

Exploring in-group diversity through storytelling: how intersecting stories work to construct a diverse Moroccan Dutch experience.

Author: Jacomijne Prins

Researchers taking a social constructionist perspective on identity agree that identities are constructed and negotiated in interaction. In ethnicity research, interaction often concerns in-group vs. out-group interaction. Taking into consideration the macro-context of political and public discourses on ethnicity and religion in The Netherlands, in this article we study intra-group identity construction among young Moroccan Dutch in group-settings. In line with theories on intersectionality, we expected intra-group identity construction to be influenced by the specific location of participants in a matrix of intersecting identities. Narratives were elicited in focus groups of varied (male/female, educational level) composition. Our analysis focused on thematic and structural similarities in short stories narrated in interaction. Central to our analysis were the narrators' evaluations of events. We found that although respondents across groups shared similar stories, specific story-patterns recurred on the intersection of ethnic, class and gender identities. Theoretically, this means that intersectionality can't be seen as self-evident and that studying narratives in focus groups sheds light on the co-construction of patterned experiences. Empirically, this paper shows how different subgroups vary in storytelling, emphasizing different aspects of experience, and help to co-construct a diverse collective story.