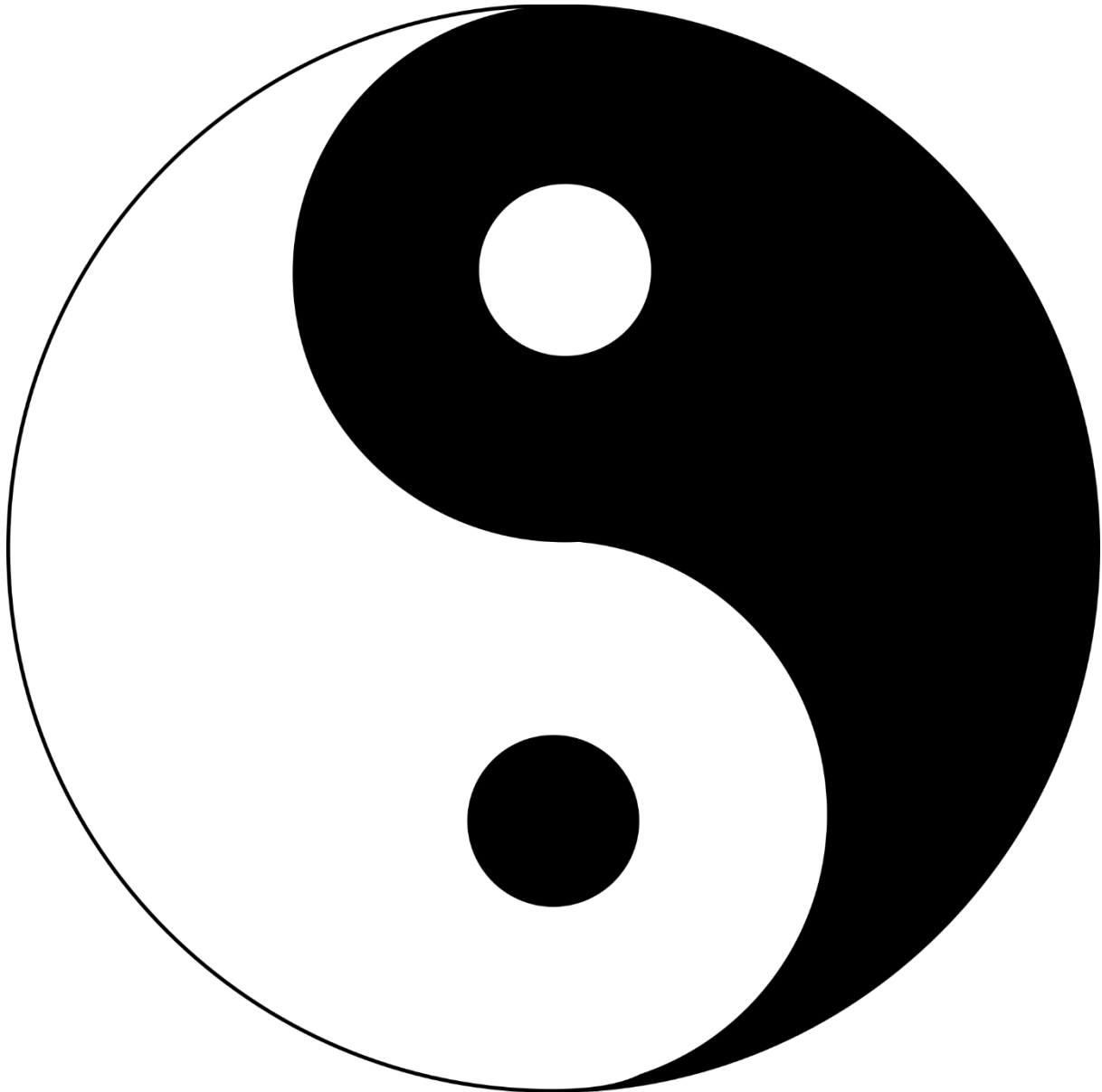


**The dynamics of attitudes towards immigrants in Dutch  
society:  
The importance of contact with immigrants**



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## Preface

Before you lies my bachelor thesis for Human Geography, Spatial Planning and Environmental Studies. This document represents the progress I have made during the course of my studies. Just as with finishing courses within my studies, it took me a long time to find the right focus.

I have learned that it is important to keep going no matter what. This goes for the process of creation, but is also relevant to the hardships that are faced in society. Subjugating to populist and extreme voices hinders structural improvements. Improvement comes with small but meaningful adjustments, suggested by perhaps not the loudest voices out there.

I want to thank my thesis supervisor Jackie van de Walle for being patient with me and sharing her enthusiasm, as well as providing much needed feedback on pieces of which few directly contributed to this thesis. I also want to thank Huibert, who helped me to challenge my own thinking and helped me to make sense of what I was doing. I would like to thank my parents for being there for me, and suggesting that I should counsel with Huibert. Last but not least, I just want to pat myself on the back and say I did a good job keeping it all together.

## Summary

Current societal and political debates in The Netherlands concerning immigration and integration seem to generally ascribe negative values to immigrants. It is assumed that the current debates on immigration both influence attitudes towards immigrants and are influenced by them. According to various scientific sources, it is likely that attitudes towards immigrants are strongly influenced by perceived threats posed by immigrants, spread by the media and politics. Various theories also indicate that actual contact with immigrants might reduce prejudice and thereby improve attitudes towards immigrants. However, it is unclear to what extent contact plays a role in developing attitudes towards immigrants, on the national level.

The goal of this research is to gain insight in the effect of interethnic contact on interethnic attitudes on a national level, in The Netherlands. This has not been studied before. This goal is to be achieved by performing quantitative analysis of the relationships between various dimensions of contact with immigrants as well as various dimensions of attitudes towards immigrants. Specifically, contact variables have measured quantity of occasional contact with immigrants, valence of occasional contact with immigrants, and quantity of friendships with immigrants, with scores ranging generally from infrequent to frequent and bad to good and. Attitude variables have measured attitudes towards immigrants on the topics of economy, culture, living, jobs, taxes and services and crime.

Multiple Chi-square tests for independence have been carried out, to expose correlations between contact and attitude variables. An existing dataset has been used, containing information about 1919 respondents in The Netherlands. It has been found that frequency of occasional contact and its valence, as well as quantity of friendships with immigrants are significantly and positively correlated with attitudes towards immigrants, regarding economy, culture, living, jobs and taxes and services. No significant correlation has been found between various contact dimensions and attitudes towards immigrants regarding crime. The strength of all significant correlations between contact and attitudes, however, is weak. This suggests that contact is not all that important in shaping attitudes towards immigrants, in The Netherlands, and thus other factors such as the way immigrants are being framed in media and politics might be more influential.

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## Chapter One: Project framework

This chapter will describe general societal developments and shortly introduce certain theories that go along with these developments. Together, the societal development and social theories can be seen as the frame within which this research is carried out. Further on, the societal and scientific relevance of this research will be explained, along with the main goals and research questions of this research.

### 1.1. Introduction

Immigrants have gained notoriety in the past years. It has been said that the immigration influx is too big and it is a problem that refugees are granted priority access to the housing market. It has been said that everybody is being granted access (to The Netherlands), including IS-fighters, and that immigration is going out of control. Also, allegedly health care is getting more and more expensive although newcomers get anything for free, and thus this situation is unbalanced. These statements are from a report by the Dutch planning agency Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (SCP) from 2019, and reflect the sentiments of a few Dutch citizens. Additionally, a spokesperson of the SCP, Josje den Ridder, reveals that in SCP research, a lot of respondents state that there are too many asylum seekers, that the process of integration is flawed, there are too many mosques and that newcomers don't adapt to society (AD, 2020). According to her, more than 50% of respondents agree to the statement that as a result of immigration and open borders, The Netherlands threatens to lose its character, whatever that character might be.

The statements above given by respondents refer to multiple concepts. First of all, it seems that Dutch people are addressing matters of inequality, where immigrants are treated with favorable measures compared to native Dutch people. Whether this perceived unequal treatment reflects reality or not in the first place is hard to tell, let alone whether it is justified or not is hard to tell and is very much a matter of perception. Nevertheless, special measures offered to immigrants are a means of integration, since immigrants often have certain disadvantages compared to the local population and need some help getting started. In short, integration refers to the process of embedding of immigrants in Dutch economy, politics, culture, law and customs. Successful integration of immigrants not only depends on the way immigrants view the importance of their own integration along with the effort they put into it, it also depends on the ways in which they are received and/or perceived in the existing culture (Bakker, Dagevos, & Engbersen, 2014).

There are a lot of immigrants in the Netherlands, many of which have different backgrounds (see Chapter 4 for an elaboration). It is thus not likely that all immigrants share the same characteristics. Nevertheless, statements as in the first paragraph refer to a division between native people and immigrants, creating a generalized notion of the Dutch and the immigrants. There are perhaps inherent differences between people belonging to the different groups, depending on which region the immigrants are from. People from the same place generally belong to the same ethnic group, and: *"An 'ethnic group' refers to a culturally defined group which may include common geographic origin, language and religious faith as well as shared traditions, values, symbols, literature, music and food preferences"* (Polednak as cited in Weeramanthri, 2000, p. 5). As such, an immigrant from Germany will probably have characteristics more similar to Dutch people than does an immigrant from India. However, whether being different or having different ethnicity inherently poses problems to the host country is questionable.

In other words, it seems that there are many perceived problems concerning immigrants, whereas there are yet few facts to substantiate such perceptions. In order to gain a realistic insight in the effects of immigration to the Netherlands, a report on integration in The Netherlands from the Dutch research platform Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS) from 2018 has been consulted. The most salient findings are the following:

- Afghan, Iraqi and Iranian people do relatively well in secondary, secondary vocational and higher education. The education levels of Turkish and Moroccan people are on the rise. People from non-western backgrounds drop out twice as often as Dutch students.
- Most refugees who have arrived in The Netherlands rely on unemployment benefits. People with non-western backgrounds are twice as often unemployed as people with a Dutch background.
- People with Antillean background are most often suspected of crimes. However, in the adolescent age group, Moroccans are most often suspected of committing crimes. The number of suspects found guilty by a judge in court has decreased for all backgrounds.
- Healthcare costs are 14% higher for people with non-western background than Dutch people. Especially the costs for mental healthcare and medicine are high for men with non-western backgrounds.
- Regarding giving informal help and volunteering, people with a non-western background partake in activities less often than people with Dutch backgrounds.

In the CBS research, people with western migration backgrounds are defined as people originating from Europe, North America, Oceania, Indonesia or Japan, and “non-western migrants”. Non-western migration backgrounds refer to people originating from Africa, Latin America, Asia (excluding Indonesia and Japan) or Turkey (CBS, 2018).

Actually, the statements given in the first paragraph hardly reflect the findings by the CBS (2018) report on integration. However, the findings from CBS to some extent confirm that immigrants in some respects perform less than Dutch inhabitants. Even so, it is important to keep in mind that:

- A refugee is: “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.” (UNHCR, 2020). Being a refugee to some extent justifies to rely on unemployment benefits.
- According to Kennisplatform Integratie en Samenleving (KIS) (2019), when candidates have equal competence, a person with a Dutch-sounding last name has about 60% more chance to be invited to a job interview than a person with an Arabic-sounding name. In other words, discrimination and racism are prevalent in the labor market.
- According to Savelkoul et al., (2010) and van Selm (2019) in general it are the refugees from Syria and surrounding countries who are spoken of in contemporary debates, along with Muslims in general. This suggests that when speaking about immigrants people actually refer to refugees and Muslims, which eliminates people

from for example Antillean and Surinam descent from being associated with certain problems or grievances concerning immigration.

In all, it seems that especially Muslims and refugees are subject of negative attitudes concerning immigration, and/or subjugated to matters beyond their control that hinder integration. Either way, there is little evidence that immigrants have negative influence on what can be called Dutch culture or character. If this is true it would be difficult to comprehend general negative attitudes towards immigrants, unless other factors have influence on the way immigration is perceived.

For instance, political parties such as the Partij Voor de Vrijheid (PVV) make use of existing anti-immigration sentiments, as the party manifesto of Geert Wilders' party, the PVV, clearly illustrates an anti-immigration attitude (PVV, 2020). According to Knoll, Redlawsk & Sanborn (2010, p. 435), how people: "perceive an issue such as immigration policy is conditioned by the ways in which the issue is framed by elites.". As such, Geert Wilders' rationale which comes down to eradicating Islam from Dutch society (although not explicitly stating what is problematic about them) (PVV, 2020), might influence people to develop negative perceptions of immigrants. In other words, Geert Wilders offers a lens or "frame" through which to view immigration.

Frames influence how people perceive immigrants and immigration, and framing relates to the creation of context. According to Boon (2017), the technique of framing consists of choosing words to describe something that evokes a certain image. An example of a frame, relevant to the immigration debate given by Boon (2017) is the term Islamization, which is used by Geert Wilders among others. The frame of Islamization allegedly implies that the presence of Muslims and their growing numbers pose a threat to Jewish-Christian values, and thereby has led to for instance protests against mosques, according to Boon (2017). This frame, although not mentioned by name, is prominent in the media and probably influences people's thoughts about immigration: "*In the Western media immigrant groups of non-Western ancestry are often portrayed as favoring cultural or religious practices which are incompatible with the prevailing norms of the host society*" (Schlueter & Wagner, 2008, p. 155).

Other than Islamization, there are frames in Dutch society that refer to refugees. For instance, there is the frame of "fortune seekers" (UNHCR, 2018), which implies that there are people who pose as refugees whereas they actually come to profit from better jobs and institutions. It is questionable whether frames such as "fortune seeker" and "Islamization", which are assumed to influence attitudes towards immigrants in The Netherlands, at least to some extent reflect reality, given the nature of frames.

The reason that these negative immigration frames are successful might have to do with the fact that on a national scale, as is relevant in Dutch politics, subjects such as the immigrant become generalized and thus to some extent good and bad characteristics become inflated. It has been found that especially on large socio-spatial scales, such as the nation-state, "*the percentage of ethnic minorities becomes a topic of political debates that often emphasize economic and political threats*" (Wagner, Christ, Pettigrew, Stellmacher, & Wolf, 2006, p. 387). Additionally, Schlueter & Davidov (2011, p. 187) suggest that: "*a greater number of negative immigration-related news reports increases perceptions of threatened group interests among natives over time*". Given the prominence of digital and social media in daily life nowadays, it is likely that when media and politics relatively often share negative views of immigrants these views consequently inform (negative) attitudes and prejudice towards immigrants.

Although it is unclear to what extent exactly immigrants are being displayed positively or negatively in the media, either way the literature suggests that attitudes towards immigrants are largely based on perceptions of immigrants. On the national scale, as was found in previous paragraphs, media and political outings potentially inform perceptions of immigrants by Dutch people. On the contrary, little information is known about how personal experience with immigrants influences perceptions of immigrants on the national scale. Evidently interethnic contact has potential to reduce prejudice, as Pettigrew & Tropp (2006) have found in their meta-analytic study. In this light, Wagner et al. (2008) further found that an increase in the number of immigrants should create opportunities for contact with immigrants, which could result in less prejudice towards immigrants. However, interethnic contact does not always reduce prejudice, which is likely due to variations in context (Hollands, 2001).

Earlier research in The Netherlands on the topic of contact theory has been carried out in more localized settings, often relating contact to either voting behavior and/or neighborhood relationships (Savelkoul et al., 2017; Muller & Smets, 2009; Lancee & Dronkers, 2011). Although insightful, these research efforts have not contributed to understanding the development of interethnic attitudes on national scale. Since about 23,6% of the population of The Netherlands consists of people with an immigration background (CBS, 2020), and media and politics have potential to disproportionately portray immigrants as negative, it seems fair to re-evaluate the perceptions and realities that underlie immigration and integration attitudes and policies.

## **1.2. Societal relevance**

Immigrants are just as much part of Dutch society as people with Dutch backgrounds, but it seems that immigrants are being treated more often negatively than positively in the media and politics. Accordingly, on average people seem to have negative attitudes towards immigrants. It is possible that negative attitudes towards immigrants are a result of sociological and psychological processes rather than actual experiences with immigrants. This research tries to gain insight in the balance between these factors, and thereby tries to gain insight in the development of attitudes towards immigrants. National immigration policy is mainly set out to reduce immigration, but if the number of immigrants were reduced, would attitudes towards immigrants improve? Perhaps there is a better way to deal with attitudes towards immigrants, that does not involve denying people access to the Netherlands or displacing them from the Netherlands. Perhaps perceptions towards immigrants could be altered, so that immigrants are less often seen as problematic to Dutch society. This research tries to gain insight in negative attitudes towards immigrants in the Netherlands and how they are related to real or perceived issues. It directly contributes to informing policy decisions by evaluating whether or not real world contact with immigrants might be a successful means of reducing prejudice or improving attitudes towards immigrants.

## **1.3. Scientific relevance**

Various research efforts in the Netherlands have focused on interethnic attitudes and related concepts. For instance Savelkoul, Laméris & Tolsma (2017) have studied ethnic compositions of neighborhoods in relation to voting for radical right parties, while taking into account perceived threats and interethnic contact. Velasco González, Verkuyten, Weesie & Poppe (2008) have studied prejudices towards Muslims in the Netherlands, also taking into account perceptions of threat. Müller & Smets (2009) have zoomed in on relationships between Iraqi's and natives in the Dutch city of Arnhem, taking into account personal contact. Huijts, Sluiter, Scheepers & Kraaykamp (2013) have studied the relationships between ethnic diversity and interethnic contact in both work and school environments.

In short, various research efforts have contributed to an understanding of interethnic attitude development as a result of actual interactions with immigrants, while taking into account perceived threats and other perceptions. However, most research on the topic has been focused on and carried out in specific local circumstances and thus to some extent lacks the possibility of generalization. As far as is known, no research has yet been carried out in the Netherlands that investigates the development of attitudes towards immigrants on a national scale, in relation to contact with immigrants.

#### **1.4. Research goals**

The goal of this research is to develop an understanding of the importance of contact with immigrants in developing attitudes towards immigrants. This understanding can be used to support policymaking decisions. Additionally, it aims to raise awareness among inhabitants of The Netherlands with regards to what information they rely on to shape their understanding of immigrants.

#### **1.5. Research questions**

The main research question that will be answered in this research is:

What is the importance of contact with immigrants, in developing attitudes towards immigrants in The Netherlands?

There are many dimensions of attitudes, such as economic and cultural dimensions. How various dimensions of attitudes towards immigrants relate to each other and might relate to contact with immigrants is elaborated upon in the theory section. The first sub-question that will be answered in this research is:

How do various dimensions of attitudes towards immigrants relate to each other?

There are different dimensions of contact, such as the intimacy of contact, and the way contact is experienced, which will be elaborated upon in the theory section. The second sub-question that will be answered in this research is:

How do different dimensions of contact relate to each other?

The final sub-question that will be answered in this research, which is an elaboration of the main question, is:

What is the effect of different dimensions of contact with immigrants on various dimensions of immigration attitudes in The Netherlands?

#### **1.6. Reading guide**

In Chapter 2, theories will be examined that explain the development of attitudes towards immigrants, in Dutch context. An explanation of the various dimensions of attitudes that will be explored in this research will be given. In this chapter, theories concerning contact theory will also be elaborated upon, similarly taking into account its different dimensions and its relationship with attitudes towards immigrants. Eventually, hypotheses will be derived from the various theories on attitudes and contact.

In Chapter 3, the hypotheses will be taken as a starting point to introduce and explain the methodological choices that were made in this research. Furthermore, the choice of the dataset will be discussed in relation to the theoretical concepts that are developed and used in this research.

In Chapter 4, a more thorough overview of immigration in the Netherlands will be given, in order to better understand the implications of this research. Following this, various results of the analyses as described in Chapter 3 will be displayed and summarized. The results show whether the hypotheses are confirmed or not. Tables that are part of the analysis but are not shown in this section can be found in Appendix A.

In Chapter 5, conclusions regarding the sub-questions and main question will be drawn. Unexpected results will be discussed, and recommendations will be given with regards to future research.

In Chapter 6, a reflection upon the research process, limits of the research and the results of this research will be given.

## Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

This chapter will elaborate on theories that are used in this research. First of all, the argumentation for the choice of theoretical framework will be given. Second, attitudes will be described according to various research efforts and theories. A distinction will be made between certain types of attitudes, related to different types of threat perceptions. Following this, interethnic contact will be addressed and explained. Theories that underlie the concept of contact will be reviewed and various forms of contact will be explored. Eventually certain relationships between types of attitudes and types of contact will be hypothesized, and these hypotheses will be visualized in the conceptual model.

### 2.1. Attitudes

The way the concept of attitude is used in this research, overlaps with these definitions:

- According to Eagly & Chaiken (2007, p. 598) an attitude is: “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or *disfavor*”.
- Banaji & Heiphetz (2015, p. 356) state that an attitude is a: “*mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual’s response to all objects and situations with which it is related*”.

The first definition gives a better idea of how an attitude works in simple terms, whereas the second definition gives more insight in the technical aspects of an attitude. The main interpretation of the word attitude in this research, is that it reflects not only rationality but also the embodiment of experiences, thoughts and values among others. It captures the (perhaps subconscious) conceptions one has of, in this case, immigrants.

#### 2.1.1. Frames in the media and politics

As has been stated in the introduction, attitudes towards immigrants are influenced by actual experiences with immigrants, and political and media frames and discourses. While little is known about the effect of contact or lack of contact on national scale in terms of causing a specific attitude, it is known that politics and media can have a large effect on public attitudes towards immigration. In the introduction it was stated that the actual balance between positive and negative portrayals in the media was unclear, but the following sources shed some light on this issue. However, they seem to be slightly outdated.

According to Panichella & Ambrosini (2018, p. 395-396): “in the recent years, researchers widely agree that the mass media depict immigrants in a predominantly negative tone and as a threat to the host society (e.g., Brader et al. 2008). This has an effect on anti-migrant attitudes, because the number of negative immigration-related news reports increases *perceived group threat*”. Similarly, Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart (2007, p. 404) found that: “The more news media reported about immigration-related topics, the higher the aggregate share of vote intention for anti-immigrant parties, even when controlling for real-world developments.”. These sources clearly indicate that the media has a negative effects on attitudes towards immigrants and related behavior.

Furthermore, according to Bos, Lecheler, Mewafi & Vliegenthart (2016, p. 99) there is little balance between positive and negative frames: “In the past years, the media coverage on immigration in Dutch media is considered overwhelmingly negative (see for instance, Lubbers, Scheepers & Wester, 1998; Roggeband & Vliegenthart, 2007; Saharso & Lettinga, 2008; Van Dijk, 1991). Most attention is paid to the poor state of integration, criminal offences, drug abuse, and Muslim extremism. However, the issue is occasionally still approached from a positive angle in the media, for example when the advantages of ethnic *diversity are emphasized*”. This imbalance between the salience of positive and negative frames is perhaps logical, since good things generally don’t require attention that would otherwise be needed to solve or fix a problem. However, although maybe unintentional the dominance of negative frames is likely to influence people’s attitudes towards immigrants.

In addition to frames in the media, Green, Visintin, Sarrasin & Hewstone (2019, p.1) found that: “integration policies have the potential to guide *national majority members’ perceptions* regarding immigrants”. This finding adds to the equation that the framing of immigrants by policies also influences attitudes towards immigrants rather than media alone.

Negative frames such as Islamization and fortune seekers, as were mentioned in the introduction, suggest that the immigrant is a cheater, a fraud, or wants to establish his or her own culture at expense of the Dutch. Schlueter & Wagner (2008, p. 155) have found that: “that by means of immigrant derogation, members of the host society seek to protect or restore the *status of their own group against the threat seen to be posed by immigrants*”. Although it is hard to substantiate that negative political and media coverage of immigration is meant as a form of immigrant derogation, the effect is clear: political debates emphasize on economic and political threats posed by immigrants (Wagner, Christ, Pettigrew, Stellmacher, & Wolf, 2006) and negative news reports about immigration lead to perceptions of threatened group interests (Schlueter & Davidov (2011).

### **2.1.2. Prejudice towards immigrants**

A feeling of threat, especially when not evoked by actual contact, but rather by negative portrayals of immigrants in the media for instance, can be seen as a form of prejudice. According to Peel (1954, p. 103):

“A prejudice literally means pre-judgment, that is, judgment before all the facts are known, but it has come also to mean a judgment in terms of an established "frame of reference". It relates to a way of looking at facts, and in this sense all beliefs and attitudes partake of prejudice to some extent. Prejudice may also refer only to those beliefs and attitudes which place the objects of the attitudes *at a clear advantage or disadvantage*.”.

Above quote is important for understanding the contents of prejudice, but it does not capture well the implication of prejudice in practice. A rather long and thorough explanation of the development and nature of prejudice is given by Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann (2011, p. 28-29), which is partially described in Figure 1 on the following page.

People are differentiated according to whether they belong to an in-or outgroup or not, without considering the actual differences in content between these groups. The distinctions by which people are categorized are often the ones that are easily visible, such as gender, race and such, or otherwise those characteristics that are visible through representations in the media or other channels. In other words, people are categorized, based on stereotypes. Stereotypes involve generalizations about groups of people, which make these people seem similar whereas in reality they are not.

Stereotypes barely change over time. Yet, they are very often used to define who belongs to an in-group and who does not, disregarding how individuals might change or have changed over time. Additionally it are often the members of the out-group whose characteristics are generalized, whereas members of an in-group are perceived as individually distinct. However, to some extent when attributing characteristics to an out-group, characteristics are also attributed to the in-group. These characteristics would generally represent the shared traits of the in-group, rather than readily available stereotypes which are used to classify others.

When having decided whether a person belongs to an in-group or out-group, people accordingly value the in-group members as positive and the out-group members as negative. This is a means of boosting self-esteem and creating coherence along with a positive feeling between group members. Interestingly, this leads to people having good attitudes towards unknown in-group members, who might be just as different from the person in question as an out-group member. The categorization of people as belonging to the in-or out-group can thus be seen as a means of gaining a positive social identity, rather than creating understanding between different groups of people.

Figure 1. Description of explanation of prejudice according to Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann (2011, p. 28-29)

Essentially, framing is a way of creating or sustaining stereotypes, which reinforces the notion of, for example Dutch culture, and similarly reinforces the perceived difference between immigrants and natives. Differences in culture might lead to the feeling of Dutch culture being threatened by immigrants, and thus justifies actions that derogate immigrants. Similarly, differences between groups in terms of social-economic status might lead to feelings of threat concerning distribution of resources. Especially when it seems that the flow of immigrants is extremely large or will grow, as certain populist politicians exclaim (AD, 2020), it might be that threat perceptions increase. The notion of threat and what threat perceptions are based on will be discussed in the next section.

### 2.1.3. Realistic and symbolic (perceived) threats

In section 2.1.1. it was argued that perceptions of threats related to immigrants, are being spread through politics and media. Green, Sarrasin, Baur, & Fasel (2015, p.1) have said that: *“Immigration is a central topic used to mobilize votes: Radical right party campaigns and discourse frequently stigmatize immigrants by depicting them as threats to the nation’s economy, culture, and security”*. Accordingly, Velasco González, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe (2008, p. 669) suggest that: *“there are four basic types of threat that can lead to prejudice: realistic threats; symbolic threats; negative stereotyping; and intergroup anxiety”*.

The research by Velasco González, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe (2008, p. 669) states that: *“Realistic threats can be conceptualized in economic, physical, and political terms.”*, and that: *“symbolic threats are based on perceived group differences in values, norms, and beliefs.”*. The other two categories of threat, negative stereotyping and intergroup anxiety, represent other aspects of attitudes towards immigrants. These aspects reflect an inner state of the one who judges others whereas the notions of realistic and symbolic threat refer to qualities of the immigrant. Prejudice and stereotypes have been discussed in the previous sections and do not help classify threats. Therefore, in this research notions of stereotype and intergroup anxiety will not be treated as threats.

In order to gain understanding of existing threats and attitudes towards immigrants in The Netherlands, various earlier discussed frames will be categorized. According to the given definitions of types of threats, the Islamization frame refers mostly to a symbolic threat, since it presupposes that the arrival of Muslims will come at the cost of original Dutch cultural values. Likely the arrival of many Muslims also has political and economic consequences, but most salient is the notion that Dutch culture will vanish, as the Islamization frame implies.

There is also the frame of the fortune seeker, which in contrast to Islamization, refers mostly to a realistic threat. Verkuyten (2004, p. 295) states that: *“In general, those whose profiles match that of the “real refugee” are typically defined as deserving of sympathy and support, whereas those labeled as fortune seekers are presented as a threat to the country’s hospitality and, as such, an understandable target of feelings of anger and resentment.”*. The fortune seeker frame might both invoke realistic and symbolic threats, because the country’s hospitality refers to a physical, economical capacity to take in newcomers, as well as compassion for people in need and a readiness to act upon their needs, which is misused when refugees are in fact economic migrants. An economic migrant is someone who migrates due to economic reasons, such as better job prospects or higher wages.

In reality, there are many economic migrants coming to The Netherlands, and is thus not a new development. According to the fortune seeker frame, however, many refugees are in fact economic migrants. Verkuyten (2004, p. 295) found that concerning attitudes towards refugees who are thus economic migrants: *“Anger about the neediness of others is to be expected when they themselves are considered responsible for their situation (e.g. Feather, 1999; Schmidt and Weiner, 1988). People tend to react in an irritated and hostile manner to others when they perceive them as personally responsible for their plight.”*. The salience of the fortune seeker frame creates the expectation that a refugee might be a fraud, and therefore they are likely being treated with more scrutiny.

Another reason for refugees and likewise immigrants in general to be scrutinized, is because of fear for terrorism. Terrorism is sometimes associated with the influx of refugees, mostly due to the fact that multiple terrorist attacks have been carried out in the EU in the last decade. There were:

- Bombings and shootings in Paris in November 2015, which were claimed by ISIS (BBC.com, 2015)
- Bombings at Brussels airport and a metro station in the city centre, in March 2016 (BBC.com, 2016).
- An act where jihadis killed 14 people and injured more than 100 people in Barcelona in August 2017, which was also claimed by ISIS (BBC.com, 2017).

The main reason that terrorism is sometimes associated with refugees, is that in the first place terrorism seems to be associated with Muslims and in the second place, a large share of refugees is Muslim (De Dagelijkse Standaard, 2017). Terrorism is meant to disrupt societies and spread fear, in hopes to force ideological beliefs onto society and to change decision making processes, according to the definition of the Dutch intelligence agency Algemene Inlichtingen en Veiligheidsdienst (AIVD) (2020). In this sense, terrorism represents mostly a symbolical threat, although terrorist attacks might have economic repercussions.

Summarizing the above the types of threat that are associated with common frames, it seems that the symbolic threat perception regarding immigration is most prevalent in Dutch society. Research by McLaren (2003) and Sniderman, Hagendoorn, & Prior (2004) as cited in Velasco González, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe (2008, p. 670) confirm these suspicions:

*“While studying 17 European countries, McLaren (2003) also found that beliefs that immigrants challenge or undermine national values were a stronger predictor of negative attitudes towards immigrants than perceptions of realistic threat. The same was found in the context of The Netherlands (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, & Prior, 2004). In relation to Muslim minorities, it can be expected that symbolic threats and negative stereotypes have stronger associations with Muslim prejudice than realistic threats. Public discourse in The Netherlands focuses on the ‘Dutch-Muslim’ cultural war and the presumed lack of sociocultural integration of Muslims, and not on competition over scarce resources, such as houses and jobs.”*

An important remark to notions of both realistic and symbolic threats, is that: *“prejudice and out-group antagonism are manifested through perceptions of group threat and not necessarily by the actual presence of migrant minorities”* (Escandell & Ceobanu 2008, p. 65). Thus, the perceptions of threat people have concerning immigrants, which could be symbolic or realistic or both, are more related to perceptions of threats posed by immigrants rather than to actual presence of immigrants. This seems self-explanatory but in reality it would mean that individual threat perceptions are more dependent on threatening portrayals of immigrants in the media for example rather than the actual presence of threatening immigrants in the country. However, there are also theories that suggest that actual contact with immigrants can reduce prejudice towards them. These notions will be discussed in the next section.

#### **2.1.4. Interethnic contact and attitudes**

A vast body of research on the topic of interethnic contact, has confirmed that actual contact with immigrants can reduce prejudice towards them (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Allport (1954, p. 281) was one of the first to develop a hypothesis regarding the effect of interethnic contact on prejudice. The main notion is: *“Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals.”* Although this hypothesis has often been proven, it is evident that not just any kind of contact is effective in reducing prejudice. It has become clear that the circumstances under which the contact takes place is very important. Hollands (2001, p. 298) offers further explanation of these required conditions: *“research made clear that the conditions under which the contact takes place are more relevant than its frequency (Miller and Brewer 1984; Desforges et al. 1991). Other important conditions appear to be that the interaction must afford high acquaintance potential and that the information exchanged during the interaction must be of the type that might disconfirm a negative stereotype.”* These findings suggest that more intimate forms of contact will yield better effects in terms of reducing prejudice.

In the literature regarding contact theory, various forms of contact are regularly acknowledged. These forms of contact are:

- Occasional contact
- Friendship
- Workplace contact

Following the explanations by Allport (1954) and Hollands (2001), it would seem that occasional contact is the least effective at reducing prejudice, since optimal conditions are less likely to be met. For instance, when visiting a local shop it is unlikely that very meaningful conversations will take place that might disconfirm negative stereotypes about one another. As such, Hamberger and Hewstone (1997, p. 175) explain the notion of neighborhood contact: "*Neighbourhood contact is perhaps best seen as an 'opportunity for' rather than a 'real use of contact (see Wagner, Hewstone & Machleit, 1989), in terms of which out-group members may simply be avoided. If neighbourhood contact means more intimate contacts based on propinquity, then it may result in a generalized positive change in out-group attitudes (Deutsch & Collins, 1951; Wilner, Walkley & Cook, 1952). But mere proximity of housing is unlikely to effect such change*". Although not all forms of occasional contact are neighborhood contact, and vice versa, occasional contact is mostly based on propinquity of individuals, as was similarly stated by Hamberger and Hewstone (1997). Additionally, in this research (Chapter 3, 4 & 5) a specific dataset is used, and in this dataset occasional (interethnic) contact is defined as: contact "on public transport, in the street, in shops or in the neighbourhood" (ESS, 2014). As such, the definition of occasional contact does suggest that it is contact that takes place merely because of proximity.

Although occasional contact by itself does not seem to have much influence on prejudice, various researches have confirmed that: "*the association between contact quantity and prejudice was moderated by its valence*" (Barlow et al., 2012, p. 1629). As such, occasional contact might be effective at reducing prejudice when it is experienced as positive, and vice versa. Additionally, Green, Sarrasin, Baur & Fasel (2015) confirm that positive experiences of occasional contact with immigrants lead to reduced threat perceptions.

As opposed to occasional contact, more intimate forms of contact, such as friendship, take place because there is more profound connection between people rather than proximity. Although contact with friends might also be occasional, the main difference between occasional contact and friendship is that occasional contact is regarded as more casual and superficial whereas friendship is considered to be more meaningful (Savelkoul, Scheepers, Tolsma & Hagendoorn, 2010). As such, friendship has more potential to reduce prejudice than occasional contact. This is supported by McLaren (2003, p. 913), who states: "*if a contact situation provides an opportunity to see that beliefs are actually similar, prejudice should be reduced. The primary type of contact that should provide this opportunity is intimate contact, such as friendship*". Additionally, Thomsen (2012) argues that intergroup friendship is the most effective prejudice-reducing form of contact, and similarly, Hamberger and Hewstone (1997) state that they can only make predictions regarding reduction of prejudice as a result of friendship, rather than other types of contact. Thus, intimate contact forms such as friendship are supposed to be the strongest influences on immigration attitudes.

The third type of contact, workplace contact, is not evaluated in this research since there is no data available on this type of contact.

## Chapter Three: Operationalization of theories and concepts

The theoretic concepts and relationships that are mentioned in the previous chapter will be tested. However, they have to be operationalized before they can be analyzed in a quantitative manner. In Chapter 4 an elaborate motivation for the choice of methodology and dataset is given. The way the beforementioned theories and concepts are operationalized is partly determined by what kind of analysis are performed and what kind of dataset is used.

### 3.1. Operationalization of attitudes towards immigrants

In the theory section it was stated that attitudes towards immigrants are informed by prejudices about and experiences with immigrants. Also, it has been found that prejudice often leads to threat perceptions. As such, it seems that perception of different types of threat might be a good indicator of attitudes towards immigrants. Based on the distinction between realistic threats and symbolic threats that has been found in theory, a selection of variables has been made to measure both types of threats. The variables are provided by the dataset that has been chosen for this research, which is the European Social Survey (ESS) from 2014. Variables have been selected according to the type of threat they indicate. As was stated in section 2.1.3., realistic threats suggest there might be competition over resources, whereas symbolic threats suggest that there might be competition in terms of culture, norms and values. Below in Table 1 an overview of the variables and associated types of threats is given.

Variable name	Type of threat
Immigration bad or good for country's economy	Realistic threat
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants	Symbolic threat
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live	Symbolic threat
Immigrants take jobs away in country or create new jobs	Realistic threat
Taxes and services: immigrants take out more than they put in or less	Realistic threat
Immigrants make country's crime problems worse or better	Symbolic threat

Table 1. Variables measuring interethnic attitudes.

There were other variables regarding attitudes towards immigrants to choose from, but many of these were not theoretically related to the notion of threat. For instance, knowing whether a respondent does or does not want to allow Muslims into their country does not provide information about why this attitude exists, or what kind of threat motivates this choice. Having a certain attitude towards immigrants on these various topics as in Table 1 might explain why someone would not want to allow Muslims in their country, whereas the reverse relationship might be hard to prove. The chosen variables, as displayed above, are rather general notions of various aspects of society and are thus easily linked to theory, which is useful to this study. Moreover, the chosen variables clearly indicate prejudices and attitudes, since the variables refer to a generalized influence of all immigrants. The importance of general conceptions of costs and benefits of immigration for determining immigration attitudes is supported by Hainmueller & Hopkins (2013, p. 225), stating that: *"immigration attitudes are shaped by sociotropic concerns about national-level impacts, whether those impacts are*

*cultural or economic*". Essentially, the attitude variables as shown in Table 1 can be interpreted separately, but ultimately they are meant to be interpreted together in order to derive a general attitude towards immigrants. Further analyses will give more insight as to how effective these concepts are at measuring attitudes.

**3.1.1. Hypotheses concerning interrelations between attitudes towards immigrants**

Since the notion of attitude refers to a mental framework from which people judge immigrants, it is expected that scores on attitude variables display a similar tendency. For instance, someone with a negative attitude towards immigrants would generally give lower scores on all attitude variables than someone with a positive attitude towards immigrants. As such, it is expected that:

H1: The various topical attitudes towards immigrants are correlated with each other.

The testing of this hypothesis contributes to answering the first sub-question of: How do various dimensions of attitudes towards immigrants relate to each other?

**3.2. Operationalization of contact with immigrants**

With regards to contact with immigrants, in the theory section it has been found that there are mainly three types of contact, namely occasional contact, friendship and workplace contact. Additionally, it has been found that occasional contact was mostly moderated by its valence. The ESS Round 7 Data (2014) dataset provides information about these exact variables, except workplace contact. In Table 2 below an overview is given of the variables available in the dataset and to what type of contact they relate.

Variable name	Type of contact
Different race or ethnic group: contact, how often	(Frequency of) occasional contact
Different race or ethnic group: contact, how bad or good	(Valence of) occasional contact
Different race or ethnic group: have any close friends	Intimate contact

Table 2. Variables measuring interethnic contact.

**3.2.1. Hypotheses concerning interrelations between contacts with immigrants**

It is assumed, just as with attitudes towards immigrants, that various measures of contact with immigrants are related to each other, since they together represent a general notion of contact. However, theory suggests that the frequency of occasional contact is less important than the valence of occasional contact in determining prejudice towards immigrants. Similarly, intimate contact is deemed an important factor in reducing prejudice. It is thus assumed that both intimate contact and valence of occasional contact have influence on immigration attitudes. In other words, a positive evaluation of occasional contact might have similar effects in terms of reducing prejudice as having friendships with immigrants. This leads to the formulation of H2:

H2: The valence of occasional contact with immigrants is correlated with the amount of intimate contacts with immigrants

The testing of this hypothesis contributes to answering the second sub-question: How do different dimensions of contact relate to each other?

### **3.3. Hypotheses concerning the effect of contact with immigrants on attitudes towards immigrants**

In the theory section it was found that in The Netherlands, the most prevalent notion of threat related to immigrants is of symbolic nature. As was stated in section 2.1.4. about contact, it was suggested that intimate forms of contact such as friendship have the potential to see that beliefs of immigrants and natives is actually similar. In this sense, it is expected that friendship with immigrants has the most potential to reduce perceptions of symbolic threats. As such, hypothesis H3 is formulated:

H3: Intimate contact with immigrants has more influence on attitudes towards immigrants that are linked to symbolic threats than attitudes towards immigrants that are linked to realistic threats.

Additionally, it is expected that intimate contact with immigrants is best at improving attitudes towards immigrants. The fourth hypothesis is:

H4: Intimate contact with immigrants is more strongly correlated with attitudes towards immigrants than occasional contact with immigrants is correlated with attitudes towards immigrants.

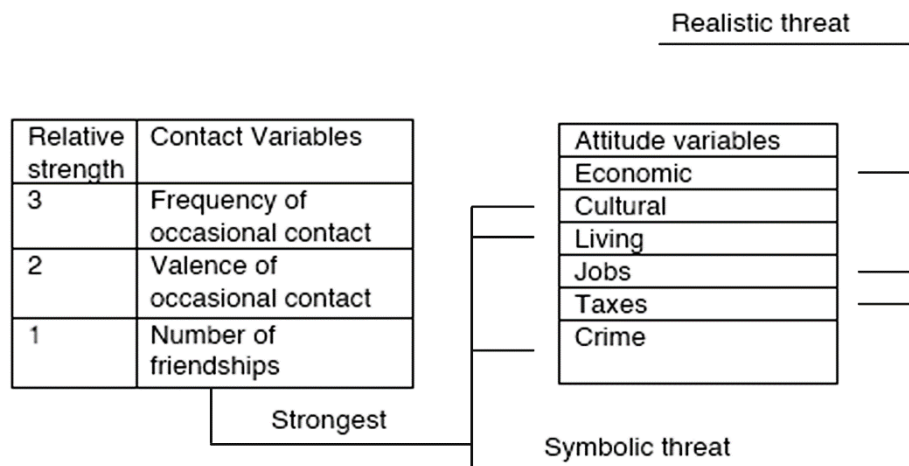
Since the effect of occasional contact is mostly determined by its valence, the fifth hypothesis is:

H5: The valence of occasional contact with immigrants is more correlated with attitudes towards immigrants than the frequency of occasional contact with immigrants.

The testing of H3, H4 and H5 will contribute to answering the third sub-question: What is the effect of different dimensions of contact with immigrants on various dimensions of immigration attitudes in The Netherlands?

Eventually the answers to all sub-questions will answer the main research question: What is the importance of contact with immigrants, in developing attitudes towards immigrants, in The Netherlands?

### 3.4. Conceptual model



The conceptual model provides a schematic overview of the relations that are expected based on the literature. Full descriptions of the variables can be found earlier in this chapter. In general, it is expected that all contact variables have a positive influence on attitude variables. The expected relative strengths of the relationships are given. It is expected that the strongest relationship in the model is the one between the number of friendships and the attitude variables related to symbolic threats.

## Chapter Four: Research design

In this chapter, choices regarding methodology and data will be discussed, along with an explanation of the way the data is coded.

### 4.1. Data

Concerning the topic of immigration attitudes and interethnic contact, there are relatively few data sources available. The choice of methodologies is thus somewhat restrained by the lack of available data. For instance, an online survey was conducted in 2016 by the Verwey-Jonker Institute, capturing contact with immigrants and experiences of contact, but this source is not yet public (Nijs, Stark, Verkuyten, 2019). Similarly, a report by CBS (2018) has used data on contact with refugees and attitudes towards refugees, but the data source is not public. However, the ESS Round 7 from 2014 captured measures of contact with immigrants, as well as attitudes towards immigrants, and these data are public. Although not very recent, it does provide data which fits this research, in terms of contents and scope. Also, 2014 saw one of the first increases in numbers of refugees, indicating the arrival of victims of the so called refugee crisis (UNHCR, 2020). The data provides information about 1919 respondents within the Netherlands, concerning various dimensions of attitudes and contact regarding immigrants.

Essentially, the variables used to measure various aspects of contact with immigrants as well as attitudes towards immigrants, are of categorical (ordinal) nature. In short, this means that the answers given to questions are scores, for example ranging from one to ten. This means that it has not been possible to record answers that lie in between the scores, for example a

score of five and a half would not be possible, so the score would be recorded as either five or six. This reduces the meaningfulness of data, since information is lost by sorting answers into these fixed categories. On the other hand, data concerning for instance attitudes, is in general hard to quantify anyway. If these data wouldn't be quantified, the answers to questions that reflect variables would be very insightful but simultaneously offer less generalizability. Since this research is interested in the net effect of contact on attitudes, it makes more sense to use large samples and quantified data in order to gain a understanding of how contact works for most people.

## **4.2. Methods**

### **4.2.1. Non-parametric tests**

There are different statistical methods available to analyze available data. For categorical data, testing relationships between categories of variables should be done via non-parametric tests (Pallant, 2016). There are various assumptions to be met when performing these tests. The assumptions for non-parametric techniques are that the samples must be collected randomly and that individuals may not “appear in more than one category or group, and the data from one subject cannot influence the data from another” (Pallant, 2016, chapter 16 second page). The ESS maintains a sampling procedure that strives to ensure random sampling (ESS, 2020).

The condition of independent observations has also been met, as the answer categories are mutually exclusive content-wise, and answers by respondents have been obtained in personal interviews as to ensure that only one score per subject was given. Additionally, sampling methods have ensured that random sampling has been applied when collecting data (only one person per household was interviewed) which reduces the chances of respondents influencing each other's responses. However, based on theory it is expected that to some extent observations are correlated and the calculation of these correlations will be part of the results, thus none of the analyses will be unexpectedly or unknowingly corrupted by dependent observations.

### **4.2.2. Ideal versus chosen statistic method**

Essentially this research is interested in the relationship between multiple independent and dependent variables. Ideally, a model would be generated in which all variables could be accounted for simultaneously. In that way correlations between the independent variables and between the dependent variables could be accounted for when examining the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. A model that would approximate this would be MANOVA or canonical correlation analysis. However, for MANOVA interval or ratio level data is required, which is not available in this situation. Regarding canonical correlation analysis, it is assumed that the frequencies of variables are normally distributed and that the covariance of variables is homoscedastic. Histograms of the variables as can be found in Appendix B showed that the distribution of frequencies approaches normal but in some cases there is skew and kurtosis, so it is impossible to say the frequencies are normally distributed. Also, when fitting a model with all variables, it turns out that the covariance matrices are not equal since Box's test is significant.

Because above methods are not applicable, Chi-square testing for Independence has been chosen as the method to perform the analysis. A Chi-square test of Independence “is used when you wish to explore the relationship between two categorical variables” (Pallant, 2016,

chapter 16 page 4). Although this model does not produce the effect of the aggregate of independent variables on the aggregate of dependent variables, nor accounts for correlations between independent variables and between dependent variables, it is an effective way of analyzing the relationships between individual independent and dependent variables. This information is suitable for answering the main research question.

Besides, something similar to correlations between variables can be calculated by performing a Chi-square test of Independence on pairs of independent variables and dependent variables. However, since there are multiple relationships that need to be assessed, and thus multiple Chi-square tests of Independence need to be carried out, there is a chance that significance of the tests might be inflated due to type-1 errors caused by repeated analyses. However, it is unclear whether type-1 errors only apply to specific types of statistical analysis. In order to mitigate this possibility significance levels will be scrutinized. The standard significance level is 0.05, whereas in this research a significance level of 0.01 will be maintained.

**4.3. Making data suitable for Chi-square test of Independence**

The Chi-square test of Independence gives significance levels regarding whether there is a significant difference between groups in the equation, as well as an indication of how strong the effect is of one variable on the other. The significance of the Chi-square test would indicate whether the allocation of people to categories of the dependent variable is a result of these people belonging to certain categories of an independent variable. The Chi-square test of Independence accounts for all categories of a variable and thus establishes whether the division of scores into categories on the independent variable is meaningful for determining scores on the dependent variable.

Since this research is interested in the effect of independent contact variables on dependent attitude variables, and thus if contact leads to a better or worse attitude, it is not useful to know whether contact with immigrants influences people to give a score of seven rather than six on a variable measuring an attitude towards immigrants. The most important distinction is whether people score above five or below five, since scores above five represent a positive attitude and scores below five a negative one.

Table 3, as can be seen below, displays how the various attitude variables are labeled, along with the categories they are divided into according to the description above, and what scores belong to these categories. The original questions asked along with possible scores can be found on the website of the ESS.

Variable	Category 1	Score	Category 2	Score
Immigration bad or good for country's economy	Immigrants not good influence on economy	0-5	Immigrants good influence on economy	6-10
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants	Immigrants not good influence on cultural life	0-5	Immigrants good influence on cultural life	6-10
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live	Immigrants not good influence on place to live	0-5	Immigrants good influence on place to live	6-10

Immigrants take jobs away in country or create new jobs	Immigrants not good influence on job availability	0-5	Immigrants good influence on job availability	6-10
Taxes and services: immigrants take out more than they put in or less	Immigrants don't contribute to positive balance of taxes and services	0-5	Immigrants contribute to positive balance of taxes and services	6-10
Immigrants make country's crime problems worse or better	Immigrants don't make crime problems better	0-5	Immigrants make crime problems better	6-10

Table 3. Overview of coded attitude variables

For contact variables, distinctions also have to be made with regards to answer categories. It is desirable to have as distinct frequencies of contact as possible, as is the case for example when comparing having contact to having no contact at all. However, whereas the dependent variables are simply coded from bad to good, the independent variables are coded differently, except the variable valence of occasional contact.

The ranges for the independent variables frequency of contact and amount of friendships are more difficult to split up in groups since their ranges are additive. The scores and answer categories for the variable frequency of occasional contact as found in the ESS (2014) dataset are visible in Table 4 below:

Score	Frequency of occasional contact with immigrants
1	Never
2	Less than once a month
3	Once a month
4	Several times a month
5	Once a week
6	Several times a week
7	Every day

Table 4. Frequencies of occasional contact

The scores and answer categories for the variable amount of close friendships as found in the ESS (2014) dataset are visible in Table 5 below:

Score	Amount of close friendships with immigrants
1	None
2	A few
3	Several

Table 5. Amounts of close friendships

For the variable frequency of occasional contact with immigrants (Table 4), the frequencies of scores have been examined in order to come up with a way to merge groups. Up to 46,4% of respondents has contact with immigrants once a week or less, with the majority within this group having contact less than once a week. The other 53,6% has contact several times a week or more, with a distribution of the scores among the variables contact several times a week and contact every day that can be considered even (respectively 27,4% and 26,2% of the total range of scores, or 51,2% and 48,8% within the combined group). The scores will be

divided according to these two groups, since they best represent the distinct groups within occasional contact behavior in the population.

For the variable amount of close friendships with immigrants (Table 5), similarly the frequencies of scores have been examined in order to come up with a way to merge groups. Of all the respondents in the dataset about 54,8% belong to the categories of few or several friendships, and 45.2% belongs to the category of no friendships. Furthermore, it is unclear what the exact difference is between few and several friendships, and these categories might be interpreted differently by different people. Thus, it has been chosen to divide the groups into two groups, one where people don't have friendships with immigrants and one where people do.

Other than for the sake of being useful to the research question, there is an assumption for the Chi-square test of Independence that the minimum expected cell frequency should be five or greater. At least 80% of the cells should meet this requirement. With many distinguished groups this assumption is frequently not met. For instance in the dataset concerning the Netherlands from the ESS Round 7 (2014), there are very few people who never have occasional contact with immigrants and don't have friendships with immigrants and yet have very positive scores on the attitude variables. In this particular example the minimum expected cell frequency is not met. Several of such combinations occur in the dataset, leading to categories consisting of less than five people, mainly as a result of the variable frequency of occasional contact. This is another reason to merge the categories into larger ones.

The following table (Table 6) shows how the various contact variables are eventually labeled, which categories they consist of, and which scores belong to each category.

Variable	Category 1	Score	Category 2	Score	Category 3	Score
Occasional contact frequency	Less than several times per week	1-5	Several times per week or more	6-7		
Occasional contact valence	Contact bad	0-4	Contact neutral	5	Contact good	6-10
Intimate contact frequency	Zero friendships with immigrants	1	A few or several friendships with immigrants	2-3		

Table 6. Overview of coded contact variables

#### 4.4. Interpreting the Chi-square test of Independence

The Chi-square test of Independence gives information about how well the independent variable contributes to the distinction between different categories of the dependent variable. For instance, with the variable friendship with immigrants, either a score of yes or no will be measured. If this variable would be of significant influence on a certain aspect of attitudes towards immigrants, it would mean that the people who have friendships with immigrants score differently on the attitude than people who don't have friendship with immigrants.

Significance is not the only concern when it comes to Chi-square tests for Independence. The Phi coefficient, which is produced as part of the Chi-square test of Independence, is a

correlation coefficient with possible scores ranging from 0 to 1, and indicates the strength of the association between variables. Scores above 0.10 indicate small association, above 0.30 indicate moderate association and above 0.50 indicate strong association. When variables have more than two groups, as is the case with the valence of occasional contact, Cramer's V is used to indicate strength of the relationship, and the same scores are used to classify the strength of the relationships.

## Chapter Five: Analysis

In this chapter, a short overview of migration to the Netherlands will be given. Afterwards, various results of the statistical analysis will be presented and interpreted.

### 5.1. History of immigration in The Netherlands

To clarify the level of immigration to The Netherlands, data from the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) has been gathered. Figure 2 below provides an oversight of immigration numbers from 1995 until 2018 in the Netherlands, in order to place the current immigration debate into perspective. The numbers indicate simply the amount of immigrants from that continent that have moved to the Netherlands in the corresponding year, although the people were not necessarily born there.

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
<b>Total</b>	<b>96099</b>	<b>108749</b>	<b>109860</b>	<b>122407</b>	<b>119151</b>	<b>132850</b>	<b>133404</b>	<b>121250</b>
Africa	13572	15904	15073	16463	15559	18269	21132	21378
America	15910	19438	20573	26312	25525	27648	25553	22853
Asia	17218	21588	22791	25409	22610	25148	25984	21751
Oceania	1326	1768	1689	1950	1970	2131	2312	2079
Europe	47754	49639	49426	51818	52349	58471	57467	52505
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Total</b>	<b>104514</b>	<b>94019</b>	<b>92297</b>	<b>101150</b>	<b>116819</b>	<b>143516</b>	<b>146378</b>	<b>104903</b>
Africa	14910	10712	9444	8819	8994	11492	14478	9971
America	19700	16832	15929	17235	18104	20542	20371	13084
Asia	18446	15186	15446	16815	18557	24127	24467	19459
Oceania	1654	1565	1552	2091	2513	2659	2400	951
Europe	49333	49445	49680	55995	68492	84464	84442	61438
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	<b>112926</b>	<b>109190</b>	<b>113487</b>	<b>126209</b>	<b>139509</b>	<b>156368</b>	<b>157475</b>	<b>168172</b>
Africa	8474	6314	7748	8581	8842	8842	8249	10428
America	13127	12348	12380	12705	14100	14477	17257	19916
Asia	21236	20119	21451	25769	36708	47370	37053	33760
Oceania	1015	921	1012	1073	1283	1450	1446	1531
Europe	69074	69488	70896	78081	78576	84229	93470	102537

Figure 2. Immigration to the Netherlands per year from different continents (CBS, 2019).

Many of the middle-eastern countries that are afflicted by the refugee crisis, officially belong to the Asian continent. As such, there is a notable increase in the number of immigrants from

the Asian continent in the past years, although in general immigration has increased from all continents. Bearing in mind the questions asked to respondents in developing the dataset that is used in this research, people's attitudes towards immigrants and contact experiences with immigrants might relate to people with very different backgrounds. However, as was stated in the introduction (p.6) the current immigration debate is mostly focused on refugees and Islamic immigrants. Adding to this that after immigration from European countries, immigration from Asian countries presents the largest influx, it might be that Dutch respondents of surveys about immigration base their answers on conceptions of refugees and Muslim immigrants. However, even if this were not the case, their answers would contribute to developing understanding of the general (national) attitudes towards and contact experiences with immigrants, which is the focus of this study.

## **5.2. Statistical analyses**

All the correlations that are mentioned throughout the rest of this chapter, are significant at a significance level of 0.005, as is visible in Appendix A.

### **5.2.1. Relationships between dependent variables**

The first hypothesis that was formulated is:

H1: The various topical attitudes towards immigrants are correlated with each other.

First of all, this hypothesis was mainly developed to test whether scores on different dimensions of attitudes related to each other, in the sense that they reflect a general attitude towards immigrants. It was found that all attitude variables are significantly correlated to each other (see Appendix A 1.1), thus H1 is confirmed. Regarding the strength of correlations:

- Attitudes regarding economy are correlated with moderate strength to all variables except attitudes regarding criminality.
- Attitudes regarding cultural life are correlated with moderate strength to attitudes regarding living.
- Attitudes regarding crime are least correlated with the other attitudes.

### **5.2.2. Relationships between independent variables**

The second hypothesis that was formulated is:

H2: The valence of occasional contact with immigrants is correlated with the amount of intimate contacts with immigrants

Just as with H1, this hypothesis was mainly developed to test whether scores on different dimensions of contact related to each other. Theory suggested that both valence of occasional contact with immigrants and amount of friendships with immigrants might have a positive effect on attitudes towards immigrants, thus they might be correlated. Statistical analysis found that all independent variables are significantly correlated to each other (see Appendix A 1.2), thus H2 is confirmed. However, all correlations are of weak strength, yet, the strongest correlation is between the frequency of occasional contact and the amount of friendships with immigrants.

### **5.2.3. Relationships between independent and dependent variables.**

The third hypothesis that was formulated is:

H3: Intimate contact with immigrants has more influence on attitudes towards immigrants that are linked to symbolic threats than attitudes towards immigrants that are linked to realistic threats.

As can be seen in Table 8 and 8.1 in Appendix A1.3, the amount of friendships with immigrants is significantly correlated to all attitude variables, except attitudes regarding crime. Attitudes towards immigrants regarding crime are related to notions of both symbolic and realistic threats. Further, the correlation between the amount of friendships with immigrants is strongest with attitudes towards immigrants regarding cultural life, which is tied to the notion of symbolic threat. The second strongest correlation is with attitudes regarding the economy. However, both correlations are weak. The other significant correlations are deemed very weak.

The hypothesis H3 is confirmed, since the strongest influence of the amount of friendships with immigrants is on attitudes towards immigrants regarding cultural life. Additionally, the variables frequency and valence of occasional contact were consistently most strongly correlated with attitudes towards immigrants regarding cultural life, although the correlations are generally weak.

The fourth hypothesis that was formulated is:

H4: Intimate contact with immigrants is more strongly correlated with attitudes towards immigrants than occasional contact with immigrants is correlated with attitudes towards immigrants.

The strengths of the correlations between valence of occasional contact with immigrants and attitudes towards immigrants are consistently higher than the strengths of the correlations between amount of friendships with immigrants and attitudes towards immigrants. However, none of the contact variables is significantly correlated to attitudes towards immigrants regarding crime. Nevertheless, H4 is rejected since intimate contact overall has weaker correlations with attitudes than does the valence of occasional contact.

The fifth hypothesis that was formulated is:

H5: The valence of occasional contact with immigrants is more strongly correlated with attitudes towards immigrants than the frequency of occasional contact with immigrants.

The frequency of occasional contact with immigrants is only significantly correlated with attitudes towards immigrants regarding economy and cultural life. The valence of occasional contact is significantly correlated with all attitude variables except attitudes towards immigrants regarding crime. The correlations between valence of contact and attitudes are stronger than the correlations between frequency of contact and attitudes. H5 is thus confirmed.

## Chapter Six: Discussion of results and conclusions

In this chapter, the research questions will be answered based on the results.

The main research question that will be answered is: What is the importance of contact with immigrants, in developing attitudes towards immigrants in The Netherlands? But first, the sub-questions will be addressed and answered. The first sub-question was: How do various dimensions of attitudes towards immigrants relate to each other? The answer to this question, is partially based on the confirmation of H1:

H1: The various topical attitudes towards immigrants are correlated with each other

The analysis showed that H1 is confirmed. This would indicate that what people think about immigrants on the topic whether immigrants are bad or good economy, for example, is also an indication for what people think about immigrants regarding whether they undermine or improve cultural life, and their contribution to and what they take from taxes and services. The economic impact of immigrants is deemed to have a moderate influence on attitudes towards immigrants regarding other topics, except crime. Furthermore, whether immigrants contribute to cultural life seems to have moderate influence on how people perceive immigrants' influence on the country being a nice place to live.

It seems thus that the economic impact of immigrants is rather important in determining people's attitudes towards immigrants, whereas literature suggested that the most threatening aspect of immigrants was of symbolic nature. Nevertheless, it might be that although the media and certain political organizations portray immigrants as threatening to culture, people tend to assess the impact of immigrants in a rather rational way, mostly based on economic concerns. On the other hand, the economic aspect of attitudes towards immigrants is easily influenced by the other aspects of attitudes. Culture and living represent the more social aspects, whereas economy, taxes and services and jobs represent more economic aspects. It seems that when immigrants are socially not appreciated, people tend to negatively value their economic contribution and vice versa.

It is remarkable that attitudes towards immigrants regarding crime have the weakest correlations with other aspects of attitudes towards immigrants. Apparently, people's attitudes or perceptions as to how immigrants contribute to crime problems is more or less detached from what people think about immigrants on other topics. In the introduction (p.6) it was found that some nationalities are disproportionally represented in terms of number of suspects of crimes, although people from these nationalities are generally not part of contemporary immigration debates. However, some events and/or frames might have caused people to be wary towards immigrants, in terms of how they are related to crime problems. Either way, social or economic perceptions of immigrants do not seem to change perceptions of immigrants regarding crime, as much as they influence other aspects.

The second sub-question of this research is: How do different dimensions of contact relate to each other? The answer to this sub-question, is partially based on the confirmation of H2:

H2: The valence of occasional contact with immigrants is correlated with the amount of intimate contacts with immigrants

The analysis showed that H2 is confirmed. This indicates that to some extent, the amount of intimate contact one has with immigrants affects the way people value their occasional contact with immigrants. Although little theory has been found about how these specific forms of contact relate to each other, it seems there might be some shared underlying

mechanisms. In reality, this is somewhat logical since when occasional contact is valued as positive, the people engaged in this contact might become friends. On the other hand, the correlation might suggest that having friendships with immigrants affects the way occasional encounters unfold, or the way these contacts are experienced, or both.

An unexpected finding is that the strongest correlation is between the frequency of occasional contact and the amount of friendships with immigrants. In theory, occasional contact is only effective at reducing prejudice when it is positively valued. However, the valence of occasional contact cannot be measured if there is no occasional contact in the first place. Thus, it seems logical that people who have friendships with immigrants are more likely to engage in occasional contact with immigrants, whereas the valence of the contact might be more dependent on specific circumstances. Likewise, people who often have occasional contact with immigrants are more likely to become friends with immigrants. People who have a lot of occasional contact with immigrants and/or multiple friendships with immigrants are likely to be less hindered by prejudice towards immigrants, and thereby might engage more often in occasional and/or intimate contact.

Furthermore, the correlation between frequency of occasional contact and valence of occasional contact suggests that positive contact experiences with immigrants might motivate people to engage in contact more often and that negative experiences might prevent people from having contact with immigrants.

The third sub-question of this research is: What is the effect of different dimensions of contact with immigrants on various dimensions of immigration attitudes in The Netherlands? The answer to this sub-question is partially based on the confirmations of H3 and H5 and the rejection of H4.

H3 is: Intimate contact with immigrants has more influence on attitudes towards immigrants that are linked to symbolic threats than attitudes towards immigrants that are linked to realistic threats.

The analysis showed that H3 is confirmed. In the literature it was found that symbolic threats concerning immigrants are most prevalent in the Netherlands. Symbolic threats represent a threat to culture and norms and values. Three variables in this analysis were linked to symbolic threats, namely attitudes towards immigrants regarding cultural life, living and crime. The variables linked to realistic threats were attitudes regarding economy, jobs and taxes. The undermining or enriching of cultural life by immigrants in The Netherlands is the most obvious indicator of symbolic threat, and the correlation of this variable with the amount of friendships with immigrants was the strongest. As such, people who have friendships with immigrants, think that immigrants generally enrich cultural life in the Netherlands. On the other hand, people who have no friendships with immigrants think that immigrants undermine or threaten cultural life in the Netherlands.

Since the amount of friendships with immigrants as well as the frequency of occasional contact with immigrants are correlated with attitudes towards immigrants regarding cultural life, it seems that people who in general have the least contact with immigrants think immigrants have the worst influence on cultural life in the Netherlands. This indicates to some extent that people who have no or little contact with immigrants might be more prejudiced than people who have more contact with immigrants

Attitudes towards immigrants regarding crime are tied to symbolic threat in the sense that some people fear that there are terrorists among immigrants, and terrorism is a threat to culture. Similarly, other types of crime represent a breach of safety and security. However, it is difficult to grasp the respondents' interpretation of immigrants' contribution to crime

problems. Nevertheless, having friendships or not with immigrants is not correlated with the attitudes towards immigrants regarding crime. Thus, even intimate relationships with immigrants do not affect how people think about immigrant's contribution to crime problems in general. Perhaps criminal activities are generally kept secret, and people don't expect others to be honest about their involvement.

H4 is: Intimate contact with immigrants is more strongly correlated with attitudes towards immigrants than occasional contact with immigrants is correlated with attitudes towards immigrants.

This hypothesis was rejected because the valence of occasional contact with immigrants turned out to be most strongly correlated with attitudes towards immigrants. This might be related to the fact that occasional contact with immigrants occurs more frequently than having friendships with immigrants. Having little occasional contact was defined as having occasional contact with immigrants once a week or less, whereas having frequent occasional contact was defined by having contact several times a week or more. Although theoretically it is unclear whether having friendships with immigrants should be more strongly correlated to attitudes towards immigrants than the amount of positively valued occasional contact with immigrants, it might be that when people have a lot of occasional contact with immigrants they have a better grasp of the general characteristics of immigrants and the diversity of the immigrant group. Since occasional contact is more likely to be influenced by random circumstances, and multiple occasions of contact might take place under different circumstances, the outcome of occasional contact is less predictable than having contact with immigrant friends. As such, chances of having a positive experiences might be smaller, and thus positive experiences might have more impact. In other words, with occasional contact there are perhaps low expectations that might be exceeded, whereas experiences of contact with friends might be more in line with prior expectations. Perhaps it also matters who initiates the contact.

H5 is: The valence of occasional contact with immigrants is more correlated with attitudes towards immigrants than the frequency of occasional contact with immigrants.

This hypothesis is confirmed by the analysis. It turned out that whereas valence of occasional contact with immigrants is correlated to all aspects of attitudes towards immigrants except crime, frequency of occasional contact was only correlated to attitudes regarding economy and cultural life. Moreover, the correlations between attitudes towards immigrants and valence of occasional contact are stronger. Whether occasional contact with immigrants is experienced as positive or negative thus has more influence on attitudes towards immigrants than the frequency of occasional contact alone.

Attitudes towards immigrants regarding economy and cultural life are the most strongly influenced by both frequency of and valence of occasional contact. However, the correlation between frequency of occasional contact and attitudes regarding economy is very weak. Regarding frequency of occasional contact, the correlations mean that disregarding the valence of the contact, people who have more occasional contact with immigrants tend to have better attitudes towards them regarding their contribution to the economy and cultural life. The reverse is also true. Perhaps the correlation between frequency of occasional contact and attitudes towards immigrants regarding cultural life, can be interpreted as that having occasional contact with immigrants is a sign of cultural diversity. As such, the value of the contact does not really matter. Some people might view the presence of immigrants as a contribution to cultural life in itself, without evaluating what these individual immigrants bring along in terms of culture.

The main question of the research is: What is the importance of contact with immigrants, in developing attitudes towards immigrants in The Netherlands?

Generally speaking, contact with immigrants, be it occasional or intimate, is of little importance to people's attitudes towards immigrants. This suggests that information that is spread through the media, politics and public discourse is most influential in determining attitudes towards immigrants. Since the attitude variables were moderately correlated, it could be expected that sources that provide information about immigrants generally offer a particular view of immigrants that is shared among various topics. This is confirmed by the literature, which suggests that immigrants are often depicted in threatening ways in the media, and in general are more often negatively portrayed than positively. As such, the concept of framing is relevant to determining people's views of immigrants, with the emphasis on negative frames. Since the contact variables are also correlated, it seems that there are people who don't engage in contact often and there are people who do. The group of people who don't, are more likely to be influenced by negative portrayals of immigrants in the media, since there are less positive contact experiences and friendships that can help overcome prejudices. As such, a general lack of contact with immigrants might lead to worsened attitudes towards immigrants.

## **Chapter Seven: Reflections and recommendations**

There are various aspects that are not addressed in this research, which in fact might be important to the theoretical relationships between attitudes and contact. For instance, this research does not take into account the effect of attitudes towards immigrants on contact towards immigrants. Also, it does not take account of feedback loops in relationships between contact and attitudes.

The outcome of the analysis, namely the strengths of the relationships (correlations) between variables, is not compared to other factors that might influence attitudes towards immigrants. For instance, it is not clear to what extent contact influences attitudes compared to factors such as education level and age. However, theory suggests that certain values regarding the Chi-square test of independence simply indicate weak, moderate and strong correlations, which is deemed sufficient.

This research does not take into account factors that contribute directly to the valence or experience of contact situations. For example, little is known about the specific geographical and social contexts in which contact takes place, in this study. This means that even though this research yields some results that might be applied in reality, concerning contact and the effect of contact on interethnic attitudes, it is wise to consider other more localized research findings in order to develop a suitable approach when trying to improve interethnic attitudes through interethnic contact. However, in general the findings of this study suggest that if trying to improve interethnic attitudes, interethnic contact would not be a very good place to start since it has only limited influence on attitudes.

The subject that most clearly needs to be investigated in further research, is the relationship between (various forms of) contact with immigrants and attitudes towards immigrants regarding crime. No theories have been found that declare the lack of correlation between these variables. Supporting this recommendation is that attitudes towards immigrants regarding crime were least correlated to other attitudes towards immigrants.

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Figures:

Figure 1:

Zick, A., Küpper, B., & Hövermann, A. (2011). *Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination: A European Report*. Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Figure 2:

CBS. (2019). *Migratie; land van herkomst / vestiging, geboorteland en geslacht*. Retrieved from Statline:

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