the forced migrants. As explained in chapter two, Saba Mahmood analyzed the interplay between the structure and the agency of individuals (the capacity to act and make individual choices) to argue that individuals can use the structure of Islamic prayer for their own purposes, for instance to cultivate piety (Mahmood, 2001). Mahmood explains this through the example of a pianist who submits herself to a painful discipline in order to improve her skills. Her ability to be taught is referred to with the term docility. In general, docility is viewed as the opposite of agency. However, Mahmood argues that this example proves that submission to a regime can also be an active choice and thus an agentic act. In the case of the Participation Declaration Trajectory, the structure of the civic integration exam forces participants to attend the sessions. They have to sign an attendance list and their presence or absence will be communicated to the municipality. This will directly affect their chances of obtaining a residence permit. Thus, the participants have to exercise a degree of docility by attending the sessions. However, this does not mean that the participants are devoid of agency. Firstly, the docility they exercise by attending the sessions contributes to their goal of obtaining a residence permit. Secondly, they have agency when it comes to their attitude towards the sessions. As we will see in chapter six, many participants perceive the Participation Declaration Trajectory as an obligatory measure that hardly offers useful information. Therefore, their reserved response can be perceived as agentic. Although the structure forces them to attend the sessions, they cannot be forced to react enthusiastically. Thus, their reserved response can be interpreted as a silent protest against a measure they perceive as meaningless.

5.3.2 Admissive response

The second key response is the admissive response. This response designates the tendency among participants to give politically correct answers. Many participants come from a background where criticizing the authorities was dangerous. The safest reaction was to agree with the person in power. Emile Durkheim has argued in *The Division of Labour in Society* (1984) that social control is what makes people abide by social rules. Those who deviate from the social rules are punished for this behavior through sanctions. In the fragment above, the agitated reaction of the man with the Hummel T-shirt who told the older man to refrain from critiques can be interpreted as a sanction. This sanction shows that the older man deviated from the social rule that participants should agree with the group leader. Although this was the most explicit example where the social rule of abiding by the opinion of the authority became visible, below the surface the fear that "the walls have ears" was present throughout each session. This was most clear from the fact that every time the group leader asked a directive question that showed her personal opinion, all participants agreed with the group leader. One of the translators aptly summarized the reason for the admissive response. *"All foreigners are like this, they think that all authorities cooperate with the IND. They first want to know if, hey, when I say something wrong, maybe something will happen to my residential status. They are afraid..."*

The dialogical self theory argues that living on the interface of cultures leads to subject positions in the self that represent voices from these different cultures (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). When analyzing the admissive response through the lens of the dialogical self theory, it can be argued that the admissive response represents a submissive subject position. The motivation for this response can be found in participants' experiences in the country of origin, where admissive behavior functioned as a survival mechanism. The precarious position that newcomers are in after arrival to the Netherlands, both in terms of their citizenship status as well as their economic position, causes this survival behavior to be continued in the Netherlands. By being submissive, this subject position stands

in contrast with the reserved response, which is more agentic in character. However, the reserved response may also reflect experiences from the country of origin, as it represents a rather silent and thus safe manner of formulating discontent. Thus, both of these subject positions represent survival mechanisms from the country of origin that are continued in the Netherlands in reaction to the insecure situation here.

5.3.3 Honest or critical opinion

The older man in the fragment above demonstrated a very different response from the ones analyzed thus far. The translator translated this: *“He says we already know all the norms and values and to learn them you should talk with people. Outside, not here in a room. To learn values, you talk with people outside.”*. The opinion of the older man is critical: he argues that the content of the Participation Declaration is already known and that the teaching method is inappropriate. This type of open critique was witnessed on several occasions, but is far from the average behavior of participants. Still, it is important to mention because it demonstrates agency. Political freedom was often absent in participants’ country of origin. This behavior of expressing one’s opinion can be interpreted as the integration of a Dutch value that is taught in the Participation Declaration: freedom of expression. These participants have used their agency to actively incorporate an appealing Dutch value of the Participation Declaration. When analyzing this act through the lens of the dialogical self theory, the incorporation of the value of freedom of expression can be interpreted as a new subject position (or the strengthening of an already existing subject position) in the self of these participants. Furthermore, although the statement is critical, in fact this behavior shows a high level of trust in the Dutch government. A Syrian participant expressed it as follows: *“It feels good that I can express my opinion. In Syria we were repressed by the CIA, the government. There you could not give your opinion. In Syria the walls have ears.”*. This participant positively evaluated the Dutch government as compared to the Syrian government. Overall, the honest or critical opinion can be interpreted as the incorporation of a subject position that stresses a value taught in the Participation Declaration: freedom of expression.

5.3.4 Active participation

The fourth type of response was active participation. This behavior was less common than the admmissive response and the reserved response. However, sometimes participants actively responded to questions, engaged in discussions and asked questions. This motivation differed per topic. In general, participants enjoyed comparing the Netherlands to Syria. Besides, certain values were met with more enthusiasm than others. The rule of thumb was that subjects regarding democracy and political freedom, reasons for which forced migrants had fled their homes, were met with more enthusiasm than subjects typical to secular liberal states regarding freedom and equal rights related to (homo)sexuality and gender (Scott, 2018). This has been elaborated on in the previous chapter.

Furthermore, it was remarkable that with the group leader who had an African descent and positioned herself as part of the marginalized group of Dutch society, the participants participated more actively than with another group leader who was a native Dutch citizen. Chapter one explained that there is a tendency in Dutch society to distinguish between insiders and outsiders (Verkaaik, 2009; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010; Wagenvoorde, 2017). While Islamophobia and anti-black racism are two distinct types of Dutch nativism, both groups experience marginalization (Duyvendak, Geschiere, Tonkens, 2016). The group leader of African descent addressed this at several occasions and used this marginalization to position herself and the participants (of whom many were Muslims) together as outsiders of Dutch society. For instance, she said: *“Rules ensure that everyone has the same rights. If people in power want to use their power for their own interests, they can’t do so here because of the rules. See, I was not born here, and she was (pointing to the primary researcher, a white woman),*

but because of the rules I have the same rights as her.”. By positioning herself as an outsider like the participants, the group leader created a connection between her and the participants. This allowed a certain trust between the two, which potentially led to greater openness on behalf of the participants. It may also subconsciously have influenced the way the group leader approached the material, by stressing participants’ rights and framing the material in a way that corresponds with secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity, as explained in section 4.2.1. This attitude created a bridge that enabled participants to express active participation.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter aimed at complementing the answer to sub-question 2) *How do forced migrants who currently participate in the Participation Declaration Trajectory perceive these norms and values?* that was given in the previous chapter. This chapter showed that the reactions to the Participation Declaration Trajectory can be classified under four key responses. The most commonly expressed reactions are the reserved response and the admissive response. The motivation for these responses lies in a combination of experiences from Syria and the precarious situation in the Netherlands. The reserved response represents a more agentic subject position than the admissive response in this regard. Both of these responses are expressed in reaction to values that participants find difficult or perceive as meaningless. The other, less commonly expressed key responses are the honest/critical opinion and active participation in the session. The honest/critical opinion demonstrates agency. Active participation is expressed in reaction to values relating to political freedom, or when the group leader frames the material in a way that corresponds with secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity.

Chapter 6. Migrants' assessment of the Participation Declaration

6.1 Introduction

The Participation Declaration fits in a discourse of citizenship where newcomers should express belonging to the host culture to count as true citizens (Duyvendak, Geschiere, Tonkens, 2016). This tendency is called moral citizenship (Schinkel, 2010). Proponents of moral citizenship argue that cultural adaptation enhances migrants' chances on the labor market (Swierstra & Tonkens, 2005; Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2016). This chapter will demonstrate that although this is indeed a goal of the Participation Declaration, participants are skeptical of the extent to which this goal is achieved. Overall, this chapter will discuss how participants assess the Dutch values in the Participation Declaration one up to two years after completion and what long term effects the Participation Declaration brings about. These long term effects will be compared to the goals with which the Participation Declaration was drafted. Thus, this chapter will answer sub-questions 3): *How do forced migrants perceive Dutch norms and values one year after completion of the Participation Declaration Trajectory?* and 4): *How do forced migrants assess the Participation Declaration Trajectory one year after completion?*

6.2 Forced migrants' perception of Dutch norms and values one year after completion

The premise from which moral citizenship departs, is that Dutch culture has a "core" of typically Dutch values. To assess up to what extent forced migrants themselves evaluate the values in the Participation Declaration as the "core of Dutch culture", we asked them to describe a "typically Dutch person" and evaluate if this person behaved according to the values of the Participation Declaration. The idea behind this question was to evaluate to what extent forced migrants perceived the content of the Participation Declaration as a truthful representation of reality. Against a backdrop of colonialism where Western people "civilized" oriental populations, the Participation Declaration runs the risk of repeating history by presenting an idealized picture of Dutch society and "civilizing" the entering minority population. As explained in chapter two, this can be mediated by a tendency to present Dutch values as good or neutral, while migrants' values are framed as "false consciousness" (Bracke, 2012; Fadil, 2011). Such an approach could cause defensive localization or feelings of marginalization on behalf of the forced migrants (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010).

In the focus group discussions, the characteristics of a "typically Dutch person" varied. However, three aspects were named repeatedly. According to the participants, a typically Dutch person smiles at the newcomers (*"Maybe they dislike newcomers, but they smile and that is good for us"*), attaches great importance to time and appointments and is strongly attached to his individual privacy and less to social life with family and friends. When asked if the typically Dutch person acted according to the norms and values taught in the Participation Declaration, most people agreed that in general, this was the case. Some people had encountered very positive experiences in the Netherlands. For instance, one man worked in a restaurant where his boss, a foreigner, had started a fight after being discriminated. When the police came, the blame was put with the person who started the discrimination. The newcomer was amazed that the police thus defended the right to non-discrimination. For him, this demonstrated that equality was practiced in the Netherlands. However, other people had negative experiences. They had been called names when walking around the asylum seekers' center or had experienced trouble with the municipality when starting their own business. This had felt like discrimination.

Although the experiences differed per person, the majority agreed that the Participation Declaration had provided correct information. In the interviewed population, only the man who had had trouble with the municipality showed traces of defensive localization. As explained in chapter one, defensive localization can be caused by insecurity about the personal identity. In this reaction, a person

retreats into his local identity and closes himself off from the range of options in an unpredictable or complex situation (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). The interviewed man made the following statement: *“Every time I met with one of their [the municipality’s] demands, they made different demands. [...] They were not fair with me.”*. Interviewer: *“So there was no equality? Or what feeling did this give you?”* Man: *“No equality and not fair, huh. I come to the Netherlands to work. Or something like that. I can also sit and do nothing, receive my unemployment benefits, everything is good. But they make much work, who do you have, we will see... [...] Every little step takes three or four months, huh, this is not... This problem takes one and a half year, or longer...”*. This fragment reveals that the man was frustrated that Dutch bureaucracy caused the problem to linger for over one and a half year. He also perceived a lack of equality, as demonstrated by the sentence *“They were not fair with me.”*. This combination caused significant distress and insecurity. The man’s response is demonstrated by the sentence: *“I can also sit and do nothing, receive my unemployment benefits, everything is good”*. This shows defensive localization as it represents a retreat into a different identity: the identity of a person on social welfare. This would close the man off from the uncertainty that is caused by the differing demands made by the municipality. However, it is a sign of defensive localization as it is accompanied by aversion against the municipality. This example shows that negative experiences can cause defensive localization, potentially creating unwanted effects such as a lack of participation on behalf of the migrant.

To summarize, one up to two years after completion of the Participation Declaration Trajectory, some forced migrants believe the Participation Declaration painted an idealized image of Dutch society. One migrant showed traces of defensive localization in response to this. However, the majority of interviewed migrants perceived the values in the Participation Declaration as generally correct. What seems striking is that while most forced migrants indicated that the typically Dutch person acted according to values propagated in the Participation Declaration, the previous chapter indicated that the most common attitude towards the sessions was a reserved response. To gain a better understanding of this discrepancy, we need to answer sub-question 4): *How do forced migrants assess the Participation Declaration Trajectory one year after completion?*

6.3 Forced migrants’ assessment of the Participation Declaration

6.3.1 Goals of the Participation Declaration

As explained in chapter one, the Participation Declaration was drafted with three official goals: 1) respecting the basic principles of Dutch society, 2) strengthening participation and 3) strengthening self-reliance. An unofficial goal seemed to be that participants come to share the taught values. Consultation with translators in the design phase revealed that the notions of self-reliance and participation were conflated in the minds of the participants. Inquiring about self-reliance as a separate notion led to either a lack of response, or answers directed towards participation. Therefore, it was decided to focus only on participation and respect for basic principles in the focus groups.

6.3.2 Respecting or sharing Dutch values

For the translators and group leaders of the Participation Declaration Trajectory, the premise that newcomers were allowed freedom of conscience towards the taught values was a fundamental condition of the Participation Declaration. During the first session that was attended for participant observation, the primary researcher ignorantly asked the group leader whether or not the Participation Declaration Trajectory was successful in making newcomers adopt Dutch values. Upon this question, the group leader said in an offended / shocked voice: *“We tell them the norms and values, in what country they have arrived. They don’t have to adopt these values. That would be*

assimilation. They are allowed to have their own opinion!” This assumption of freedom on behalf of the participants was reflected in the teaching approach of the group leader, who, as we have seen in section 4.2.1, framed the governmental material in a way that reflected secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity (Schuh et al., 2012). According to the most experienced translator newcomers rarely changed their own values through the Participation Declaration. However, by learning to listen to other opinions, they learned to respect opinions different from their own. This was the main effect of the Participation Declaration according to him.

Similarly, a majority of participants in the focus groups indicated having learned to respect different religions and different opinions. Some participants indicated their group leader had stressed this a lot. Other participants indicated they appreciated this freedom in the Netherlands. One focus group participant stated the following: *“The people, eh, every person has a different mentality, different behavior, than the other people, and that is why the Netherlands is a nice country, because the government, eh, protects all the people, to exercise their mentality or behavior.”*.

With regard to sharing Dutch values through the Participation Declaration Trajectory, a useful tool to understand the processes at play is the concept of the *multiplicity of cultural positions in the self*. In the dialogical self theory, a self is conceived to exist of multiple subject positions. By living in a new cultural environment, a multiplicity of cultural subject positions that represent the old as well as the new culture can come to existence. In one focus group, there was group consensus about the following attitude of one participant towards adding Dutch values through the Participation Declaration Trajectory. He stated: *“I have my own values, and I want to exert my own values. And if I notice a good value that the Dutch people have, than, eh, I will add this.”*. This statement represented the general opinion of participants towards being forced to add Dutch values. Participants were keen to preserve their own cultural subject positions. On the other hand, participants indicated that the combination of living in the Netherlands longer and the Participation Declaration caused them to consciously add a few Dutch values. They gave the examples of biking, taking care of their front yard and respecting the importance of time and appointments. Another value that they added through the Participation Declaration was to refrain from beating their children (possibly because they learned this is criminalized in the Netherlands). These examples show that participants internalized certain Dutch subject positions while at the same time trying to preserve their own cultural positions, corresponding with the multiplicity of cultural positions in the self. This became most clear when it came to the cultural code of shaking hands with women in the Netherlands. In one focus group, there was group consensus on the following statement: *Translator: “He said, when I was in Syria, it was not allowed to shake the hand of my niece. Now, I shake the hand of my female neighbor, I shake the hand of someone else, and that is eh, normal.”[...] Interviewer: “So he changed a value.” [...] Translator: “Only for the Dutch people. But for Arabic women, no.”*. In this fragment, we notice a distinction in conduct between Dutch women and Arabic women. This shows that a heterogeneity of subject positions with regard to shaking hands with women has come to existence in the self of the participant. Although the different subject positions are in contradiction, a compromise is found by restricting the new subject position of shaking hands with women to Dutch women and maintaining the old subject position of not shaking hands with women towards Arabic women.

To summarize, although the Participation Declaration generally did not cause participants to directly add the values of freedom, equality, solidarity and participation, it enabled them to practice dealing with different opinions. The combination of the Participation Declaration and exposure to Dutch society at large caused some participants to add Dutch subject positions. Some of these added values were practical in nature, others pertained to ideas of equality. Participants added these values by creating a multiplicity of cultural positions in the self. The multiplicity of cultural positions connects to the statements of the Rijksoverheid: newcomers are allowed to keep their own values but at the

same time they are encouraged to respect or take over Dutch values. Creating a multiplicity of cultural subject positions in the self enables forced migrants to navigate this contradiction by doing both.

6.3.3 Participation

Participants in the focus groups expressed interest in receiving tools to enhance participation. For them, participation mainly designated access to the labor market. However, they criticized the role of the Participation Declaration in this regard. Participants indicated that to access the Dutch labor market “...you have to fulfill three requirements: the language, education and internships.”. The Participation Declaration did not contribute to this. When enquiring into the role of the Participation Declaration in strengthening their motivation, one participant stated that “*In theory, the Participation Declaration has motivated us, but in reality, eh, it did not help us. [...] The Participation Declaration Trajectory taught us that we need to pursue an education, that we should improve our language skills, but in practice it did not help us, because we needed to follow the civic integration courses.*”. Another focus group participant stated: “*Syrian people always enjoy working. Nobody likes staying at home and receiving unemployment benefits. In general, Syrian people want to work. So the Participation Declaration Trajectory did not give us motivation.*”. For most newcomers, the Participation Declaration did not improve access to jobs nor enhance motivation. This confirms statements of group leaders and translators. Translators stressed that language skills were essential for labor participation. A group leader said that most newcomers really wanted to work but simply did not see opportunities in the Netherlands. Overall, respondents agreed that the Participation Declaration did not enhance access to labor participation.

What the Participation Declaration Trajectory did effectuate with regard to participation, was the transmission of knowledge. One participants learned volunteer work did not require diplomas. Another participant learned he could always fall back on social security, even after working a few years. A third participant was inspired by a presentation by police officers. This participant stated that “*In the Netherlands, the police officer is a good person, not like in Syria*”. He now aspired to become a police officer himself. Thus, practical knowledge and role models in the Participation Declaration Trajectory benefited participants.

The goal of participation reveals a tension between participants’ motivation to gain access to the labor market and the theory-based approach of the government towards the Participation Declaration. The phrase “*The Participation Declaration Trajectory taught us that we need to pursue an education, that we should improve our language skills, but in practice, eh, it did not help us, because we needed to follow the civic integration courses.*” is telling. Newcomers learn about participation in the labor market and in volunteer work, but are prevented from practicing this because they have to obtain the civic integration exam first. Without being able to practice their newly acquired knowledge, the knowledge remains only theory.

The critique that the newcomers address here, fits with a transformation in the way civic integration is structured. Joppke observes a shift from naturalization as a tool for integration towards naturalization as the end point of successful integration (Joppke, 2008). Under this new conception of naturalization as the end point, the requirements for integration have been sharpened and migrants are required to understand and respect Dutch values at the start of their stay in the Netherlands. Joan Scott aptly describes this as “asking them to pass final exams at the beginning of the course” (Scott, 2007). Indeed, newcomers complain that “*to learn values you should talk with people. Outside, not here in a room*”. When newcomers added Dutch values, this was usually through prolonged exposure to Dutch society. This underlines the argument of authors opposing the view of naturalization as an end point of integration. These authors understand citizenship as craftsmanship: a skill developed through practice (Duyvendak, Geschiere & Tonkens, 2016; Sennet, 2008). By demonstrating that

practice and exposure to Dutch society are the principal mechanisms through which participants add Dutch values, my research confirms this view of citizenship. Newcomers indicate that gaining access to the labor market is important to them. The Participation Declaration is perceived as a barrier prolonging their time on social welfare rather than as a program offering tools for labor participation. The only nuance to this is that when practical information is provided or role models are used, the Participation Declaration benefits newcomers. However, even then, theory and practice should go hand in hand.

6.3.4 Other effects of the Participation Declaration

During the research process, it became clear that the Participation Declaration Trajectory had some other effects that were not addressed under the aforementioned specific goals. In two out of the three focus groups, there was a general consensus that the Participation Declaration had been beneficial to establish contact with their Dutch neighbors. For instance, one participant stated that *“It helped me to get acquainted with the traditions and habits of Dutch people. If you want to visit your neighbors, you have to make an appointment with them.”*. Several participants indicated that this knowledge about the custom of making an appointment, as well as the reassurance that their Dutch language skills did not have to be perfect before contacting their neighbors, enhanced their courage to introduce themselves. The participants positively evaluated this aspect of the Participation Declaration.

Another positive effect of the Participation Declaration Trajectory was that it informed participants about Dutch laws. One participant recounted a story about his brother who got into an argument while eating at a restaurant and was subsequently attacked. *“...his brother thought about the Participation Declaration when this situation occurred. [...] He knew the laws here in the Netherlands. Therefore he decided not to fight back. He had received the Participation Declaration Trajectory, therefore he did not fight back and called the police.”*. When the police came, the attacker was arrested and his brother was not. Other participants in the focus groups agreed: *“Yes, the Participation Declaration has benefits.”*.

To summarize, certain aspects of the Participation Declaration Trajectory had benefited participants. What is remarkable here is that again, practical information was valued the most.

6.3.5 Negative assessment of the Participation Declaration

During the focus groups, several participants spontaneously gave negative feedback on the Participation Declaration Trajectory. This gives an insight in the mechanisms that led to the reserved response that was displayed by a majority of participants. The negative feedback can be categorized into two different levels: practical preconditions and content.

On the level of practical preconditions, the primary negative feedback was that the Participation Declaration Trajectory arrived too late. *“The time of the invitation for the Participation Declaration Trajectory was too late. Because, what the group leader gave them as information, 90% of this information was already familiar to them.”*. Participants indicated that they had already lived in the Netherlands for several years before following the Participation Declaration Trajectory. Thus, they had learned the Dutch values through ordinary contact with Dutch society. Another practical critique was that *“The hours of the Participation Declaration sessions were in conflict with the hours of school. [...] And the school did not tolerate your absence.”*. Participants were thus forced to negotiate between different obligations in order to attend the Participation Declaration Trajectory sessions.

On the level of content, participants indicated that the subject matter of the Participation Declaration Trajectory overlapped with information given in the asylum seekers center and in a part of the civic integration exam called “Knowledge Dutch Society”. Therefore, they had learned the

subject matter of the Participation Declaration through three different channels already before receiving the Participation Declaration Trajectory: through contact with Dutch society in general, in the asylum seekers center and in the civic integration course. Another critique on the level of content concerned the usefulness of the information that was provided during the Participation Declaration Trajectory. The majority of participants indicated that their main takeaway from the Participation Declaration Trajectory was knowledge of Dutch society, which, as we have just seen, had already been provided to them on several other occasions. The goal of the Participation Declaration to enhance participation was viewed positively by participants, but as one participant summarized it: “...[if] the government wants the newcomers to eh, earn, or that these people work, and not stay on social welfare, I think they have to do something different. The Participation Declaration, these things, it does nothing, you see.”. In general, the participants thus did not perceive the content of the Participation Declaration as providing many useful tools to build up their life in Dutch society.

6.4 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to answer sub-questions 3): *How do forced migrants perceive Dutch norms and values one year after completion of the Participation Declaration Trajectory?* and 4): *How do forced migrants assess the Participation Declaration Trajectory one year after completion?* Regarding sub-question 3), the majority of participants perceived the Participation Declaration as a correct depiction of the dominant values in Dutch society. Only a few participants disagreed with the values that were taught in the Participation Declaration, because their negative experiences in the Netherlands did not confirm freedom, equality, solidarity and participation being practiced in reality. Regarding sub-question 4), the assessment of the Participation Declaration Trajectory was rather negative. When evaluating the goals of the Participation Declaration, it turned out that although the trajectory taught newcomers to respect differences of opinion, the goal of enhancing participation was not reached. There was a tension between newcomers being interested in tools to enhance labor participation and the trajectory providing information on Dutch values that was perceived as repetitive or redundant. In general, participants perceived the trajectory as beneficial only when the sessions provided practical information.

Overall, this chapter demonstrates that the most important effect of the Participation Declaration is that newcomers learn to acknowledge different opinions. This is in line with the goals with which the Participation Declaration was drafted. However, does the fact that a goal of the Participation Declaration is accomplished also mean that the measure is successful? It would be equally, if not more interesting, to evaluate to what extent the goals in itself are in the interest of the newcomer population. In sum, this reflection raises the question if the Participation Declaration Trajectory as a whole is meant to benefit the incoming forced migrants or the existing host population of the Netherlands. This question will be further elaborated on in chapter seven.

Chapter 7. Discussion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the answers to the four sub-questions of this thesis will be presented in order to answer the overarching research question: *How does the way the Dutch national identity is presented in the Participation Declaration Trajectory interact with the experiences of Syrian forced migrants of being a Dutch citizen?* It will be argued that the Participation Declaration has the potential to elicit feelings of marginalization that are expressed through admmissive and reserved responses. When relevant for the particular sub-question, the study limitations will be pointed out. The importance of this answer will be framed in the context of existing theories on culturism. It will be argued that the Participation Declaration has an important symbolic function and the question will be raised if this means that the Participation Declaration is illiberal. Finally, directions for further research will be highlighted.

7.2 Answering research questions

The first sub-question was: *What norms and values are presented as typically Dutch in the Participation Declaration Trajectory?* There were four central values in the Participation Declaration: freedom, equality, solidarity and participation. In the material provided by the government, dimensions of freedom that corresponded to secularity for the sake of individual liberties and secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity were equally present. The session, however, reflected a frame of secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity. With regard to the value of equality, three dimensions were important in the Participation Declaration Trajectory: legal equality, non-discrimination and equal rights for homosexuals. It was concluded that the Participation Declaration Trajectory showed traces of homonationalism. With regard to the values of solidarity and participation, the governmental brochure echoed a critique to multicultural society by assuming that forced migrants will make use of social welfare. During the session, migrants were stimulated to find volunteer work.

The relevance of this first sub-question was to discover whether or not the Participation Declaration portrays the Dutch national identity in opposition to an (Islamic) cultural Other. In Germany a number of questions that specifically cornered Muslims by reproducing negative stereotypes shortly figured in civic integration exams. These questions met with strong opposition and were rapidly withdrawn (Furlong, 2006). Through the homonationalist discourse and the assumption that participants have to be stimulated to work, a similar (albeit less strong) targeting of Muslim newcomers takes place in the Participation Declaration. Thus, this sub-question shows that the governmental material has the potential to portray the Dutch identity in opposition to a Muslim Other. The tools of multiple secularities and homonationalism can be used to analyze to which extent this opposition to a Muslim Other is applied during a session. Secularity for the sake of individual liberties and secularity for the sake of national integration are more aggressive towards Muslims in this regard, while secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity is more focused on promoting tolerance.

An important side note pertains to the role of the group leader and the municipality. The response that is elicited by the governmental material is mediated by the frame of secularity that is reflected in the discourse of the group leader. Moreover, municipalities have the freedom to decide about the format, the number of obligatory sessions and the NGO that is responsible for executing the Participation Declaration. Thus, the way the national identity is presented in the Participation Declaration can vary widely from one city to another. This confirms findings by Oskar Verkaaik, who observed a large variation among naturalization ceremonies between different municipalities (Verkaaik, 2009). Peter Scholten (2015) developed a term for this phenomenon: multi-level decoupling. He argues that in the Netherlands, an absence of vertical relations between the national government

and local policies leads to frame decoupling, with local policies diverging from national policies. With regard to this first sub-question, multi-level decoupling means that although the governmentally predetermined norms and values of the Participation Declaration have the potential to portray the Dutch identity as opposed to a Muslim Other, municipalities and individual group leaders can exert a huge influence on the way the Participation Declaration is presented in practice. For instance, one group leader positioned herself as an outsider of Dutch society and focused on participants' rights to mediate the effects of the governmental material.

The second sub-question was: *2) How do forced migrants who currently participate in the Participation Declaration Trajectory perceive these norms and values?* It was presumed that the Participation Declaration could elicit counter positioning. A strong form of counter positioning was rarely observed. However, what was often observed was a reserved response. Together with the admmissive response, this was the most commonly expressed reaction to the Participation Declaration. It was argued that the reserved response constituted a form of agency, as it showed discontent with the state of affairs while at the same time accomplishing the migrant's goal of completing the civic integration test to obtain a residence permit. The admmissive response should be understood as a less agentic position. Both the admmissive and the reserved response represent survival mechanisms that reflect experiences of the country of origin. These survival mechanisms are applied in the Netherlands in reaction to newcomers' precarious situation regarding citizenship and economic stability. Other (less commonly expressed) reactions consisted of the honest/critical opinion and active participation in the session. Which response was displayed depended to a large extent on the values that were treated. Among Syrian men, values that had to do with democracy and political freedom were met with more enthusiasm than values related to (sexual) freedom, equal gender rights and homosexuality.

The relevance of this question was to assess up to what extent the Participation Declaration elicited feelings of marginalization or defensive localization among newcomers. Although not apparent as a strong form of counter positioning, the reserved response should be interpreted as an expression of a feeling of marginalization. Counter positioning by expressing reserved behavior is the only tool forced migrants have in the position that they are in (wanting to succeed the civic integration exam). Only those forced migrants who have a lot of trust in the Dutch government allow themselves to be openly critical and thus display what may seem like overt counter positioning. The conclusion that the majority of forced migrants display counter positioning through reserved responses confirms an argument often made by opponents of cultural adaptation. They state that civic integration measures that require migrants to know and adhere to the host culture's values lead to insecurity and vulnerability of migrants (Carrera & Wiesbrock, 2009).

The third sub-question was: *How do forced migrants perceive Dutch norms and values one year after completion of the Participation Declaration Trajectory?* This question helped to evaluate if the image of Dutch society that was painted during the Participation Declaration Trajectory corresponded with forced migrants' lived reality. The majority of the focus group participants indicated that the Participation Declaration provided correct information. A few participants believed the Participation Declaration had painted an idealized picture because they had encountered discrimination, which was not in accordance with the value of equality. However, only one migrant showed traces of defensive localization in response to this.

A study limitation that applies to this sub-question entails the fact that the key responses that were characterized as reactions to the Participation Declaration Trajectory, apply to the focus group discussions as well. Therefore, the response of the majority stating that the values were a correct representation of Dutch society possibly represents an admmissive response and not honest/critical answers or active participation. To avoid this, it was attempted to create a safe environment during the focus groups by stressing anonymity and asking participants to write down a number instead of

their name. Nevertheless, the conclusion that forced migrants agreed with the content of the Participation Declaration Trajectory might have to be taken with a pinch of salt.

The fourth sub-question was: *How do forced migrants assess the Participation Declaration Trajectory one year after completion?* The goal of this sub-question was to evaluate if the Participation Declaration Trajectory accomplished the goals with which it was drafted as well as to what extent the trajectory as a whole benefitted the forced migrants. The Participation Declaration was drafted with three goals in mind: creating respect for the basic principles of Dutch society, increasing self-reliance and increasing participation. An unofficial goal seemed to be that participants come to share the taught values. It was concluded that the Participation Declaration Trajectory was successful at creating respect for different opinions, but not at making participants add Dutch values. When it came to the goal of strengthening participation, a tension was revealed between the motivation of newcomers to gain access to the labor market and the theoretical approach of the Participation Declaration. Participants positively evaluated aspects of the Participation Declaration that taught them useful information about Dutch laws and how to make contact with Dutch natives. Negative assessments of the Participation Declaration pertained to the fact that the timing of the Participation Declaration Trajectory was too late and that the content was already known.

Having answered all sub-questions, we can now answer the general research question of this thesis: *How does the way the Dutch national identity is presented in the Participation Declaration Trajectory interact with the experiences of Syrian forced migrants of being a Dutch citizen?* The answer to this question is that the Participation Declaration Trajectory has the potential to elicit feelings of marginalization, as expressed by reserved or admmissive responses. There are two mechanisms through which the Participation Declaration Trajectory evokes these responses. The first mechanism is the focus on secular liberal values pertaining to (homo-)sexuality and gender that is present in some sessions. The second mechanism is the fact that the content of the sessions is perceived as redundant and repetitive. In line with this second mechanism, there is a tension between participants' motivation to gain access to labor participation and the perception that the Participation Declaration, by focusing on abstract values, does not offer concrete tools to enhance labor participation. The extent to which the sessions elicit these feelings of marginalization varies. For the first mechanism, it depends on the frame of secularity that is reflected in the sessions. For the second mechanism, it depends on the extent to which relevant practical information is offered. The way the Dutch national identity is presented can be influenced to a large extent by the local group leaders and the municipalities. This is possible because of the multi-level decoupling that is present in the Dutch system of governance. In the long run, participants indicate that their main take-away from the Participation Declaration is that they need to respect different opinions.

7.3 Reflection

The Participation Declaration connects forced migrants' culture to integration and participation problems. The proposed solution is that forced migrants learn to respect the Dutch values. This solution to integration problems fits with a notion of culturism. Culturism states that migrants' different culture is not only the cause of socio-economic deprivation, but is also a problem of its own, insofar as the migrants' culture is incompatible with the host culture. An underlying premise of culturism is that "cultures" can be designated as such. The latter is combined with an individualistic perspective: the individual migrant bears responsibility for his integration process. Culturism thus creates the association of integration problems with cultural differences, proposing instruction in the host culture's norms and values as the solution (Schinkel, 2007). This is reflected in the goals of the Participation Declaration, where respect for the Dutch values is coupled to enhancing participation and self-reliance (Rijksoverheid, 2017). Closely related to culturism is the notion of moral citizenship

that has been stressed throughout this thesis. Moral citizenship designates the discourse where “real” citizens are distinguished from “unreal” citizens through their value system (Schinkel, 2010; Duyvendak, Geschiere & Tonkens, 2016; Geschiere, 2009; Duyvendak, 2011; Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak, 2012). Culturism helps us understand that not only the different culture of “unreal” citizens is perceived as problematic in itself, but that this is also perceived to cause their lack of participation and integration. As explained in chapter one, proponents of moral citizenship argue that learning cultural values enhances newcomers’ chances on the labor market. They argue that without knowing specific cultural customs such as looking people in the eyes, shaking hands and being assertive, it is impossible to integrate into the labor market (Veenman, 2007; Swierstra & Tonkens, 2005).

This thesis has assessed in what ways the discourse of moral citizenship influences forced migrants’ experiences. It analyzed the underlying premise in culturism that the Dutch culture can be designated as such by enquiring into forced migrants’ perception of the Dutch culture one up to two years after completion of the Participation Declaration Trajectory. Participants seemed to agree that there exists such a thing as the Dutch culture and that this is correctly represented in the Participation Declaration. However, it is possible that this answer represents an admmissive response. Furthermore, it has analyzed the presumption that when forced migrants learn the Dutch values, this will help them participate and become more self-reliant. This sub-question revealed that although the Participation Declaration achieves the goal of creating respect for the Dutch culture, the presumed associated positive follow-up effects lag behind. Participants indicated that the Participation Declaration has very little effect on their access to labor participation. This fits with literature of authors opposing moral citizenship. A large overview study revealed that respondents in nine European countries were skeptical of civic integration courses about the host society. Respondents found the content useless and did not believe it facilitated integration (Strik et al., 2010). From the perspective of forced migrants, the culturist assumption that learning cultural values facilitates participation therefore seems flawed.

As this thesis supports the argument of opponents to moral citizenship, it is interesting to investigate the flaw in culturist thinking in order to propose as a better way forward. My suggestion is to evaluate the premise in culturism that “cultures” can be designated as such. Jan Willem Duyvendak distinguishes between restorative and constructivist views on culture. A restorative view of culture sees a national culture as having a fixed and known content that can be traced back to historical roots. A constructivist view of culture sees culture as a process in the making, produced by clashes and contestations with insiders as well as outsiders of the culture. Everyone who participates in this process is seen as a citizen. In culturism, a culture is seen as a stable whole of norms and values. Accordingly, in the Participation Declaration, four values are presented as the core of Dutch culture. This fits with the restorative view of culture. However, the restorative view on culture ignores that cultures change over time. Through the restorative view on culture, culturism focuses on making newcomers learn “the Dutch values”. As we have seen in this thesis, this causes reserved and admmissive responses. I propose a shift in the perception of culture from restorative to constructivist. In the context of the Participation Declaration, this would mean a shift from learning “the Dutch core values” into allowing newcomers to participate. This could be enabled by creating possibilities for labor participation early on in civic integration courses. This shift in perception fits with a statement a newcomers made during participant observation: “...to learn them [Dutch values] you should talk with people. Outside, not here in a room. To learn values, you talk with people outside.”

Under the new civic integration law in 2021, the Participation Declaration will be extended from a minimum of four hours to a minimum of 12 hours (Rijksoverheid, 2019). As such, the Participation Declaration, which was established in 2017, can be considered evidence for the fact that despite apparent flaws in its reasoning, the culturism approach to immigration is gaining momentum in the

Netherlands. This raises the question how the government benefits from the culturism approach. An important function of civic integration tests that has been described by several authors is political symbolism (Goodman & Wright, 2015; Permoser, 2012). In light of an increasingly right-wing voting public in the Netherlands, it is important to governmental parties to show voters that their messages are heard and taken seriously. As this thesis has shown that forced migrants evaluate the content of the Participation Declaration as redundant and repetitive, it appears that the symbolic function of the Participation Declaration, notably sending out the message that forced migrants' different culture is noticed and dealt with in the context of the civic integration exam, is an important function, if not *the* most important function of the Participation Declaration Trajectory.

From an ethical point of view, the conclusion that the Participation Declaration has an important symbolic function is remarkable. By requiring migrants to respect Dutch values, while Dutch natives are free not to respect these values and do not have to learn about the culture of the incoming migrants, the Participation Declaration creates a distinction between first class and second class citizens. The second class citizens are racial-cultural others. Thus, the Participation Declaration demonstrates that Gloria Wekker's argument that racism is so deeply embedded in the Dutch culture that is imperceptible to many people, also applies to Dutch policy makers, who could be expected to promote equal rights for all citizens. Charles Taylor argues that distinguishing between first and second class citizens is the principal thing that should be avoided within a democratic society (Taylor, 1994). This raises the question whether the Participation Declaration should be seen as a liberal or an illiberal measure. Joppke (2017) describes two lines of authors with different views on whether a policy is illiberal. A first group of authors argues that only forced morality change, in combination with interrogations and exclusion in case of failure to have sufficiently adapted, counts as illiberal (Joppke, 2013, Goodman, 2014). The second group of authors argues that even mandatory cognitive familiarization with culture is illiberal, since this is not related to the functioning of liberal democracy (Orgad, 2015). I will use the first definition here and follow the line of reasoning from Goodman (2014), who argues that a liberal state can demand knowledge but not the professing of morality of newcomers. According to this definition, the Participation Declaration Trajectory still counts as a liberal practice. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the declaration that newcomers have to sign at the end of the trajectory demands "respect" and not "loyalty". Secondly, although the governmental material asks morality questions such as "*What would you do if your homosexual colleague invited you for a wedding with his husband?*", wrong answers are (as far as I know) not recorded and do not influence participants' chances of obtaining a residence permit. Although sometimes leading to feelings of marginalization, the Participation Declaration therefore stays exactly on the liberal side of a fine line between liberal and illiberal integration practices. Its institutionalization in 2017 and intensification from 2021 onwards, however, do open up the way for a trend towards more illiberal practices. It would be an easy step from here to start coupling the answers given in the Participation Declaration Trajectory to a selection mechanism where migrants failing to comply with the taught values are excluded from citizenship. If that happens, the line between liberal and illiberal practices is irrevocably passed.

7.4 Further research

To my knowledge, this thesis has been the first academic research to evaluate the Participation Declaration. Since the Participation Declaration exemplifies the expansion of moral citizenship, it would be a relevant topic for further investigation. Similar trajectories exist in Denmark, Germany, Flanders, France, Austria and Switzerland (Pennings et al., 2015). By comparing these Participation Declaration Trajectories, we could evaluate how moral citizenship is shaped in different countries. This

contributes to the discussion of whether there is policy convergence or policy divergence with regard to civic integration measures (Joppke, 2007; Joppke, 2017). Another research direction would be to examine how the focus on moral citizenship affects the dialogical self of newcomers. By holding in-depth interviews with the forced migrants in this study, we could understand how dialogical voices play a role in the formation of the four key responses. This would contribute to literature on how acculturation processes function when institutionalized powers exert pressures to change.

8. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to answer the overarching research question: *How does the way the Dutch national identity is presented in the Participation Declaration Trajectory interact with the experiences of Syrian forced migrants of being a Dutch citizen?* We can conclude that the Participation Declaration has the potential to elicit feelings of marginalization as expressed by admmissive or reserved responses. Two mechanisms can lead to these feelings of marginalization. The first mechanism is the focus on secular liberal values regarding (homo) sexuality and gender rights in the governmental material. The second mechanism is the extent to which the content is perceived as redundant and repetitive. The group leader can mediate these effects by using language corresponding with a frame of secularity for the sake of accommodating religious diversity and by providing practical information. Overall, the Participation Declaration fits with a notion of culturism, which connects problems of integration and participation to migrants' different culture and proposes instruction in the host culture's values as the solution. Closely related to culturism is the notion of moral citizenship. This thesis has critiqued the moral citizenship approach in several ways. Firstly, it argued that although the Participation Declaration is effective in creating respect for the Dutch values, the proposed positive follow-up effects lag behind. Secondly, it argued that the restorative view of culture that is propagated in culturism is flawed. As a way forward, this thesis proposes a constructivist view on culture, where everyone who participates, regardless of clashes and contestations, is viewed as a citizen. This could be enacted by stimulating labor participation early on in the integration process, instead of focusing on theory.

Ultimately, this thesis has shown how the rise of right wing parties shapes governmental policies in directions where rhetoric and symbolic value is prioritized over the concrete benefits for the targeted population on the ground. The good news is that local policy makers and executive organizations have a lot of freedom to mediate these effects. The bad news is the trend towards cultural adaptation seems to gather momentum. I would like to end this thesis with an urge to policy makers to devise policies which have meaningful effects for the people concerned with them.

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Appendix 1: Suggestions for improvement of the Participation Declaration Trajectory

During the focus groups as well as the interviews, participants and translators made several suggestions for improvement of the Participation Declaration Trajectory. These suggestions for improvement can be categorized under two levels, the first level pertaining to practical preconditions, the second level to content matter.

On the level of practical preconditions, the first suggestion pertained to the dimension of timing. Participants suggested that the Participation Declaration Trajectory should be held soon after the moment participants exit the asylum seekers center, so that participants can benefit from it in order to quickly establish contact with Dutch natives, which in turn will benefit their language skills. A second group of suggestions pertained to the dimension of group dynamics. A group leader indicated that currently, groups for the participation declaration were formed on the basis of language, in order to facilitate good understanding for all participants through intermediation of a translator. Depending on the homogeneity of the group, this approach was more suitable for some groups than for others. The language categorization was a good selection tool for the group of Eritrean forced migrants as these were relatively homogeneous when it came to education levels. However, the group leader stated that *“The Syrians are much less homogeneous as a group. Within the group of Syrians, there is a large difference in education level. [...] Therefore, the Participation Declaration Trajectory is never completely made to measure.”* A second point regarding group dynamics was made by one of the translators, who indicated that it was beneficial to separate couples in order to allow both partners to freely interact during the sessions. A third point regarding group dynamics was made by translators as well as group leaders, who indicated that it was important to stimulate interaction during the sessions. Small exercises and videos were a good tool and should be used during each session. A third general practical point was that both interviewed translators indicated that their first time translating the Participation Declaration Trajectory had been extremely challenging. Managing the group dynamics while translating at the same time was demanding, especially if translators were unfamiliar with the material. This could also lead to interpretation biases when translators decide to give examples on their own initiatives. A first experience translating could be made easier by requiring translators to passively attend the Participation Declaration Trajectory in order to familiarize themselves with the material before the first time they actually translate. Another idea could be to provide training to the translators in an early stage, or to have the translator and the group leader (or an experienced older translator) meet in a prior meeting before the session in order to discuss the material and the expectations towards the translator.

On the level of content matter, an important group of suggestions pertained to the dimension of applicability. Participants and translators indicated that newcomers benefitted the most from practical information. This includes information about laws in the Netherlands as well as information on the common rules of conduct in the Netherlands. Instead of repeating information that has already been given in previous settings, it would be good if the Participation Declaration Trajectory gave actual tools that participants could use to participate in Dutch society through interaction with Dutch people in informal or work-related settings. Examples of these tools could include: knowledge of Dutch rules of conduct such as shaking hands, punctuality, making eye contact and making appointments. The information about Dutch laws that is now provided in the Participation Declaration was perceived as useful and should therefore be kept or even extended. Another way of augmenting the level of applicability could be by inviting organizations that represent certain values to give a presentation, for instance the police or the municipal department of enforcement. One of the translators had experience with this approach and was very positive about it as it stimulated interactions and removed stigma's among migrants towards these organizations. Other suggestions on the level of content matter were related to the Participation Declaration Trajectory's function regarding labor

participation. Participants suggested it could be useful to make a connection with a person who is actually in the function that the newcomer pursued in his country of origin, and investigate the differences together. *"You have to learn the people, this is the road you should walk to reach your goal."* Another idea participants brought in regarding labor participation was to create short learning trajectories of less than one year that would enable participants to obtain a Dutch diploma in the profession they had exercised in their home country. Current programs are often three years and participants indicated they perceived such a long trajectory as a barrier. Finally, a relevant comment on the level of content matter was made by one of the participants who stated that although the newcomers learn about Dutch society through the Participation Declaration, the Dutch citizens do not learn about the culture of the newcomers. He therefore suggested that the Participation Declaration could include an interactive component where native Dutch citizens and newcomers exchanged in an informal manner.

Appendix 2: Interview guide focus groups

Meenemen:

- Geprint interview protocol
- Lekkers voor bij thee/koffie
- Papier, viltstift voor naambordjes
- Opnameapparatuur (opgeladen mobiel als back up)
- Aantekeningenblok
- Bedank kaartjes voor deelnemers

Van te voren:

- Stoelen in een kring klaarzetten
- Thee, koffie en koekjes klaarzetten
- Papier en viltstiften voor naambordjes klaarleggen

Bij binnenkomst iedereen een nummer laten opschrijven op een naambordje.

Welkom allemaal, heel erg bedankt dat jullie er zijn. Mijn naam is Céline, dit is Manaf, hij zal vandaag vertalen. Ik ben student van de universiteit van Groningen en ik doe mijn afstudeeronderzoek naar de participatieverklaring. Ik wil onderzoeken welke normen en waarden als typisch Nederlands worden gepresenteerd en wat jullie daar als deelnemers van vonden en aan gehad hebben. We willen dit onderzoek gebruiken om de participatieverklaring workshops te verbeteren vanuit Vluchtelingenwerk. Ik heb bij de sessies gezeten en aantekeningen gemaakt om te leren wat jullie bij deze workshops leren, maar om een nog beter beeld te krijgen van jullie mening over de participatieverklaring organiseren we nu deze groepsdiscussie.

Wat we vandaag gaan doen is dat we vragen stellen en dat jullie daarover in discussie kunnen gaan. Zoals jullie weten zijn jullie hier vrijwillig, dus als je liever niet mee doet met deze discussie dan mag je weg gaan als je dat wil. Maar ik hoop dat jullie blijven om je mening te geven. Wat jullie hier vertellen blijft geheim. Jullie namen zullen niet genoemd worden in de documenten. Verder wil ik graag benadrukken dat *er geen goede of slechte antwoorden zijn*, we zijn juist op zoek naar zo veel mogelijk meningen en ervaringen, dus voel je alsjeblieft vrij om te zeggen wat je echt vindt. Je hoeft het dus ook niet met elkaar eens te zijn, als je een andere mening hebt, geef die dan vooral ook. Jullie mogen op elkaar reageren naar aanleiding van vragen, maar we laten wel eerst de ander uitspreken en de tolk de tijd geven om te vertalen.

Ik ben geïnteresseerd in de inhoud van wat jullie zeggen en niet in jullie zelf. Dit is het geheimhoudingsdocument dat ik bij vluchtelingenwerk heb ondertekend. Als jullie dat allemaal goed vinden, zou ik dit gesprek willen opnemen. Dat doe ik omdat ik niet alles kan onthouden wat we hier zeggen en omdat ik met een opname meer details kan terughoren dan als ik meeschrijf. Laat dat je alsjeblieft niet tegenhouden om je mening te geven. De opname wordt alleen door mij beluisterd en zal alleen voor dit ene onderzoek worden gebruikt. We gebruiken hier alleen voornamen en bij het uittypen zal ik alle informatie anoniem maken en erop letten dat de informatie niet naar individuele personen kan worden terug geleid. Vindt iedereen het goed om de discussie op te nemen?

Verder is het handig als er één iemand tegelijk praat vanwege de opname. Het gesprek duurt 1 tot anderhalf uur. Ik hoop dat met jullie antwoorden de participatieverklaring kan worden verbeterd voor deelnemers die na jullie komen. Voel je vrij om drankjes of koekjes te nemen als je daar zin in hebt.

Introductory questions

Misschien kunnen we beginnen met een rondje waarbij iedereen zijn naam zegt en waar hij vandaan komt en wat voor werk of opleiding hij had in het land waar hij vandaan komt en hoe lang hij in Nederland woont en of hij hier ook bezig met werk of een opleiding?

Jullie hebben net de participatieverklaring gedaan. Ik wilde beginnen met een tijdlijn tekenen van de participatieverklaring. Wie wil de lijn tekenen?

OF: jullie hebben een jaar geleden de participatieverklaring afgerond. Ik wilde beginnen met een tijdlijn tekenen van de verschillende onderdelen van de participatieverklaring op basis van wat jullie je herinneren. Wie wil hem tekenen?

Ieder onderdeel van de participatieverklaring beschrijven.

Hoe vonden jullie dit onderdeel? Bij muurtje bouwen bijvoorbeeld vertellen, weet je nog welke normen en waarden onderaan lagen? Kan je uitleggen waarom?

Transition questions

Welke dingen vonden de meeste mensen het belangrijkste onderdeel van de participatieverklaring?

Welke momenten hadden jullie het idee dat de trainer het meest belangrijk vond?

Welke normen en waarden waren het meest belangrijk bij de participatieverklaring?

Key questions

Als je een typische Nederlander moest omschrijven, hoe zou je dat dan doen?

Na 1 jaar: kan je een voorbeeld geven hoe je de typische Nederlander anders bent gaan zien na de participatieverklaring?

Zien jullie dat de typische Nederlander zich ook houdt aan de waarden die jullie geleerd hebben bij de participatieverklaring?

Na 1 jaar: Kan iemand een voorbeeld geven van een moment waarop hij terug gedacht heeft aan de participatieverklaring nadat die was afgelopen? *Denken jullie nadat jullie de PVT hebben gehad, dat alle Nederlandse mannen en vrouwen gelijkheid hebben? Dat de typische Nederlander ook vrijheid zoals in de grondwet heeft?*

Hebben jullie andere waarden dan de typische Nederlander?

Hebben jullie nieuwe normen en waarden toegevoegd aan jullie normen en waarden door de PVT? *Kan je een voorbeeld geven?*

Of sommige normen en waarden verwijderd uit je normen en waarden? *Of nu meer interesse in de vrijheid dan voor de participatieverklaring? Of over gelijkheid meer interesse? Kun je een voorbeeld geven?*

Kan iemand een voorbeeld geven van een moment in de participatieverklaring dat hij niet mooi of niet leuk vond? *Bijvoorbeeld over de vrijheid? Of over de gelijkheid tussen mannen en vrouwen? Of de gelijkheid tussen leraren en leerlingen?*

Hoe vinden jullie het om werk te zoeken of een opleiding te doen of vrijwilligerswerk te doen in Nederland?

Kan je een voorbeeld geven van hoe de participatieverklaring een invloed heeft gehad op het vinden van werk of vrijwilligerswerk of je opleiding doen? *Nadat jullie PVT hebben gehad, denken jullie om verder te studeren of te werken? Nadat je de PVT hebt gehad, wordt het makkelijker om werk te vinden of te studeren?*

Kan je een voorbeeld geven waar de participatieverklaring een invloed had op hoe je contact kon maken met mensen uit Nederland? *Bijvoorbeeld, begon je om beter gedrag van Nederlanders te snappen? Geef voorbeeld.*

Wat hebben jullie aan de participatieverklaring gehad?

Closing question

De doelen van de participatieverklaring zijn dat nieuwkomers de Nederlandse normen en waarden leren, zelfredzaam worden en actief gaan deelnemen aan de Nederlandse samenleving. Wat zouden de participatieverklaringsworkshops moeten hebben om dat te bereiken volgens jullie?

Samenvatting van de bevindingen, vragen of dit klopt of dat de deelnemers nog iets toe te voegen hebben?

Probes

Probe: Iedereen lijkt het eens te zijn over... , kunnen jullie daar de redenen voor uitleggen?

Probe: ... , ik zie dat je knikt, wil je je mening geven?

Probe: ..., ik zie dat je fronst/dat je je armen over elkaar hebt. Wil je misschien vertellen hoe jij hierover denkt?

Probe: Het lijkt alsof iedereen hetzelfde denkt over dit onderwerp. Weten jullie of andere mensen een andere mening hebben over dit onderwerp?

Probe: Heeft iemand een andere mening over dit onderwerp?

Silent probe: Blijf stil voor 5 seconden.

Ranking probe: Vraag de groep om onderwerpen in te delen naar hoe belangrijk ze ze vinden en vraag om uitleg.