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# **Learning communities, informal learning and the humanities**

An empirical study of book discussion groups

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# **Learning communities, informal learning and the humanities**

An empirical study of book discussion groups

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## Introduction

Just a few weeks after I passed through the first-ever meeting of my very own book discussion group, I started with this research. It was our set-up meeting where we discussed our plans: how often and where would we gather, what would we discuss? Our first book discussion, on Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods*, followed later that month, and many more books and meetings would follow.

Before I was 'into' book discussion groups, my subject of study was 17th century rhetoricians: groups of men who wrote and performed drama and poetry. Men who were convinced their literature was valuable, and started to collect rhetorician plays to make sure their art would not be forgotten.<sup>1</sup> Other than performing a play, present-day reading is a literary activity that a person can easily perform in solitude. However, several phenomena point to the existence of a need for sharing reading experiences. Readers who talk about books and reading when they bump into another reader at a party, at work, in the book shop. Readers who join social reading websites on the internet, such as *Goodreads* or *LibraryThing*.<sup>2</sup> Readers who dedicate their own weblog on their reading experiences.<sup>3</sup> Readers who start or join a book discussion group where they can discuss books intensively with other readers. This study is dedicated to this last type of reader: the book discussion group participant.

The study contains four goals. First, the study aims to map out the characteristics of book discussion groups, their practices, and their members. Who are the members of

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<sup>1</sup> Van Herten 2011.

<sup>2</sup> *Goodreads* (<http://www.goodreads.com/>) – online since January 2007 – claims more than 7,400,000 members world-wide (<http://www.goodreads.com/about/us>). *LibraryThing* brings together 1,500,000 book readers (<http://www.librarything.com/>). A Dutch-language example of a website readers can add their own opinion on books is *De Boekensalon* (<http://www.deboekensalon.nl/>). This website claims 24,735 members and 802,378 book reviews. All websites were accessed on March 27, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> An English-language book blog is, for example, <http://fyreflybooks.wordpress.com/>. The blogger reviews every book she reads since early 2006 (<http://fyreflybooks.wordpress.com/about/>). An example of an English-language website providing an overview of a number of book blogs is <http://bookbloggerdirectory.wordpress.com/>. A Dutch-language example of a weblog dedicated to book reading is <http://boekendag-boek.blogspot.com/>, which was started in November, 2005. All websites were accessed on March 27, 2012.

the book discussion groups? What do they read? How do they discuss? Second, the study concentrates on motives people have for reading and participating in a book discussion group. Why do people feel the need for a book discussion group, despite the fact one can read in solitude? The third aim of this study is to increase the understanding of learning for personal development in book discussion groups: what do participants themselves experience to learn from their membership? Fourth, it investigates how the outcomes on characteristics, motives, and learning for personal development, relate to each other.

The four goals are formulated into four research questions. The origin and formulation of these questions will be elucidated in the first chapter:

- I. What are characteristics of present-day book discussion groups in the Netherlands?
- II. What motives do participants have for taking part in their book discussion group?
- III. In participants' experience, what do they learn from taking part in their book discussion group?
- IV. What connections exist between characteristics of participants and their book discussion groups, participants' motives, and their experienced learning outcomes?

To find answers I first oriented on the existing theories about book discussion groups, motives, and learning. This theoretical framework forms Chapter 1. Next, Chapter 2 gives an overview of methods used to answer the research questions. I conducted two different surveys and fifteen interviews. For the group survey, 211 book discussion groups filled out a long list of questions. An individual survey for members was set out at the same time. 877 individual book discussion members invested quite some time to respond to this survey. In addition to these surveys, I interviewed fifteen book discussion group participants. The outcomes of both the surveys and the interviews provided information on characteristics of book discussion groups, their members, as well as their reading material (Chapter 3), motives of members to read and to participate in a book discussion group (Chapter 4), and the experienced learning outcomes of reading and book discussion group participation (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 ends with combining the findings to answer research question IV, and a discussion of the study.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Theoretical background and framework

*We can hardly be blamed for being the only ones that read and read like crazy and boost up all those books into the Top Ten.*

Renate Dorrestein, 2010 p. 12<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Original quote: 'Ons kan het moeilijk worden aangerekend dat wij de enigen zijn die lezen en lezen als gekken en al die boeken de top tien in pompen' (translation MvH).



## 1.1 THE BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

### *First research question*

Book reading today is an activity a person pre-eminently can do in private. Still, the existence – and in some cases: rising – of various phenomena indicate that a number of readers feel the need to share their reading. One way to share reading is by participating in a book discussion group. Book discussion groups are a popular phenomenon today in the Netherlands and several other countries. In addition, there is interest in studying these groups of which many different forms exist. Some are very stable and long-lasting, while others consist of a less fixed core of participants, or exist only for a short time. There are mixed-sex groups and single-sex groups. Groups may consist of colleagues or friends, or of people who did not know each other before their first group meeting. Some groups read books from various categories while other groups focus on one author, one period, or one topic. Participants may read a book in advance of the meeting, while in other groups the book (or poem or play) is read during the meeting itself. Meeting can be physically meeting each other or meeting each other online.

The first aim of this study is to learn more about the phenomenon book discussion group. The first research question therefore is formulated as follows:

- I. *What are characteristics of present-day book discussion groups in the Netherlands?*

In the present section, first the origin of book discussion groups in the Netherlands will be described. Next, the characteristics of present-day book discussion groups and their members are explored. Characteristics embrace among other things composition of groups (all-female, mixed, or all-male), affiliation of groups, the method of working (what do they read, how do they organise their meetings), and personal characteristics of members such as sex and age. In order to investigate ‘the book discussion group’, it was necessary to restrict the object of study. Book discussion groups can have various manifestations, and therefore it can sometimes be difficult to draw a line and point out what group will be and what group will *not* be subject of this study. In the last part of this section, the book discussion group will be defined as *a fixed group of non-professional readers who meet physically to discuss books (fiction or nonfiction) that they all have read on their own or read together*. The consequence of this definition is, that in the remainder of this study, certain groups will be included while others are excluded. The answers to this first research question about characteristics (presented in Chapter 3)

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therefore only apply to book discussion groups that already fit within this framework. Furthermore, for the answering of the subsequent research questions considering motives (Chapter 4) and learning (Chapter 5), it was decided to focus specifically on groups reading mainly or only *fiction*.

### *Origin of the book discussion group*

It is often said that the present-day book discussion group, where readers gather to discuss books, has various predecessors in the history of reading.<sup>5</sup> Reading had been a social activity rather than a solitary activity for centuries. Especially before the printing press was in use, books were expensive and scarce, and most people were illiterate: texts were shared orally through reading out aloud in public or spread by word of mouth. Reading silently in solitary had become in use since the thirteenth century. Many diverse ways of text consuming existed alongside each other: reading out aloud – to a public or not –, reading alone in silence, listening, rereading, watching images. The invention of the printing press in the second half of the fifteenth century did not result in the disappearance of the oral text culture, but individual reading in silence did become more and more prevalent in the fifty years following this groundbreaking discovery. It was at the time common that people intensively read and reread passages of one book or a small number of books, rather than reading a book from the beginning to the end, followed by the reading of a new, different book from the beginning to the end, and so on, as how most people read today.<sup>6</sup>

During the eighteenth century, this *intensive reading* (repeatedly reading a small corpus of texts) of mostly edifying texts was more and more complemented with *extensive reading* (reading diverse titles only once) of other genres of texts, such as novels and magazines.<sup>7</sup> In the second half of the eighteenth century, the amount of printed matters expanded: in numbers as well as in diversity (such as vernacular texts, novels, travel books). In this same age – influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment – reading societies were founded in places all over Europe: in the Netherlands since the 1770s.<sup>8</sup> Reading enabled people to develop themselves. Moreover, engaging in activities in a community rather than at a solitary basis would enable people to even better develop themselves, and it would better stimulate development of the society in general.<sup>9</sup> In accordance with

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<sup>5</sup> See for instance Hartley 2002, p. 1; De Vries 2011, p. 125. An extensive description of the concept of the book discussion group, as well as a definition used in the current study, is given in the last two parts of Section 1.1.

<sup>6</sup> On historical reading habits, see Pleij, 1996 pp. 51-61.

<sup>7</sup> De Vries 2011, pp. 16-18.

<sup>8</sup> Honings and Lubbers 2012, p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> Duyvendak 2005, p. 178.



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this philosophy, reading societies were founded to contribute to this development. Usefulness of reading was combined with the pleasure of it. The first manifestations of reading societies were reading circles.<sup>10</sup> Here, civilians together bought books – which were expensive – magazines and newspapers. These texts circulated among the members; at the end of the season books were sold among them. Participants of these reading circles could read about 25 to 50 books or magazines per year thanks to their membership.<sup>11</sup> From 1820 on, some of the urban reading societies started to collect the works that had circulated among members instead of selling them, and these collections grew out to be subscription libraries.<sup>12</sup> Like-minded members could meet in reading rooms where books, magazines and newspapers were available for their perusal.<sup>13</sup> Some libraries offered the opportunity to borrow books as well.<sup>14</sup> Despite the fact members could meet each other in the reading rooms of their subscription library, it is not self-evident that the members met each other specifically to talk about their reading material: the meetings mostly were of a leisurely sort.<sup>15</sup> Members of reading circles too did not choose to discuss together the books they had read.<sup>16</sup>

These forms of reading societies existed all through the nineteenth century. While in the eighteenth century mainly the useful purpose of reading in societies was important, in the course of the nineteenth century societies addressed more and more to the pleasure of reading.<sup>17</sup> New societies were still being founded: between 1860 and 1890 especially many women's reading societies arose in Western Europe including the Netherlands.<sup>18</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century, these traditional forms of reading societies started to disappear, though a few examples of long lasting subscription libraries still exist today in the Netherlands.<sup>19</sup> The upcoming commercial and public libraries were more and more able to meet the needs of readers, and the private owning of books in-

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<sup>10</sup> Honings and Lubbers call these reading circles in their English language article on Dutch reading societies 'book clubs'.

<sup>11</sup> De Vries 2012, p. 123.

<sup>12</sup> Honings and Lubbers 2012, p. 31, De Vries 2011, p. 107, Duyvendak 2004, p. 151. These libraries are in Dutch usually called *leesmuseum* or *leeskabinetten*.

<sup>13</sup> Duyvendak 1994, p. 164; 2004, p. 151.

<sup>14</sup> De Vries 2011, pp. 125-135.

<sup>15</sup> De Vries 2011, pp. 135, 154-156.

<sup>16</sup> Honings and Lubbers 2012, p. 25. Reading circles could gather to decide which new material had to be bought, but discussions on texts that were already read were not organised (Honings and Lubbers 2012, p. 29).

<sup>17</sup> De Vries 2011, p. 123.

<sup>18</sup> Duyvendak 2004, p. 152, De Vries 2011, p. 145.

<sup>19</sup> Two Dutch examples are the Haags Damesleesmuseum (see Duyvendak 2003) and the Rotterdamsch leeskabinet (see Duyvendak and Pesch 2009).

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creased as well.<sup>20</sup> Reading societies in the modern form of book discussion groups in the Netherlands became popular during the second feminist wave, in the 1970s. Similar to the first reading societies that established in the Age of Reason, the new book discussion groups that were founded in the 1970s arose from a need to develop, and mainly had women – who in general had had less opportunities to attend an education that met their abilities and ambitions than men and subsequently were less highly educated as men – as a target audience.<sup>21</sup> The most important event in the renewed attention for societal reading in the Netherlands was the founding of what is nowadays the *Stichting Literatuurclubs Drenthe* (SLD, ‘Foundation of Drenthe literary groups’; Drenthe is a northern province of the Netherlands) in 1970.<sup>22</sup> In its first year, 219 members formed fifteen groups in which they discussed three books per year: each book resulted in two discussion evenings. During the first evening, the book itself played a central role; during the second evening social problems related to the theme of the book were the topic of discussion. The SLD is still very active and nowadays it has around 2311 members in 243 groups.<sup>23</sup> Other book discussion group organisations are for instance public libraries, women’s organisations and *Senia*, an organisation for senior citizens, to which in 2014 approximately 680 groups are affiliated.<sup>24</sup> Next to these *organised* book discussion groups, unaffiliated groups (or: *wild* groups) are active as well. It is estimated that there are 3.000 to 5.000 groups, organised as well as wild groups, in the Netherlands today.<sup>25</sup>

In other European countries, similar book discussion groups can be found as well and also are subjects of study to scholars from diverse academic fields.<sup>26</sup> Outside Europe, this form of book discussion groups is also a well-known phenomenon. In Australia, for instance, the Council of Adult Education (CAE) in Victoria has been organizing book

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<sup>20</sup> De Vries 2011, p. 125.

<sup>21</sup> Duyvendak 1994, pp. 166-169.

<sup>22</sup> SLD stands for ‘organisation of literary clubs in the Dutch province of Drenthe’ and was founded by the provincial library association (*Provinciale Bibliotheekcentrale Drenthe* or *PBC Drenthe*) and the Drenthe department of the Dutch confederation of countrywomen (*Nederlandse Bond voor Plattelandsvrouwen* or *NBvP*). On the history of the SLD book discussion groups, see Benjamins, Dorleijn, Nagtegaal, Van Voorst 2010.

<sup>23</sup> See website [http://www.literatuurclubsdrenthe.nl/component/option,com\\_frontpage/Itemid,1/](http://www.literatuurclubsdrenthe.nl/component/option,com_frontpage/Itemid,1/) (website accessed on January 15, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> See website <http://www.boekblad.nl/senia-maakt-keuze-leesgroepen-voor-volgend.237495.lynkx> (website accessed on July 22, 2014)

<sup>25</sup> This estimation was made by the Dutch Library Organisation NBLC, now the *Vereniging Openbare Bibliotheken* (Organisation Public Libraries), *Vrij Nederland Leeskringspecial*, 13 July 2002 p. 73.

<sup>26</sup> Hartley 2002, pp. 1-9; see also for instance Schultz Nybacka 2011 for research in Sweden.

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discussion groups since their foundation in 1946.<sup>27</sup> Book discussion groups made a leap in the United States as from the 1980s.<sup>28</sup>

Latest developments in book discussion are found on the Internet, where readers discuss books without physically meeting each other, using online discussion boards or instant messaging.<sup>29</sup> These digital groups can be openly accessible for interested readers, but it is also possible people have to be a member to participate in the discussion. Internet groups often are devoted to a specific genre. There are several digital book discussion groups active in Dutch, using forums or twitter.<sup>30</sup> These discussions can be held by a steady group of people and take place on regular times, or can be held by a more unstable group of anonymous internet-users.

### *Present-day book discussion groups in the Netherlands*

Present-day book discussion groups can be divided into two main categories. First, there are *organised* groups, which are affiliated to an organisation of any kind, such as a library, a senior citizen's organisation or a women's organisation. *Wild* groups at the other hand are not (or: not anymore) affiliated to any kind of organisation.<sup>31</sup> This is at the same time the main reason why the exact number of book discussion groups and book discussion group members in the Netherlands is unknown. The number of book discussion groups in the Netherlands was estimated in 2002 at two to three thousand, with eleven members on average (ten female; one male).<sup>32</sup> Four years later, Frank Hockx, chief editor of *Boek-delen* (a Dutch magazine for book discussion groups), estimated the total number of groups (explicitly including online groups) at five thousand. He thinks this number is increasing, especially among wild groups.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Poole 2000, pp. 2-3.

<sup>28</sup> Long 2003, p. 19.

<sup>29</sup> Long 2003, pp. 189-218, Fister 2005.

<sup>30</sup> Examples of online book discussion groups in Dutch may be found for instance on websites of women's magazines Libelle [http://forum.libelle.nl/forum/list\\_topics/9](http://forum.libelle.nl/forum/list_topics/9) and Viva [http://forum.viva.nl/forum/Lezen/list\\_topics/26](http://forum.viva.nl/forum/Lezen/list_topics/26), on the website of radio and television broadcaster NCRV <http://www.ncrv.gids.nl/miekesleesclub/>, on websites of newspapers such as NRC <http://www.nrclux.nl/leesclub>, and on other websites such as Ezzulia: <http://www.ezzulia.nl/forum/index.php> (all websites were accessed on March 15, 2012). Online book discussion groups in Dutch using twitter are @Leestweeps (1014 followers on September 10, 2012) and @Chicklit\_nl (2080 followers on September 10, 2012).

<sup>31</sup> This distinction is made, among others, by Duyvendak 1994, p. 164; Gerritsma 1998, p. 15; Kerka 1996, p. 84; Long 2003, p. xiii; and *Vrij Nederland Leeskringspecial* 13 July 2002, p. 64.

<sup>32</sup> This estimation was made by the Dutch Library Organisation NBLC, now the *Vereniging Openbare Bibliotheken* (Organisation Public Libraries), *Vrij Nederland Leeskringspecial*, 13 July 2002, p. 73.

<sup>33</sup> Pronk, *Trouw* 22 april 2006. In the UK, the number of book groups is estimated at 50.000, in the USA at 500.000 (Hartley 2002, p. xi).

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Who are those thousands and thousands of assumed participants of book discussion groups in the Netherlands? As the estimation mentioned above already indicated, and studies about book discussion groups confirm, it seems the Dutch book discussion groups mainly consist of females; male participants form a minority.<sup>34</sup> The *composition* of a group can be all-female, all-male or mixed, whether this is a deliberate choice or an unintended situation.<sup>35</sup> The majority of book discussion group participants being female is not very surprising. Two possible explanations have their roots in the 1970s. First, in the Netherlands, women are more avid leisure readers than men. Since the 1970s, for several reasons, females began to read more than males, and today they still spend more time reading than males do.<sup>36</sup> Second, as was stated in the previous section, the history of the founding of modern book discussion groups in the 1970s explains why many *women* joined them and this may still be related to the overrepresentation of women in these groups today.<sup>37</sup> That women more than men feel the need to gather in book discussion groups, is argued by American sociologist Long. She studied all-female book discussion groups in Houston, Texas. As in the Netherlands, book discussion groups in the USA mainly consist of women.<sup>38</sup> According to Long, in the past century, especially for women the possibilities in life and the choices that they can make have changed fundamentally – more than for men. Book discussion groups would form a safe environment to develop personal opinions and insights, and offer an opportunity to negotiate the choices to make in life. Long claims women might still have more need for these possibilities that book discussion groups can offer.<sup>39</sup> It is imaginable this is explanation is valid for the Dutch situation as well.<sup>40</sup> Hartley, too, specifically describes the book discussion group as a safe environment where personal issues can be talked about, though she does not directly link this to the overrepresentation of female book discussion group participants.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> On the composition of book discussion groups in the Netherlands, see for instance Duyvendak 2005, p. 180; *Vrij Nederland* 2002, pp. 73-74; Pronk, *Trouw* 22 April 2006; Vullings 2002, pp. 62-65.

<sup>35</sup> This characterisation of the book discussion group is made by for instance Hartley 2002, p. 59; Kerka 1996, p. 83; and Long 2003, p. xiv.

<sup>36</sup> Duyvendak 2005, p. 183; Dijkstra 1992, p. 59; Huysmans, De Haan and Van den Broek 2004, pp. 54-55; Knulst and Kraaykamp 1998, p. 29.

<sup>37</sup> Although book discussion groups in the USA were founded in different circumstances, this argument also applies to some USA book groups, see for instance Long 2003, p. xiv.

<sup>38</sup> On the composition of book discussion groups in Texas, see Long 2003, pp. xiii-xiv. The same image is valid for the UK book discussion groups, see Hartley 2002, p. 25.

<sup>39</sup> Long 2003, pp. xiv-xv, 21, 62-73, 219-220.

<sup>40</sup> Duyvendak 2005, pp. 187-190.

<sup>41</sup> Hartley 2002, pp. 28-29.

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In 2002, the Dutch magazine *Vrij Nederland* (VN) presented the outcomes of a survey among book discussion groups.<sup>42</sup> Next to the fact that participants mostly are female, other characteristics of book discussion groups and their participants were presented as well. The VN-survey showed that the average age of the members was 57. Furthermore, the survey showed that members are generally well educated: most members having attended pre-university secondary education (i.e. academic high school in the USA, A-levels in the UK), and almost 60% of them having attended university or higher vocational education.<sup>43</sup> The average member being a well-educated woman in her fifties is not very surprising as these women form the largest group of leisure readers in the Netherlands.<sup>44</sup>

With the *SLD* as a pioneer, the modern organised book discussion groups were founded in rural areas of the Netherlands. According to VN, in 2002 still, most organised book discussion groups seem to be situated in the more rural parts of the Netherlands, mostly in the north.<sup>45</sup> Organised groups may be blessed with long life. The average group in 2002 was still active after ten years, while 17% of the groups questioned by VN had existed for more than 20 years.<sup>46</sup>

Next to these more general characteristics concerning personal characteristics of group members and the area most groups are active, several other features can typify more in detail specific book discussion groups. First of all, there is the way groups meet. Today, there are groups who meet *face-to-face* for discussion, and groups who only meet *online* for discussion.<sup>47</sup> Both types of groups are active in the Netherlands. For online meetings, diverse possibilities of the Internet are being used.

Members of the group may be *professionals* and *non-professionals*. This distinction can be interpreted in two ways. First, literary scholars can understand this as the distinction between *professional readers* and *non-professional readers*.<sup>48</sup> Professional readers, such as reviewers, are engaged with books in their profession, whilst non-professional

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<sup>42</sup> *Vrij Nederland Leeskringspecial* 13 July 2002, p. 73. A survey was sent to one thousand book discussion groups, of which 441 responded.

<sup>43</sup> *Vrij Nederland Leeskringspecial* 13 July 2002, pp. 65, 73.

<sup>44</sup> Duyvendak 2007, p. 214.

<sup>45</sup> *Vrij Nederland Leeskringspecial* 13 July 2002, pp. 64-65, 73.

<sup>46</sup> *Vrij Nederland Leeskringspecial* 13 July 2002, pp. 65, 73.

<sup>47</sup> The distinction between online and face-to-face groups, their similarities and differences, are discussed by Long 2003, pp. 206-216 and Hartley 2002, pp. 2-4. Sedo (2003) studied online and face-to-face book discussion groups using an online survey.

<sup>48</sup> Dijkstra (1992, p. 97) distinguishes professional and leisure readers. According to Dijkstra professional readers are readers who participate in professional literary activities such as writing, publishing, review, teach or sell literature. Reading as a leisure activity is the only non-professional literary activity Dijkstra describes. She does not mention other non-professional literary activities such as visiting a play or a poetry recital, or writing as a leisure activity. Engaging with literature as a literature student, is seen as a professional activity.

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readers read as a leisure activity. Second, one can interpret a group of professional readers as readers who read about the subject of their profession, such as medicine, psychology or law. This can take place outside their working hours or not, be organised by their employer or professional organisation to which they belong, or not. Members can be colleagues of the same institution or from different institutions. This reading, however, is directly connected with their profession. Non-professional readers are in this case people who do not read *primarily* about or for their profession.

Book discussion groups, in particular organised ones, may have a *professional coach*. A professional coach is for instance a literature teacher or library employee. He or she can have various tasks or responsibilities, such as leading the discussion, or providing information about the books that are discussed.<sup>49</sup> The coach may decide – possibly in consultation with the group – what the group will read. Professional coaches may have a good view of the enormous amount of books available in bookshops and libraries, the quality of these books, and the suitability of a book for their book discussion group. The choice may also be made by the organisation the group is affiliated to as is the custom for *SLD*-groups. Peer groups who do not have a professional coach can choose to divide mentioned and other tasks among the group members, either based on individual initiative or assignment of roles.

Groups can have *various ways of organising their meetings*. For instance, if the group works with a discussion leader, this role can be allocated to one person either explicitly or through an implied agreement, or it can rotate among group members. Additionally, the topics discussed and in which order they appear, may vary. Groups for instance may focus on literary analysis or have a discussion on a more personal or social level. Additionally, guides for book discussion group leaders and participants give examples of how to organise meetings and indicate the number of choices groups can make.<sup>50</sup> Choices concern not only content and organisation of the discussion but also practicalities such as the regularity (i.e. the actual number of meetings during a period of time, whether the meetings are planned at a certain point in time or in an ad hoc way) and the location (e.g. community centre, pub, participant's home) of the meetings. It is possible that groups not only meet for discussion, but combine this with other activities, for instance

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<sup>49</sup> This distinction is mentioned by among others Gerritsma 1998, pp. 29-30; Kerka 1996, p. 84.

<sup>50</sup> Examples of such guides for Dutch and Flemish readers are Drewes 2006; Van Gool and Van Hulle 1997, and Van Kempen and Bultinck 2006. Next to these guides, concised folders or digital texts are for instance published by local libraries, publishing houses (e.g. <http://www.querido.nl/web/Voor-leesclubs/Hoe-start-ik-een-leesclub.htm>) and the Dutch magazine for book discussion groups by Biblion *Boek-Delen* ([http://www.nbdbiblion.nl/sites/nbdbiblion.nl/files/0711\\_FOL\\_Tips\\_Leesclubs\\_los\\_0.pdf](http://www.nbdbiblion.nl/sites/nbdbiblion.nl/files/0711_FOL_Tips_Leesclubs_los_0.pdf)). Both websites were accessed on July 1, 2014. Examples of guides in English are Daniels 2002, Jacobsohn 1998, Loevy 2006.

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eating together. Groups may plan separate meetings for additional activities such as visiting a restaurant, a museum or the cinema.

There are groups who discuss during their meeting one or more books that are *determined beforehand*. In addition, there are groups where *book-swapping* takes place, so not every group member reads the same book in advance of or during a specific meeting.<sup>51</sup> It is therefore not intended or not even possible to have a discussion between all group members about one or more books everyone is familiar with. These groups are usually called *multi-title clubs*. During their meetings, members discuss books while advising each other and sharing their thoughts with the previous reader or readers of the book. Discussions will be organised in a very different way than in plenary book discussion about one specific book. At the end of each season it is likely that the greater part or all of the members will have read the same corpus of books, though. This approach may resemble the eighteenth-century reading circles, though in the present-day multi-title clubs specifically do not evade discussions.

If members of a group – unlike members of multi-title clubs – choose to read and discuss the same title together at the same time, groups can choose to read the same book or part of it together *during their meeting*, or choose that every member should read it *in advance* of the meeting. Examples of groups who read together during their meeting are Bible-discussion groups, or groups who want to read and understand difficult and voluminous books like James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922).<sup>52</sup>

Book discussion groups may read *fiction* or *nonfiction*, or both.<sup>53</sup> Fiction groups may choose for highbrow literature or less pretentious works and anything in between. They can read prose, poetry, or drama. Nonfiction consists of for example professional literature – for instance scientific or professional texts about medicine, law, or management – or popular science, religious works, autobiographies, biographies and more or less accessible works about humanities like art, philosophy, history, or works about social sciences. Groups may alternate different genres.

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<sup>51</sup> Hartley 2002, pp. 18-19, describes the all-male multi-title club *Bristol Friendly Reading Society* that was founded in October 1799 and still exists. Duyvendak (1994) found a somewhat similar book-swapping group in Sittard, The Netherlands, founded in the early 1960's. The Netherlands. This group also participated in the current study.

<sup>52</sup> Hartley 2002, pp. 49-50 found some *one-book groups*, (including her own at the time), among others a group that has been reading *Ulysses*, at the time they read five chapters in fourteen years.

<sup>53</sup> This distinction is made by Hartley 2002, p. 59. On page 57 of her work, she names different categories of fiction works groups may choose from.



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### *Defining the book discussion group*

There are many publications especially written for book discussion groups, their coaches or leaders, or people who want to join or start a group. Authors of these works have tried to specify the concept of book discussion groups. In 1997, Van Gool and Van Hulle published a guidebook for Dutch and Flemish book discussion groups.<sup>54</sup> They see book groups as ‘an institutionalised form of talking about books. Regularly and profoundly exchanging views about books leads to attentive, more motivated and better informed readers’.<sup>55</sup> In 2006, another guidebook for Dutch and Flemish book discussion groups was published by Drewes. She does not really specify the *reading club*, and describes them as ‘groups of people who gather and discuss books together’.<sup>56</sup> In Part I of her book we learn that she assumes that the groups are more or less fixed, meet on a regular basis and all members have read the same book or books in advance of the meeting.<sup>57</sup>

Scholars who were interested in studying the book discussion group have attempted to define their subject of study following their research questions; sometimes practical reasons played a role as well. Contemporary book discussion groups have been a subject for scholarly studies in several countries, some of them give a more or less broad definition. A selection of definitions will be described below.

Gerritsma studied motives of people for being member of a *reading club*, and defines it as ‘a group of readers who survived the ravages of time and prefer collective reading above individualistic reading. A group of people who with clock-like regularity read a literary book and ... sit together to discuss it’.<sup>58</sup> She studied four Dutch book discussion groups reading fiction. Because of the goal of her study (i.e. finding out what motives people have to read in a book discussion group), she concentrated on groups consisting

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<sup>54</sup> The authors use the term *leeskring* (literally: *reading circle*). The use of the term *reading circle* for a group that discusses books together everyone has read is often used in the Netherlands but may be confusing, for this term is also used for groups who mainly swap books and don’t have group discussions on one book everyone has read in advance. I will use the term ‘reading circle’ only for book-swapping groups.

<sup>55</sup> Van Gool and Van Hulle 1997, p. 9. Original Dutch definition: ‘de leeskringen zijn een geïnstitutionaliseerde vorm van het praten over boeken. Het regelmatig en diepgaand van gedachten wisselen over boeken leidt tot aandachtiger, gemotiveerder en beter geïnformeerde lezers’.

<sup>56</sup> Drewes 2006, p. 7. Drewes uses the term *leesclub* (literally: *reading club*). This is the most common Dutch term for book discussion groups. Original Dutch definition: ‘groepjes van mensen die bij elkaar komen en met elkaar over boeken praten’.

<sup>57</sup> Drewes 2006, pp. 10-29.

<sup>58</sup> Gerritsma 1998, p. 4. Gerritsma also uses the term *leesclub*. Original Dutch definition: ‘Dit onderzoek richt zich op een groep lezers die de tand des tijds heeft doorstaan en het collectieve lezen verkiest boven het individualistische. Een groep mensen die met de regelmaat van de klok een literair boek uitlezen en letterlijk na het avondeten bij elkaar zitten om erover te praten’. The phrase ‘letterlijk na het avondeten’ (literally after dinner-time) alludes to a phrase Gerritsma quoted in a passage above her definition, in which reading is characterised as a cultural hobby people shared in their living room until the 1960s.



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of non-professional readers, based on the assumption that these motives would be different with professional readers.<sup>59</sup> Second, she did not want to include groups who only read works of one specific author, because of the supposition that the motives of such groups would differ too much from motives of more regular book discussion groups. Third, she excluded groups that were founded before 1975: Gerritsma wanted to study the modern, present-day form of book discussion groups. Groups that are older may still use very old habits that differ from the current form of the book discussion group. For practical reasons, Gerritsma eventually chose four wild groups of which two had a coach.<sup>60</sup>

Duyvendak, who studied *reading circles* in parts of the Netherlands, describes her subject of study as 'groups of readers who meet on a regular basis to discuss a book they all have read'.<sup>61</sup> Duyvendak focused in her study on organised groups in the northern part of the Netherlands, all affiliated to the *SLD*, and one wild multi-title group in the south of the Netherlands.

In English-speaking countries, book discussion groups have been a subject of study as well. Hartley studied *reading groups* in the United Kingdom. In addition, she devotes a chapter in her *Reading Groups Book* to compare the UK-groups with groups in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and English-language book discussion groups in France, Belgium and Singapore.<sup>62</sup> She states: 'a reading group can be many things, since it's any group which wants to call itself one. The usual minimal definition would be a group of people who meet on a regular basis to discuss books'.<sup>63</sup> By 'meeting' she includes meeting online.

Long defines *book discussion groups* (or *book clubs* or *reading groups*) as 'people together in groups who meet to talk about books'.<sup>64</sup> Like Hartley, Long includes groups that meet only on the internet. In her study she concentrates on book discussion groups located in and nearby Houston (Texas, USA), consisting of European American women.

Kooy studied *teacher book clubs*.<sup>65</sup> In her definition, a teacher book club is 'an informal, peer-led discussion group that meets regularly to discuss a mutually selected text (mostly fictions) that include some element of teaching and schools'.<sup>66</sup> In her study, she

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<sup>59</sup> Gerritsma uses Dijkstra's 1992 distinction between professional readers and non-professional readers.

<sup>60</sup> Gerritsma 1998, pp. 26-27.

<sup>61</sup> Duyvendak 2005, p. 177. Duyvendak uses the term *leeskring* (literally: *reading circle*). Original Dutch definition: 'groepjes lezers die regelmatig bij elkaar komen om te discussiëren over een door ieder gelezen boek'.

<sup>62</sup> Hartley 2002, pp. 103-124.

<sup>63</sup> Hartley 2002, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> Long 2003, p. 31.

<sup>65</sup> E.g. Kooy 2003; Kooy 2006a; Kooy 2006b.

<sup>66</sup> Kooy 2003, p. 662.

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focuses on two book discussion group of female teachers in Toronto, Canada: one group of five experienced teachers and one group of nine novice teachers. The groups are learning communities and Kooy specifically aims to study the learning that takes place inside these groups of professionals.

These definitions of book discussion groups make clear that there is a great variety in book discussion groups and they may therefore be classified in different ways. The goals of this study that were already announced in the preface – investigating characteristics, motives and learning considering book discussion groups – ask for a stipulative definition of the otherwise broad term ‘book discussion group’. This definition will include certain groups and exclude others. The choices made in order to define the subject of study depend on the aims of this study. Furthermore, for practical reasons this study will concentrate on book discussion groups located in the Netherlands only. Accounts for the choices made in order to formulate this definition and restrict the subject of study will be given below. The definition that is used in this research is:

*a book discussion group is a fixed group of non-professional readers who meet physically to discuss books (fiction or nonfiction) that they all have read on their own or read together.*

In this study, the academic literature about book discussion groups that is used as sources of information and reference may focus on book discussion groups that do not fully apply to this definition. These studies may for instance describe the investigations of book discussion groups that are not included in the current study, such as groups of professional readers or online groups.<sup>67</sup> Also it is possible other studies may have a more narrow focus on the subject, for instance studies who only include all-female book discussion groups.<sup>68</sup> In order to have a solid theoretical framework and to explore possible interpretations of current findings, these studies are essential. Because of different definitions of the book discussion groups, assumptions or, moreover, conclusions, are not naturally applicable on the subject of study in this current research.

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<sup>67</sup> Kooy (2006a; 2006b) studies professional book discussion groups: groups of women teachers who primarily come together for their professional development. Sedo (2002; 2003; 2004) includes online groups in her survey.

<sup>68</sup> For example the work of Long (2003), who studies European-American all-female book discussion groups. Her choice to restrict herself to these groups was partly stemmed from her research method: participant observation. See also Chapter 2.

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### *A fixed group*

Book discussion groups intend to consist of a stable group of people. Changes may take place in the composition of the group across time: with members leaving the group and other new members joining, besides members who will not be able to make it to every book discussion group appointment.

One of the aims of this research is to study learning in the book discussion group. As will be discussed in Section 1.3, it is expected that groups may build up a ‘shared history of learning’.<sup>69</sup> The intended fixedness of a group is therefore a necessary condition. This is also one of the reasons why this study only includes face-to-face book discussion groups. It is expected that a part of online groups, particularly those using public discussion boards, differ from face-to-face groups considering their fixedness.<sup>70</sup> Though a shared history of learning is not yet existing when a group has just started, new groups are included in the research. The members have certain motives and expectations committing to a fixed group, that are of interest to this research.

### *Non-professional readers*

Because of the focus of this study about learning for *personal* development, only groups of non-professional readers are included. Apart from groups of non-professionals, there are groups of professional readers active. Though these groups do have similarities with non-professional book discussion groups, there are fundamental differences. Professional readers have a primary focus on learning about their profession such as teaching, medicine or law. In line with this, groups of professional readers such as literary reviewers or scholars are excluded from this study as well.

Analogous to this decision, university book discussion groups who read and discuss literature as a subject for which they receive ECTS-credits, are excluded from this study. Students or alumni gathering and reading books *outside their curriculum* are however included. Groups affiliated to organisations such as libraries or women’s organisations also take part in this study. Next to these organised groups, wild book discussion groups are included.

The definition of non-professional and professional readers as a base to exclude or include groups remains indistinctly in case of high school literature teacher groups. Personal and professional development are intertwined and are not strictly to be separated. In line with the decision to exclude groups affiliated to their workplace, groups of teachers who discuss literature at the workplace primary for their professional development, are excluded. Teachers who are a member of a wild book discussion group, and

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<sup>69</sup> Wenger 1998, p. 86.

<sup>70</sup> Wenger 1998, pp. 134-139. The impression is that online groups have a more open character.

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who do not focus primarily on the improvement of their teaching practice, are included in this study.<sup>71</sup>

### *Readers*

A number of studies about book discussion groups focus only on all-female groups.<sup>72</sup> The aims of this study do not ask for a specific focus on female readers or the exclusion of male readers and therefore does not separate groups by the sex of their members. All-female, all-male, and mixed-sex groups are included in this study.

### *Meeting*

The intended fixedness of a group implies that the group meets on a regular basis. Being a group, and therefore coming together more than once, means that a shared history of learning can be build.<sup>73</sup> Groups may have fixed times for their meetings, such as the first Friday of the month, or every six weeks, but that is not necessary. Groups may prefer to plan their meetings in an ad hoc fashion, depending on everyone's schedule. For groups participating in this study, no restrictions were made to how often the group comes together or for how long the group has been coming together.

This research focuses on groups who meet for discussion face-to-face. Besides these face-to-face groups, there are many groups active on the Internet. These online groups are relevant for the study of the phenomenon book discussion group.<sup>74</sup> Online groups can have similarities with face-to-face groups, but the primary difference between these two types of groups is the way groups meet and discuss. Unlike face-to-face groups, online groups only discuss books using an internet forum (i.e. a discussion board, the discussers in this case do not have to discuss simultaneously) or via chat programs such as instant messaging. Besides this, studying both groups, each with their own characteristic discussion method, requires different research approaches. Next to the supposed differences with face-to-face groups considering the stability of the group, this is a second reason why online groups are excluded from this particular study.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Teacher book discussion groups similar to the groups studied by Kooy, will therefore not be included in the current study. Kooy (2006a; 2006b) studies groups of teachers who primarily come together for their professional development.

<sup>72</sup> For instance: Long 2003; Poole 2003; Kooy 2006b.

<sup>73</sup> Wenger 1998, pp. 93-102.

<sup>74</sup> See Section 6.3 and 6.4.

<sup>75</sup> On online book discussion groups and other ways readers can interact using the internet, see for instance Long 2003, p. 206-216. On differences between face-to-face and online book discussion groups, and on the advantages and disadvantages of using weblog or chat as forms of communication for online book discussion groups, see for instance Balling, Henrichsen and Skouvig 2008, pp. 58-61. Differences and similarities between members of online and face-to-face groups are studied by Sedo (2003).

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### *Discussing books all members have read on their own or read together*

Groups can choose different approaches with regard to reading books. In book discussion groups, one or more books can be read by all the group members. This will be the same book or books for all the members. This will enable the participants to have a thorough discussion about the book or books. A different approach is found in multi-title clubs. Here, all members read a different book and during the meetings, the exchanging of experiences and actual book swapping takes place. At the end of a season, the members may have read more or less the same books that circulated in the group. Because of the different character of the discussions in their meetings and the focus of this study about learning from the group discussions, multi-title clubs will not be included in this research.<sup>76</sup>

If a group chooses that all members should read and discuss the same book or books, a subsequent choice has to be made. Group members may all be expected to read the same book or books in advance of the meeting. It is also possible a group prefers to read a book or parts of it together during their meetings. Both types of groups will be included in this study.

Groups may have a professional coach who can have several tasks, such as leading the discussion or choosing the books to read. This study includes groups with as well as groups without a coach.

### *Fiction and nonfiction*

The books discussed may be either fiction (prose, poetry, and drama) or nonfiction. Any fiction will do, highbrow as well as more accessible reading. It is not the aim of this study to intervene in the discussion of what is considered literature and what is not, though groups themselves and their members may form opinions about this issue. Groups who read nonfiction works such as travel books, history books, popular science books, biographies and autobiographies are included too. Book discussion groups may choose books from only one category or from diverse categories. As was already mentioned in the beginning of this section, during the follow-up studies, the focus however lies with groups who mainly or only read fiction. Furthermore, in accordance with the choice to exclude professional readers, groups who read professional, specialist literature will not be included in this study.

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<sup>76</sup> One multi-title book discussion group did however participate in this study: one meeting a year they do discuss one title every member read in advance. For this reason it was decided to include this group in the first part of this study. It is the same group Duyvendak described in her 1994 article.

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### 1.2 MOTIVES FOR READING AND DISCUSSING BOOKS

#### *Second research question*

Next to characteristics of groups and participants, the motives people have to participate in a book discussion group are subject of study. The second research question of this study is formulated as follows:

*II. What motives do participants have for taking part in their book discussion group?*

In order to investigate this subject, not only motives for participation in a book discussion group are of interest, motives for reading are relevant as well. Theories that are of interest for the study of reading motives and group participation motives have been described by scholars from different backgrounds: literary studies, literature sociology and cultural sociology.

A literature study led to the formulation of four motives for individual reading and subsequently six motives for participating in a book discussion group, which will be presented in this section. Theories and studies about reading behaviour, reading motives, cultural participation motives, didactics of literature, and specifically motives for book discussion group membership are included in this literature study. Theories relevant for finding out about book discussion group membership show resemblance with the theories that are relevant for investigating individual reading motives. The first four book discussion group participation motives correspond to the four motives for individual reading, but have a somewhat different interpretation. The fifth and sixth book discussion group participation motives are uniquely applicable to book discussion group membership.

#### *Motives for individual reading*

People may have multiple motives for reading. These motives change constantly, depending on the goal someone has for his or her reading at a specific moment.<sup>77</sup> From diverse fields of study, theories about motives for individual reading have been defined and sometimes tested.

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<sup>77</sup> Duyvendak 2007, p. 219; Miesen and Stokmans 1998, pp. 223-225.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

Literary theorists Fokkema and Ibsch discuss several theories about motives for cultural participation.<sup>78</sup> Reading is interpreted as a form of cultural participation. Motives for reading are developed primarily as a result of the cultural participation theory of sociologist Bourdieu.<sup>79</sup> He states that the most important influence to cultural behaviour is a person's need for *social distinction*. By participating in cultural activities, like visiting a museum or attending a concert, people mean to distinguish themselves from others. By showing that they have the cultural knowledge to participate, they heighten their status. Sociologist Ganzeboom however claimed that this need for social distinction is not the most important influence to cultural participation. Rather, it is the competence of a person to handle more or less complex information that influences his or her cultural behaviour.<sup>80</sup> People with a higher educational level are able to process more complex information and are therefore able to *enjoy* participating in cultural activities, for which this ability is needed.

Like Ganzeboom, sociologist Kraaykamp understands reading as a cultural leisure activity comparable to visiting the theatre or a concert. He investigates reading connected to three matters: the investment of time that is needed when reading, reading as the processing of complex cognitive information, and reading as a social activity.<sup>81</sup> Reading a book demands a greater – yet more flexible – time-investment than for instance going to a concert or the opera, or visiting a museum. It is however experienced as rewarding. Readers enjoy processing complex cognitive information adjusted to their competence.<sup>82</sup> Besides this, individual reading can be interpreted as a social activity as well which means that reading makes one a reader and this may lead to social recognition – distinguishing from non-readers or types of readers one does not want to belong to, and conforming to certain types of readers one does want to belong to – this too is important to many readers.<sup>83</sup>

Sociologist Knulst posits that when people make a choice regarding participating in a cultural activity, they consider the expected profits participating brings to social, cognitive and hedonistic areas and the investments in time and money that are required of the participant.<sup>84</sup> Fokkema and Ibsch continue on Knulst's theory about motives for

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<sup>78</sup> Fokkema and Ibsch 1992, pp. 152-158 discuss the theories of sociologists Bourdieu (1979) and reactions, corrections and applications by Ganzeboom, De Graaf and Kalmijn (1987), Ganzeboom (1989), De Swaan (1986), Wippler (1987) and Knulst (1989).

<sup>79</sup> Bourdieu 1984.

<sup>80</sup> Ganzeboom 1989, pp. 44-52; 176-177.

<sup>81</sup> Kraaykamp 1993, pp. 183-185.

<sup>82</sup> Kraaykamp 1993, pp. 137-147.

<sup>83</sup> Kraaykamp 1993, pp. 171-181.

<sup>84</sup> Ganzeboom also found that availability of time is an issue (Ganzeboom 1989, pp. 36-38) while the availability of money seems to be only important when *buying* books (Ganzeboom 1989, pp. 35-36). These are not to

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cultural participation.<sup>85</sup> Combined with the theories of Bourdieu and Ganzeboom, Fokkema and Ibsch define and discuss four types of motives for cultural participation: the *public motive*, the *hedonistic motive*, the *cognitive motive*, and the *coordination motive*.<sup>86</sup> The public motive means that people participate because of their need to distinguish themselves and be seen as someone with a high status. If a person participates in a cultural activity expecting to enjoy this, he or she has a hedonistic motive. If a person expects to gain knowledge, then he or she has a cognitive motive. With the description of the coordination motive Fokkema and Ibsch focus on the assumption that participating in cultural activities provides us with knowledge of cultural conventions. These conventions provide solutions to coordination problems.<sup>87</sup> People who are aware of conventions may have less problems deciding how to act or react in different social settings.

Based on these theories about differences in and motives for cultural participation, four main motives for reading are described and used for research by both Dijkstra and Duyvendak.<sup>88</sup> In her dissertation *Readers in Utrecht: An empirical investigation into factors influencing reading behaviour*, literary theorist Dijkstra studies the reading behaviour of the inhabitants of the Dutch city of Utrecht.<sup>89</sup> According to Dijkstra, reading behaviour is the product of two choices: first the choice of being a reader or being a non-reader, second – when being a reader – the reader has to decide what to read. To explain what factors influence the decisions of people, Dijkstra uses theories from three academic disciplines: sociology, psychology, and literary theory, and states that reading behaviour is influenced by the social context, the individual context and the literary context. Dijkstra explored among other things four types of motives that influence people to read fiction ('narrative books'). Subsequently, literary historian Duyvendak studied these four motives for reading among members of the *Damesleesmuseum* (literally

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be considered as motives but rather as *conditions* and can be studied as aspects of what makes a book suitable for a book discussion group. Hartley for instance found several book discussion groups who only choose to read books that meet a practical aspect, for instance books that are low in price or available as paperback, or books that are available in the library, or books that do not exceed a certain number of pages (Hartley 2002, pp. 46-47).

<sup>85</sup> Fokkema and Ibsch 1992, pp. 158-159; Knulst 1989.

<sup>86</sup> Fokkema and Ibsch 1992, pp. 159-171.

<sup>87</sup> See also Fokkema and Ibsch 1992, p. 91, where the terms 'convention' and 'coordination problem' are discussed, using the theory of Lewis (1969).

<sup>88</sup> Dijkstra 1992; Duyvendak 2007; 2005; 2003.

<sup>89</sup> Dijkstra (1992) conducted two surveys of residents of the Dutch city of Utrecht: first a large and general survey on a sample of inhabitants of Utrecht, second, as a result of the outcomes of the first survey, a more detailed survey of two specific groups of people with a certain degree of literary socialisation, divided in a group of leisure readers and a group of professional readers. Dijkstra defined professional readers as readers who are engaged in literature in their education or occupation.



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‘Ladies’ Reading Museum’) – a women’s library in The Hague – as well as among female members of organised book discussion groups in the northern part of the Netherlands.<sup>90</sup> The four motives studied by Dijkstra and Duyvendak include the *hedonistic motive*, the *status* or *social motive*, the *aesthetic motive* and the *cognitive motive*. The hedonistic motive applies to people who enjoy reading because they want to relax and immerse themselves in a book. When people read because they want to show they are readers, the status motive applies to them. The aesthetic motive applies to people who read a book because they are interested in the theme of it and the style of writing. The cognitive motive implies that people read because of their need for the development of general knowledge and expansion of more specific knowledge, also about moral subjects.<sup>91</sup>

Psychologist Pette published a study about the psychology of reading novels, for which she studied six German readers who all individually read the German translation (1998) of the novel *Mañana en la batalla piensa en mí* (1994) from the Spanish author Javier Marias.<sup>92</sup> Her basic assumption is that people read literary texts primarily for their pleasure. The fact someone wants to read a novel depends on the fact that he or she has had positive experiences with reading in the past and wants to bring about a positive experience again by reading.<sup>93</sup>

Pette describes three different aspects that cause people to enjoy reading literature, that resemble the motives discussed above. Like Ganzeboom, Pette sees a relationship between educational level and cultural participation – in Pette’s case reading. According to Pette, the need to relax applies most to people with a lower level of education while people with a higher educational level *also* read because of a need for gathering information and interest in the literary-aesthetic aspect of the book.<sup>94</sup> She further makes a distinction between *reading motive* (*Lesemotiv*) and *reading motivation* (*Lesemotivation*). By reading motive she means the more basic, long-lasting willingness to read. This is trait-related. This positive attitude towards reading depends on social influences starting from childhood. Reading motivation is the impetus that someone has at a particular moment for reading a particular book. This is state-related. This motivation follows from the reader’s need to escape from daily reality and have imaginary, unpredictable experiences. If readers have a stabile reading motive, the reading motivation is influ-

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<sup>90</sup> Duyvendak 2007; 2005; 2003.

<sup>91</sup> Both Duyvendak and Dijkstra use these motives. Dijkstra uses the term *social motive*, Duyvendak calls this the *status motive*. Dijkstra 1992, pp. 34-37, 50-52; Duyvendak 2007, pp. 218-219; 2003, pp. 16-24, 181-183.

<sup>92</sup> Pette 2001.

<sup>93</sup> Pette 2001, p. 41.

<sup>94</sup> Pette 2001, p. 42.

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enced at a social level by friends and relatives, colleagues and school, and at someone's level of curiosity and need for discovering new things.<sup>95</sup>

The coherency between educational level and subsequent reading motivations also appear in the work of teacher educator Witte, who studied the literary development of students for the subject Dutch literature in the last three years of secondary education.<sup>96</sup> He operationalised the term *literary competence* specifically in the context of this level of secondary school, partly based on final attainment levels. Reading motives are interpreted as important distinguishing features for the different competence levels Witte defines. A reading motive, he states, implies a certain way of reading, an opinion about literature and how a reader positions the reading of literature. Witte defines six successive literary competence levels, each of them accompanied by a specific reading motive. These six motives are preceded by the pragmatic motive, which implies a person only sees reading as an obligatory activity, for instance because of a school assignment. The six subsequent motives that were defined are:

1. the *hedonistic/escapist motive*: reading for pleasure and as a way to relax;
2. the *mimetic motive*: reading in order to recognise one's own social world and find self-assurance;
3. the *cognitive motive*: reading in order to broaden one's horizons;
4. the *interpretive-aesthetic motive*: discovering multiple meanings in a book while reading, and enjoying the work at an aesthetic level;
5. the *cultural-aesthetic motive*: reading as a way to nourish one's literary and cultural-historical level;
6. the *constructivistic motive*: reading as a way to nourish one's intellectual level.<sup>97</sup>

As students develop their literary competence, they also develop new reading motives, without forgetting or abandoning the preceding reading motives. Students are then able to switch between different reading motives, depending on what they want to accomplish by reading at a specific moment.<sup>98</sup> This corresponds with other theories about reading motives that do not specifically concern *student* readers: though the accretion of

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<sup>95</sup> Pette 2001, pp. 42-44, cf. Dijkstra 1992, pp. 34-39. On the concepts trait and state see for instance Reigeluth 1983, p. 32.

<sup>96</sup> Witte 2008.

<sup>97</sup> Witte 2008, pp. 132-140; 233; 235. Table 6.2 (p. 203) gives an overview of the six levels of literary development and the different characteristics of each level such as motivation, responses and motives. In the same table the six levels are compared to development models of Appleyard (1994), Thomson (1987), Applebee (1978), Kohlberg (1963) and Piaget (1952). Witte's thesis contains an English language summary, see pp. 523-543.

<sup>98</sup> Witte 2008, pp. 207-208; cf. Dijkstra 1992, pp. 34-35; cf. Pette's state/related reading motivation (Pette 2001, pp. 42-44).

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reading motives may develop in a successive way, once readers become acquainted with different reading motives, these can co-exist.<sup>99</sup>

Though Witte's study focuses on the literary *development* and therefore reading motives of secondary school students, his study is valuable in studying reading motives among adult readers as well. The upper two literary development levels exceed the final attainment levels of secondary schools and are not often reached by the students.<sup>100</sup> As adults, they may develop their literary competence when remaining active readers and reach those higher levels at a later stage in life.<sup>101</sup>

### *Definitions: four motives for reading individually*

In sum, scholars from different backgrounds have identified several motives for reading individually. For this current study, a connection is made with these theories originating from literature studies, literature sociology, psychology, cultural sociology and didactics of literature. Here, four reading motives are derived from these theories. The occurrence of these four motives for reading will be investigated among book discussion group members. In order to have a consistent set of terms to refer to in this study, the motives will be used according to the following description:

1. *Cognitive Reading Motive*: If people intend to *learn* by reading, they have a *Cognitive Reading Motive*.<sup>102</sup> People who have a Cognitive Reading Motive want to pick up information or develop practice by their reading.<sup>103</sup> Learning by reading can include the enhancement of general knowledge or knowledge about a specific topic, such as history. Also, developing practice – such as or literary analysis – may be seen as learning. Besides this, people may read because they aim to develop their self-identity. It also includes learning with respect to social ability or cultural conventions.<sup>104</sup>
2. *Aesthetic Reading Motive*: This motive concerns the need to *experience* the style or theme of a book.<sup>105</sup> People with an Aesthetic Reading Motive for instance read a

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<sup>99</sup> Duyvendak 2007, p. 219; Miesen and Stokmans 1998, pp. 223-225.

<sup>100</sup> Witte 2008, pp. 104-107; 245-247; 250.

<sup>101</sup> Kraaykamp 1993, pp. 144-155 found that only very few readers stay with books on one particular competence level during their life. Almost all readers develop and read more and more complex books.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Dijkstra 1992, pp. 34-37, 51; Duyvendak 2007, p. 219; Fokkema and Ibsch 1992, pp. 162-163; Pette 2001, pp. 42-44; Witte 2008, pp. 135-137, 203 competence level 3 and 6.

<sup>103</sup> See Section 1.3 for more on the defining of learning and the relation between reading and learning.

<sup>104</sup> Motives on learning specific with respect to cultural conventions is appointed a separate term (the coordination motive) by some scholars, e.g. Fokkema and Ibsch 1992, pp. 91, 164-166.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Duyvendak 2007, p. 219; Pette 2001, p. 42; Witte 2008, pp. 136-138, 203 competence level 4 and 5.

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book because they enjoy the use of language, or because they love books of a particular author because of his or her style.

3. *Hedonistic Reading Motive*: This motive means people read because they want to *relax*, immerse in a book, *enjoy* themselves.<sup>106</sup> People with a Hedonistic Reading Motive for instance forget about their daily worries and dive into the story of a book.
4. *Status Reading motive*: The Status Reading Motive concerns peoples need to *distinguish* themselves as – specific types of – readers.<sup>107</sup> People with a Status Reading Motive like to be visible as a reader with a certain literary taste or competence. They distinguish themselves from others who do not read or read different types of books, and conform themselves to a type of reader they want to belong to.<sup>108</sup>

As was stated before, readers can have more than one motive to read, and a reader's motive or combination of motives are variable. It is therefore possible that readers have different motives for reading a book for the book discussion group than motives for reading a book individually.

### *Motives for participating in a book discussion group*

In addition to motives for individual reading, book discussion group members have motives for participating in a book discussion group. Below, existing theories about motives for book discussion group participation will be described. Next, six motives for book discussion group membership will be defined. Motives for reading individually prove to be – in a somewhat different or intensified form – applicable when describing motives for reading in a book discussion group. They form the base of the first four motives for book discussion group participation. These four motives consider primarily the *reading* aspect of the book discussion group. The fifth and sixth motive for partici-

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<sup>106</sup> Cf. Dijkstra 1992, pp. 34-37, 51; Duyvendak 2007, p. 219; Fokkema and Ibsch 1992, pp. 162-163; Pette 2001, pp. 42-44; Witte 2008, pp. 132-135, 203 competence level 1 and 2. The aesthetic motive is also classified in the hedonistic motive, cf. Duyvendak 2003, p. 24. The term *hedonistic* may have a negative connotation, in English as well as in Dutch (*hedonistisch*). It is however not intended to brand this motive as something negative. The motives described here are not intended to have positive or negative overtones.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Dijkstra 1992, p. 51 (Dijkstra calls this the *social* motive); Duyvendak 2007, pp. 218-219; Fokkema and Ibsch 1992, pp. 160-162 (public motive).

<sup>108</sup> Kraaykamp 1993, p. 149 notes rightly that it is less easy to show oneself as a reader, for he sees reading itself as a solitarily activity, when compared to visiting an art gallery or opera house for instance. He states that it is possible for people to characterise oneself as a reader, however, for instance by having a filled bookcase, citing authors, or having conversations on literature. Membership of a book discussion group may be seen as another example for readers to position themselves.

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pating in a book discussion group do not originate from reading motives but primarily focus on the *group* aspect of the book discussion group.

Though book reading is an activity one can do alone, talking about books may be part of the reading process for individual readers. Talking about a specific book with another reader provides new insights to them.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, it is claimed that people have a need of sharing their experiences of consumption of a certain cultural product, like literature, when they valued it as an cognitive and emotional enrichment.<sup>110</sup> One can discuss books incidentally with friends, family, or colleagues, without forming a steady book discussion group, to learn more about a specific book, literature, interpretations other than one's own, or get ideas of new titles to read. Book shop keepers and librarians of course can be a discussion partner or source of information for readers. The internet can also provide a forum or be a source of information. Nonetheless, book discussion group members choose not only to read and have an occasional chat about books, but they are looking for something extra that, hopefully, a book discussion group will provide. What extra's do being part of a book discussion group offer to a participant? What are people's motives for their membership?

Researchers from different fields of study have been investigating book discussion group membership motives by defining diverse motives and testing them. Literature teacher educator Smith audio-taped two sessions of two book discussion groups and interviewed a part of the members of these groups. He investigated what aspects of their membership were valued most by the participants.<sup>111</sup> After analysing the audiotapes, Smith combined these outcomes with the data collected in the interviews.<sup>112</sup> Members seemed to value most the *social aspect* of the book club, the *equality among members*, and the *spirit of cooperation*. The social aspect includes more than the joy of meeting friends: participants recognise the discussions as a chance to get to know their friends better.<sup>113</sup> They learn more about the personal experiences and morals of their fellow members. This is because members tend to use personal experiences as a source of knowledge, which is made possible by the atmosphere where members are equals and collaborate.<sup>114</sup>

Similar motives were found by literature theorist Hartley, who asked book discussion group members in a survey what is to them precious or most enjoyable in being a

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<sup>109</sup> Pette 2001, p. 60.

<sup>110</sup> Fokkema and Ibsch 1992, pp. 164-165.

<sup>111</sup> Smith 1996.

<sup>112</sup> The coding scheme was developed by Marshall and is included in Chapter 2 in the book of Marshall, Smagorinsky and Smith 1995.

<sup>113</sup> For the importance of friendship and a friendly atmosphere, see for instance Hartley 2002, p. 83.

<sup>114</sup> Smith 1996, pp. 182-183. See also Section 1.3.

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member.<sup>115</sup> Thanks to the meetings, *people claim to gain insights in the books they read* as well as *insights in themselves as a person*. They read books they normally would not have read, and become capable to understand books they normally would not have understood. They learn through other people's experiences in reading the book and by discussing their own personal experiences with others, and learn to value these other views. Not only are books discussed, but in time the groups become safe and supportive environments to discuss personal issues. Besides the value of discussing personal issues, some respondents said that being a member of a book discussion group gives them a *valid excuse to actually take time for reading*. It makes reading, otherwise seen by their environment or even themselves as a luxury or waste of time, a legitimate activity. Besides this, visiting the meeting gives participants a few hours for themselves, away from their normal daily activities.<sup>116</sup>

The highly valued possibilities book discussion groups offer to discuss personal aspects are also emerging in the researches Long, Poole and Duyvendak conducted among all-female book discussion groups, each in a different continent. They all recognise these possibilities. Moreover, they use this possibilities to explain why participating in a book discussion group is so valuable to *females* in particular. Sociologist Long studied all-female book discussion groups in Houston, Texas and found that the *social aspect of gathering and discussing both the books that the members have read and what is occurring in their lives* seems to be very important to them. Long concludes that: 'More than men, women may need the deliberative spaces to voice their concerns, to narrate the particularities of their lives, to expand their cultural repertoires in dialogue with narratives in books or from other women's lives'.<sup>117</sup> A comparable view also arises in the research of sociologist Poole who studied all-female book discussion groups in Victoria, Australia: women have a need to discuss their lives together with other women.<sup>118</sup> In the Netherlands, Duyvendak also concentrates on the reasons why specifically females participate in book discussion groups, and her findings correspond to the findings of Long and Poole. Duyvendak looks at what actually happens in the book discussion groups and what makes them attractive. Literature provides the female readers with models of experience and observation of the world. By discussing books, women talk about literature and by that about their position with respect to social issues and her position in society. The book discussion group gives members the opportunity to test and confirm

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<sup>115</sup> Hartley 2002, pp. 125-138.

<sup>116</sup> Hartley 2002, pp. 125-130.

<sup>117</sup> Long 2003, p. 219.

<sup>118</sup> Poole 2003, pp. 271-273, 278-280.

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their views, and thus the discussion gives a surplus value to reading individually and being obliged to make these considerations alone.<sup>119</sup>

Empirical literature studies student Gerritsma too recognises having the opportunity to discuss personal issues and gain personal insights as one possible impulse for participating in a book discussion group, though she classes it together with learning about literature itself as one more comprehensive *cognitive* motive. Based on existing theories about reading motives and book discussion group membership motives, she defines in total five motives for reading in a book discussion group.<sup>120</sup> First, the *motive of social appreciation* implies that people can count on being appreciated by their social environment by being a reader.<sup>121</sup> They distinguish themselves from people who do not share their literary taste and they conform to people who do have the same literary taste. By joining a book discussion group, people conform what they read to other members and show their literary taste and interest, not only to the members of the book group but also to other people in their environment. Second, corresponding with the motive of social appreciation, the *socially-active motive* holds that people want to show that they conform to the current norm of being socially active.<sup>122</sup> By joining a book discussion group, reading is more visible as a non-solitary activity. Kraaykamp also emphasizes the importance of visibility of cultural practices, which increase its communicative value for social interaction.<sup>123</sup>

The third motive Gerritsma describes is the *pressure-of-time motive*.<sup>124</sup> People join a book discussion group because this will push them to make time to read. These people are afraid that, when there is no pressure to read, they will not find the time to do so, even if they really want to read. By making an appointment with their book discussion group, they will feel more or less forced to read. Fourth, the already mentioned *cognitive motive* implies that people read because they want to gain more insight in the texts they read, as well as insights at an individual, personal level.<sup>125</sup> Discussing the books allows them to learn more because of the possibility to exchange views and therefore come to better insights. The fifth motive Gerritsma focuses on in her research is the *educative*

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<sup>119</sup> Duyvendak 2005, pp. 187-190.

<sup>120</sup> Gerritsma 1998, pp. 18-25 uses theories by Van Gool (1992), Van Dalen (1990), Dijkstra (1992), Ganzeboom (1989), Kraaykamp (1993), Knulst and Kraaykamp (1996), Long (1993), and Nell (1988), to define her five membership motives.

<sup>121</sup> *Motief van sociale waardering*.

<sup>122</sup> *Sociaal-actieve motief*.

<sup>123</sup> Kraaykamp 2007, p. 133.

<sup>124</sup> *Tijdsdrukmotief*.

<sup>125</sup> *Cognitieve motief*.

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*motive* and is also learning-based.<sup>126</sup> It implies that by joining a book discussion group, people learn more broadly about literature because of the discussions, the sometimes extra information handed out during meetings, and because there is a possibility to read books for their group they otherwise would never have chosen to read themselves.

For her study, Gerritsma questioned 35 members of four book discussion groups in the Netherlands, using a survey. Subsequently, she interviewed eight of these respondents. She had specific interest in their motives for reading in a group.<sup>127</sup> She concludes that people rarely just have one most important motive to read in a book discussion group, but tend to combine a number of motives. Different combinations are possible. Moreover, she states, motives can change over time: motives that were important when someone began visiting a book discussion group may disappear and be replaced by others: reasons for joining a book discussion group may differ from reasons for staying in one.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, Gerritsma found more evidence for the existence of the social appreciation motive than she expected. Though it was never the most important reason for a person to become or stay a member of a book discussion group, it was almost always present and the respondents were aware of this.<sup>129</sup> The socially-active motive was, other than expected, less of an issue, as was the pressure-of-time motive.<sup>130</sup> Few of the research participants (13%) indicated that they had too little spare time to read and needed the participation in their book discussion group in order to take time to read. This motive turns out to be valid for participants who experience having enough spare time to read as well. Many participants appreciated the fact that the book discussion group appointment forced them to do read although they did have enough spare time: 29% of the respondents for instance state they read more since they joined their book discussion group. For almost all participants in the research, an important reason to be a member of a book discussion group was the cognitive motive. Most participants (91%) aim particularly to gain insight in the book they are reading, rather than insight in their own identity (17%). Gerritsma thinks this second part of the cognitive motive is more present in a subconscious way and therefore did not appear prominently in the results of this research.<sup>131</sup> Gaining knowledge of literature and getting to know other types of books than one would normally read – the educative motive – is another important motive for people for participating in a book discussion group: for instance, 85% of the

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<sup>126</sup> *Educatieve motief.*

<sup>127</sup> For the outcomes, see Gerritsma 1998, pp. 70-72; 87-100.

<sup>128</sup> Gerritsma 1998, pp. 69-70.

<sup>129</sup> Gerritsma 1998, pp. 47-52.

<sup>130</sup> Gerritsma 1998, pp. 52-55, 55-58.

<sup>131</sup> Gerritsma 1998, pp. 59-60.



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respondents agree to the proposition they participate in their book discussion group because this enables them to gain knowledge about literature.<sup>132</sup>

### *Definitions: six motives for participating in a book discussion group*

Similar to theories about motives for reading, theories about motives for book discussion group membership have been described by scholars from different fields of study. In this current research, motives people have for participating in a book discussion group will be subject of study (research question II). Based on the discussed literature, motives for reading in a group are categorised in six types of motives which presence will be investigated. The first four correspond to motives for reading but have a specific interpretation that is adapted to reading and discussing books in a group. The fifth and sixth motives are specifically applicable to book discussion group membership.

*Four motives for reading in a book discussion group* that can be derived from the motives for individual reading are described as follows:

1. *Cognitive Membership Motive*: If people intend to *learn* by reading and discussing books with a group, they have a *Cognitive Motive*.<sup>133</sup> It means people are member of a book discussion group because they want to learn by participating in a community rather than learning individually. This learning for personal rather than professional development can include the same aspects as described by the Cognitive Reading Motive. Because of the added value of a group discussion, the learning itself may be intensified.<sup>134</sup> Also, people may learn different aspects when reading and discussing with a group instead of reading individually. For instance, the group discussion enables people better to learn at a social level, such as learning more about your friends, developing your own social ability, be a better debater, or learning about cultural conventions.<sup>135</sup> But it may also mean that people become acquainted with books or genres they would not have read individually.
2. *Aesthetic Membership motive*: This motive concerns the need to *experience the style or theme of a book*. This motive implies people attend book discussion groups in or-

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<sup>132</sup> Gerritsma 1998, p. 62.

<sup>133</sup> As mentioned, Gerritsma (1998, pp. 23-24) makes a distinction between the *educative motive* and the *cognitive motive*. In this research however, both these types are combined in one term, the cognitive motive. Both types of knowledge will be studied in this research.

<sup>134</sup> People might feel the book discussion group gives them a different opportunity to learn than they would get by only reading individually (cf. Gerritsma 1998, pp. 23-24: educative motive). Section 1.3 will deal more intensively with the subject of group learning.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Hartley 2002, pp. 128-130; Long 2003, p. 129; Smith 1996, pp. 182-183.

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der to get more out of their reading experience. Talking about books is part of the book reading process and it enables participants to get more pleasure from reading and enjoy the style or theme of a book. Some readers do not specifically notice style but focus mainly on the narrative thread. Other members of their book discussion group who do focus on style could pay attention to it in the group.

3. *Hedonistic Membership motive*: This motive means people participate in a book discussion group because they want to *relax*, immerse in a discussion about books, enjoy themselves. Participants enjoy the social aspect specifically of discussing books, preparing the discussion about the book, sharing reading experiences.
4. *Status Membership motive*: This motive concerns peoples need to *distinguish* themselves as – socially active – readers. People may want to distinguish themselves by being a member of a book discussion group because it shows they are active readers.<sup>136</sup> Also, it may show that they are socially active.<sup>137</sup> People who use their book discussion group as a valid excuse to take time for reading also apply to this motive.<sup>138</sup>

Next, two more motives that primarily apply to participating in a book discussion group are the social motive and the practical motive:

5. *Social Membership Motive*: This motive indicates people enjoy the *social aspect of the gathering*, meeting the group, talking together also about other subjects than books, all things that come to meeting with and belonging to this group of fellow readers.<sup>139</sup> Please note, the Hedonistic Membership Motive specifically includes *enjoying the talking about books*, the Social Membership Motive points at *enjoying being together with others*.
6. *Practical Membership Motive*: This motive includes the practical advantages of reading in a group. It includes the pressure-of-time motive. People with a Practical Membership Motive for instance want to read but do not take enough time for it when they read individually. The appointment with their group allows them to take time for reading. Furthermore people for instance find it convenient their group chooses what to read next, or provides copies of the books.

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<sup>136</sup> Cf. Gerritsma 1998: motive of social appreciation. As stated in the previous section, this motive can also directly apply to reading alone. The fact a person reads in a book discussion group however, makes him or her more visible as an active reader.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Gerritsma 1998: socially-active motive. This reason does not apply to motives on reading individually.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Hartley 2002, pp. 125-130.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Hartley 2002, p. 126.

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Four reading motives and six book discussion group participation motives have been defined as a framework for finding an answer to the second research question. In the following section, a framework for the third research question will be described.

### 1.3 LEARNING BY READING AND DISCUSSING BOOKS

#### *Third research question*

This research aims to investigate learning in the book discussion group. In understanding with the studies that will be discussed in the current section, it is accepted that book discussion groups enable participants to learn about different aspects. It is however not taken for granted that all participants with their different baggage or motives actually learn from their membership. In order to investigate the learning by reading and discussing books together, the third research question is formulated as follows:

*III. In participants' experience, what do they learn from taking part in their book discussion group?*

Exploring motives for reading individually and motives for participating in a book discussion group (Section 1.2) already made clear that scholars recognise the possibility to learn from reading as well as from discussing books. Researchers mention among other things learning about literature, general knowledge, social conventions, social issues and insights at an individual, personal level. This study wants to contribute to the understanding what participants of book discussion groups experience to learn in their leisure time from reading and discussing books in their book discussion group. Interpretations of the concept of learning and collaborative learning will be explored, followed by an examination of learning by reading – in specific: learning by reading fiction – and finally of reading by book discussion group participation.

#### *Learning*

The term *learning* is not easily bounded. It is generally defined as implying a change in cognition, behaviour, skills, and the considering of meaning. This change should be relatively lasting and is a result of practice or experience.<sup>140</sup> Three types of learning are

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<sup>140</sup> Hoekstra 2007, pp. 14-15 gives an overview of a number of conceptions of *learning*. See also on this subject for instance Pieters and Verschaffel 2003, p. 254.

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distinguished. First, *formal learning* is an institutionalised form of learning and is situated inside schools and other education and training institutes. It is organised in a curriculum and it tends to lead to recognised diplomas and certificates. In this definition, learning is synonymous to education. In addition to formal learning, it is increasingly recognised that *non-formal* and *informal learning* play an important role in learning in general, and in lifelong learning for professional as well as personal development in specific.<sup>141</sup> Scholars, however, have defined these terms in different ways.

The main characteristic that separates both non-formal and informal learning from formal learning is that they take place outside official institutions. Non-formal and informal learning do not provide the learner with a recognised certificate. Because scholars use different definitions of informal and non-formal learning, other learning characteristics are not consistently classified within these terms. These characteristics concern, for example, whether the learning takes place in the workplace or not, whether it is organised and supported or not, whether it is conscious or unconscious, whether one intends to learn or if the learning is unintended, and whether the learning is incidental or not.<sup>142</sup> By defining the book discussion group as *a fixed group of non-professional readers* [...] the study is restricted to investigate learning that is not primarily work-related. Though it is impossible to strictly separate one's professional and personal development, this study concentrates at book discussion groups operating as a leisure activity, not as a part of the reader's profession or formal education.<sup>143</sup> This excludes book discussion groups that are organised at the workplace or meant to support or improve skills, knowledge or competences principally needed for the profession of the participants. Learning should primarily support personal development. The learning may however be organised or supported by institutions such as community centres and libraries, but not formal education institutes such as schools and universities. In sum, this study includes conscious and implicit, planned and unplanned, and incidental learning, as long as it is not organised in formal institutions or is primarily work-related. It is not intended to measure learning by comparing test results, but to study peoples self-reported experiences of learning.

What people may learn from their book discussion group membership is formed by the books they read and discuss. Similar to the discussion of motives in Section 1.2, learning by reading will first be explored, followed by learning from participating in a book discussion group, wherefore the book discussion group is interpreted as a community of practice.

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<sup>141</sup> Commission of the European Communities 2000, pp. 8-9.

<sup>142</sup> Hoekstra 2007, p. 15.

<sup>143</sup> See for example Wenger 1998, pp. 161-163; Kooy 2006a, pp. 6-8; Hoekstra 2007, p. 14.

*Learning by reading*

As mentioned, researchers from diverse disciplines consider reading as instructive regarding several topics, varying from learning about cultural conventions to more personal learning about self-knowledge. Learning by reading is perhaps obvious in case of nonfiction works. People learn about a specific topic they are personally interested in. That people can learn from reading fiction may seem less obvious.<sup>144</sup> However, the well-known fictive juvenile book, *The wonderful adventures of Nils* by Selma Lagerlöf (1906), for example, was especially written with the intention to be educative.<sup>145</sup> More fictive books are written with instructive intentions, such as thesis novels (or: social novels, for instance, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) by Harriet Beecher Stowe).<sup>146</sup> Like novels used in education, thesis novels are written with explicitly instructive intentions. These intentions by the author are however not a strict condition for fiction in order to have any instructive potential. Besides this, boundaries between fiction and nonfiction are not always that obvious.<sup>147</sup> Medical students for instance can read fictional works dealing with medical issues as a part of their curriculum at university in order to become a better doctor: it would positively develop empathy, and the technique of reading a novel may also help a doctor to extract relevant information from a patient who tells his or her story.<sup>148</sup> Besides developing general knowledge or more specific knowledge about the topic or theme of a book, literary knowledge such as literary analysis, and literary movements, is part of learning by reading literature as well.<sup>149</sup>

In her study about the *Damesleesmuseum*, of which the collection consists mostly of fiction, Duyvendak defended that knowledge can be gained by reading fiction and discussed several studies about this subject.<sup>150</sup> Fiction is in these theories recognised to serve as a source of knowledge, insights and emotions, by providing facts as well as allegorical knowledge. It offers models of experiences and perceptions of the world. Readers can gain insight in their self-development, and moreover in political and social issues, and link their personal life to society. Literature forms someone's state of mind: during

<sup>144</sup> See for instance Hartley 2002, p. 126, where readers themselves claim they feel they have to legitimate the fact that they spend 'valuable' time reading fiction. This implies reading is sometimes seen as a waste of time.

<sup>145</sup> Nix 1998. Original title of the book: *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige* (Lagerlöf 1906).

<sup>146</sup> See on this subject for instance Kluvel 2000, pp. 43-46; Duyvendak 2003, pp. 212, 213, 356, 374.

<sup>147</sup> Examples of genres that mix fiction and nonfiction are new journalism and *faction*. See for instance Ceelen and Van Bergeijk 2007.

<sup>148</sup> Hordijk 2011, pp. 32-33. Related to this topic is the article by Rose (2008) who studies the representations of disability in popular fiction and the impact this has on readers.

<sup>149</sup> Gerritsma 1998, pp. 24, 71-72.

<sup>150</sup> Discussed theories are of Fokkema (1996); Schwegman (2001); Kluvel 2000; Ruggles Gere (1997); Flint (1993); and Fokkema and Ibsch (1992).

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reading, readers may test their personal views.<sup>151</sup> Besides this, reading and discussing fiction was since the start of the *Damesleesmuseum* used as a substitute for formal education for women, and a way to learn in particular about unconventional and controversial topics which are dealt with in fiction. The historical and contemporary collection of the *Damesleesmuseum* shows interest in engagement in society as well as in self-development. Together with the findings considering the importance of the cognitive motive for today's members, the theories about the possibility to learn from reading fiction are supported.<sup>152</sup>

Fokkema and Ibsch state that participating in cultural activities (such as reading literature) enables people to learn about social conventions. This gives people knowledge about how people act and react in all sorts of situations. Furthermore, literature in specific provides readers with knowledge that is of a different level than pure scientific facts, because it not only gives answers but also raises questions to the reader and gives him the opportunity to create a general understanding and wider context.<sup>153</sup>

Psychologists claim reading fiction enables people to learn at several levels. Psychological research has shown growing evidence that reading fiction has cognitive, social and personality outcomes and that it positively predicts measures of social ability and empathy.<sup>154</sup> Emotions play an important role in the experience of reading narrative fiction, throughout the whole process of reading.<sup>155</sup> Reading fiction, even more specifically reading *literary* fiction in contrast to popular fiction, is claimed to enhance the reader's *Theory of Mind* (ToM).<sup>156</sup> One's *affective* Theory of Mind includes the ability to notice and understand emotions of other people. One's *cognitive* Theory of Mind stands for the inference and representation of the beliefs and intentions other people have.<sup>157</sup> However, conclusions are based on short-term effects of reading small amounts of literary texts. More extensive research is needed to confirm expectations of the influence of reading fiction on cognition, action, perception, personality, or Theory of Mind, and to investigate whether changes are long-lasting.<sup>158</sup>

Reading literature is claimed to enable people to learn about emotions by researchers from other fields of study as well, for instance in empirical literary studies. Emotions are

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<sup>151</sup> Duyvendak 2005, p. 188.

<sup>152</sup> Duyvendak 2003, pp. 212-216.

<sup>153</sup> Fokkema and Ibsch 1992, pp. 152-171; Duyvendak 2003, pp. 20-21.

<sup>154</sup> Mar, Oatley, Hirsch, Dela Paz, and Peterson 2006 and the follow-up study Mar, Oatley, and Peterson 2009.

<sup>155</sup> Mar, Oatley, Djikic, and Mullin (2011) reviewed empirical research on the experience of the process of reading narrative fiction – this includes the selection of a work, the reading itself, and the period after finishing the reading – and the changes reading may evoke in a reader.

<sup>156</sup> Comer Kidd and Castano 2013.

<sup>157</sup> Comer Kidd and Castano 2013, p.377.

<sup>158</sup> Mar, Oatley, Djikic, and Mullin 2011, pp. 829-830; Comer Kidd and Castano 2013, p.380.

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not only understood as biological and psychological processes but also as a cultural phenomenon. Next to natural emotions explained by biology and psychology, cultural emotions exist. Where natural emotions tend to be spontaneous and ephemeral, cultural emotions are more rooted in one's personality and stretch out over a longer period of time.<sup>159</sup> These emotions are interpreted as products of cultural mechanisms. This implies one can learn about cultural emotions and cultivate them. Literature can play an important role in both the learning about emotions and the cultivating of emotions.<sup>160</sup>

In Wenger's social theory of learning, fiction is acknowledged as a way to appropriate meanings. The ability to experience meaningfulness and the forming of identity play important roles in learning. Fiction enables people to relate their own experiences to the events in stories and undergo these narratives as if they were own experiences. Subsequently readers may integrate these fictional experience into their own identity.<sup>161</sup>

In educational sciences, Kooy has a resembling starting point for her studies. She recognises that stories can play an important role in a person's life and learning. Her research of teacher book discussion groups brings together narratives, teacher knowledge and identity, relational learning, and the social construction of knowledge.<sup>162</sup> Because of their social viewpoint of learning, both theories of Wenger and Kooy are valuable when looking at the book discussion group as a learning environment.

To conclude: The point of departure of this study is that people may learn from reading nonfiction as well as from reading fiction. What readers may learn from fiction is situated in a very broad spectrum and may include a development of literary knowledge, self-insight, understanding of emotions and social conventions. The idea that readers can learn from reading fiction is supported by many scholars from different fields of study.

### *Learning through book discussion group membership*

In the 1970s, educational research started to orient at collaborative learning. The importance of collaborative learning in addition to individual learning has gained interest since. Learning is characterised as social; cooperation between learners contributes to the learning outcomes.<sup>163</sup> In line with the assumption that individual reading causes individual learning, reading and discussing in a group could create collaborative learn-

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<sup>159</sup> Van Peer 1994, p. 211.

<sup>160</sup> Van Peer 1994, p. 210.

<sup>161</sup> Wenger 1998, pp. 203-204.

<sup>162</sup> Kooy 2006a, pp. 661-662.

<sup>163</sup> Pieters and Verschaffel 2003, pp. 251-254; Van der Linden, Erkens, Schmidt, and Renshaw 2000, p. 37.

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ing opportunities, which make theories of collaborative learning interesting when studying the learning experiences of book discussion group members. Though most theories and studies focus on formal learning and/or workplace-related learning, they may be adapted to the subject of informal learning for personal development as well.

Connected to this interest in collaborative learning, Wenger interprets learning as a social rather than a solitary or individual activity in his theory about *communities of practice*. The idea of these communities is similar to the idea of sociability in the Enlightenment that played a role in the origin of the book discussion group (as described in Section 1.1). In Wenger's conceptual framework, it is stated that the goal of learning, ultimately, is to produce meaning: the 'ability to experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful'.<sup>164</sup> People who together create meaning over time, form a community that fosters learning. The practices that are the result of collective learning in such a community show its goals as well as the developing relationships between the members.<sup>165</sup>

Wenger indicates that communities of practice can be found at different levels, in people's working life but also in their life outside their job. Though in his theoretical framework Wenger focuses mainly on communities of practice related to work, his ideas about learning relate to communities that affect learning for personal development as well. This involves learning that is usable or useful to a person's private life rather than his or her professional career only. Learning for personal development involves learning about a specific topic or area of personal interest, like practicing a hobby in one's leisure time. A community of practice formed in leisure learning can help members to acquire and develop skills, knowledge or competences concerning their personal interests, similar to the way a community of practice at the workplace or in the area of one's work enables people to learn to do their job better.<sup>166</sup> Along with learning about a specific topic, the development of identity is a learning result of participating in communities of practice as well.<sup>167</sup> According to Wenger, participation 'shapes not only what we do, but also who we are and how we interpret what we do'.<sup>168</sup> Thus, learning in a community of practice is said to influence a person's development of his or her own identity.

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<sup>164</sup> Wenger 1998, p. 4. Learning is generally interpreted as a process of developing knowledge, meaningfulness, and skills (Pieters and Verschaffel 2003, p. 254); Wenger sees the development of the ability to create meaning as the ultimate outcome to which the development of knowledge and skills contribute.

<sup>165</sup> Wenger 1998, p. 45.

<sup>166</sup> Wenger 1998, pp. 99-102.

<sup>167</sup> Wenger 1998, pp. 149-163.

<sup>168</sup> Wenger 1998, p. 4.



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Communities of practice are not exclusive; people can be members of several communities of practice. These communities can be formed, for instance, by colleagues at work or people living in the same street. A person may be involved in each community at a different level of participation. What is learned in one community is usually not strictly applicable in just that one community or situation.<sup>169</sup>

The book discussion group can be interpreted as a community of practice.<sup>170</sup> Three dimensions that make a community of practice coherent are:<sup>171</sup>

1. Membership as a mutual engagement: practice exists because members of a community of practice are together engaged in actions.
2. A joint enterprise that is negotiated by the members.
3. A dynamic shared repertoire, that develops over time and forms a resource for the negotiation of meaning.

Based on the definition of the book discussion group, these three dimensions are expected to be relevant for the book discussion group being a community of practice. Firstly, the mutual engagement of members of the book discussion group lies within their practice of reading and discussing books as described in Section 1.1: their shared practice defines the book discussion group. Within the group, participants are connected to each other by this practice of reading and discussing books. Together, they ascribe meaning to their practice.<sup>172</sup> Each member has his own role in this practice that only exists because of individual contributions to the discussion – and perhaps book choosing – and the synergy between the diverse members and their contributions: it forms the relationships between the members. As communities of practice, book discussion groups may be formed by participants with – largely – the same competences, or more complementary competences. This will influence the engagement between the members and the diverse roles found in a group.

Secondly, the perception of their being a book discussion group forms what Wenger calls the joint enterprise of the community. By their interactions, the joint enterprise is negotiated by members of the community of practice. It is not static but may evolve during time.

Thirdly, book discussion groups build a shared repertoire during time: members read the same books and discuss about them. Over time, the collective frame of refer-

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<sup>169</sup> Wenger 1998, pp. 103-121, 164-172.

<sup>170</sup> Peplow 2011, pp. 297-298.

<sup>171</sup> Wenger 1998, pp. 72-85; 152-153.

<sup>172</sup> On the creation of new meanings by members of book discussion groups through their shared practice, see also Kooy 2006b, p. 210 and Long 2003, p. 22.

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ence grows, the way the group discusses a book evolves, and this influences the meaning the group attributes to its practice, the book they will read next, the role the different group members have in the meeting. This shared repertoire is used by the group to engage in their joint enterprise.

The negotiation of meaning and creation of knowledge by members are important aspects of communities of practice. Because of the evolving character, communities of practice are seen as *shared histories of learning*.<sup>173</sup> Learning results of communities of practice are found at both individual as well as group level.

Being a member of the community of practice at the workplace enables people to learn to do their job properly, a community of practice formed in leisure time can help members to develop skills, knowledge or competences related to their personal development.<sup>174</sup> Learning in a community of practice such as a book discussion group may enable people to learn differently and more effectively than learning by reading individually, for knowledge is constructed collectively. In other words, the social aspect of the getting together and discussing books together, may have an added value for the learning of the participants. Over time, participants build a collective framework of books they have all read and with their discussions they build a collective history of learning.

Several scholars have pointed at the possibilities for learning specifically by participating in a book discussion group. Gerritsma and Duyvendak both show the importance of the cognitive motive to book discussion group members.<sup>175</sup> This indicates participants themselves experience their active membership as a way to learn. Besides this, a number of book discussion group associations specifically start up their groups with an emancipatorial, educational goal.<sup>176</sup> Research has showed the surplus value of the book discussion group over reading individually. The social aspect of regularly discussing books together in a group enables certain readers to learn better or different from reading individually.<sup>177</sup> Not only reading literature itself enables people to learn about literature, emotions, social conventions. Moreover, the book discussion group itself is supposed to form an environment that is important for learning about subjects as social aspects and

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<sup>173</sup> Wenger 1998, p. 86; cf. pp. 95-96.

<sup>174</sup> Cf. Wenger 1998, pp. 99-102.

<sup>175</sup> Gerritsma 1998, pp. 71-72; Duyvendak 2005, pp. 184-187.

<sup>176</sup> For example, in Victoria, Australia, the *Council of Adult Education* (CAE) founded its book discussion groups "as part of its adult education drive – a sort of distance education without the loneliness." (Poole 2003, p. 264). The Dutch *Stichting Literatuurclubs Drenthe* (SLD) also started their activities with the goal of educating members, Duyvendak 1994, pp. 166-167; Benjamins, Nagtegaal, and Van Voorst 2011, pp. 195-197.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. Gerritsma 1998, p. 71.

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identity forming.<sup>178</sup> Furthermore, emotions can be described extensively in literature: people may learn from the books how to express their emotions in language.<sup>179</sup>

Smith found that the discussion really is a group process. Knowledge is constructed by members together. Members find it important to talk about books with equals, which causes them to feel they can speak freely. During the discussions, participants feel free to express their feelings about what is said and evaluate each other. Feeling free to talk enables participants to construct a certain point in the discussion together. Formulating an idea is done through cooperation of group members who take turns in the discussion, rather than by individual members. The knowledge that is constructed together includes literary knowledge and knowledge of opinions of fellow participants and their personality.<sup>180</sup>

Book discussion groups are valued for their benefits concerning learning for *professional* development as well. Kooy and Pelletier for instance both studied book discussion groups that were being used as part of professional development for teachers and teacher education.<sup>181</sup> Teachers experience they have little time to discuss together about their profession during their working days; a book discussion group provides them this opportunity.<sup>182</sup> The book discussion groups in these studies during discussions specifically aimed at relating the books to the participants' teaching practice and classroom experiences.<sup>183</sup> Both researchers claim the book discussion groups had had positive outcomes for the professional development of the participants. Kooy claims these groups inform and shape teacher knowledge and development.<sup>184</sup> Pelletier found that the possibility to have conversations with colleagues gave the participating teachers a 'much larger perspective of education and the role teachers play in a school system'.<sup>185</sup> The book discussions had in multiple ways impact on the practicing and experiencing of their profession, for instance on the way to have discussions with students in the classroom and on the appreciation and understanding of fellow teachers.<sup>186</sup>

Diverse studies have been dedicated to the demonstration of learning by reading fiction and learning in communities of practice. In this study, the book discussion group is

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<sup>178</sup> On learning about social issues, see for instance Rose 2008, pp. 54-55. On the forming of self-identity, see for instance Duyvendak 2005, p. 189.

<sup>179</sup> Van Peer 1994, pp. 216-217.

<sup>180</sup> Smith 1996, pp. 183-185.

<sup>181</sup> Kooy 2006b, pp. 21-23; Pelletier 1993, pp. 3-4. See also George 2001, p.2.

<sup>182</sup> Pelletier 1993, pp. 10, 13.

<sup>183</sup> Kooy 2006a, p. 664, Kooy 2006b, p. 18, Pelletier 1993, pp. 5-6.

<sup>184</sup> Kooy 2006a, p. 672.

<sup>185</sup> Pelletier 1993, p. 10

<sup>186</sup> Pelletier 1993, pp. 11-14.

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interpreted as a community of practice where individual and group learning takes place through the book discussions that the groups have over time. Research question III addresses *what* members may learn from their participation. The final research question will bring together the outcomes of the first three research questions.

### 1.4 SYNTHESIS

#### *Fourth research question*

Three research questions were introduced and underlying theories have been discussed in the first three sections. Finally, the aim is to relate the outcomes of the first three research questions to each other. The final research question is formulated as follows:

*IV. What connections exist between characteristics of participants and their book discussion groups, participants' motives, and their experienced learning outcomes?*

In the next chapter, methods used to find answers to these four research questions will be elucidated. Chapters 3-6 will each answer one research question. After answering the fourth research question, Chapter 6 ends with a discussion of the current study and gives suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### Studying book discussion groups

*Of course there are also Manuals existing for them. And Coaches. Conferences are being held about them. There are Teachers who assign Papers about them. One can't stop Scholarly progress.*

Gaston Durnez, 1997 p. 157<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Gaston Durnez writes about the flourishing of literary book discussion groups in Flanders and the Netherlands in Van Gool and Van Hulle 1997, p. 157. Original quote: 'Natuurlijk bestaan er ook al Handleidingen voor. En Begeleiders. Er worden Conferenties over gegeven. Er zijn al Leraren die er eindverhandelingen over laten maken. Wetenschappelijke klimop hou je niet tegen.'



In this second chapter, diverse methods suitable for studying readers and book discussion groups will be described. These include methods aimed at gathering qualitative as well as quantitative data and are used to examine small and larger samples, gathered in order to find answers to diverse research questions. Advantages and disadvantages will be considered, as well as the usefulness of methods regarding the four specific research questions of the current study. Besides this, a pilot study was carried out. The procedure and relevant implications for the current study will be presented. Eventually, two different methods will be selected: surveys (for gathering qualitative and quantitative data among two large samples) and interviews (for gathering qualitative data among a small sample). The design, procedure, and the process of data analysis of both methods will be described.

## 2.1 MIXED METHODS

The aim of this study is to contribute to the understanding of book discussion groups, focusing on three topics: characteristics of both groups and members, motives for reading in a book discussion group (mainly pertaining to members, but groups can have a collective motive or goal as well) and experienced learning outcomes of members of book discussion groups.

Book discussion groups have been a subject of academic study for some years now. As we have seen in the previous chapter, researchers originating from different disciplines and countries have investigated these groups with different research questions in mind. Methods used therefore originate from different fields of study. Researchers tend to combine multiple ways of data-gathering and data-analysis methods in order to answer their research questions and sometimes even combine qualitative and quantitative data.<sup>188</sup> In the remainder of this section, methods used in research about readers in general as well as about book discussion groups and their participants will be described in more detail, in order to investigate the possibilities of diverse methods and the types of data they may collect. In conclusion, the selection of methods for this study will be justified.

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<sup>188</sup> As Sedo 2003, p. 86 pleads for a combination of quantitative and qualitative data-gathering in order to study book discussion groups extensively, several book discussion group studies are indeed based on a combination of both types of data-gathering (for instance Long 2003).

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### *Surveys*

Conducting a survey is a practical method for questioning large numbers of people and for gathering both quantitative as well as qualitative data. It is a much used method among researchers interested in readers in general and more specifically in book discussion groups and their members. Reader surveys are generally used to find out more about personal characteristics of readers and the development of their reading habits. Surveys are usually directed to a specific group of readers, such as members of a specific library, or a specific city.<sup>189</sup> In case of surveys for book discussion groups, researchers may choose to use group surveys or surveys for the individual members of groups.<sup>190</sup>

Questions consider – for instance – composition of groups, setting and content of discussions, and the books that are being read. Because surveys enable one to question large numbers of people, some of these surveys are intended to provide a complete image of book discussion groups.<sup>191</sup> Many of the characteristics of book discussion groups and their members, as described in the previous chapter, are indeed illuminated with help of survey studies done in the past. However, giving a representative picture of these groups is hardly possible, considering the fact that many groups are unaffiliated to any organisation and the exact number of book discussion groups in a region, for instance the Netherlands, is therefore not known.<sup>192</sup>

Not only book publishers are interested in what book discussion groups choose to read and how they make their choices. Studying the reading material of book discussion groups is interesting for literary scholars as well and can be done with help of a survey investigation. The institution of the book discussion group is part of the literary field. The selection of books by these groups and their opinion about those books form an essential part when describing the literary field.

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<sup>189</sup> E.g. Duyvendak (2003) questioned members of a private Library in The Hague ( $n=282$ ); Dijkstra (1992) questioned inhabitants of the Dutch city Utrecht ( $n=439$ ).

<sup>190</sup> A group survey was set out by for instance the Dutch magazine *VN* in 2002 ( $n=441$ ) and Hartley 2002, pp. xi-xiii. Hartley conducted two surveys, the first one ( $n=350$ ) was followed two years later by a shorter follow-up survey that was sent to 150 of these groups. Other researchers used surveys to question individual members of book discussion groups, e.g. Gerritsma 1998 ( $n=35$  out of four different wild book discussion groups); Sedo 2003 ( $n=251$  readers of whom 64% also were of had been members of book discussion groups: face-to-face group members (36%), members of online book discussion groups (36%), and even people active in both kinds of groups (28%)).

<sup>191</sup> *VN* 2002.

<sup>192</sup> Researchers such as Hartley 2002, p. xi; Long 2003, pp. xii, xiv-xv, 84; and Sedo 2003, p. 70 mention the representativeness of their research outcomes.



In the UK, Hartley gathered book titles read by 284 groups in the second half of 1999, using a survey.<sup>193</sup> She described several aspects concerning her material: genre (drama, fiction, nonfiction or poetry), nationality of the author (North-American, British, Irish, European (other), and other countries), the sex of the author, year of first publication and frequency of titles and authors. She compared part of this information with group characteristics, for instance she related the sex of the author to composition of the group (all-male, all-female or mixed-sex groups). Furthermore, Hartley did a follow-up study and collected the book titles read by 130 groups in 2001, and again composed lists of 50 most read authors and 30 most read books by groups. Hartley completed her data by adding lists of UK bestsellers 1999-2001, fast-selling paperbacks in the UK in 1999, 2000, and 2001: title, genre, author and author's nationality, and the 30 most read authors in the UK in 1999.

In the Netherlands, the reading material of book discussion groups, in particular that of organised groups by the *SLD* has been studied.<sup>194</sup> Duyvendak, and, more recently, Benjamins, Nagtegaal, and Van Voorst, studied the book lists of the *SLD*.<sup>195</sup> Duyvendak gathered lists of book titles read by *SLD*: she collected in total 79 book titles read from the starting season 1970-1971 until season 1988-1989, and added the reading list of one wild Dutch book discussion group who makes its book choices independently (21 titles for season 1989-1990 and 21 titles for season 1992-1993).<sup>196</sup> With the help of these book lists, Duyvendak demonstrated that book discussion groups – which consist mainly of females – do not principally read female authors or easily-accessible books. With this, the results dismissed an existing prejudice about book discussion groups. According to Duyvendak, the book lists show that book discussion groups primarily read and discuss starting from cognitive and aesthetic motives.<sup>197</sup> This would imply that reading in search for identification is not a main goal for readers in book discussion groups.<sup>198</sup>

Recently, Benjamins, Nagtegaal and Van Voorst used Duyvendak's article as a starting point and investigated the books more recently read by the *SLD* groups, as well as the policy of the *SLD* in choosing books. This policy has changed several times during the existence of the *SLD*. Moreover, the authors combined these data with results from a survey and group observations.<sup>199</sup> They conclude that the *current* books read by these

<sup>193</sup> Hartley 2002, pp. 176-196.

<sup>194</sup> The *SLD* is introduced in Chapter 1.

<sup>195</sup> Benjamins, Nagtegaal, and Van Voorst 2011; Duyvendak 1994; 2007.

<sup>196</sup> Today, all selected book titles by the *SLD* are easily consulted on the website <http://www.literatuurclubs.drenthe.nl/content/category/10/108/134/> (website accessed on March 15, 2012).

<sup>197</sup> Duyvendak 1994, pp. 175-177; 2007, pp. 222-225;

<sup>198</sup> Benjamins, Nagtegaal, and Van Voorst 2011, p. 194.

<sup>199</sup> Benjamins, Nagtegaal, and Van Voorst 2011, pp. 192-193.

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groups, do primarily lend themselves for reading in an identifying way: readers may easily identify with characters and situations featuring in the book. This would result in discussions about personal subjects rather than literary discussions. However, observations of discussions also made clear that although all groups of the *SLD* read the same books, groups differ a lot in how they discuss this reading material: many groups discuss personal identification with characters from the book, some groups however restrict themselves to a more academic and objective oriented discussion.<sup>200</sup>

Analysing book lists of book discussion groups thus provides interesting and valuable information of what types of books are popular among various groups. This may say something about motives groups have for reading and discussing books. The research of Benjamins, Nagtegaal and Van Voorst, however, shows us that only looking at book title lists may lead us to believe that we already know what book discussion groups are talking about while further investigation may prove otherwise. Combining the investigation of book title lists with other data is necessary if one wants to know what book discussion groups are discussing about.

### *Participant observation*

Distributing a survey among book discussion groups, or studying their reading material, may be done behind the researcher's desk. Several researchers however chose to visit their subjects of study. The most obvious choice is to visit book discussion groups in their natural habitat: observing either one or a series of their meetings. Participant observation is thoroughly used by for instance Long, who visited multiple groups in Texas, each for one or two meetings, and even visited four of these groups more intensively for several months.<sup>201</sup> Long aimed to investigate the reasons why people join book discussion groups, and how members are influenced in their relationships with literature as well as with fellow members.<sup>202</sup> Smith, who also visited book discussion group discussions, had a different intention with his research and particularly wanted to analyse the way adults discuss literature. He visited two sessions of two different book discussion groups. Smith's research question also asked for audio-taping each session. He then analysed the discussions with help of a coding scheme.<sup>203</sup> In Sweden, Schultz Nybacka collected information about the practices of three book discussion groups using partici-

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<sup>200</sup> Benjamins, Nagtegaal, and Van Voorst 2011, pp. 205-206; 208.

<sup>201</sup> Long 2003, pp. 77-82. Next to visiting these groups, Long also was a member herself of one all-women book discussion group. In the study, she occasionally mentions relevant findings or data originating from meetings of her own book discussion group. Long 2003, p. 79.

<sup>202</sup> Long 2003, p. xiv.

<sup>203</sup> Smith 1996, p. 181. Smith previously had been a member of one of the groups he now studied.

pant observation.<sup>204</sup> She studied the practices and experiences of book discussion groups in her broad study of the art and logic of book reading as consumption practice, in search for cultural and economic values of books and reading. All three researchers did not confine themselves to observing only, but collected data in other ways as well, such as interviewing participants or group interviewing.

Other researchers choose to start new book discussion groups specially for their research, such as Kooy and George both did. This was desirable because both researchers used the book discussion groups to develop educational material. As a teacher educator at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) in Toronto, Kooy facilitated book discussion groups for student teachers and beginning teachers.<sup>205</sup> Next to this, Kooy also uses her book discussion groups to study learning in these groups. Within the groups, she had multiple roles: teacher educator, group initiator as well as discussion partner. George also conducted his research among teachers, and set up a number of groups for 23 teachers in a New York City middle school as part of a staff development programme.<sup>206</sup> Both researchers attended the meetings and played a more active, facilitating role in the groups than the mere observing role Long, Smith, and Schultz Nybacka had in their research. Kooy and George also used interviews as a way to complete their data collection.

Participant observation may have some disadvantages. The presence of the observing researcher could influence the group meeting and influence the research data.<sup>207</sup> Long experienced this during her research when she discovered that her presence as a European-American was too influencing in the meetings of African-American book discussion groups she visited, even though she did not participate in the discussions but only observed them. As a consequence, she decided not to include African-American groups in her study.<sup>208</sup> The presence of audio- or video-tape material during participant observation may also influence the natural situation.<sup>209</sup> It is claimed that this influence is marginal or may even disappear over time: participants get used to the equipment and neglect it.<sup>210</sup> Using audio-tape material does provide valuable data: it enables the researcher for instance to intensively study the way people discuss.<sup>211</sup>

<sup>204</sup> Schultz Nybacka 2011, pp. 318-333.

<sup>205</sup> Kooy 2006b, pp. 21-23.

<sup>206</sup> George 2001, p. 2.

<sup>207</sup> Long 2003, pp. 84-87.

<sup>208</sup> Long 2003, p. xv.

<sup>209</sup> Baarda, de Goede, and Teunissen 2005, p. 266. Note also Long 2003, p. 124: 'they refused to let me tape the meeting "because it might interfere with discussion"...'.

<sup>210</sup> See for instance Jorgensen 1989, p. 102.

<sup>211</sup> See for instance the study of Marshall, Smagorinsky and Smith (1995).

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When a participant observer does more than observing alone, one can expect this may influence the discussions as well. The multiple roles Kooy for instance played in the groups she studied, should not be neglected when interpreting data.<sup>212</sup> Depending on the goals of the research, it does not necessarily mean that the influence of the researcher is a negative aspect. When developing and testing educational material for instance, this influential role of the researcher even is necessary.

Besides considerations about influencing the observed groups and the objectiveness of collected data, the representativeness of the gathered data should also be taken into account when interpreting it. Because of the time-investment, the number of groups taking part in such research will be small. The selection of groups willing and suitable to cooperate in a study using participant observation as a method will influence the representativeness of the research and exclude certain groups in advance.

Despite these comments, participant observation is valued as a very useful research method. It provides a large amount of rich data that may be used to study a broad spectrum of research themes. Gathered data may not be representative but it gives detailed insights in how a book discussion group may work. These may be used to illustrate, develop or test research theories or hypotheses.

### *Interviews*

Interviewing is a frequently used method in case study research of readers, sometimes combined with the writing of literacy autobiographies.<sup>213</sup> Research specifically aimed at book discussion groups may use group interviews but individual interviews are more common. The interviews are always used in addition to other methods of data gathering. Fister, Gerritsma, and Pelletier all interviewed individual members of book discussion groups as an addition to written sources. Fister studied a large online book discussion group, by gathering texts and posts from their forum, personal communication, and she interviewed a number of members.<sup>214</sup> Gerritsma used paper-and-pencil surveys preceding her interviews.<sup>215</sup> Pelletier gathered written evaluation forms, as her book

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<sup>212</sup> Kooy 2006b, pp. 6-8.

<sup>213</sup> See for instance Pette 2001. Next to interviews, the literacy autobiography (in Dutch: *leesautobiografie*) is a many used method studying individual readers, see for instance De Moor 1992, Van Woerkom 1991. The literacy autobiography is also used as a starting point for further research on readers, using interviews, see for instance Pette 2001. Kooy 2006b, pp. 29-59 also chose to use literacy autobiographies as a starting point for her research on book discussion groups for which she used interviews as well.

<sup>214</sup> Fister 2005, p. 304.

<sup>215</sup> Gerritsma 1998, pp. 26-28.

discussion group was part of a professional development project for teachers, and combined this data with interviews and more informal talk with the participants.<sup>216</sup>

Other researchers used interviews in addition to participant observation. Smith combined audio-taping book discussion meetings with the interviewing of individual members.<sup>217</sup> Long not only combined her individual interviews with members with observation, she also worked with surveys during the beginning of her research.<sup>218</sup> Schultz Nybacka used group interviews in combination with participant observation.<sup>219</sup> Kooy used both individual as well as group interviews as part of her data collection that also contain surveys, literacy autobiographies, email messages and transcripts of book discussion group sessions.<sup>220</sup>

The added value of interviews next to other (written) sources to study group practices, informal learning and personal development within groups, is praised by Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder.<sup>221</sup> Their knowledge-measurement model of *Systematic Anecdotal Evidence* is based on the use of diverse methods to gather information. Most important to them is to collect *stories* as a source of information. Stories are able to 'explain the linkage between community activities, knowledge resources, and performance outcomes'.<sup>222</sup> Only the practitioners themselves can provide the researcher with stories. Together with additional data (e.g. surveys, documents) an overall picture of the performance outcomes of a community of practice can be made.

As is the case with other research methods, there are some disadvantages attached to using interviews, depending on the goal one has. Surveys are useful for questioning a large audience, but it will only be possible to interview a relatively small number of respondents. Though interview data can be presented anonymously to the public, the interview itself is not anonymous. Intended interviewees may be found unwilling to cooperate. Also, interviewees may more strongly feel the need to give socially desirable answers than respondents of a more anonymous questionnaire. Furthermore, interpreting data is an intensive process and more liable to being subjective than the interpretation of quantitative data may seem.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Pelletier 1993, pp. 3-4.

<sup>217</sup> Smith 1996, pp. 181-182.

<sup>218</sup> Long 2003, pp. xi-xvi.

<sup>219</sup> Schultz Nybacka 2011, pp. 318-333.

<sup>220</sup> Kooy 2006b, pp. 21-23.

<sup>221</sup> Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder 2002, pp. 167-178.

<sup>222</sup> Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder 2002, p. 168.

<sup>223</sup> On possibilities, potential disadvantages and difficulties of individual face-to-face interviewing, see for instance Baarda 2005, pp. 230-246; 331.

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In conclusion: interviews seem to be a very helpful tool to combine with other methods. In particular, motives people have for joining or staying in a book discussion group, and the value the group has in members' lives may best be found using interviews. Various researchers used interviews together with or as an extension of other, various, data gathering methods. Because of the different and more personal information interviews can provide, they form a valuable addition to recorded discussions or other types of data. It is also possible to explain or deepen more quantitative information gathered by questionnaires.

### *Choosing methods*

When setting up the search for answers to the four research questions as phrased in Chapter 1, the diverse methods that were described above were considered. Previous book discussion group research has proved the added value of combining diverse research methods. In some cases, both qualitative and quantitative research was combined, to complement data, or to check or deepen gathered information. Combining diverse methods enables a researcher to compensate the disadvantages of one method with the advantages of another.

It was decided that a large-scale survey set out among book discussion groups could be the optimal method to inventory characteristics of present-day book discussion groups in the Netherlands (research question I) – such as composition, age of the group, and affiliation. This survey could also be used to investigate book selection criteria followed by groups and to gather recent book titles read by book discussion groups. More personal characteristics of members could be gathered using a second survey specifically aimed at the individual members of book discussion groups. With help of such an individual survey, motives participants have for taking part in their book discussion group (research question II) could be explored among a large sample, as well as what participants experience to learn from taking part in their book discussion group (research question III).

The size and reach of a survey is limited. Also, it will not be possible to present the data as representative for all book discussion groups in the Netherlands. Investigations considering the second and particularly third research question are merely explorations. Case study research using semi-structured interviews will give the opportunity to deepen the information about these subjects, using the preliminary outcomes of the surveys. Individual interviews are to be preferred above group interviews for the individual motives and learning outcomes are the subjects of this study.

## STUDYING BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

Using participant observation in this study was considered as well. First steps to observe groups were made: one group was visited once.<sup>224</sup> Though this was a fruitful experience, it was eventually decided not to observe more groups, for several reasons. First and foremost, the collected data, as rich and inspiring as they might be, would have little relevance for answering the research question concerning individual motives and individual learning outcomes. It would be difficult for an outsider to value individual learning outcomes from one or two visits to a group that is coming together for several years – or decades. Second, there are some objections to this research method: participant observation in a book discussion group was not desirable because of the possibilities of influencing the group discussions, not to mention the fact that groups might not like the idea of being observed, video-taped or audio-taped. Most groups do not see each other very often and their time per session is not infinite. It was clear that filling out the group survey was already a big investment of valuable time for several groups. Getting used to an observer in their group would cost even more valuable and intimate discussion time.

The final research question – about connections between characteristics of the book discussion group, participant's motives, and experienced learning outcomes (research question IV) – does not ask for more data gathering: the findings concerning the first three subjects will have to be combined in order to see whether these relations exist.

In conclusion, the main data gathering methods used for this research of book discussion groups are two simultaneous surveys (a group survey and an individual member survey), followed by member interviews. These methods are used by other researchers that studied book discussion groups and their members. It was expected these methods would gather the information needed to answer the four research questions; there was no need to look for new or other methods. One of the advantages of using surveys is that it can yield a large group of respondents. Therefore, it is an ideal method to map a phenomenon such as the book discussion group. It can provide a broad image of these groups. To complete group information with more personal information of the participants of these groups, an individual survey was set out next to the group survey. The size of a questionnaire is limited, as is the level of detail of the answers. Therefore, more in-depth questions were accommodated in individual interviews. The number of interviewees however is far less than the number of survey respondents.

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<sup>224</sup> The group that was visited was group D, see Appendix 3.4. See also Section 2.4 subsection *Procedure*.

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**Table 2.1** Overview of research questions and corresponding methods.

	Research question	Method
I	What are characteristics of present-day book discussion groups in the Netherlands?	Group survey
II	What motives do participants have for taking part in their book discussion group?	Individual survey & interview
III	In participants' experience, what do they learn from taking part in their book discussion group?	Individual survey & interview
IV	What connections exist between characteristics of participants and their book discussion groups, participants' motives, and their experienced learning outcomes?	Combination of the outcomes

The operation of these two methods will be elucidated in Sections 2.3 (the surveys) and 2.4 (the interviews). The surveys were preceded by a pilot study.

### 2.2 PILOT STUDY: a survey among Rotterdam library users

#### *Goals*

The *Rotterdamsch Leeskabinet* ('Rotterdam Reading Cabinet') was founded in 1859 as a private library within the Dutch city of Rotterdam, following the example of the English *free libraries*.<sup>225</sup> The library has had a lively – and in some ages troublesome – history. The most dramatic event in the history of the library was the destruction of its building and the loss of almost the entire collection during the bombardment of Rotterdam on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1940. Thanks to the help of concerned members, institutes and funds, the *Rotterdamsch Leeskabinet* survived this devastation. Since 1969, the library cooperates with the Erasmus University Rotterdam. The library moved in 1971 to the campus of this university. Next to their regular members, students and employees of the Erasmus University now make use of the library. In exchange, members of the *Rotterdamsch Leeskabinet* may also use the facilities of the University Library, in which it is housed.

To celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this exclusive library, a commemorative book was published in 2009. This book entails chapters by different authors about the history of the library, the collection, the members in the past and the current members. The investigation serving the chapter about current members was an opportunity to carry

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<sup>225</sup> Duyvendak 2009, pp. 11-12.



out a pilot study before conducting the planned large-scale book discussion group survey and individual member survey as described in the previous section.

In Rotterdam, a survey was conducted among the members and other users of the library during October and November 2008. This questionnaire served three goals. First of all, it was used to find out characteristics and motives of the current members and users of this library in order to write the chapter for the commemorative book.<sup>226</sup> Second, the board of the library wanted to know the prevailing opinion about a number of cases concerning their policy. Third, it provided the chance to ask some extra questions so the investigation could act as a pilot study for this research of book discussion groups. Moreover, the pilot study offered the opportunity to practice and test the intended research method: conducting a survey. The survey was available as a paper-and-pencil survey as well as a web survey using the online software *Questback*.<sup>\*</sup> Furthermore, it helped to design and test questions concerning reading habits and motives, because a number of questions for respondents who also happened to be members of a book discussion group were added to the survey. These questions offered some possibilities for checking premises concerning the composition of book discussion groups and the motives of their participants. Practicing and testing both types of survey modes as well as the formulation of survey questions turned out to be helpful for composing the two questionnaires for the study about book discussion groups later on.

### *Designing the survey*

The survey was aimed at members and other users of the *Rotterdamsch Leeskabinet*. The survey was meant to be filled out individually and contained questions about personal characteristics, reading habits, use of the library, and opinions and ideas concerning the policy of the library such as opening hours. Questions about these topics were designed and consisted of open-ended questions, closed questions and Likert-scale questions. The questions, especially those concerning respondents' use and level of satisfaction about the library facilities, were designed in agreement and cooperation with the librarian of the *Rotterdamsch Leeskabinet*.

The survey included 11 questions specifically regarding book discussion group membership: questions concerning composition of the group (number of participants in the book discussion group, the sex of the participants), affiliation of the group, if applicable role of the coach of the group, and motives for participating in the book discussion

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<sup>226</sup> Van Herten 2009.

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group. The motives were questioned using 13 propositions with the possibility to fill in a 5-point Likert-scale.

### *Procedure*

In order to have as many respondents as possible, mixed-mode surveys were used: the questionnaire was available as paper-and-pencil survey as well as internet survey. Participants could choose themselves which mode they preferred. Both modes were self-administered, without guidance or help from interviewers. In total, 101 respondents filled in the paper-and-pencil survey, 282 preferred the internet survey. No technical problems occurred. An employee of the *Rotterdamsch Leeskabinet* digitalised the paper-and-pencil surveys, before the analysis started, using the same *Questback*<sup>227</sup> internet survey the respondents used.

Differences between the paper-and-pencil and the internet survey were avoided as much as possible. Questions were kept similar and the only differences, apart from appearance, were how *routing* was accomplished and in the possibility of looking ahead and backtracking. Routing (i.e. if an answer to one question involves a 'jump' to another question or means that a following question becomes irrelevant) was automatically controlled in the web version and in some cases dependent of answers given by the respondents. In the paper-and-pencil version respondents had to carefully read routing instructions after several questions to guide them to the appropriate continuation of the survey. This led in some cases to mistakes; some respondents actually filled in questions they were not meant to answer. However, the automatic routing in the web survey was also subject to mistakes: only when people filled in all questions presented to them at each page would the routing be successful. Considering that respondents did not always answer each question implies that routing did not always work successfully.

The second major difference between survey modes was that paper-and-pencil respondents could look ahead or back in the questionnaire. This option was not available for web respondents because of the automatic routing. It was expected, however, that most paper-and-pencil respondents would proceed with filling out the questionnaire in the intended order.<sup>227</sup>

The positive experiences with and usability of both modes lead to the decision of choosing the same mixed-mode method for the survey concerning the research of book discussion groups. It showed the possibilities and pitfalls of different ways of formulat-

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<sup>227</sup> This expectation is based on the findings of Statistics Netherlands 2008, p. 12.

ing questions and answering methods. Careful attention to routing is needed for both the paper-and-pencil as well as the web-based survey.

### *The process of data analysis*

Due to the goals of the research and the intentions of the book chapter that was written, no complex data analysis was required.<sup>228</sup> Answers to open-ended questions were categorised and counted. No problems occurred during this phase.

## 2.3 TWO SURVEYS: one for groups and one for individual members

Based on literature about the subject of study (Section 2.1) and the experiences of conducting a survey (Section 2.2), it was decided to compose and carry out two surveys.

### *Goals*

The two surveys were primarily planned in order to answer research question I: *What are characteristics of present-day book discussion groups in the Netherlands?* In order to specify this general research question about the phenomenon book discussion group, subsequent research questions are formulated as follows:<sup>229</sup>

- Is the general picture prevalent in the literature about the characteristics of book discussion groups in the Netherlands still legitimate?
- Does this general picture only apply to organised book discussion groups or does it also apply to wild book discussion groups?:
  - Do wild groups have more men among their members than organised groups?
  - Is the average age of wild group participants lower than the average age of members of organised groups?
  - Is the educational level of members of wild groups different from that of members of organised groups?

In the previous chapter, several topics concerning the book discussion group are mentioned. These topics generate more sub questions:

- Meetings of the book discussion group:
  - What are the characteristics of book group meetings at an organisational level?

<sup>228</sup> All calculations that were needed could be done using Microsoft Excel 2010.

<sup>229</sup> These questions are based on possible characteristics of book discussion groups and members as described in the first chapter.

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- What are the substantive characteristics of the discussions?
- If applicable: what is the role of the coach?
- Do characteristics of the meeting and discussion relate to characteristics of book discussion groups?
- Choosing, reading and discussing a book:
  - How do book discussion groups come to an agreement of what to read?
  - What books do book groups read?
  - Does the process of choosing a book relate to the characteristics of book discussion groups?

Along with investigations regarding research question I, the opportunity was seized to explore both topics considering the second and third research questions: motives and learning. Considering the extent of the surveys, it was decided beforehand to limit the number of questions about these topics. Sub questions that arise from research question II (*What motives do participants have for taking part in their book discussion group?*) and research question III (*In participants' experience, what do they learn from taking part in their book discussion group?*) to which survey questions were based are:

- Motives for participating in a book discussion group:
  - Do groups have a specific goal?
  - What is the most important motive groups have for gathering?
  - Are goals and motives reflected in book choice?
  - Is it important to members that their book discussion group offers them opportunities to learn?
  - Do motives for gathering in a book discussion group relate to characteristics of the group?
- Learning in the book discussion group:
  - Do participants experience that they learn from participating in their book discussion group? If so: what do they experience they can learn from participating?
  - Do experienced learning outcomes of members relate to characteristics of the group?

The second and third research question will be examined more extensive in a follow-up study with help of interviews.

### *Designing the surveys*

Based on the experiences of the pilot study, the designing and testing of the two planned surveys began in 2009. Part of the research questions are aimed at groups, part of them at individual members. The group survey focused on group characteristics and reading

material. Along with the aim of answering the research questions concerning group characteristics, the group survey was used to find groups willing to cooperate in the continuation of this research.<sup>230</sup> The individual survey focused on personal characteristics, reading habits, motives for reading and for membership, and opinions about learning in the book discussion group. Concerning the topics of motives and learning, more in-depth information was planned to be gathered in the future using interviews.

Different forms of surveys, namely surveys for readers, for book discussion groups, and for members of these groups, were investigated in order to compose the group and member survey.<sup>231</sup> Both surveys can be consulted in the appendices: the group survey can be found in Appendix 1; the individual survey in Appendix 2. The group survey was designed to gather information about the general characteristics of book discussion groups, such as age of the group and number of members the group has (questions 1-18), the meetings of the group and the book selection (questions 19-28) and the goals of the group (question 29). The individual survey was to be filled out by individual members of book discussion groups. Questions considered personal characteristics such as age and education (questions 1-5), reading habits and reading motives (questions 6-9), motives for being a member of a book discussion group (questions 10-16) and learning in the book discussion group (questions 17-22). Both surveys ended with the possibility to note general comments. The individual survey also included two equal appendices containing questions regarding characteristics of the book discussion groups the respondent was a member of. These appendices only had to be filled out when one of the groups or – when applicable – both groups the respondent participated in did not fill out the group survey.

During the process of designing both surveys, concept-versions were read by two experts in the field of empirical research of readers.<sup>232</sup> Furthermore, a concept-version of both the group and the individual survey was tested in August 2009 by a book discussion group. All six members (four males, two females) of the book discussion group are professional experts in the field of social sciences and have much experience in conducting surveys. At the time, the group had been meeting – roughly – every month for about seventeen years and has discussed about two hundred books together. Suggestions to improve the survey focused on formulation of questions and ranking of Likert-scales. Adaptions were made based on all suggestions.

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<sup>230</sup> See Section 2.4: *Procedure*.

<sup>231</sup> In the first part of this chapter, studies using surveys were discussed. Not all authors provided the complete list of used survey questions in their research report.

<sup>232</sup> Frank Huysmans (University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands Institute for Social Research) and Dick Schram (VU University Amsterdam / *Stichting Lezen* ('Dutch Reading Foundation')).

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After the definitive versions of both surveys were designed, a digital version was made using the online software *Questback*<sup>233</sup>. The digital surveys contained exactly the same questions and answering modes as the paper-and-pencil version of the surveys. Routing in the digital form was planned and tested carefully. Once both modes of both surveys were available, respondents could be attracted.

### *Procedure*

Finding out about the characteristics of present-day Dutch book discussion groups with the help of two surveys requires a large number of groups and members participating in the study. However, finding book discussion groups and members willing to participate demands some effort. In the first chapter the following definition for book discussion groups that could participate in this study was determined: *a book discussion group is a fixed group of non-professional readers who meet physically to discuss books (fiction or nonfiction) that they all have read on their own or read together*. The definition is narrower than Hartley's 'any group which wants to call itself one' and it already forces the book discussion groups that could take part in the survey into a certain direction.<sup>233</sup> Texts to attract respondents, such as emails, letters and advertisements (the last showing a photograph of a number of, mostly modern, literary works) did not include the exact definition. In practice, however, the way the groups were attracted may have contributed to the fact that only groups who met the definition responded: no responding groups had to be excluded afterwards concerning contents. Moreover, the way groups were attracted may have influenced the fact that practically every responding group was a literature group. Only few deviant groups appeared, such as a drama-group, foreign-language groups, a group specialised in children's literature, and one anthroposophical group.

For practical reason, many researchers restrict their subject of study to *organised* groups.<sup>234</sup> In this study, several organisers of book discussion groups were contacted and requested to participate in the study. These included women's organisations, local and provincial libraries, organisations for senior citizens, and organisations for students. Groups affiliated to the largest book discussion group organisation of the Netherlands, the *SLD* were already involved in a different study and therefore were contacted a few months later than other groups.

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<sup>233</sup> Hartley 2002, p. 2.

<sup>234</sup> See for instance Poole 2003, p. 265: 'Given the logistical difficulties in contacting reading groups, this study is based on women-only groups associated with the Council of Adult Education.'

Along with organised groups, the aim was to reach wild groups as well, which are unaffiliated to any organisation. These wild groups mostly are harder to find and therefore they are more sparsely represented in studies. Wild groups are usually found in an indirect way and through *snowballing*.<sup>235</sup> Also, despite their wild character, groups may be known by local librarians or in book shops.<sup>236</sup> So, to reach wild groups, flyers were delivered or sent to libraries and book shops. Besides this, groups were approached with the help of personal network and snowballing (e.g. at the end of the survey, groups were asked to inform other groups about the research). Moreover, both organised and wild groups were targeted by advertisements placed in four magazines: *Boek-Delen* (a Dutch magazine for book discussion groups, published by *Biblion*), *Lezen* (a magazine for people interested in reading research, published by *Stichting Lezen*, the 'Dutch Reading Foundation'), and *Werkwijzer* and *Modulair* (magazines of the Open University for its employees and students respectively), as well as several relevant digital newsletters. Some groups, wild as well as organised ones, were found thanks to the pilot-study at the *Rotterdamsch Leeskabinet*. A number of groups who hosted their own website about their activities were contacted per email.

A website with the final versions of both surveys was launched in September 2009. The surveys were available until April 2010 (8 months). The original plan was to make the survey only available until January. However, as was explained above, it was necessary to extend this date in order to give SLD-groups the opportunity to participate. Similar to the pilot-study, both surveys were mixed-mode surveys, and both modes were self-administered. Surveys were available as web-survey, but could also be downloaded as pdf-file for people who preferred to print the surveys. The paper versions were also available in English and in large font. In the end, the English version was not used by anyone. These paper versions of the survey could also be sent to participants by mail if requested, including an introductory letter and return envelope that did not need a stamp. Participants always needed to actively approach the researcher in order to receive the surveys: no one was sent surveys unsolicited.

It was possible for individual members to respond to the individual survey without their book discussion group taking part in the group survey. It was also possible for a book discussion group to respond to the group survey, without any or all members taking part in the individual survey. Technically it was not possible to link the individual survey to the group survey. A name of the book discussion group and the place where the group most frequently gathers had to be written down on both the group survey and

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<sup>235</sup> See for instance Gerritsma 1998, p. 27.

<sup>236</sup> Gerritsma 1998, p. 27; Long 2003, p. xiii.

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the individual survey. In this way it was manually possible to link member surveys to group surveys. People who participated in two book discussion groups were able to answer several questions two times, considering both groups. People who participated in even more than two book discussion groups were asked to contact the researcher if they felt like filling out even more questions about their other groups, but this did not occur.

In total, 213 book discussion groups filled out the group-survey: 211 of the responses were valid.<sup>237</sup> Of these, 86 groups made use of the internet survey and 125 the paper-and-pencil version. Also, 887 members of one (or sometimes even two) book discussion groups filled out the individual survey: 877 responses were useable.<sup>238</sup> Of these, 275 of the respondents filled out the internet survey and 602 the paper-and-pencil version. Some groups that requested prints of the survey did not send any back on paper. All 727 paper-and-pencil surveys were manually entered in the *Questback*<sup>®</sup> web survey environment so as to allow the data to be exported into Excel and SPSS for data analysis. As it is not known how many book discussion groups or members exactly were familiar to the surveys, it is not possible to calculate the response rate of both surveys.<sup>239</sup>

A few minor problems occurred during the data gathering. Using a mixed-mode method for these surveys made that difficulties mostly occurred in only one of the two methods. Routing issues were not present in the internet surveys but occurred a few times in paper-and-pencil surveys. Redundant answers in paper responses were not taken along in the digitalisation of the paper-and-pencil surveys, that preceded the data-analysis.

Another problem that occurred only in the paper-and-pencil version was that many respondents filled out more than one answer to some questions where they were specifically asked to choose only one (e.g. the *single most* important motive...). In the web version this was technically not possible so respondents were forced to choose only one answer. As a result, three questions were invalid: questions 6 and 7 of the group survey and question 11 of the individual survey. The other way around also occurred: due to a technical mistake, it was impossible for groups who filled out the internet survey to choose more than one answer to group survey question 22, where they should have been able to do so. A number of groups yet reported their correct answers at the end of the survey where the possibility to post remarks was open. It was decided not to analyse these four questions that did not work out well.

Finally, it was not possible to trace all book discussion groups in the group survey responses that were mentioned by respondents to the individual survey. Some respondents claimed their group responded to the group survey but the corresponding group

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<sup>237</sup> One was a duplicate, one survey was merely filled-in.

<sup>238</sup> Ten surveys were not or merely filled-in.

<sup>239</sup> Sedo 2003, p. 70 acknowledges the same issue considering her questionnaire-based research.



survey response could not be traced. In these cases, there was no group information (affiliation, composition, coach, age of the group) available for these individual respondents. No other problems occurred.

### *The process of data analysis*

Both surveys included diverse types of questions: open-ended questions, closed questions, and Likert-scale questions. In a number of questions, it was of interest to make comparisons between different types of respondents in order to look for relations between diverse characteristics of respondents (e.g. age and educational level of participants) or between characteristics and motives (e.g. affiliation of the group and motives for participation). These comparisons between diverse characteristics and between characteristics and other information anticipated research question IV about possible relationships between characteristics of groups and members, motives and learning outcomes.

Dependent of the type of question (closed or Likert-scale), and the number of variables the responses were divided in (i.e. three educational level groups of participants of the individual survey), different quantitative data analysis methods were used. Because the size of the sample was relatively small for this type of calculations, and due to the fact that the scores were in most cases not normally distributed, non-parametric tests were preferred above parametric tests. Preceding these tests, the Likert-scale questions related to reading motives and membership motives were tested on reliability by calculating the Cronbach alpha coefficients, and testing the correlation between diverse questions using a factor analysis.<sup>240</sup>

In the results discussed in Chapter 3, the answers of different types of groups and individual respondents were compared. In order to make these comparisons, the respondents to the individual survey were grouped according to personal characteristics:

1. Sex (two categories: male and female);
  2. Age (four categories: 20-34; 35-49; 50-64;  $\geq 65$ ) and by year of birth;
  3. Educational level (three categories: low; middle; high);
- as well as according to one characteristic of their book discussion group:<sup>241</sup>
4. Affiliation of the group (two categories: wild groups and organised groups).

<sup>240</sup> Elementary calculations were first done using Microsoft Excel 2010: determinations of mean, median, mode, range, minimum, maximum and/or standard deviation. A number of non-parametric tests was conducted using SPSS Version 20.

<sup>241</sup> Members of two groups were counted twice: once according to the characteristics of book discussion group 1, and once according to the characteristics of book discussion group 2.

## CHAPTER 2

In Chapters 4 and 5, ordinal Likert-scale questions considering motives and learning were analysed. Answers between different types of respondents were compared. Respondents were grouped according to personal characteristics:

1. Sex (two categories: male and female);
  2. Age (four categories: 20-34; 35-49; 50-64;  $\geq 65$ );
  3. Educational level (three categories: low; middle; high);
- as well as according to characteristics of their book discussion group:<sup>242</sup>
4. Affiliation of the group (two categories: wild groups and organised groups);
  5. Composition of the group (two categories: all-female groups and mixed-sex groups);
  6. Coach (two categories: with coach or without one);
  7. Number of years the group exists (five categories: 0-4; 5-9; 10-19; 20-29;  $\geq 30$ ).

The calculations were done using two different non-parametric tests:

- Likert-scale questions: ordinal, two variables:
  - Independent Mann-Whitney U test (non-parametric counterpart of independent samples t-test, which tests whether two independent samples differ or not).<sup>243</sup>
- Likert-scale questions: ordinal, more than two variables:
  - Kruskal-Wallis test (non-parametric counterpart of one-way between-groups ANOVA, which tests whether more than two independent samples differ or not).<sup>244</sup>

In Chapters 4 and 5, outcomes considering motives and learning are presented following these seven characteristics. Outcomes of the calculations are presented in Appendix 2.2.1.

In addition to this quantitative material, qualitative data were gathered by means of open-ended questions in the surveys. For instance, groups were asked to describe the setting of their meetings. Answers to open-ended questions could mostly be categorised by type of answer (e.g. Appendix 1.2: group survey question 11 about the goals of the book discussion group). These types of answers describe certain aspects of the book discussion groups and provide these with illustrations, rather than giving exact numbers and calculations of specific situations.

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<sup>242</sup> Members of two groups were counted twice: once according to the characteristics of book discussion group 1, and once according to the characteristics of book discussion group 2.

<sup>243</sup> Field 2005, pp. 522-534; 737.

<sup>244</sup> Field 2005, pp. 542-553; 736.

## 2.4 INTERVIEWING BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP MEMBERS

### *Goals*

The surveys produced much information about characteristics of book discussion groups and their members (research question I). Moreover, the individual survey already provided some information about motives people have for reading and participating in a book discussion group (research question II); additionally, information was gathered about learning in the book discussion group (research question III).

Interviews were planned to gain in-depth information about reading habits of book discussion group participants related to their book discussion group membership, their motives for reading and for participating in a book discussion group, and their experiences of learning from literature and from book discussion group participation. The topics interviewees were asked to elaborate on are not static themes. Reading behaviour and motivation is variable and motives for book discussion group participation for instance may change during membership.<sup>245</sup> Attention was therefore given to the possible changes with respect to topics and the causes of these changes (e.g. the possible relationship between the book discussion group and someone's personal, individual reading behaviour). Sub questions that arise from research question II (*What motives do participants have for taking part in their book discussion group?*) and research question III (*In participants' experience, what do they learn from taking part in their book discussion group?*) to which interview questions were based are:

- Motives of participating in a book discussion group:
  - What motives do people have to take part in a book discussion group? Or: what are the extra's a book discussion group offers on top of reading individually?
  - Do motives for reading a book individually by book discussion group members differ from their motives for reading a book for the book discussion group meeting?
  - Do motives for participating in a book discussion group change over time?
  - Do motives concerning participating in a book group relate to characteristics of book groups?
- Learning through participating in a book discussion group:
  - Do participants experience they learn from participating in their book discussion group? If so: what do they experience they can learn from participating?
  - What makes a book discussion group an instructive environment?

<sup>245</sup> See also Chapter 1: Duyvendak 2007, p. 219; Gerritsma 1998, pp. 69-70; Miesen and Stokmans 1998, p. 223.

## CHAPTER 2

- Is it important to members that their book discussion group offers them opportunities to learn?
- Do learning experiences relate to characteristics of book discussion groups?

The outcomes of both surveys together with the outcomes of the interviews should provide information usable to answer the first three research questions. Combining the answers must lead to observations considering research question IV: *What connections exist between characteristics of participants and their book discussion groups, participants' motives, and their experienced learning outcomes?*

### *Designing the interviews*

Because of the specific aims of the interviews – finding relevant information considering the second and third research question – it was possible to design a structured interview with specific questions. The interview questions were grouped into six categories and contained more topics than only the topics directly related to the research questions.<sup>246</sup> In order to position the information gathered about motives and learning considering book discussion group membership, the interviews also addressed to personal information (e.g. age, profession), development of individual reading habits, motives for reading individually, and points of view considering learning by reading *fiction* individually. Some questions needed extra material such as cards with definitions, or examples. The six themes were:

1. Reading habits (question 1-5);
2. Reading in the book discussion group (question 6-19);
3. Motives for reading (question 20-21);
4. Motives for book discussion group participation (question 22-23);
5. Learning by reading fiction (question 24-29);
6. Learning by participating in a book discussion group (question 30-37).

The interview was designed as semi-structured. Almost always, the questions were read to the interviewees literally and in the same order. During some interviews, the answers of the interviewees asked for a small detour in the order of the following questions, or extra specifying questions were made. Most interviews had a more narrative character from time to time.<sup>247</sup> Interviewees were given the time they needed for their answers, and topics that would appear in later questions, were already mentioned in an earlier stage, for example. A number of interviewees needed little encouragement and illustrat-

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<sup>246</sup> See Appendix 3.2 for an overview of the interview questions including extra information and examples that were used during the interviews.

<sup>247</sup> Alheit 1993.

ed their answers with examples or anecdotes. Some interviewees rose matters themselves during the interview, such as the difference between male and female readers and/or book discussers.

The first two interviews served as pilot-interviews and were conducted in September 2010. Both interviewees were asked in advance to pay attention to the interview technique: the role of the interviewer and the questions asked. They were given information about the intentions of the interviews, just like all other interviewees after them. Minor adjustments were made thanks to these pilot studies. After the first interviewee gave oral feedback, the interview scheme for the second pilot-interview was changed: the order of questions was altered and two questions concerning the status motive were added. Also, the term *hedonistic motive* seemed to have a negative connotation and was altered in *enjoyment motive*.<sup>248</sup> Another term, *general knowledge / general development*, was simplified into *general knowledge*. The adjusted interview scheme was tested in a second pilot-interview. The alternations made following the first interviewee were afterwards deliberately checked with the second interviewee who agreed with the improvements and suggested some other minor changes. These concerned the need for some more extensive explanations to some questions, for instance questions about motives. Both pilot-interviews were found equally valuable as research data as the following interviews and therefore incorporated in the research data. After these two interviews, the third interview led to some final changes, in the order of the instructions preceding the interview and the adding of some explanation in a question concerning motives for book discussion group participation.

### *Procedure*

Finding interviewees turned out to be more problematic than expected. Many book discussion groups participating in the group survey responded positively to the call for participants for the follow-up of the study. At the time, not only interviews were planned, but observation of one or more group meetings of the interviewees' groups as well. This was the reason why the call for the participation in the follow-up study was included in the group survey instead of the individual survey. Groups for the second part of the study were selected considering three aspects: composition (all-female groups versus mixed-sex groups), motives about learning (high score of learning about literature items versus high score of learning as personal development items), and location (groups located in different parts in the Netherlands). This led to the contacting of

<sup>248</sup> This negative connotation is mentioned in Chapter 1. Although participants to the study were not confronted with this term, in this study the term *hedonistic* will be used in order to conform to existing studies.

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eight book discussion groups. Unfortunately, seven did not want to participate any longer in the study. Mainly, groups did not want their meetings to be disturbed or taped. This was the final push to decide to definitively let go of observation as a research method, though the one group that reacted positively was visited once at the start of the interviewing phase. The meeting of this book discussion group, consisting of ten females and one male, was a very inspiring and fruitful experience.<sup>249</sup> The group was having their second meeting discussing the Dutch translation of the Afrikaans book *The way of the women* by Marlene van Niekerk (2004), after they experienced during their previous meeting about this voluminous book, that they were not finished discussing it.<sup>250</sup> This was a way to get acquainted with each other, to introduce the study and the planned interviews and to recruit volunteers for this study. Three members of this group were interviewed indeed, and two more volunteered. Because the aim was to gather members of several different book discussion groups, only three members of this particular group were interviewed.

Eight new groups were contacted and asked for participation of one or more of their members in interviews only. Moreover, individual members were contacted in an indirect way and in one case through snowballing. This was more successful, but it had the effect that the interviewees are not equally spread out through the Netherlands. The new approach led to other selection criteria. Most importantly, the aim was to find members of different types of book discussion groups: wild and organised groups, all-female and mixed-sex groups. In addition, interviewees with different backgrounds were searched for: males and females, different ages, employed, freelance or retired or stay-at-home mother. Also, two interviewees were approached who had left their book discussion group recently, one of them was now member of a new *philosophical* book discussion group. Interviewees were partly found thanks to the survey, partly via an in-direct way and snowballing.

From September 2010 to October 2011, 15 readers were interviewed. The interviewees were five males and ten females, average age 56.33 years (*SD* 14.64, range 31-80) with diverse occupations. The interviewees are represented with the following pseudonyms:

- Joan (female, 53, assistant professor, book discussion group A)
- Peter (male, 31, editor/corrector, book discussion group B)
- Pauline (female, 31, teacher, book discussion groups B and C)

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<sup>249</sup> For a description of this book discussion group, see Appendix 3.4, book discussion group D, because three members were also interviewed. During the meeting, not all members were present.

<sup>250</sup> The original Afrikaans title of *The way of the women* is *Agaat* and was first published in 2004. The Dutch translation, also named *Agaat*, was first published in 2006.

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- Karin (female, 33, homemaker, book discussion group C)
- Adrian (male, 74, retired, book discussion group D)
- Dorothy (female, 62, retired, book discussion group D)
- Afra (female, 61, retired, book discussion group D)
- Addie (female, 65, retired, book discussion group E)
- Yvonne (female, 58, homemaker, former member of book discussion group F)
- Marlene (female, 61, board member, book discussion group G)
- Therese (female, 61, retired, former member of book discussion group H, member of philosophical book discussion group I)
- Rita (female, 57, homemaker, book discussion group J)
- Bart (male, 80, retired, book discussion groups K and L)
- Francis (male, 66, retired, book discussion group M)
- Matthias (male, 52, writer/journalist, book discussion group N)

In Appendices 3.3 and 3.4, a more extensive overview is given of interviewees and the group or groups they participate in – or had participated in.

Most members were interviewed at their own home or garden. Joan was interviewed at the workplace. Dorothy and Afra were interviewed in the researcher's home, close to their own village. Yvonne was for practical reasons interviewed at the home of her friend in her own town. The researcher was alone with the interviewee during the interview, except for the interview with Bart. His wife, who is also member of one of his book discussion groups and helps him organising his literary lectures, sat in the corner of the room reading a book, of course. During the interview, she occasionally added information.

All interviewees received information about the research project, the intentions of the interview, and how anonymity was guaranteed. This information was given beforehand orally during the meeting of the visited book discussion group, or via email or telephone. At the beginning of each interview, the interviewees were given more extensive information about the interview orally.<sup>251</sup> Interviewees could ask questions about the research whenever they wanted to. Also it was made clear that they could ask for clarifications during the interview at any time, and that they could tell as much as they wanted to. Also, interviewees were given the opportunity to give up an imaginary first name. Though promised that the interview could be finished within one and a half hours (and most of them more or less did), multiple interviewees took their time telling their stories: interviews took between just over 1 hour up to 2 ¾ hours. This led to very interesting stories and rich data. Many interviewees ended telling they felt comfortable

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<sup>251</sup> This information is found in Appendix 3.1.

## CHAPTER 2

during the interview and liked taking part in it; putting their answers into words let some of them think for the first time very consciously about for instance their reading motives, whilst others had very well-formulated answers ready in mind. All interviewees received a book token for their participation.

During the interviews, notes were made, and all interviews were also audio-taped. Afterwards, the interviews were written out. These reports were sent to the interviewees for a member check. Some interviewees made minor changes or added extra information, for instance about a book title they remembered. After the thirteenth interview was finished in December 2010, gathered information was partly analysed and it was decided to find two more participants for an interview. These were held in May and October 2011. After the fifteenth interview, a point of saturation was reached. Collected material was analysed in order to find answers to the first, second and third research questions.

### *The process of data analysis*

The final versions of the fifteen interviews were used for analysis. Two major topics that were investigated with help of the interviews are motives for reading and membership and learning experiences considering reading and book discussion group membership. Because of the semi-structured character of the interviews, relevant quotes considering specific motives or learning aspects were mostly easily found. On the other hand, interviewees were given space to elaborate about topics that were important to them. Some topics that were covered by later interview questions were talked about in an earlier stage of the interview, or popped up again later on. Relevant passages of the fifteen reports were selected as a base for analysis and were checked by a fellow researcher.

Contrary to most of the data gathered by means of the surveys, all interview material was used as a source for qualitative research. In Chapter 4, data about motives will be discussed. During the interviews, all four reading motives and six membership motives were attended to in a structured way. As will be described in Chapter 5, learning opportunities of reading and of participation in the book discussion group emerged from the interviews: learning from reading fiction, learning from discussing and about discussing, learning about literature, personal development and broadening one's horizons, and diversification of taste. The analysis of learning concentrated on these topics.

In the next three chapters, results of these data collections will be presented. Chapter 3 presents the characteristics of book discussion groups and its members, and the books that are read. In Chapter 4, the motives people have to read and to participate in a book



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discussion group are discussed. Chapter 5 deals with the aspect of learning: what do people experience to learn from their participation in a book discussion group? In Chapter 6, outcomes are combined and relationships between characteristics, motives, and experienced learning outcomes, are discussed.



## CHAPTER 3

### Characteristics of book discussion groups and participants

*It is true that most groups do consist of women, and also true that the reading group is every bit as much a form of escape as belonging to any other sort of society, but it is an escape of a particularly satisfying sort in which the member is very actively engaged in a most enjoyable cultural exercise.*

Margaret Forster.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> From the foreword by Margaret Forster in Hartley 2002, p. ix.



The image exists that book discussion groups are populated by middle-aged, highly educated females.<sup>253</sup> By means of a group survey and an individual survey, characteristics of present-day book discussion groups and their members were studied.<sup>254</sup>

The responses of the 211 groups and 877 individual members that participated in this study, mainly confirm or accentuate the existing image. Dutch book discussion groups indeed consist of highly educated females in their sixties. The participants meet four to seven times per year in their living rooms. Over a cup of coffee and a sweet, or a glass of wine and a snack, they discuss recently published fiction. Besides the book discussion group, the members are active in one or more clubs in their free time. This is the image of a general book discussion group that emerges from both the surveys. Some differences between organised groups and wild groups also emerge: participants of wild groups tend to be younger than members of organised groups, wild groups have more men among their members than organised groups do, and wild groups make less use of coaches than organised groups.

This third chapter presents a number of outcomes of the surveys: it describes the characteristics of book discussion groups and their participants (Section 3.1 – 3.3), the meetings (Section 3.4) and the books they read (Section 3.5). The full surveys and outcomes are presented in Appendix 1 (group survey) and Appendix 2 (individual survey). Appendix 1.3 includes a list of books recently read by the responding groups. The text in Section 3.5 refers to this so-called ‘book list’. Where possible, outcomes will be compared to results of other studies of book discussion groups or of reading behaviour, that were introduced in the first chapter. Outcomes will form the starting point for the investigations considering the subsequent research questions that are treated in the following chapters.

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION: GENERAL IMAGE OF BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS AND PARTICIPANTS

#### *Book discussion groups: Group survey*

In the group survey, 211 groups consisting of 1963 members (coaches excluded) participated: on average 9.3 members per group. The majority of the groups, 123 (58.29%), are

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<sup>253</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>254</sup> See Chapter 2.

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affiliated with an organisation of some kind; 86 (40.76%) groups are wild groups.<sup>255</sup> Groups exist on average 12.8 years at the time of the group survey. Most groups, 166 (78.67%), consist of females only; 41 (19.43%) groups have males and females amongst their members. Only 2 (0.95%) responding groups were all-male. Half of all groups come together between 4-6 times per year. 64 (30.33%) groups have a coach.

The 195 groups that report a place-name or region in the group survey, come from nearly all over the Netherlands. Related to the population density, however, some regions are better represented than others. Taking population density numbers into consideration, the largest *urban* regions in the Netherlands are not the regions with most book discussion groups. This is in line with findings of the previous research of the Dutch magazine *VN*.<sup>256</sup> Not in line with the expectations is the underrepresentation of groups in the Northern provinces Friesland and Groningen. The snowballing effect that helped finding respondents may have helped increasing the number of respondents in southern provinces. Next to this, northern book discussion groups of the *SLD* had just participated in another survey. This survey was specifically launched because of the preparation of a jubilee volume to celebrate the organisation had been active for 40 years.<sup>257</sup> It is imaginable many groups did not feel the need to participate in another survey, though it had another aim and scope.

It was expected that organised groups were easier to reach than wild groups. Indeed, most responding groups are affiliated with an organisation of any kind. However, it is not known whether this ratio is valid for all book discussion groups in the Netherlands. The response from the largest urban regions also stayed behind. It is possible that more wild than organised groups are active in these densely populated regions.

### *Book discussion group participants: Individual survey and interviews*

In total, 877 individual book discussion group participants responded to the members survey (94.39% female); of them, 60 (6.84%) indicated that they are member of two different book discussion groups. Members are on average 64.73 years old ( $SD = 10.76$ ) and 571 (65.11%) of them have completed an education of a high level (bachelor, master

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<sup>255</sup> Because respondents did not always answer every question, the number of answers may be lower than the total number of respondents: 211 (group survey) or 877 (individual survey).

<sup>256</sup> *Vrij Nederland Leeskringspecial* 13 July 2002, pp. 64-65, 73. The *Vrij Nederland*-survey was introduced in Section 1.1: *Present-day book discussion groups in the Netherlands*.

<sup>257</sup> Benjamins, Dorleijn, Nagtegaal, Van Voorst 2010, p. 6. Surveys were sent to 750 members of *SLD* book discussion groups, 608 responded (response rate 81.07%). The *Stichting Literatuurclubs Drenthe* was introduced in Section 1.1: *Origin of the book discussion group*.

or post-academic degree).<sup>258</sup> Members are socially active: 655 (74.69%) participate in one or more other clubs or societies besides their book discussion group or groups.

Interviews were held with 15 members of book discussion groups: five males and ten females. Their ages varied between 31 and 80 years. The 15 interviewees represented 14 different book discussion groups: 7 all-female groups, 6 mixed-sex groups and 1 all-male group, though the last one only had two members. This wild group was – of course – also the smallest group. The largest group was a library group consisting of 18 females. Four groups were affiliated with a library, the other groups were wild. Two of the library groups had a coach, all other groups did not have an official coach. One mixed wild group read only philosophical works, all other groups read fiction (prose and/or poetry), one of these groups incidentally reads works of nonfiction. The oldest group was founded in 1976, the two youngest both in 2008.

In the following sections, results of the surveys and – to a small extend – interviews will be presented. In the diverse tables concerning specific topics, the number of respondents ('*n*') may deviate from the total number of respondents to the surveys (*n*=211 for the group survey; *n*=877 for the individual survey). This is due to the fact that a) not all respondents gave valid answers to all questions in the survey; b) in some cases tables only describe information about a part of the population that show a specific characteristic, such as only members of mixed-sex groups; c) for some calculations, it was necessary to count members of two book discussion groups twice. In the appendices the *n* is accounted for per question.

### 3.2 COMPOSITION OF THE BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

#### *Males/females*

In the first chapter, it was stated that a strong image exists of book discussion group members: females, highly educated, age 55+. This is what previous researchers found, and – based on the outcomes of both group and individual survey – this image still holds. First, the difference in book discussion group participation among males and females still clearly stands. Over 94% of the respondents to the individual survey is female.

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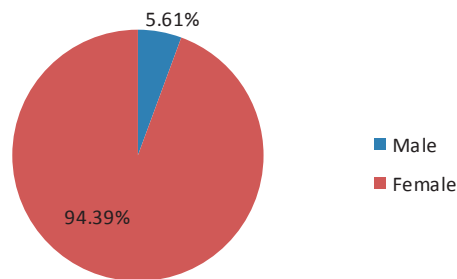
<sup>258</sup> Vocational university (professional university or college of higher vocational studies) / Academic bachelor (in Dutch: hbo / wo kandidaats / wo bachelor) or Academic master / post-academic degree (in Dutch: wo doctoraal / wo master / post-wo).

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**Table 3.1** The sex of the respondents to the individual survey. Source: Individual survey question 2.

Sex → ↓ <i>n</i> =874	Male	Female
Number of respondents	49	825

### Percentage of male and female respondents



**Figure 3.1** Percentage of male and female respondents in the individual survey. See Table 3.1.

In total, there were 1963 members in the 211 book discussion groups that participated in the group survey. With an average of 9.30 members per group ( $SD = 3.06$ ; smallest 3; largest 20; mean 9; mode 8), the book discussion groups that participated in this study are somewhat smaller than the groups that responded to the VN-questionnaire in 2002: the average number of members of these groups was 11.<sup>259</sup> All but two mixed-sex group specified the division of males and females in their group. Thus, of the 209 groups reporting the sex of the participants with a total of 1945 members, there were 113 (5.81%) males and 1832 (94.19%) females. Comparing these percentages to the data presented in Figure 3.1 shows that both individual and group survey practically represent the same proportion of males and females.

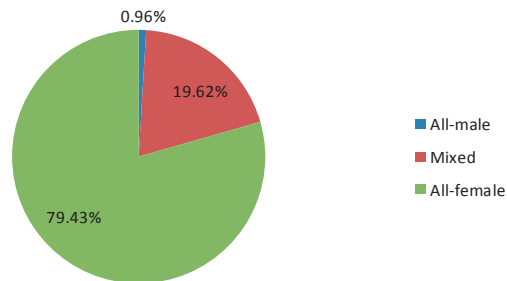
**Table 3.2** Composition of groups and the sex of participants. Source: Group survey question 4.

Composition → ↓ Number of...	All-male	Mixed-sex	All-female
Number of groups ( <i>n</i> =209)	2	41	166
Number of participants ( <i>n</i> =1945)	15 ♂	98 ♂ and 265 ♀	1567 ♀

<sup>259</sup> *Vrij Nederland Leeskringspecial* 13 July 2002, p.65.



### Percentage of groups by composition



**Figure 3.2** Percentage of all-female, mixed-sex and all-male groups that participated in the group survey. See Table 3.2.

Given the fact that so many more females than males are active in book discussion groups, it is obvious that many of the groups turn out to be all-female groups. Besides this, within most mixed-sex groups, the ratio between males and females is not equal.

**Table 3.3** Males and females in mixed-sex groups. Source: Group survey question 4.

Sex → ↓ <i>n</i> =41	Male	Female
Number of members in mixed-sex groups	98	265
Average number of members in mixed-sex groups	2.39	6.46
Ratio males / females in mixed-sex groups	1	2.70

**Table 3.4** Ratio between male and female members in mixed-sex groups. Source: Group survey question 4. In this table, the row adds up to 100%.

Sex → ↓ <i>n</i> =41	Male > female	Male = female <sup>260</sup>	Male < female
Number of mixed-sex groups 1	2.44%	11 26.83%	29 70.73%

Because of the very small number of all-male groups, it was not possible to do any statistical calculations or give well-founded statements about these groups. In the remainder of this chapter therefore, no comparisons will be made between all-male groups and mixed-sex groups, or between all-male groups and all-female groups.

<sup>260</sup> In case of book discussion groups existing of an uneven number of participants, groups with an equal proportion *plus or minus one* male or female member were also grouped in this category.

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The high representation of females in book discussion groups corresponds to the expectations based on previous research outcomes: the largest book discussion group facilitator of the Netherlands, the *SLD*, claims 96% of their members are female.<sup>261</sup> The older *VN*-study found 95% females among book discussion group members. In other countries, the same image is visible: more females than males are participating in book discussion groups and most groups consist of females only. For example, 95% of the 988 groups affiliated with the Australian Council of Adult Education is all-female.<sup>262</sup> In the United States, it is claimed 85% of all groups are all-female groups.<sup>263</sup> Of the 121 book discussion groups identified by Long in Houston, Texas, 64% were all-female groups, 33% mixed-sex groups and 3% all-male groups.<sup>264</sup> Similar percentages were found by Hartley in her research in the United Kingdom: 69% were all-female, 27% mixed-sex, and 4% all-male.<sup>265</sup>

One explanation for the overrepresentation of females in Dutch book discussion groups may be found in the fact that in the Netherlands, females are more avid book readers than males. They spend on average 48 minutes per week more than males do reading books (1.7 hours/week for females versus 0.9 hours/week for males).<sup>266</sup> Females in the Netherlands specifically spend more time reading literary fiction than males do.<sup>267</sup> Furthermore, as stated in the first chapter, the modern form of the book discussion group was established out of emancipatory motives. Many book discussion groups that started in the 1970s were established by women's organisations. As will be made clear in Section 3.3, still many of the responding all-female organised groups are affiliated with a women's organisation.

### *Age*

Besides expectations about sex, there were also expectations with respect to age of participants, namely, that the average age would be over 55. The average age of the respondents to the survey indeed is 64.73 years ( $SD = 10.76$ ; mode 66; mean 65).<sup>268</sup> More

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<sup>261</sup> Benjamins, Dorleijn, Nagtegaal, Van Voorst 2010, p. 13: 2412 members in total.

<sup>262</sup> Poole 2003, p. 264.

<sup>263</sup> Poole 2003, p. 263.

<sup>264</sup> Long 2003, p. xiii.

<sup>265</sup> Hartley 2002, p. 25. 350 groups responded to her survey, 347 answered the question considering composition of the group.

<sup>266</sup> SCP 2004 p. 43. See also [http://www.scp.nl/Onderzoek/Tijdsbesteding\\_2006\\_t\\_m\\_2010/Hoe\\_lang\\_en\\_hoe\\_v vaak/Vrije\\_tijd/Media/Gedrukte\\_media/Boeken](http://www.scp.nl/Onderzoek/Tijdsbesteding_2006_t_m_2010/Hoe_lang_en_hoe_v vaak/Vrije_tijd/Media/Gedrukte_media/Boeken) [website accessed on September 1, 2015].

<sup>267</sup> Kraaykamp 2007, p. 141.

<sup>268</sup> See Individual survey question 3. The age of the respondents was calculated as follows: 2009 – [year of birth].

## CHARACTERISTICS

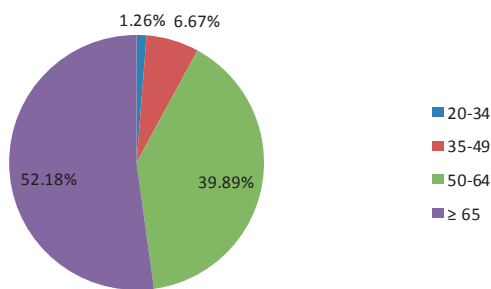
than half of the respondents are 65 or older. The oldest respondent was a 96 year old female, the youngest a 28 year old female (average age of females: 64.7 years). The oldest male was 83, the youngest 31 (average age of males: 64.5 years). There is no correlation between age and the sex of the respondents (Mann Whitney U test:  $Z=-.304$ ,  $p=.761$ ).

In Appendix 2.2, an overview of the number of respondents per year of birth is given. Below, the respondents are grouped into four age categories which will be used in the following chapters to answer research questions II, III and IV:

**Table 3.5** Respondents grouped into four age categories. Source: Individual survey question 3.

Age → ↓ In numbers $n=870$	20-34	35-49	50-64	≥65
Respondents total	11	58	347	454

### Age of respondents



**Figure 3.3** Percentage of respondents to the individual survey by four age categories. See Table 3.5.

Of the respondents, 91.33% is 50 years or older: this is similar to findings of the *SLD*-survey where 95% of the respondents is older than 50.<sup>269</sup> 75% of the *SLD*-respondents is older than 60, this is the case for 72.75% of the respondents to the individual survey. As was the case with the explanation of sex, the average age may be explained using numbers about reading behaviour as well: people in higher age categories tend to read more than people in younger age categories:

<sup>269</sup> Benjamins, Dorleijn, Nagtegaal, Van Voorst 2010, p. 21.

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**Table 3.6** Time spent on reading books. Source: Huysmans 2011, p. 3.

Age → ↓ Dutch population	20-34	35-49	50-64	≥65
Hours per week reading books	0.8	1.0	1.7	2.3

In other countries, different findings regarding age of book discussion group participants are reported: members seem to be younger, but the sample size of these studies is often very small. Long ( $n=42$ ) found an average age of 51 in Houston (range 25-78, 60% in their forties), Poole ( $n=37$ ) reports an average age of approximately 50 years among members of four face-to-face organised book discussion groups.<sup>270</sup> Book discussion group members – of online groups as well as face-to-face groups – that participated in Sedo's online research ( $n=243$ ), are youngest: 55% of the respondents are between 26 and 40 years of age.<sup>271</sup> This young age cannot be explained by the fact she includes online groups in her study: looking only at the face-to-face group members, still 52% are aged 26-40 years old.

The 2002 study of Dutch book discussion groups by the magazine *VN* reported an average age of 57. As is the case with above mentioned studies, the current study was held approximately a decade later. The average age in 2009/2010 has shifted to 65. This indicates book discussion groups are strongly influenced by a cohort effect, which implies that habits – like reading habits – stick to a generation.<sup>272</sup> Next to this cohort effect, the average age of participants may be explained by the fact that most people not only have more time to read when they get older, they also have more time to come together for discussions, when they finished their studies, reduce their working life or even retire, and when their family grows up.<sup>273</sup>

### *Educational level*

Based upon the information in presented in Section 1.1: *Present-day book discussion groups in the Netherlands*, it was expected that the average educational level of participants would be high. Educational qualifications were ordered in three levels, based on the classification of the Netherlands Institute for Social Research:<sup>274</sup>

<sup>270</sup> Long 2003, p. 89; Poole 2003, p. 265.

<sup>271</sup> Sedo 2003, pp. 73-74.

<sup>272</sup> See on cohort effect in media use (such as book reading habits): Huysmans 2011, p. 2 and Knulst and Kraaykamp 1998.

<sup>273</sup> Pommer 2011, pp. 37-39.

<sup>274</sup> See for instance Huysmans, De Haan and Van den Broek 2004, p. 184.

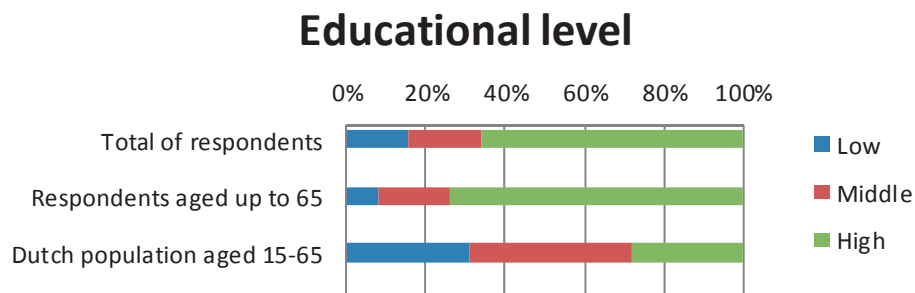
## CHARACTERISTICS

- *Low educational level*: Primary education (age 4-12) or Secondary education: preparatory middle-level vocational education (age 12-16);
- *Middle educational level*: Secondary education: higher general continued education (age 12-17) or pre-university secondary education (age 12-18) or Vocational Education / career and technical education (age 17+);
- *High educational level*: Vocational university (professional university, or college of higher vocational studies) / Academic bachelor or Academic master / post-academic degree.<sup>275</sup>

Furthermore, available reference material of the educational level of Dutch inhabitants in 2010 is restricted to the age category 15-65 years. In order to make a comparison, the educational level of respondents up to the age of 65 is represented apart, in the second line.

**Table 3.7** Educational level and age. Source: Individual survey questions 3 and 5 and CBS Statline data of 2010. In this table, each row adds up to 100%.

Educational level → ↓ In numbers <i>n</i> =868	Low		Middle		High	
Respondents total ( <i>n</i> =868)	137	15.78%	160	18.43%	571	65.78%
Respondents (age up to 65) ( <i>n</i> =413)	33	7.99%	74	17.92%	306	74.09%
Dutch population (age 15-65) in 2010 <i>N</i> =10922 x 1000	3416 x 1000	31.28%	4440 x 1000	40.65%	3066 x 1000	28.07%



**Figure 3.4** Educational level of different populations. See Table 3.7.

Compared to the average educational level of Dutch inhabitants, respondents to this survey are highly educated. These findings correspond to outcomes of the *SLD*-survey:

<sup>275</sup> Dutch names for these educational levels are: *Low educational level*: Lager onderwijs / Basisonderwijs, lbo / vmbo / mavo (mulo); *Middle educational level*: mms / hbs, havo / vwo, mbo; *High educational level*: hbo / wo propedeuse / wo bachelor/ wo kandidaats, wo doctoraal / wo master / post-wo.

## CHAPTER 3

60% of their respondents have completed higher education. In other countries, book discussion group members tend to be highly educated as well.<sup>276</sup>

In the Netherlands, people with a high educational background spend only little more time reading books (1.5 hours/week) than people with a middle or low educational background (both groups read 1.2 hours/week).<sup>277</sup> This difference is small and therefore cannot fully explain the overrepresentation of people with a high educational background among book discussion group members. It is possible that more than the time invested in reading, the type of books that are read by readers with different educational backgrounds differ from each other.

Looking at the history of the founding of many book discussion groups, educational motives played an important role. The target group of these book discussion group organisers were women who had not yet had the chance of following satisfactory formal education. One would expect that part of the book discussion group participants would be lower educated and specifically looking for the instructive potential of membership. However, it seems that most book discussion group members nowadays already are highly educated but still are motivated to join a book discussion group. In the next two chapters, this subject will return.

Table 3.8 presents the age, sex, and educational level of participants.

**Table 3.8** Age, sex, and educational level. Source: Individual survey questions 2, 3, and 5. In this table, each row adds up to 100%.

Educational level →		Low		Middle		High	
↓ In numbers <i>n</i> =865							
All ages	♂ <i>n</i> =49	2	4.08%	8	16.33%	39	79.59%
( <i>n</i> =865)	♀ <i>n</i> =816	134	16.42%	150	18.38%	532	65.20%
Aged 20-34	♂ <i>n</i> =1	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
( <i>n</i> =11)	♀ <i>n</i> =10	0	0%	0	0%	10	100%
Aged 35-49	♂ <i>n</i> =5	0	0%	1	20%	4	80%
( <i>n</i> =58)	♀ <i>n</i> =53	3	5.67%	3	5.67%	47	88.70%
Aged 50-64	♂ <i>n</i> =14	1	7.14%	2	14.29%	11	78.57%
<i>n</i> =344	♀ <i>n</i> =330	29	8.79%	68	20.61%	233	70.61%
Aged ≥65	♂ <i>n</i> =29	1	3.45%	5	17.24%	23	79.31%
( <i>n</i> =448)	♀ <i>n</i> =419	101	24.11%	77	18.38%	241	57.52%

<sup>276</sup> See for instance Hartley 2002, pp. 33-35, 174, Long 2003, pp. 87-88.

<sup>277</sup> See [http://www.scp.nl/Onderzoek/Tijdsbesteding\\_2006\\_t\\_m\\_2010/Hoe\\_lang\\_en\\_hoe\\_vaak/Vrije\\_tijd/Media/Gedrukte\\_media/Boeken](http://www.scp.nl/Onderzoek/Tijdsbesteding_2006_t_m_2010/Hoe_lang_en_hoe_vaak/Vrije_tijd/Media/Gedrukte_media/Boeken) [website accessed on September 1, 2015].

## Age, sex, and educational level

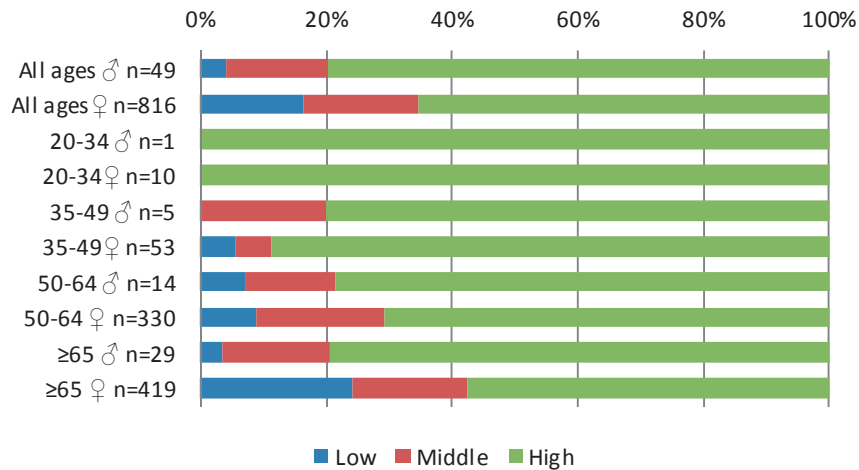


Figure 3.5 Age, sex, and educational level. See Table 3.8.

The median ages of respondents differ significantly for the three educational level categories (Kruskal-Wallis test:  $\chi^2$  50.249,  $p < .001$ ; posthoc Mann-Whitney tests corrected for the risk of a type 1 error using Bonferroni correction: low-middle:  $Z = -3.367$ ,  $p = .001$ ; low-high:  $Z = -6.932$ ,  $p < .001$ ; middle-high:  $Z = -2.892$ ,  $p = .004$ ).<sup>278</sup> This is logical since educational level in the Netherlands, especially among females, is increasing.<sup>279</sup>

Table 3.9 Age and educational level of respondents. Source: Individual survey questions 3 and 5.

Educational level →	Low	Middle	High
↓ Age (n=861)			
Mean age	69.71	66.54	62.99
Median age	70	65	63.5

To anticipate the following chapters, the educational level of participants from the diverse age categories was also compared. Because of the small size of participants of the

<sup>278</sup> The shape of the histogram and the Q-Q-plot suggested the distribution of both groups was normal. Moreover, the sample size ( $n=861$ ) was large. Therefore, a one-way ANOVA was a valid option as well. The result of this test was also significant ( $F=25.410$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The post-hoc Tukey test showed that the mean ages of respondents of all three educational levels differ significantly (mean differences: low-middle: 3.173,  $p = .028$ ; low-high: 6.725,  $p < .001$ ; middle-high: 3.552,  $p = .001$ ).

<sup>279</sup> Vogels and Turkenburg 2011, p. 103; see also <http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/onderwijs/publicaties/artikelen/archief/2015/onder-dertigers-vrouwen-vaak-hoger-opgeleid-dan-mannen.htm> [website accessed on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015].

## CHAPTER 3

age categories 20-34 and 35-49, it was not possible to compare the educational level of all four age categories. A comparison between the age categories 20-64 and  $\geq 65$  did turn out to be possible, using all three educational levels. Participants aged up to 64 have a higher educational background than participants aged  $\geq 65$  (Pearson  $\chi^2$ : 37.411,  $p < .001$ ).<sup>280</sup>

**Table 3.10** Educational level of respondents divided into two age categories. Source: Individual survey questions 3 and 5. In this table, each row adds up to 100%.

Educational level → ↓ In numbers $n=861$	Low		Middle		High	
Aged 20-64 ( $n=413$ )	33	7.99%	74	17.92%	306	74.09%
Aged $\geq 65$ ( $n=448$ )	102	22.77%	82	18.30%	264	58.93%

Next, the educational level of males and females was compared. Because of the small number of males with a low educational level, it was not possible to compare the educational level between males and females using all three educational levels. It was however possible to make a comparison when the levels are categorised as 'low and middle educational level' and 'high educational level'. The educational level of male respondents does not differ from the educational level of female respondents (Pearson  $\chi^2$  continuity correlation: 3.65,  $p = .056$ ).<sup>281</sup>

**Table 3.11** Educational level and sex. Source: Individual survey questions 2 and 5. In this table, each row adds up to 100%.

Educational level → ↓ In numbers $n=865$	Low and Middle		High	
Males ( $n=49$ )	10	20.41%	39	79.59%
Females ( $n=816$ )	284	34.80%	532	65.20%

As expected, the educational level of participants of book discussion groups is high compared to the level of the Dutch population. Furthermore, the participating males and younger participants have achieved a higher educational level than females and older participants. Females and older participants however form the majority of the book discussion group population.

<sup>280</sup> The Pearson  $\chi^2$  tests whether two categorical variables are associated. Field 2005, pp. 686-693; 725.

<sup>281</sup> The continuity correction compensates for overestimation of the Pearson  $\chi^2$  value when used with a 2 by 2 table. Pallant 2005, p. 290.



### 3.3 AFFILIATION: Differences between organised and wild book discussion groups

#### *Males/females*

In the first chapter, book discussion groups were divided into wild groups and organised groups. Despite the fact that wild groups are more difficult to find, 86 participated in the research. In what ways do wild groups differ from organised groups? If we look at the composition of the groups, males seem to be more likely to join a wild group rather than an organised one.

**Table 3.12** The sex of the members and affiliation of the group. Source: Group survey questions 2, 4, and 8. In this table, each row adds up to 100%.

Affiliation → ↓ In numbers $n=209$	Wild		Organised	
Groups in total ( $n=209$ )	86	41.15%	123	58.85%
All-female groups ( $n=164$ )	61	37.20%	103	62.80%
Mixed-sex groups ( $n=43$ )	23	53.49%	20	46.51%
Male participants ( $n=113$ )	84	74.34%	29	25.67%
Female participants ( $n=1815$ )	656	36.14%	1159	63.86%

This image is confirmed by the individual survey: more males participate in wild groups than in organised groups (Pearson  $\chi^2$  continuity correction: 14.239,  $p<.001$ ).

**Table 3.13** The sex of the members and affiliation of the group. Source: Individual survey questions 1 and 2 (members of two book discussion groups are counted twice). In this table, each row adds up to 100%.

Affiliation → ↓ In numbers $n=831$	Wild		Organised	
Number of all participants ( $n=831$ )	331	39.83%	500	60.17%
Number of female participants ( $n=785$ )	300	38.22%	485	61.78%
Number of male participants ( $n=46$ )	31	67.39%	15	32.61%

How ‘mixed’ is a mixed-sex group? As Table 3.3 already showed, there are on average 2.70 females for each male in a mixed-sex book discussion group. In wild groups, the

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male-female ratio (1:1.65) is more equal than in organised groups (1:5.21) (independent Mann-Whitney U test:  $Z=-3.934$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

**Table 3.14** Ratio of males and females in wild and organised groups. Source: Group survey questions 2, 4, and 8.

Affiliation →	Wild ( $n=22$ )	Organised ( $n=19$ )
Average number of female members in mixed-sex groups ( $n=41$ )	5.18 ♀	7.95 ♀
Average number of male members in mixed-sex groups ( $n=41$ )	3.14 ♂	1.53 ♂
Average number of members in total in mixed-sex groups ( $n=41$ )	8.32	9.48

The explanation may be found in the different ways most wild groups are formed in contrast to most organised groups. The organisation forms groups by bringing together people who associate with the organisation, whereas wild groups are perhaps more likely to be formed by groups of friends or acquaintances. It is possible that this may influence the more balanced male-female ratio in wild groups. Moreover, in the interviews the image arose that wild mixed-sex groups tend to include one or more often mixed (married) couples.<sup>282</sup>

**Table 3.15** Affiliation of groups by composition of the group. Source: Group survey questions 4 and 8. In this table, each row adds up to 100%.

Affiliation →	Not affiliated (ever)		Not affiliated (anymore)		Affiliated	
↓ In numbers ( $n=209$ )						
All-female groups ( $n=164$ )	54	32.93%	7	4.27%	103	62.80%
Mixed-sex groups ( $n=43$ )	23	53.49%	0	0%	20	46.51%
All-male groups ( $n=2$ )	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Total of all groups ( $n=209$ )	79	37.80%	7	3.35%	123	58.85%

Taking a closer look at the affiliation, we see an explanation of the fact that many of groups consist of females only. Of all 103 *organised all-female* groups, 52 (50.49%) are affiliated with a women's organisation.

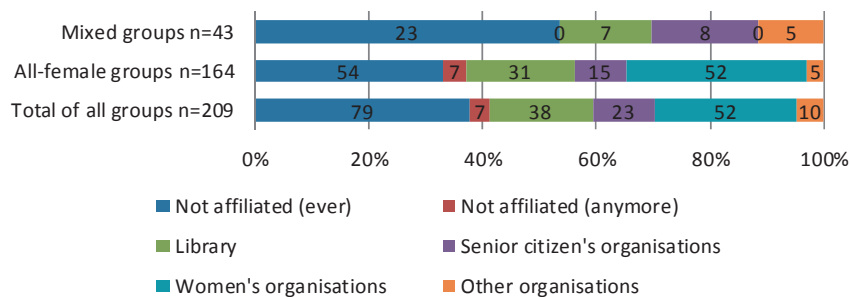
<sup>282</sup> Schultz Nybacka (2011, p. 332) claims it is not common for spouses to be member of the same reading group, because members want to "create a relation to and connect with what is outside one's life", and this is best done without the presence of one's partner. The interviews in the current research however showed it is not that unusual for partners to participate in the same book discussion group: the surveys unfortunately did not include a question concerning the relationship between members. Hartley also reports mixed-sex groups that partly consist of mixed couples. Hartley 2002, p. 27.

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**Table 3.16** Organisations all-female and mixed-sex groups are affiliated with. Source: Group survey questions 4 and 8.

Affiliation → ↓ In numbers $n=209$	Senior citizen's organisations		Women's organisations		Library		Other organisations	
Mixed-sex groups ( $n=20$ )	8	18.60%	0	0%	7	16.28%	5	11.63%
All-female groups ( $n=103$ )	15	9.15%	52	31.71%	31	18.90%	5	3.05%
Total of all groups ( $n=123$ )	23	11.00%	52	24.88%	38	18.18%	10	4.78%

### Affiliation and composition of the group



**Figure 3.6** Affiliation and composition of the group. All-male groups are not represented here because of the small sample size ( $n=2$ ). See Tables 3.15 and 3.16.

### Age

Table 3.16 showed that a large number of organised groups is affiliated with a women's organisation. Also, organisations for senior citizens are represented, though not as massive as women's organisations: 18.70% of the organised groups is affiliated with a senior citizen's organisation. The average age of participants of wild groups (60.63 years,  $n=331$ ,  $SD=11.60$ ) is significantly lower than the average age of participants of organised groups (66.6 years,  $n=497$ ,  $SD=9.36$ )<sup>283</sup> (independent Mann-Whitney U test:  $Z=-7.395$ ,  $p<.001$ ).<sup>284</sup> Besides this, the distribution of members in the four age categories seems to be somewhat different in wild and organised groups.

<sup>283</sup> Source: individual survey questions 1 and 3. Members of two book discussion groups are counted twice.

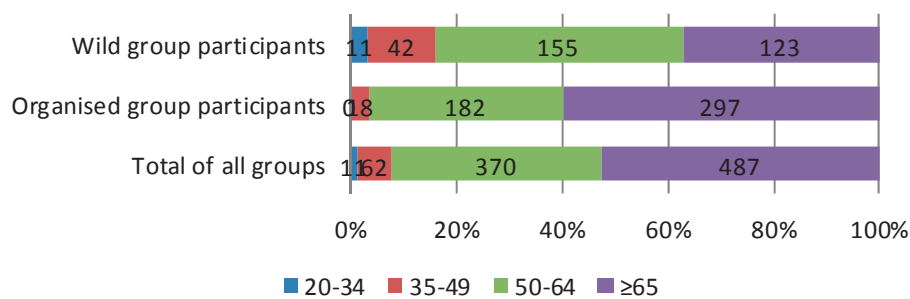
<sup>284</sup> The shape of the histogram and the Q-Q-plot suggested the distribution of both groups was normal, although a bit negatively skewed. Moreover, the sample size ( $n=828$ ) was large. Therefore, a parametric independent samples t-test was a valid option as well. The result of this test was also significant ( $t=-7.849$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

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**Table 3.17** Age of members and affiliation of the group. Source: Individual survey questions 1 and 3 (members of two book discussion groups are counted twice). In this table, each row adds up to 100%.

Age of members → ↓ In numbers $n=870$	20-34		35-49		50-64		≥65	
Wild group participants ( $n=331$ )	11	3.32%	42	12.69%	155	46.83%	123	37.16%
Organised group participants ( $n=497$ )	0	0%	18	3.62%	182	36.62%	297	59.76%
Total of all groups ( $n=930$ )	11	1.18%	62	6.67%	370	39.78%	487	52.37%

### Age and affiliation



**Figure 3.7** Age of participants and affiliation of the group. See Table 3.18.

Due to the small number of respondents in both categories 20-34 and 35-49, it was only possible to compare the percentage of participants aged 20-64 and 65 and over, between wild and organised groups. In organised groups, there are significantly more members within the age category  $\geq 65$  than in wild groups (Pearson  $\chi^2$  continuity correction: 39.695,  $p < .001$ ).

**Table 3.18** Age of members and affiliation of the group. Source: Individual survey questions 1 and 3 (members of two book discussion groups are counted twice). In this table, each row adds up to 100%.

Age of members → ↓ In numbers $n=870$	20-64		65 +	
Wild group participants ( $n=331$ )	208	62.84%	123	37.16%
Organised group participants ( $n=497$ )	200	40.24%	297	59.76%
Total of all groups ( $n=930$ )	443	47.63%	487	52.37%

The average *age of the groups* participating in this study is approximately 12 years: wild groups exist on average 12.89 years ( $n=83$ ,  $SD=9.34$ ), organised groups exist on average

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12.77 years ( $n=114$ ,  $SD=10.84$ ).<sup>285</sup> The age of the responding groups varies from very new groups that have just met twice, to four groups which have been meeting for more than forty years.

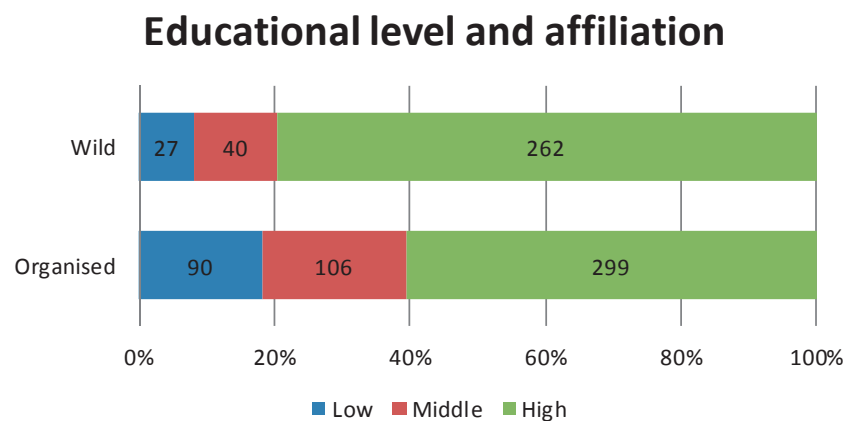
**Table 3.19** Age of groups. Each row adds up to 100%. Source: Group survey questions 5 and 8.

Average age of groups →	0-4		5-9		10-19		20-29		≥30	
↓ Affiliation										
Total ( $n=199$ )	57	28.64%	28	14.07%	61	30.65%	32	16.08%	21	10.55%
Wild ( $n=83$ )	20	24.10%	11	13.25%	33	39.76%	11	13.25%	8	9.64%
Organised ( $n=114$ )	37	32.46%	16	14.04%	27	23.68%	21	18.42%	13	11.40%

Of the responding groups, 21 groups originated in the 1970s, the decade in which many book discussion groups were founded in the Netherlands, as well as the first organisations of book discussion groups.

### *Educational level*

Taking a closer look at the educational level of participants, members of wild groups have a significantly higher educational background than members of organised groups (Pearson  $\chi^2$ : 34.143,  $p<.001$ ). Whether this influences motives for participating (the desire to participate in an educative activity) and learning outcomes will be discussed in the next two chapters.



**Figure 3.8** Educational level and affiliation. Source: Individual survey question 1 and 5 (members of two book discussion groups are counted twice).

<sup>285</sup> Source: group survey questions 5 and 8.

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Possibly, readers with a higher educational background are more confident to start a book discussion group by themselves without the support of an organisation. Organisations may offer help in providing suitable book titles, information about the book, lists of discussion points, and a discussion leader. Readers with a higher educational background may feel they are able to find information and organise the meetings themselves.

### 3.4 MEETING AND DISCUSSING

Discussing books is obviously the primary goal for groups to gather. Many groups combine their meetings with other activities as well. Some groups occasionally meet for extra activities besides the book discussions. In this section, the organisation of the meetings and discussions will play a central role.

#### *Meeting*

Half of the book discussion groups meet four up to and including six times per year:

**Table 3.20** Number of meetings per year by affiliation of the group. Source: group survey question 10.

Number of meetings per year → ↓ <i>n</i> =208	1 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	>12
Wild groups ( <i>n</i> =85)	1	35	29	18	2
Organised groups ( <i>n</i> =123)	1	69	44	8	1
Total ( <i>n</i> =208)	2	104	73	26	3

### Number of meetings organised groups

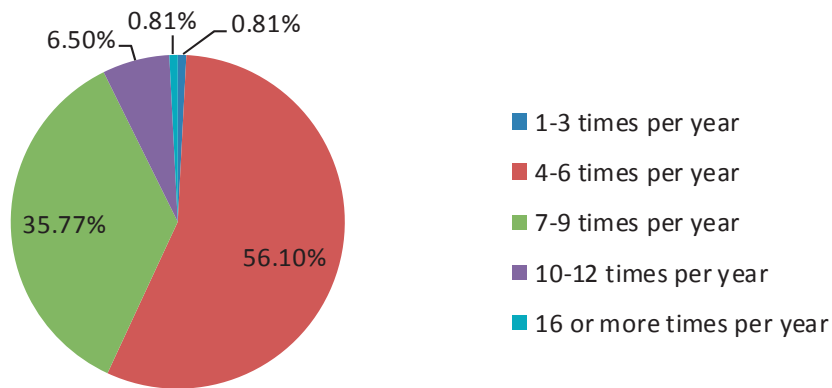


Figure 3.9 Percentage of number of meetings per year by organised groups. See Table 3.21.

### Number of meetings wild groups

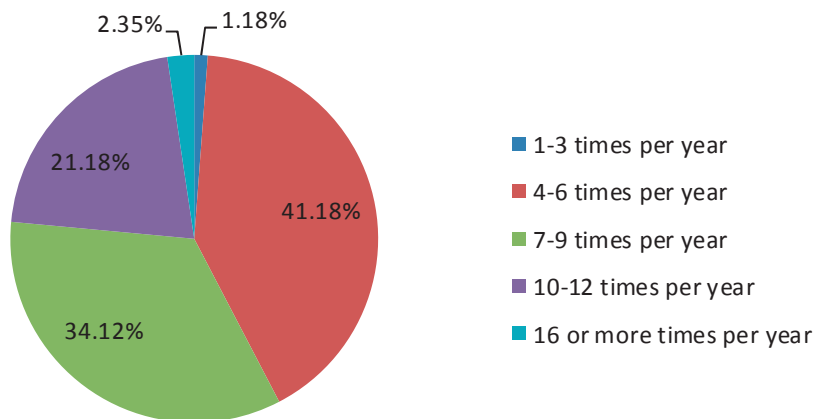


Figure 3.10 Percentage of number of meetings per year by wild groups. See Table 3.21.

These meetings mostly take place in the homes of the members, though organised groups also make use of facilities at their libraries:<sup>286</sup>

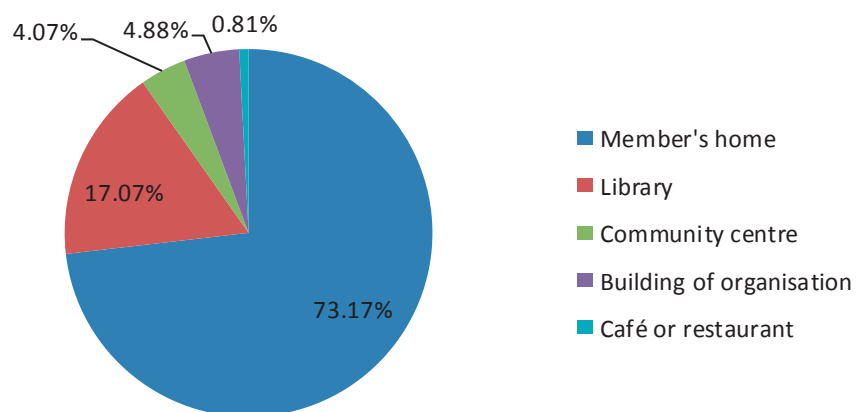
<sup>286</sup> None of the groups met at a book shop, which was also offered as an option for answering.

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**Table 3.21** Places book discussion groups meet, by affiliation. Source: group survey questions 8 and 9.

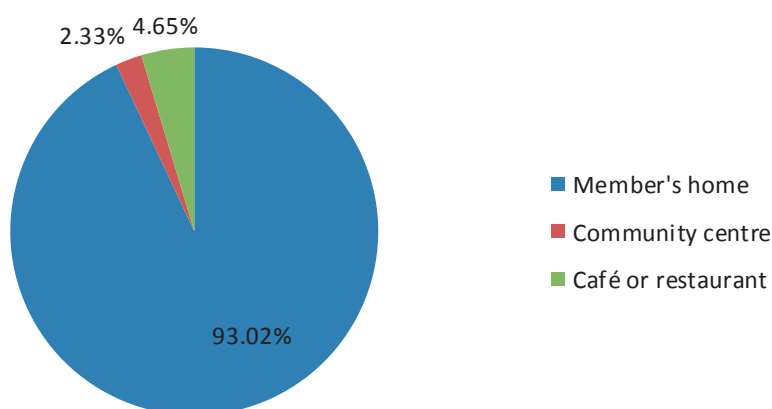
Place → ↓ <i>n</i> =211	Member's home	Library	Community centre	Building of organisation	Café or restaurant
Wild groups ( <i>n</i> =86)	80	0	2	0	4
Organised groups ( <i>n</i> =123)	90	21	5	6	1
Total ( <i>n</i> =211)	172	21	7	6	5

### Places of meetings organised groups



**Figure 3.11** Percentage of places where organised groups meet. See Table 3.21.

### Places of meetings wild groups



**Figure 3.12** Percentage of places where wild groups meet. See Table 3.21.



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Being an at home activity, it is not surprising that many groups describe their meetings in terms relating to living room settings, for example:<sup>287</sup>

On the sofa drinking coffee, moving to wine.

A lot of cheerfulness with coffee / tea and something sweet and afterwards a glass of wine. But [there is] also serious attention to the book, mostly when sitting at the large table.

Living room meetings, after the coffee [there is] attention for the one who treats the book, and the discussion that follows. After the discussion [we have] a glass of wine [...].

We sit pleasantly in the sitting area with coffee and cake. Later on, [we have] wine and soft drinks with a snack.

Next to the actual book discussion, the meetings may be combined with catching up about personal subjects, talking about other subjects than the book, having a drink, or eating together. Approximately half of the groups plan extra activities besides their book discussion meetings as well, though most groups do not meet very frequently outside the regular meetings.<sup>288</sup> Some groups plan their extra activity for instance once a year, mostly at the end of their reading and discussing season.

Extra activities often are related to literature or even a specific book that the group has discussed. Among these literary activities are seeing a theatre adaptation or film adaptation of a discussed book,<sup>289</sup>

Khalid Boudou – *Het schnitzelparadijs*. Together, [we] watched the film [adaptation of this book] in the private film theatre of acquaintances.

Joke Hermesen – *De liefde dus*. [We] watched films at YouTube, this made it all more lively.

visiting a literary event or excursion,

*Sonny Boy* by Annejet van der Zijl, partly because of the lecture by the author.

or making literary city trips or poetry walks. Some groups have diner in style of a book or literary theme, and one of the most popular books on the book list just happens to be a perfect book to induce a great meal:

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<sup>287</sup> Group Survey, question 14.

<sup>288</sup> See for all extra activities and number of responses Appendix 1.2, question 28.

<sup>289</sup> Quotes are derived from Group survey, questions 14 and 28.

## CHAPTER 3

[We sit] at a table with a glass of wine fitting the book. The last book was *The dinner* [by Herman Koch], so it became a grandiose banquet.

Herman Koch – *The dinner*. The book [was] discussed during dinner at *Librije's Zusje* [a chic restaurant] to stay in the atmosphere of the book.

Films and theatres may be visited without a direct relation to a specific book as well. Other non-literary activities are for instance eating together, visiting museums, visiting cities, and making diverse other trips (e.g. bicycling, walking, sailing). Two groups go away for the weekend together; one group even had gone on holiday together to France and Spain for a week.

### *Discussing*

In organizing their discussions, groups make different choices.<sup>290</sup> Many groups could find themselves more or less in the given example of a meeting in the survey: *First everyone gets a chance to talk briefly about his / her first impression, after which we discuss the content. Then we compare the book to other books and to conclude everyone tells how his or her opinion about the book has changed.* A number of groups add points to the example, or change minor points:

Like above, [but] we do not end with telling whether our opinions or judgement about the book has changed, we plan to do that from now on.

Like above, and we use [a set of] questions from book discussions we can buy.

We try: first a round of questions for each member, then a central discussion.

Almost all groups follow specific steps in their discussions. Some groups follow a very strict, specific order, for others, the discussion is more freely though certain aspects always come up:

Requirement: everyone has read the book thoroughly; discussion: author / background; what is characteristic to this story / in the structure?; structure / book cover, do we agree or disagree?; Private questions and observations; conclusion. We acknowledge that everyone has looked on the Internet, so our introduction should exceed the internet.

Introduction of biography of the author, content of the story, sometimes with help of a video interview. Then, own opinions and to conclude the critics.

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<sup>290</sup> This section is based on the outcomes of group survey questions 13 and 14.

## CHARACTERISTICS

First [we] take turns giving the book a mark, then an explanation, then we talk about the book more profoundly (title, style, characters, events, possibly resemblances to other books, if desired at the end we tell whether our own judgement has changed.

Fixed elements emerge in variable order: elements considering content and style [of the] book, information about author and critics, possibly discussing of relevant daily environment and own experiences considering the book. If relevant: discussing of specific elements of the book in relation to music, film, images, a guest, or the like.

Most groups who follow a strict order, are inspired by a reading guide:

First, we each tell how we experienced reading the book. Then we treat every question and point of discussion offered by the discussion guide by *Senia*.

First impression with reference to the cover of the book; treating of the content led by questions in the material provided by the *Library Service of Overijssel*; to conclude: everyone tells her final experience.

The first half hour we catch up and we talk about the impression one has about the book. Then, [we] treat all discussion points offered by *Senia*, taking turns at every question – [it is] not uncommon the answers lead to discussing a ‘life theme’.

Coaches play a leading role in the meetings of some groups:

The coach always starts with a short introduction about author and work. Then, all members take turns, others may interrupt. This way, usually a discussion emerges, with a finishing conclusion, recapitulation.

Introduction by coach about content, structure, themes and motives; discussion taking turns of comments about the book.

Introduction by coach, taking turns about reading experiences, points of discussion, evaluation.

In other groups, members themselves take turns preparing and sometimes leading the meetings:

Someone discusses the book that she extensively has prepared. Then, all members give their opinion taking turns. Then, a social gathering.

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The person who prepared the book tells something about the author and then we treat the questions this person [...] has circulated beforehand.

One member prepares discussion points; each member prepares own vision and remarks; following both [preparations we] talk without further structure.

Two members (circulating) prepare, make some twenty questions. These always are answered, mostly by discussion. We end by [making] an argued individual mark from 0-6.

Only a small number of groups describe their meetings work out rather anarchistic:

Dining and talking and drinking wine.

[We] freely associate in view of the content of the book and the impressions concerning the book.

Question who finished the book; [having a] good meal; discussing the book for approximately 15 minutes (story, content, style); other conversation topics.

### *The role of the coach*

A total of 64 groups (30.33% of all groups: 17 wild; 47 organised) indicate having a coach.<sup>291</sup> For organised groups, it is significantly more common to work with a coach than for wild groups (Pearson  $\chi^2$  continuity correction: 7.259,  $p=.007$ ): 38.21% of organised groups have a coach compared to only 19.77% of wild groups. With respect to the position of the coach, 74.60% of groups with a coach see him/her always as an equal interlocutor during discussion. Most common task for the coach however is to lead the discussion: 64.52% of the coaches do so at every meeting. This does not mean the coach automatically helps the group to interpret the book (37.70% always do; 32.79% often do) or provides subjects for discussion (39.28% always do; 12.70% often do). Twenty-three coaches choose the books that the group will read (9 *also* choose from suggestions made by members), 11 more *only* choose from suggestions made by the members.

### *Choosing a title*

The present reading habits of book discussion groups was examined by means of the group survey. Groups were asked to name the current book they were discussing and – when possible – the last five books that had been read and discussed. 1220 book titles

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<sup>291</sup> This section is based on the outcomes of group survey questions 16-18.

including duplicates were written down. Duplicates arise when more than one book discussion group read the same specific title. The complete list of book titles (referred to as: 'the book list') that was compiled out of these 1220 responses includes 510 unique book titles written by 362 different authors, and is presented in Appendix 1.3.

How are books chosen by the groups that participated in the group survey?<sup>292</sup> The survey outcomes show that most groups decide on their own what to read. Mostly this is done by discussion sometimes ending with voting: members end their meeting with a discussion which book is to be read for next meeting (or in some cases: all books for one season). The book selection may depend on a certain condition, such as a theme or the condition that the book is new to everyone. In a number of groups, members take turns in deciding which book will be read, or fate makes the final decision which book of all suggestions written down is on the programme next. When members take turns in book choice, it is possible the group asks this person to prepare the next meeting.

Not all book discussion groups select their own reading material. This applies for instance for many library-organised groups. A number of these groups may select the books on their own but still are dependent of the supply of their library. Others follow a programme in which the library or their coach chooses the books each season. The largest organisation for book discussion groups is the *SLD*. *SLD*-affiliated groups do not choose the books they read themselves: via the *SLD*, members buy four books each season the board of the *SLD* has carefully selected. For the board, this means it has to provide some 2400 more or less anonymous readers with the same four books every season.<sup>293</sup> The organisation specifically chooses literary books that are expected to provide long discussions. However, not all topics are judged suitable for group discussion and therefore deliberately avoided.<sup>294</sup> Furthermore, it tries to avoid books concerning specific delicate topics that may be difficult to discuss for some readers for personal reasons. Because of the large number of readers, the organisation thinks the chances are considerable that some participants may have difficulty discussing topics such as suicide.<sup>295</sup>

Thirty *SLD*-groups participated in this study. Together these groups handed in 172 titles (17 unique titles) for the book list. Differences in responses may be attributed to the fact not every group was at the same point in their program when filling out the

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<sup>292</sup> Source: Group survey question 15.

<sup>293</sup> Benjamins, Dorleijn, Nagtegaal, Van Voorst 2010, p. 6 mentions 2412 members.

<sup>294</sup> An example of a book that was found too intimate for group discussion by the *SLD* is the Dutch novel *Shadowchild: A Meditation on Love and Loss* (2003) by the Dutch author P.F. Thomése (original title: *Schaduwkind*), which deals on the death of the author's little daughter. Pronk, *Trouw* 22 April 2006.

<sup>295</sup> An example of a book that was rejected for this reason is the novel *A charming mass suicide* (1990, original title *Hurmaava joukkoitsemurha*, translated in Dutch as *De Zelfmoordclub* in 2004) by the Finnish writer Arto Paasilinna. Pronk, *Trouw* 22 April 2006.

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survey. Moreover, some groups organise an extra meeting per season and read an extra book, next to the four fixed books bought via the *SLD*. Vincent Overeem's *Misfit* was at the time of the survey read by most responding groups.

The book choice of a book discussion group is of great importance to whether the members appreciate their participation. During the interviews, interviewees were asked to think of reasons to stop participating in their book discussion group. Changes or restrictions in book choice turned out to be a hypothetical cause for five of the interviewees (Joan, Afra, Marlene, Therese, Francis). Joan, who is member of a relatively small group, notices a dichotomy between the six members when it comes to book choice. Two or three members tend to choose books that Joan does not consider valuable for her. This is not wrong as everyone should be allowed to pick a book. However, when these books would dominate the book choice, Joan would quit because she would not get enough out of the meetings. Afra never thought of the possibility to leave her group. She would stop when the group was restricted in the way books are chosen. In group D, Afra recalls someone leaving the group because she did not like the choice of books. Marlene's group now reads 'middle-hard' books in Dutch. If the group would choose to read very different books (level or type), for instance, if they only would read comics from now on, she would stop.

Though many respondents to the survey as well as the interviews appreciate to read other books than they would normally have chosen to read individually, five interviewees (Peter, Pauline, Adrian, Therese, Francis) indicate that they still need to read books of their own, independent choice, next to the books they read for their book discussion group. Not having enough time to read other books of their own interests means they would reconsider their membership, especially when the book choice of the group is disappointing. During her membership of a literary book discussion group, Therese noticed she more and more had to read books she did not like. She was very busy at the time and had little time to read and decided she'd rather read books she did like. Now she is a member of a philosophical book discussion group. She would leave the group if the book choice gets limited and only books on, for instance, epistemology or philosophy of science were to be read. Francis does not think of stopping but he can image stopping because a couple of times per year he reads a book he finds a waste of time. Besides this, there is a lot of interesting literature to be read that does not belong to the formula of his group (which focuses on Dutch debut novels) such as foreign classics. If he would stop, he would spend all his reading time these classics. Peter thinks of leaving the group when time and again he would not enjoy the books that are being read. Furthermore he would stop when he would only have time to read books for his group and no time left to read individually any more. The same applies for his fellow group mem-

ber Pauline. She is very dutiful and would, no matter what, want to finish the book she has to read for the meeting. If this would mean she could no longer read books by herself besides the book discussion group books, she would stop. Adrian also gives high priority to finishing the book for his group meeting. He wants to be well prepared for the meeting that takes place every month. Because he wants to read the books for the group intensely, he spends quite some time on his book discussion group. But he notices he also likes to read other kinds of books, such as nonfiction and history. He wants to read popular science books, but he has too little time for this as he is involved in making music as well. If in future he would like to have more time for his other interests, he would stop going to the book discussion group.

### 3.5 READING IN THE BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP: The book list

In the newest general history of Dutch and Flemish literature, Brems describes the reading preferences of readers in the Netherlands and Flanders around the past turn of the century. He acknowledges the fact that advertisements and media definitely have an impact on reading behaviour, but this does not imply that there is one large, congenial group of readers. Brems describes the reading public to consist of articulate consumers. The traditional socio-political and religious barriers do not exist as strongly any more as they used to do, and there is not one dominating ideology. Instead of one prevailing standard and one large reading audience, a number of different audiences seem to exist with alternating compositions. These audiences have a broad spectrum of preferences. There is not only room for literature with intrinsic depth and complexity. A connection between quality and success at a large audience is hardly the case anymore. An increasing osmosis between literature and popular lecture is visible.<sup>296</sup>

At the same time, upcoming media attention for literature is said to influence the reading behaviour of Dutch readers. This media attention since the 1980s in the Netherlands is often referred to as *Akoïsering* ('AKOification'). This term originates from the establishment of the *Ako Literatuurprijs*, a Dutch language literary prize for fiction and literary nonfiction. The prize was established by the AKO bookshop chain in 1987. Books that are nominated for this prize or win the prize can count on a lot of media attention. Other commercial prizes have been established in the Netherlands and Flanders since, such as the Libris Literatuurprijs (since 1994, organised after the example of

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<sup>296</sup> Brems 2006, p. 640.

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the Man Booker Prize). The process of ‘AKOification’ implies a reading public that it is influenced by media attention and *en masse* reads the same books.<sup>297</sup>

‘If we are what we eat, book clubs are what they read’, Long writes in her book about Houston book discussion groups.<sup>298</sup> She states that groups take their identity from the books they read together. Hartley also points at the role the books play in the identity forming of a book discussion group.<sup>299</sup> Can Dutch book discussion groups also be classified as broadly interested groups (literature and popular lecture), however influenced by commercial media attention? Does the reading behaviour of book discussion groups correspond to the reading behaviour of Dutch readers in general?

To check these expectations, the present reading habits of book discussion groups was examined by analysing the book list as presented in Appendix 1.3. The list of 1220 book titles – including 510 unique book titles – shows that the most popular book among responding book discussion groups was *The Solitude of Prime Numbers* (2008), the award winning debut novel by Italian author Paolo Giordano, which was read by 40 responding groups. This title was followed by three books by Dutch language authors, all read by 30 responding groups: Herman Koch – *The dinner* (2009); Doeschka Meijsing – *Over de liefde* (2008); and Erwin Mortier – *Godenslaap* (2008). Four popular titles: all four recently published and awarded with literary prizes. Three out of four were originally published in Dutch: two by Dutch authors and Erwin Mortier lives in neighbouring Belgium.

Of the 362 different authors on the list, 86 (23.76%) are represented by more than one of their books. Appearing with the most different titles on the list is the Dutch author Hella S. Haasse (1918-2011) of whom 8 different titles manifested on the book list. Both Maarten ’t Hart (1944) and Philip Roth (1933) were represented with 5 different book titles and 11 more authors appear with 4 different titles on the book list.

More eye-catching however are not the similarities in the book list, but the fact that there exists great variance in the book titles that have been read: 72.50% of the book titles were only entered once in the survey. This indicates that book discussion groups do not all read the same, well-known books at the same time, but that they search within the enormous number of available book titles trying to find specific books matching their own specific expectations or goals.

These findings match previous findings of Hartley, who also presents title lists of books read by present-day groups. She notices that book titles that are popular with a number of groups are books that are also popular among readers in general and states

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<sup>297</sup> Ruiter and Smulders 1997, pp. 335-337.

<sup>298</sup> Long 2003, p. 114.

<sup>299</sup> Hartley 2002, pp. 66-67.



that book discussion groups want to be part of the reading community. On the other hand, she observes that groups want to have their own identity. This follows from the fact that groups read up to 12 books per year and use this to also pick out books that are not read by a large reading public and only entered once in the survey.<sup>300</sup>

Below, the book list will be analysed in order to see if there are patterns to be discovered within the reading behaviour of book discussion groups. How are their goals and expectations reflected in the book list? Book titles are presented in English where possible. If no English translation exists, the title will be presented in the original language.

### *The book list: Dutch language books and international titles*

Readers in the Netherlands and Flanders are interested in Dutch-language works as well as foreign works, mostly translated into Dutch. Book sections in newspapers and best-seller lists today contain more foreign literature than books originally written in Dutch. The difference between the two seems less and less relevant for regular readers.<sup>301</sup>

The image exists that, like regular readers, Dutch book discussion groups both read books that originally were written in Dutch as well as books translated into Dutch.<sup>302</sup> The group survey illustrates that book discussion groups prefer literature originally written in Dutch: 56.72% of all entries were originally published in Dutch.<sup>303</sup> 30 Flemish works (85 entries) and 224 Dutch works (607 entries)<sup>304</sup> are on the list.<sup>305</sup> On average, these 254 titles (692 entries) each were mentioned 2.72 times. In the group survey, 25 groups (11.85%) specifically state they focus on Dutch-language literature.<sup>306</sup>

The remaining 256 works (528 entries; on average 2.06 entries per individual book title) were not originally published in Dutch. Books originally published in English are next most popular, of which most books written by British and Irish authors (56 books;

<sup>300</sup> Hartley 2002, pp. 66-67.

<sup>301</sup> Brems states in his chapter about literature around the millennium that book sections in Dutch newspapers only devote about one fifth of their space on Dutch language literature and no less than four fifth on international literature. Brems 2006, p. 664.

<sup>302</sup> Brems 2006, p. 664. Brems bases his statement on lists of books that are recommended in 2004 to book discussion groups by a handful of different parties such as the magazine *Boek-Delen*, not on research to what book discussion groups actually read.

<sup>303</sup> See Appendix 1.3.6.

<sup>304</sup> Including Dutch-language works from Surinam and Dutch East Indies. Including Moses Isegawa – *Abyssinian Chronicles* (1998) that was originally written in English but first published in Dutch.

<sup>305</sup> Excluding the French language letters by Isabelle de Charrière (Belle van Zuylen) and Desiderius Erasmus' work in Latin. Fouad Laroui publishes in Dutch since 2001, the book that is on the book list was originally written in French and is therefore not included in this sum.

<sup>306</sup> Group survey question 11.

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67 entries),<sup>307</sup> and USA authors (49 books; 76 entries).<sup>308</sup> Four of the responding groups say to read English-language works in the original language.<sup>309</sup> Furthermore, English-language books were written by authors originating from Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, Georgia, India, Iran, and South Africa.<sup>310</sup>

These numbers illustrate the general image of the book trade in the Netherlands, that is nowadays focused on English-language publications. In the 1970s and 1980s, translations from contemporary Spanish-language novels from South-America were very popular in the Netherlands.<sup>311</sup> This popularity has faded, as the book list illustrates. French literature has since long lost its leading position in the lecture of women, and the book list shows that Dutch, English, German and Italian titles seem to be more popular.<sup>312</sup> Half of the maybe surprising number of 80 Italian entries is caused by only one unique title, the popularity of the world-wide best-seller *The Solitude of Prime Numbers*. Of 10 different Italian titles on the list, this one title was entered on the list by 40 groups.

### Number of entries

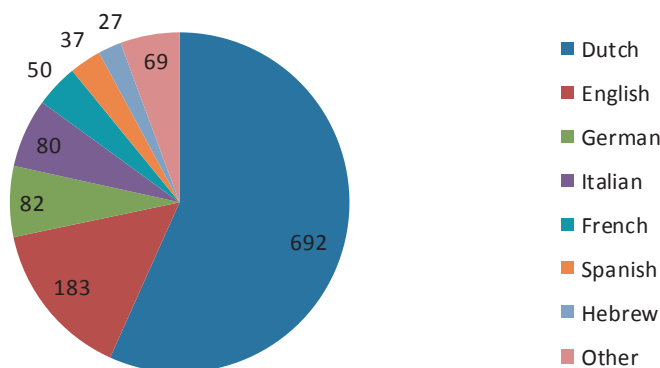


Figure 3.13 Spreading of books based on number of entries, by original language.

<sup>307</sup> Including the English language works by American-British author Henry James, Indian-British author Salman Rushdie, and Indian-British author Nikita Lalwani.

<sup>308</sup> Including the English language works by British-American author Neil Gaiman, Afghan-American author Khaled Hosseini, British-American author Jhumpa Lahiri, Iranian-American author Azar Nafisi.

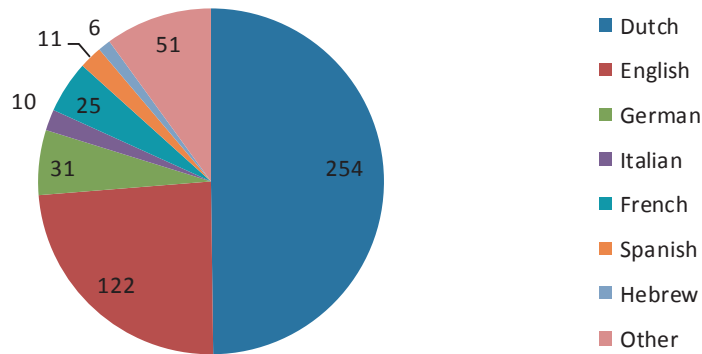
<sup>309</sup> Group survey question 11. In the survey, it was not asked whether groups read foreign literature in the original language or in translation, because this may differ from member to member, and from book to book.

<sup>310</sup> Excluding Moses Isegawa – *Abyssinian Chronicles* (1998) that was originally written in English but first published in Dutch. Three years later it was published in English.

<sup>311</sup> Steenmeijer 1989, pp. 28-45.

<sup>312</sup> Duyvendak 2003, p. 172.

## Number of unique titles



**Figure 3.14** Spreading of unique book titles by original language.

If we consider the fact that today foreign literature receives more space in newspapers as does Dutch-language works, we can state that book discussion groups tend to focus more on Dutch language works than would be expected. Though written media devote relatively small space to Dutch literature, recently published Dutch novels do get other media attention as well, for instance thanks to the diverse literary prizes that are regularly presented.

If we consider numbers of book production within the Netherlands, the reading habits of Dutch book discussion groups is less devious, but still the focus on Dutch-language literature is notable. In 2000, 44.34% of all book titles published in the Netherlands within the category literary fiction – most books on the book list belong to this category – originally were published in Dutch. Translations of English-language literary fiction works make up 33.26% of this category.<sup>313</sup>

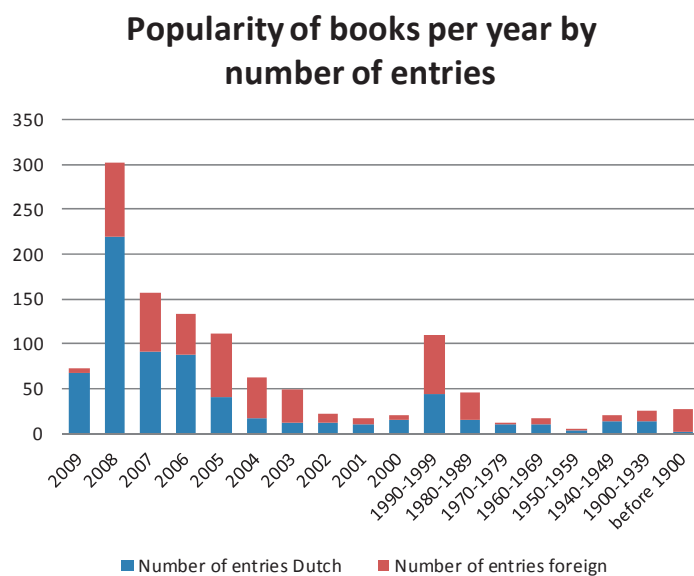
To conclude: compared to the image of what ‘the Dutch reading public’ reads, book discussion groups focus more on Dutch language literature than was expected. When they choose to read foreign works, they mainly pick books that were originally published in English.

<sup>313</sup> Van Rees, Janssen, and Verboord 2006, p. 261.

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### *The book list: New books and classics*

Book discussion groups are primarily interested in recently published titles.<sup>314</sup> Of responding groups, 57.82% claim they only or mostly read recently published books, i.e. not older than 5 years, while 36.97% say to read as much recent as older work.<sup>315</sup> A minority of 5.21% says to mostly or only read books that are older than 5 years. The top-10 list of most popular books read by book discussion groups immediately illustrates that most groups focus on recently published books: they were all first published between 2003 and 2009.<sup>316</sup> A total of 951 entries (306 different titles, on average 3.11 entries per unique title) were first published in their original language in the year 2000 or later. Moreover, some works originally written well before 2000 only became available in Dutch translation several years later, such as the four appearing titles (7 entries) written by Sándor Márai, Haruki Murakami – *Norwegian Wood* (3 entries) and *Under the Glacier* by the Icelandic Nobel Prize laureate Halldor Laxness (1 entry). In the following figure, books are grouped into 18 different time categories, based on the year of first publication in the original language.



**Figure 3.15** Popularity of books based on number of entries, by date of publication.

<sup>314</sup> Based on group survey questions 26 ( $n=203$ ) and 27 ( $n=198$ ). It was possible for groups to name other books than they entered on the book list of recently read novels. Some titles that are mentioned here do therefore not appear on the book list.

<sup>315</sup> Group survey question 21.

<sup>316</sup> See Appendix 1.3.4. Including ties the list contains 17 titles, 399 entries, on average 23.47 reads per title.

Of the 25 groups specifically focus on Dutch literature that were mentioned before, 15 have the aim to *keep up* with Dutch literature and claim to read recent works.<sup>317</sup> Looking at the 688 Dutch-language entries (250 titles) that could be grouped in the 18 time categories, a total of 507 entries (125 titles) or 73.70% were first published in the 5 years preceding the survey.<sup>318</sup> After that, popularity quickly fades.

### Number of entries Dutch-language books

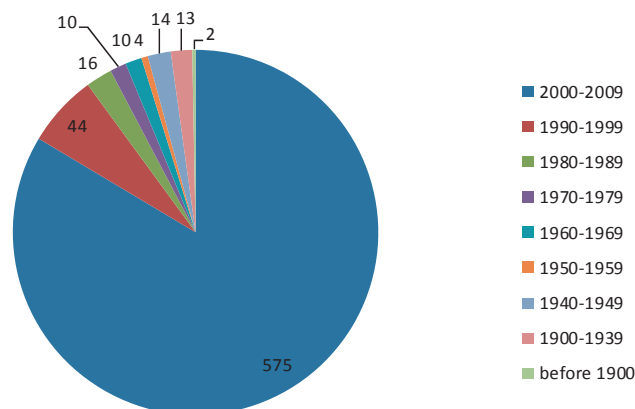


Figure 3.16 Popularity of Dutch-language books based on number of entries, by date of publication.

Two noticeable irregularities in this table are caused by the annual autumn reading campaign in the Netherlands, *Nederland Leest* ('The Netherlands Reads', comparable to the concept of *One Book, One City*). Hella Haasse – *Oeroeg* (1948, 10 entries) and Harry Mulisch – *Twee vrouwen* (1975, 7 entries) were the selected novels in the two campaigns preceding the survey, respectively the 2009 and 2008 campaign. Extra publicity of the *Nederland Leest* authors may have contributed to the fact that Hella Haasse was represented with 8 different book titles on the list, the most of all authors. 21 times a book by her hand was read by book discussion groups. Of Harry Mulisch, 4 different titles (11 entries) appear on the list.

Looking at the Dutch-language titles that are somewhat older, many works may be called 'classics'. Authors and titles are found on the Dutch-language canon lists of the *Maatschappij der Nederlandse letterkunde* ('Society of Dutch literature') (2002) containing 108 authors and 125 book titles.<sup>319</sup> On the book list, 29 canon authors (120 entries in

<sup>317</sup> Group survey question 11.

<sup>318</sup> For complete numbers, see Appendix 1.3.7.

<sup>319</sup> The canon list does contain some modern works and present-day authors as well. The Dutch language canon from 2002 can be found on: [http://www.dbnl.org/letterkunde/enquete/enquete\\_dbnlmnl\\_](http://www.dbnl.org/letterkunde/enquete/enquete_dbnlmnl_)

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total) and 21 canon titles (38 entries in total) appear. A second list of canon books that was compared with the book list was the list of the 'ten best Dutch language books ever' published by the Dutch newspaper *NRC* and the Dutch public-server broadcaster *NPS* (now: *NTR*). This list was published in 2007 and therefore it is possible its influence is visible when looking at the current book and past 5 books read by the responding groups. 5 of 10 titles were found on the list with 18 entries in total.

Within foreign literature, most entries are also coming from books written in the decade preceding the survey. However, a somewhat different division of works of certain age is found than within Dutch-language entries. More 'classics' may be found among foreign literature: 0.29% of Dutch-language works originate from before 1900, whereas for foreign literature this percentage is 4.92%. Examples of famous foreign classics that can be found on the book list are *Moby-Dick*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and *War and Peace*.

### Number of entries non-Dutch-language books

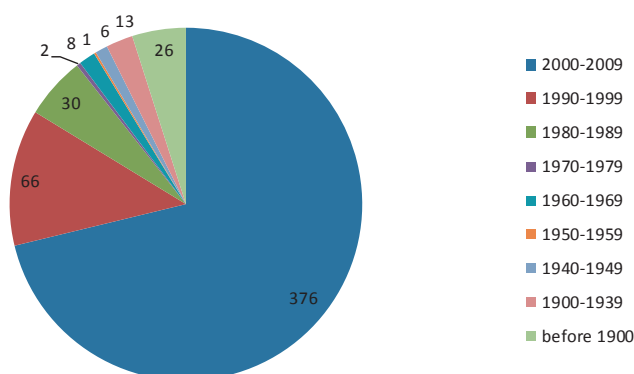


Figure 3.17 Popularity of non-Dutch-language books based on number of entries, by date of publication.

In sum, book discussion groups mostly read recently published works, especially when they choose to read Dutch-language works. Most of the foreign literature the groups read, is also recently published, though this is not as extreme as is the case with Dutch language literature. When book discussion groups read classics, they are more likely to choose a foreign work than an originally Dutch-language work.

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21062002.htm (website accessed on May 27, 2013). Appendix 1.3.8 gives an overview of book titles appearing on both the survey book list and the canon book list, as well as an overview of authors appearing on both the survey book list and on the canon author list.

*The book list: Literary prizes and other media attention*

Literary prizes and other media attention had the aim to influence the reading public. Books on the book list were analysed regarding three types of media attention: a selection of literary prizes (national as well as international), broadcasting in the Oprah Book Club, and film adaptations that showed in Dutch cinema theatres in 2000 up to and including 2010.

Looking at the books that were read by responding groups, many of the books had been awarded with one or sometimes even more literary prizes. These are both Dutch and Flemish prizes as well as international prizes. Most prizes are awarded to a specific literary work, some prizes are awarded to authors for their oeuvre.

For Dutch language literature many literary prizes exist. The three main commercial literary prizes with the most media attention and the highest prize money are the AKO *literatuurprijs*, the *Libris literatuurprijs* and the Flemish *Gouden Boekenuil*. Books nominated for these and other Dutch language literary prizes can count on extra media attention. This is especially the case for public awards such as the *NS Publieksprijs* (public prize for best book, organised by the Dutch national railway operator *Nederlandse Spoorwegen*), for which readers can play an active role in nominating titles. Contrary to these prizes, other awards exist that are oeuvre prizes such as the *P.C. Hooftprijs* and the *Constantijn Huygensprijs*. Not all prizes are equally familiar to the public or generate an equal amount of media attention. The AKO, Libris, and NS Publieksprijs literary prizes announce their shortlists. When analysing the book list, shortlist nominees for these three mediagenic prizes were also taken into account. The Flemish prize *Gouden Boekenuil* is not equally familiar in the Netherlands: only the winners were taken into account. Looking at these prizes, we see the following image:<sup>320</sup>

- 8 AKO Literatuurprijs winners and 26 nominees (178 entries in total);
- 7 Libris Literatuurprijs winners and 24 nominees (130 entries in total);
- 9 Gouden Boekenuil winners (43 entries in total);
- 4 NS Publieksprijs winners and 17 nominees (192 entries in total).<sup>321</sup>

<sup>320</sup> Naturally, one book title can be nominated for more than one prize, or awarded with more than one prize. For example, *Tirza* (2006) by Arnon Grunberg was nominated for the AKO *Literatuurprijs* and the NS *Publieksprijs*, and was awarded with the *Libris Literatuurprijs* as well as the *Gouden Boekenuil*.

<sup>321</sup> Only the nominees and awards since 2001 were taken into account. Before 2001, the prize was known as the *Trouw Publieksprijs* and was organized in a different way.

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Most prestigious international literary prize is perhaps the *Nobel Prize in Literature*. Authors are recommended as Nobel Prize winners in book shops and receive attention in newspapers: it is expected that the award influences the Dutch book market and therefore the reading behaviour of Dutch readers. The prize influences the publishing or reprinting of works by laureates. Elfriede Jelinek's 1975 novel *Die Liebhaberinnen* – that appears in Dutch on the book list – was only translated into Dutch thirty years later in 2005, the year after she was awarded the Nobel Prize. Including Jelinek, fourteen laureates of the Nobel Prize in Literature feature on the book list (37 entries).<sup>322</sup> Especially the names of *recent* laureates are present: five authors (18 entries) were awarded in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Next to Nobel Prize winners, other international or foreign prizes appear on the book list of which the English *Man Booker Prize for Fiction* and the American *Pulitzer Prize* for fiction may influence the Dutch book market. As the book list shows, groups read foreign literature among which originally published in English is most popular. Though quite a number of Pulitzer Prize winning authors are to be found on the book list, they mainly featured with other titles on the book list than their winning or nominated title (for instance: Jhumpa Lahiri, Annie Proulx, Philip Roth, Richard Russo). Only three Pulitzer Prize shortlisted titles appear on the book list (four entries): all three of them winners. The Man Booker Prize for Fiction seems to be of greater influence. Five winning novels and another ten nominees (36 entries in total of which 18 were for Aravind Adiga – *The White Tiger* which was read by 11 SLD-groups) for this literary prize are found on the book list. Next to these and other English language prizes, winners of other important, foreign prizes appear on the book list, such as *Prix du Roman Fnac*, *Deutscher Buchpreis* and the *Premio Strega*.<sup>323</sup>

The presentations of literary awards provide a lot of media attention. The presentations of for instance the AKO and Libris awards are broadcasted live on Dutch television. Apart from this and other *incidental* media attention for books, no regular specifically literary television show was broadcasted in the years before or at the time of the survey. The influential show by author Adriaan van Dis already ended in 1992.<sup>324</sup> New, regular attention for literature in television shows appeared after the ending of the survey.

However, the Dutch public is acquainted with the success of Oprah's Book Club in the United States and the well-known impact her shows have to reading behaviour and book sales. This television show also was broadcasted in the Netherlands: could this

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<sup>322</sup> See Appendix 1.3.9.

<sup>323</sup> These prizes are however not specifically stated in the book list in Appendix 1.3.1, because of low numbers.

<sup>324</sup> Van Dijk 2003, pp. 73-78.



have influenced Dutch book discussion groups in their book choices? One of the responding book discussion groups specifically mentioned starting off using Oprah's book choice as a guideline for their own group's book choice. Despite this claim, it was not expected the American television show would have a large impact overseas in the Netherlands. Moreover, Oprah's book group read fewer books than it did in its beginning years, and the last books were discussed in 2010.<sup>325</sup> The previously mentioned book discussion group abandoned their connection to Oprah before that time, because 'Oprah reads too slow'.<sup>326</sup> Nevertheless, five books (and three more authors) that featured in Oprah's book club were also to be found on the book list of the group survey, among which Bernhard Schlinck – *The Reader* (featuring in 1999, so not that recent) was most popular having 6 entries.<sup>327</sup>

The few similarities between both lists confirm the expectations that Oprah's book club does not have a large impact on book discussion groups in The Netherlands. It is likely the few similarities in book choice appear on the Dutch list for other reasons than (or next to) Oprah's attention to these titles or authors, whether they are classics (Tolstoy) or Nobel Prize laureates (Márquez, Faulkner, Morrison). For Bernhard Schlinck – *The Reader*, translated in Dutch in 1996, renewed attention by Dutch book discussion groups may more probably be caused by the award-winning American film adaptation of the novel (2008), which was released in Dutch cinemas in spring 2009, just before the survey was launched.

Next to *The Reader*, many more books appearing on the book list have been adapted for film.<sup>328</sup> Many of the books from the list had been made into a film, some of them even more than once (such as Jane Austen – *Pride and Prejudice* and Herman Melville – *Moby-Dick*). Not all films will have influenced Dutch readers in their book choice. The Finnish film *Ulvova mylläri* (1982) was for instance not released in the Netherlands. Moreover this film, like many other older films, does not generate any media-attention

<sup>325</sup> One should notice that shows of Oprah Winfrey were broadcasted in The Netherlands during daytime and repeated late in evenings and that shows that were broadcasted in the USA only appeared with a delay of several months on Dutch television. Furthermore, Oprah's announcement of setting up a new version of Oprah's book club, online, came in 2012, well over two years after the group survey was held.

<sup>326</sup> The book discussion group in question added a list of all book titles they had discussed and added this explanation.

<sup>327</sup> For an overview of books appearing on the book list and featuring in Oprah's Book Club, see Appendix 1.3.10.

<sup>328</sup> See Appendix 1.3.1: the eight column of the book list table includes information about film adaptations up to and including 2010. No films released after 2010 are included because the survey was set out at the end of 2009 and the beginning of 2010. Most films that are not made in the Netherlands or in Flanders are released in the Netherlands some months later than in the original country. Not all foreign films were released in Dutch cinemas or on dvd at all.

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to the book which could influence groups searching for a new book. Forty film adaptations of book list books were released in film theatres in the Netherlands, in the years 2000 up to and including 2010. The – upcoming – release of a book adaptation does generate media-attention for the book as well: some books even get reprinted as ‘film-edition’ with scenes from the film on the cover. Extra or renewed media-attention for the film and the book may influence book discussion groups just like any other readers. Besides this, if a group specifically wants to read a book and see the film together, it is most obvious they choose for a film that is in theatre or will be in theatre soon, or choose a title that is well available to watch at home. Seventy (33.18%) of the responding groups do occasionally watch a film together, however, these films may not all be film adaptations of a book.<sup>329</sup>

In sum, it is possible that Dutch book discussion groups are somewhat influenced by literary prizes and film adaptations of books. Oprah does not seem to influence present-day Dutch book discussion groups, and at the time of the survey, no other literary show was broadcasted on Dutch television. Some film adaptations of books may trigger book discussion groups to read a specific title and even watch the film together. Looking at the *complete* book list, however, the influence of media attention seems minor. Prize winning books are usually read by multiple groups. Book discussion groups seem to be broadly interested: many less familiar books appear only once or twice on the book list.

### *The book list: Female writers*

It has been claimed that females especially tend to read books written by female authors. In the Netherlands, the majority of readers is formed by females. This is the case since half a century now. More than the literary quality of their work, this would explain the popularity of Dutch-language female writers among the reading public.<sup>330</sup> As mentioned before, by far the most members of the book discussion groups participating in this research are female, which could indicate a popularity of books by females among these groups. Besides this, many groups that were founded in the 1970s in the Netherlands, were established from a feminist point of view.<sup>331</sup> Part of the groups that participated in the current study are still even affiliated with women’s organisations. Furthermore, book discussion groups in the United Kingdom as well as in the United States show a prefer-

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<sup>329</sup> Group survey question 28.

<sup>330</sup> Van Boven (2000, p. 694) describes this prejudice but refutes it in the remainder of her article.

<sup>331</sup> See Chapter 1 Section 1 Origin of the book discussion group.

ence for the work of female authors. Based on this information, we would expect a preference for female authors to be reflected in the book list.<sup>332</sup>

Previous research by Duyvendak showed that the organisation *SLD* does not specifically focuses on work by female authors.<sup>333</sup> Participating groups of the current study also make clear there is no specific attention to female writers: groups were asked whether they consciously take the sex of the author in consideration when choosing a book to read in their book discussion group.

**Table 3.22** Source: Group survey question 23. In this table, each row adds up to 100%.

Answer →	Yes, more male authors than female authors		Yes, more female authors than male authors		Yes, equally division between male and female authors		No attention paid to the sex of the author	
↓ Type of group (n=208)								
All-male groups (n=2)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%
Mixed-sex groups (n=42)	2	4.76%	0	0%	2	4.76%	38	90.48%
All-female groups (n=164)	6	3.66%	1	0.61%	8	4.88%	149	90.85%
Total (n=208)	8	3.85%	1	0.48%	10	4.81%	189	90.87%

The responses show that for most groups the sex of the author is not an important issue in the process of choosing a book. In her study among readers in the USA, Summers found that most female readers did not have a preference for either male or female authors.<sup>334</sup> These findings show some resemblances with the findings presented in Table 3.22 where most all-female groups claim to pay no attention to the sex of the author when choosing a book. The female respondents in Summers' research who did have a preference more often preferred male authors instead of female authors. A majority of male readers preferred male authors, others did not have a preference whilst none of the male respondents preferred female authors. Besides this, a similar but even stronger image arose considering a preference for female or male protagonists by female and male readers.

The book list consists of 509 unique titles (1219 entries) of which the sex of the author is known (of one 14<sup>th</sup>-century work, the author is not known). Of all the book en-

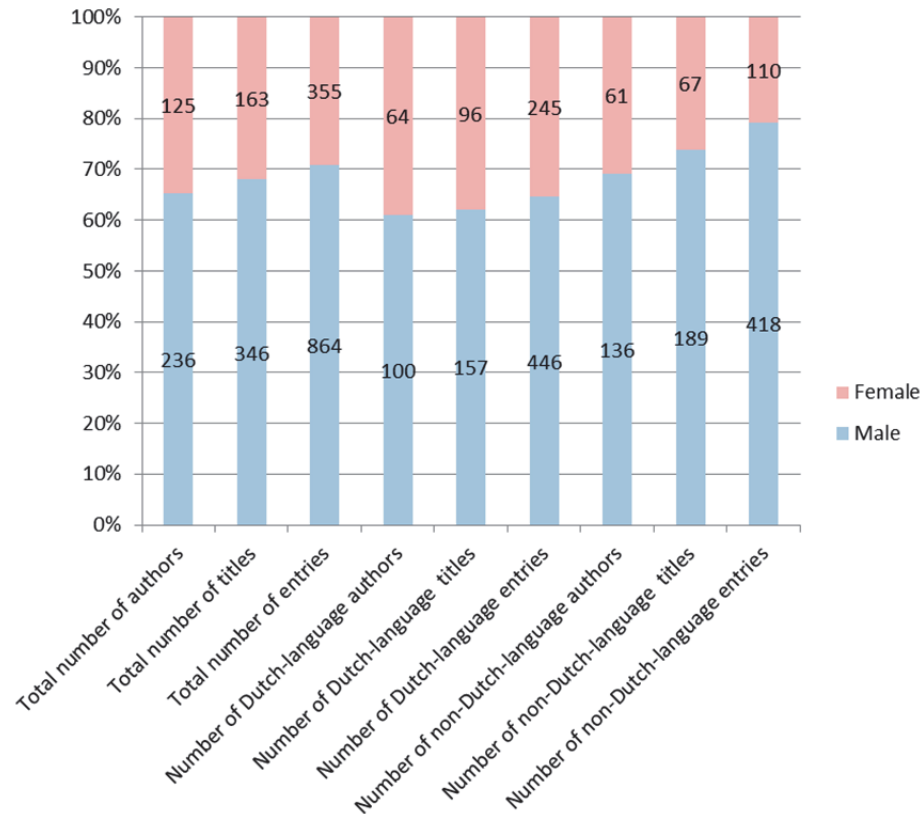
<sup>332</sup> About preferences for work by female authors, see Hartley 2002: 58; 177. Long 2003: 132-135.

<sup>333</sup> Duyvendak (2007, pp. 216-217) studied the book choices made by the *SLD* between 1970 and 2005.

<sup>334</sup> Summers 2013, p. 247.

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tries, 70.88% of the books were written by males, and thus 29.12% of the books were written by females.<sup>335</sup>



**Figure 3.18** Distribution of all authors, titles and entries by the sex of the author. Source: Group survey question 24 and 25 (book list).

If we only look at Dutch-language works on the list, the ratio between works by male and female authors somewhat differs. 157 titles (446 entries: 64.54%) were written by 100 male authors, 96 titles (245 entries: 35.46%) by 64 female authors. Vos showed in her dissertation that since the 1990s the share of female writers is rising – after several decades where female authors steadily made up a share of a quarter of all Dutch writers.<sup>336</sup> In 1997, 35% of all Dutch-language authors are female. If this percentage still is legitimate, it exactly matches the representation of female authors on the book list. If the

<sup>335</sup> Based on number of entries. This number includes the 2007 novel by Marjolijn Februari who published as a female author until September 2012 before publishing as male author Maxim Februari.

<sup>336</sup> Vos 2008, p. 56.

percentage still has risen since 1997, this has not affected the choices of book discussion groups one decade later.

In the UK, Hartley found that a small preference for female authors exists in all-female book discussion groups when compared to the preferences of mixed-sex groups and all-male groups.<sup>337</sup> For Houston groups studied by Long, this topic seems to be even more relevant: eye-catching is the observation by Long that all *nonfiction* books read by Houston groups were related to the women's movement. This is definitely not the case with Dutch book discussion groups. Poole found in Australia that there is a strong preference for works by female authors among the groups she studied: 75% of all titles on the reading list of the organisation CAE are written by female authors. Her study showed that groups were very interested in talking about women's lives. However, explicit discussions about feminism were not found.<sup>338</sup>

In sum, it can be stated that Dutch book discussion groups in general do not have a preference for female authors or that these groups especially are interested in reading about feminism or the women's movement. Considering the findings of Summers about the preference of male and female readers for male or female protagonists, it would be interesting to analyse the book list about this topic as well.<sup>339</sup>

#### *The book list: Nonfiction and other notable genres*

The bulk of the book list is made up by works of fiction. Most of the book discussion groups pass nonfiction and concentrate purely on fiction. However, with the upcoming popularity of narrative nonfiction novels (or: creative nonfiction, or: faction), boundaries between the two are fading.<sup>340</sup> Narrative nonfiction novels, however, do seem to be popular among book discussion groups. Hartley too sees groups in her study being interested in fiction and literary nonfiction at the same time.<sup>341</sup> Three most popular works on the book list within this genre are from Dutch origin: Suzanna Jansen – *Het pauperparadijs: een familiegeschiedenis* (18 entries), Annejet van der Zijl – *Sonny Boy* (6 entries), Frank Westerman – *The Republic of Grain* (4 entries). The first is very popular: book discussion groups even visit the place where this book is set, Veenhuizen. These excursions were organised by Senia, but other groups choose to make a visit on their own account as well, as for example one of the interviewees told about.

<sup>337</sup> Hartley 2002, pp. 58-60; 177.

<sup>338</sup> Poole 2003, p. 265. CAE stands for the Council of Adult Education, that organises book discussion groups.

<sup>339</sup> Summers 2013, p. 247.

<sup>340</sup> In Dutch: *litteraire non-fictie*. See about nonfiction novels : Ceelen and Van Bergeijk 2007.

<sup>341</sup> Hartley 2002, p. 69.

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Book discussion groups that do include purely nonfiction works in their reading list certainly exist: organiser Senia has founded a number of book discussion groups on the topic of history, for example.<sup>342</sup> Apart from the Rudolph Steiner group, the book discussion groups that participated in this study that included nonfiction, read fiction as well. History seems a common theme to choose when reading nonfiction. Other themes that appear are for example psychology, biography or autobiography, and books about social issues.

Most books on the book list however is formed by works of fiction. Why most book discussion groups prefer fiction may be explained by the fact that females tend to read more fiction in stead of nonfiction, than males do.<sup>343</sup> This is similar in other countries, such as the USA, Australia and Canada.<sup>344</sup> Furthermore, some responses to the survey or interview questions suggest that the book discussion group does not lends itself to discussing facts. This would signify that groups primary search to discuss the theme and literary aspects of a book rather than linking books directly to everyday life. As Long found in her study, groups judge the nonfiction works 'not on literary merit ... but on social relevance'.<sup>345</sup> Apparently most book discussion groups do not feel the need to *purely* focus on social relevance for they would have chosen more nonfiction works. However, as will be made clear in Chapter 5, facts and social relevance are by no means ignored by most book discussion groups reading fiction.

Like the groups in Long's study, Dutch book discussion groups also prefer fiction above nonfiction. This is not the only similarity found in the reading habits of the two samples. As Long observed with the Houston book discussion groups she studied, most Dutch groups also tend not to read 'either end of the literary spectrum: most do not read poetry, plays, or difficult postmodernist novels ...'.<sup>346</sup> Looking at the book list, most Dutch book discussion groups also mainly choose 'mainstream' literature. Only a small number of works of poetry or drama for example can be found on the list. None of the responding groups exclusively read poetry, but a number of groups do include some poetry in their programme. Next to the discussion of a collection of poems during a meeting – three groups for instance specifically indicate they close their reading season

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<sup>342</sup> See <http://www.senia.nl/geschiedenis/> [website accessed on May 27, 2013].

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[http://www.scp.nl/Onderzoek/Tijdsbesteding\\_2006\\_t\\_m\\_2010/Hoe\\_lang\\_en\\_hoe\\_vaak/Vrije\\_tijd/Media/Gedrukte\\_media/Boeken](http://www.scp.nl/Onderzoek/Tijdsbesteding_2006_t_m_2010/Hoe_lang_en_hoe_vaak/Vrije_tijd/Media/Gedrukte_media/Boeken) [website accessed on September 1, 2015].

<sup>344</sup> Summers 2013, pp. 243, 246-247; Sedo 2003, p. 73, Long 2003, p. 131.

<sup>345</sup> Long 2003, p. 121.

<sup>346</sup> Long 2003, p. 119.

with a meeting devoted to poetry<sup>347</sup> – groups may incidentally involve poems in their discussion of books. Dutch book discussion groups choose for Dutch-language poetry rather than poetry originally written in another language. On the book list are works of for example Marjoleine de Vos, Gerrit Kouwenaar, Tonnus Oosterhoff, Paul van Ostaijen, M. Vasalis. Noticeable is that multiple respondents refer to the works as ‘poetry by [author]’ in stead of naming an exact title of a collection of poems. It is possible these groups select a number of poems themselves instead of reading an existent collection of poems.

Thirteen groups claim to sometimes read drama. One of these groups – an all-female group devoted to English language works – recently only read plays and entered these on the book list. More groups seem to *visit* the theatre: 25 groups say to incidentally see a play together. Six groups specified they visit plays based on a book that the group has read, such as *The Tea Lords* (on stage in the Netherlands in 2009).<sup>348</sup>

Other outsiders appearing on the book list do not stand out specifically, though one graphic novel (one entry) is to be found on the book list: Pulitzer Prize winner *Maus* by Art Spiegelman. Crime novels or literary crime novels appear scantily on the list: best selling Dutch crime novel author Simone van der Vlugt is represented with three different titles (three entries). Literary crime novels are frequently present on the shortlist for the *NS Publieksprijs* and Simone van der Vlugt was nominated multiple times.<sup>349</sup> It is however remarkable that only author Simone van der Vlugt is read by book discussion groups where they do not pay attention to other authors in this genre. Two well-known best-selling Dutch authors writing literary crime novels are Saskia Noort and Esther Verhoef, both often nominated for the *NS Publieksprijs* as well.<sup>350</sup>

Book discussion groups do not restrict themselves to books for adults. One of the participating groups even is devoted to discussing children’s and young adult books. The group is interested in encouraging reading for children, parents and teachers. They find new titles by using among other the nomination list of the *Jonge Jury*.<sup>351</sup> Next to this special group, the group survey shows 29 groups claim to sometimes read books for young readers as well. In the book list, several young adult books appear.<sup>352</sup> It is not

<sup>347</sup> Appendix 1.2: group survey question 28.

<sup>348</sup> Appendix 1.2: group survey question 28.

<sup>349</sup> Novels by Simone van der Vlugt were nominated in 2005, 2007, 2008, and 2012. She won the prize in 2010 (this was after the individual and group surveys).

<sup>350</sup> Saskia Noort was nominated in 2004, 2006, 2009. Esther Verhoef was nominated in 2006, 2007, 2009, 2012, and won the prize in 2011.

<sup>351</sup> See the website [www.jongejury.nl](http://www.jongejury.nl) for more information and book title lists. Website accessed on March 27, 2015.

<sup>352</sup> One novel by Dutch author Carry Slee is on the book list as well. Although Slee is known for her books for children and young adults, *Ooggetuigen* (2007) is novel written for adults.

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uncommon for adults to buy and read young adult books: 55% of the buyers of young adult books in the USA are adults and 78% of these buyers claim to read the books themselves instead of buying the book for someone else.<sup>353</sup> The book list shows that this adult interest in these type of books is existing in the Netherlands as well.

The book list shows that book discussion groups have a broad spectrum. Most popular in the Dutch book discussion group are recent works of fiction. Within this genre groups take the possibility to choose diverse books. Next to modern fiction, a minority of groups venture to read other, less common, books as well.

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

The goal of this chapter was to find answers to research question I: *What are characteristics of present-day book discussion groups in the Netherlands?* With help of the group survey ( $n=211$ ) and the individual survey ( $n=877$ ), diverse characteristics of groups and participants were described. In general, the findings confirm the existing image of book discussion groups and it's participants: book discussion groups consist of highly educated females in their fifties and sixties. A majority of the groups that participated in this study are affiliated to an organisation. Some differences between these organised groups and wild groups emerge: participants of wild groups tend to be younger than members of organised groups, wild groups have more men among their members than organised groups do, and wild groups make less use of coaches than organised groups. These outcomes can be illustrated by imagining two basic stereotype book discussion groups:

- Group 1: Organised group, with a coach, members have a lower educational background than the members of group 2, members are older than members of group 2, there are less males among the members than in group 2.
- Group 2: Wild group, without a coach, members have a higher educational background than the members of group 1, members are younger than group 1, though the majority of the members is female, there are more males among the members than in group 1.

The second part of this chapter was devoted to the books that book discussion groups read. The actual reading habits of book discussion groups were compared with present-day reading habits of Dutch readers in general – which is influenced by upcoming me-

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<sup>353</sup> See <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-industry-news/article/53937-new-study-55-of-ya-books-bought-by-adults.html> Website accessed on April 10, 2015.



## CHARACTERISTICS

dia attention – and reading habits of book discussion groups in English-speaking countries. Book discussion groups in general focus on present-day literature, mostly originally written in Dutch. Though prize-winning best-sellers do tempt book discussion groups, they certainly do not all read exactly the same novels. Furthermore, Dutch groups do not have special attention for female authors.



## CHAPTER 4

### Motives for reading and discussing books

*We may think of reading as something solitary and private – ‘the lone voyage’, it’s sometimes called – but the impulse to share can be powerful.*

Jenny Hartley 2002, p. 1-2.



To answer research question II – *What motives do participants have for taking part in their book discussion group?* – this chapter examines the motives of *individual* book discussion group participants. Four theory-based motives for reading and six theory-based motives for participating in a book discussion group were defined in the first chapter: the Cognitive, Aesthetic, Hedonistic and Status Reading Motives, and the Cognitive, Aesthetic, Hedonistic, Status, Social and Practical Membership Motives, respectively. Anticipating research question IV – *What connections exist between characteristics of participants and their book discussion groups, participants' motives, and their experienced learning outcomes?*, findings are linked with respondents' personal and group characteristics.

First, the individual survey (questions 9 and 10) and interviews (theme 3 and 4) were used to test whether these theory-based reading and membership motives can be put into practice in empirical research. Minor adjustments in the original grouping and interpretations were necessary following a factor analysis. Second, it was investigated how important these adjusted reading motives and membership motives are to book discussion group members in general. Third, the occurrence of both reading and membership motives among different types of book discussion group members (based on personal characteristics and group characteristics) were investigated.<sup>354</sup>

The findings concerning research questions II and IV are presented as follows: starting with Section 4.1, the findings *per reading motive* are discussed. First, the importance of the motive to book discussion group members in general is discussed using outcomes of relevant survey items and interview responses. This is followed by a more detailed interpretation of connections between the importance of the reading motive to groups of respondents with specific personal characteristics (i.e. sex, age, educational level) and characteristics of the group in which respondents participated (i.e. affiliation, composition, the presence or absence of a coach, age of the group).

Section 4.2 has a similar structure, but reports the findings regarding the *membership* motives. In Section 4.3 an overview of the conclusions is organised per personal characteristic and group characteristic in order to answer research question II and the first findings relevant to answering research question IV. Chapter 5 then adds the third aspect – the learning component – to answer research question III and complete the answer to research question IV.

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<sup>354</sup> For the individual survey, see Appendix 2. The 15 interviewees were introduced in Section 2.4.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4.1 READING MOTIVES

In this section, findings on the reading motives of individual book discussion group participants are presented per motive. The individual survey (see Appendix 2.2: individual survey question 9) and the interviews focused on reading motives. In the survey, along with statements about learning by reading (research question III: *In participants' experience, what do they learn from taking part in their book discussion group?* See Chapter 5), this specific question contained 11 statements about reading motives to which the respondents could react by indicating a level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree – agree – undecided – disagree – strongly disagree). These statements were formulated based on studies on reading motives as described in Section 1.2, from which four reading motives were distilled. The 11 statements concerning reading motives (translated from Dutch) are:

**Table 4.1** Overview of statements on reading motives (individual survey question 9).

Question number	Statement
9.a	I sometimes enjoy the style of a book.
9.b	Reading is customary in my family.
9.d	I like to immerse myself in a fictional story.
9.e	I like receiving reading tips.
9.f	People react positively when they find out I like to read.
9.h	I love getting absorbed in a book.
9.i	Most of my friends regularly read books.
9.j	I like recommending books to other people.
9.k	I appreciate beautiful language.
9.m	I enjoy a well-composed book.
9.o	I like forgetting about my day-to-day worries by reading.

First, it was tested which reading motives to investigate by means of these statements. When formulating these statements, it was intended to test three different reading motives (the Hedonistic, Aesthetic and Status Reading Motive) by means of this survey question. To limit the size of the survey, the Cognitive Reading Motive was not included as a topic in this individual survey question: instead, this motive was addressed in the interviews. Several statements in question 9 addressed learning by reading, but did not focus on *motives* for learning by reading, and are therefore not included in Table 4.1. These statements are discussed in Chapter 5. Nonetheless, the Cognitive Reading Mo-

tive was an interview topic, as were the other motives. During the interviews (see Appendix 3.2: interview theme 3) respondents first were asked to formulate what they themselves find important reasons for reading. Next, they were shown the names and descriptions of the four original theory-based reading motives, accompanied by examples if desired. Each interviewee was asked to rank the four reading motives in order of importance to him or her, and provide an explanation of the order they chose. The information gathered with the help of the interviews was used to verify the practical use of these motives as well as provide information on the importance of the motives. Also, it may be useful to elaborate on the outcomes of the survey as it can illustrate certain outcomes, provide an opportunity for more in-depth examination of a motive, or help to explain certain outcomes.

The Aesthetic, Hedonistic and Status Reading Motives were also intended to be tested with help of the individual survey. The Aesthetic Reading Motive was supposed to be tested with help of statements 9.a, 9.k, and 9.m; the Hedonistic Reading Motive with help of statements 9.d, 9.h, and 9.o; and the Status Reading Motive with help of statements 9.b, 9.e, 9.f, 9.i, and 9.j. To see whether these statements may indeed be grouped in these three categories (i.e. motives) and thus to test three specific reading motives, a number of statistical tests were carried out. First, the Cronbach alpha coefficients of precisely these three groups of statements were calculated. The Cronbach alpha coefficient reflects the reliability of a questionnaire: does a set of items test one same subject or does it test different subjects? The Cronbach alpha coefficient can be less than or equal to 1; the closer to 1, the higher the reliability of the tested items.

The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the Aesthetic Reading Motive statements is above .7 and therefore shows good internal consistency (.749).<sup>355</sup> This outcome indicates that these three different statements indeed measure one same motive. The same goes for the three Hedonistic Reading Motive statements, and the five Status Reading Motive statements. The Cronbach alpha coefficients of these groups of statements are both between .6 and .7, which indicates an acceptable internal consistency (.627 and .656 respectively).<sup>356</sup>

The Cronbach alpha coefficients already indicate that the statements can indeed be grouped into three different reading motives. In addition, it was investigated which statements exhibited a correlation, by means of a factor analysis. First, the 11 statements on reading motives were tested on suitability for such an analysis. The correlation matrix showed multiple coefficients of .3 or more and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .854. This indicates that there are compact patterns of correlation: factor analysis there-

<sup>355</sup> See Pallant 2005, pp. 90-92.

<sup>356</sup> All three points of caution when interpreting outcomes of Cronbach's alpha as suggested by Field do not apply to this survey question. Field 2005, pp. 668-669.

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fore should result in distinct and reliable factors.<sup>357</sup> Bartlett's test of Sphericity reached significance (.000), which means that group variances are the same and dependent variables do not have a correlation.<sup>358</sup> These outcomes, together with the high response rate of  $n=877$ , support that the data is suitable for factor analysis.

First, a principal component analysis showed there are three components with eigenvalues exceeding 1. These components explain the following percentages of the variance respectively:

- Component 1: 34.753%
- Component 2: 11.263%
- Component 3: 9.209%

The screeplot shows a break after the second component:

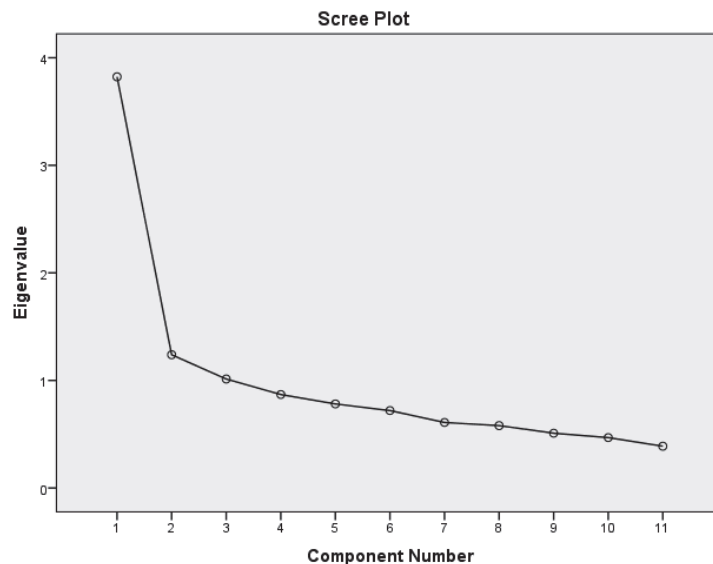


Figure 4.2 Scree plot factor analysis of reading motives.

Following the outcomes of the principle component analysis, it was decided to retain three components for further investigation. This means that the statements may be divided into three groups, each of which covers a different aspect. Varimax rotation was used to interpret the components:

<sup>357</sup> Field 2005, pp. 640; 735.

<sup>358</sup> Field 2005, pp. 648-652; 724.



**Table 4.2** Rotated component matrix: three components extracted. Varimax rotation.

Component → ↓ Statement	1	2	3
9.o	.769		
9.h	.728		
9.d	.537		
9.e	.524		.443
9.a		.784	
9.k		.784	
9.m		.728	
9.i			.706
9.f	.454		.576
9.b			.570
9.j	.450		.559
% of variance explained	20.406	18.671	16.148

The option to retain three components explained a total of 55.23% of the variance. The results of this analysis based on three components support the use and classification of the Hedonistic, Aesthetic and Status Reading Motives by using these statements, as originally intended when formulating these statements. Three of five statements relating to the Status Reading Motive turned out to correlate with statements relating to the Hedonistic Reading Motive as well: statement 9.e (*I like receiving reading tips*) even correlates more to the three statements on the Hedonistic Reading Motive than it does to the other four statements relating to the Status Reading Motive. However, the loading on component 3 still exceeds .4. The original grouping of statements in three theory-based reading motives can be maintained:

*Component 1: Hedonistic Reading Motive*

- 9.o: I like forgetting about my day-to-day worries by reading.
- 9.h: I love getting absorbed in a book.
- 9.d: I like to immerse myself in a fictional story.

*Component 2: Aesthetic Reading Motive*

- 9.a: I sometimes enjoy the style of a book.
- 9.k: I appreciate beautiful language.
- 9.m: I enjoy a well-composed book.

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### *Component 3: Status Reading Motive*

- 9.i: Most of my friends regularly read books.
- 9.f: People react positively when they find out I like to read.
- 9.b: Reading is customary in my family.
- 9.j: I like recommending books to other people.
- 9.e: I like receiving reading tips.

The outcomes of the factor analysis combined with the outcomes of the Cronbach alpha coefficient support the use of these three groups of statements for testing three different motives. In the remainder of this section, the results of the study of these motives and the Cognitive Reading Motive are presented per motive. To offer a clear structure, the order in which the reading motives are presented reflects the order of the reading motives as presented in Section 1.2. General findings considering the occurrence and importance of the reading motive are presented and discussed per reading motive. These findings are taken from the interviews and, in the case of the Aesthetic, Hedonistic and Status Reading Motive, the individual survey as shown above.

Moreover, the individual survey made it possible to investigate relationships between the Aesthetic, Hedonistic and Status Reading Motives and characteristics of the respondents and of the groups in which they participate. This was done to anticipate research question IV, about connections between characteristics, motives and learning. As introduced in Section 2.3: *The process of data analysis*, three personal characteristics and four characteristics of the group of the respondents, were taken into account. Statistical tests were used to find links between the reactions to individual items from the survey relating to the reading motives and the diverse respondent categories:

**Table 4.3** Overview of groups of respondents and statistical tests.

Personal characteristics		
Sex	two categories: ♂ =male ♀=female	independent Mann-Whitney U test <sup>359</sup>
Age	four categories: a=age 20-34 b=age 35-49 c=age 50-64 d=age ≥65	Kruskal-Wallis test
Educational level	three categories: L=low level of education M=middle level of education H=high level of education	Kruskal-Wallis test
Characteristics of the book discussion group <sup>360</sup>		
Affiliation of the group	two categories: W=wild groups O=organised groups	independent Mann-Whitney U test
Composition of the group	two categories: A-F=all-female groups M-S=mixed-sex groups	independent Mann-Whitney U test
Coach	two categories: +=with a coach -=without a coach	independent Mann-Whitney U test
Age of the group	five categories: a=0-4 years b=5-9 years c=10-19 years d=20-29 years e=≥30 years	Kruskal-Wallis test

Significant outcomes ( $p \leq .05$ ) relating to correlations between a specific characteristic and a specific statement belonging to a reading motive are presented in tables per motive in Appendix 2.2.1. Following these tables, interpretations or explanations of the outcomes are discussed in the current section. The correlations that exist between various characteristics (see Chapter 3) are important for interpreting the outcomes:

- Age and educational level of the participant (median ages of respondents differ significantly for the three educational level categories: the median age of respondents

<sup>359</sup> Non-normal distribution.

<sup>360</sup> Members of two groups were counted twice: once according to the characteristics of book discussion group 1, and once according to the characteristics of book discussion group 2.

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with a high educational background is the lowest, and the median age of respondents with a low educational background is the highest (Kruskal-Wallis test:  $\chi^2$ : 50.249,  $p < .001$ ; posthoc Mann-Whitney tests corrected for the risk of a type 1 error using Bonferroni correction: low-middle:  $Z = -3.367$ ,  $p = .001$ ; low-high:  $Z = -6.932$ ,  $p < .001$ ; middle-high:  $Z = -2.892$ ,  $p = .004$ ).

- The sex of the participant and affiliation of the group (wild groups have significantly more males among their members than organised groups do, Pearson  $\chi^2$  continuity correction: 14.239,  $p < .001$ ).
- Age of the participant and affiliation of the group (the average age of participants of wild groups is significantly lower than the average age of participants of organised groups, independent Mann-Whitney U test:  $Z = -7.395$ ,  $p < .001$ ; organised groups have more members aged  $\geq 65$  than wild groups do, Pearson  $\chi^2$  continuity correction: 39.695,  $p < .001$ ).
- Educational level of the participant and affiliation of the group (members of wild groups have a significantly higher educational background than members of organised groups do, Pearson  $\chi^2$ : 34.143,  $p < .001$ ).
- The presence or absence of a coach and affiliation of the group (organised groups have a coach significantly more often than wild groups do, Pearson  $\chi^2$  continuity correction: 7.259,  $p = .007$ ).

Because of the imbalance of characteristics (considering males/females for instance), it is possible that within this sample, statistics do not always show exactly what explains differences between respondents and their motives. Explanations of the outcomes are therefore not always limited by looking at only one specific characteristic.

Furthermore, because of the results of the factor analysis, these explanations of outcomes are not limited to specific statements within each motive, but discuss the factor or motive as a whole. When relevant, the discussion focuses on single statements and/or single characteristics.

After the presentation of findings on reading motives, Section 4.2 presents the findings on membership motives. This will be done in a presentation similar to the one in Section 4.1.

### *Cognitive Reading Motive*

If people intend to *learn* by reading, they have a *Cognitive Reading Motive*. People who have a Cognitive Reading Motive want to pick up information or develop practices through reading. Learning by reading can entail the enhancement of general knowledge or knowledge on a specific topic, such as history. Developing practices – such as literary

analysis – may also be seen as learning. In addition, people may read to develop their self-identity. It also includes learning with respect to social ability or cultural conventions.

As mentioned above, question 9 of the individual survey did not include statements on the Cognitive Reading Motive. It did contain statements on learning by reading. These will be covered in Chapter 5. In the interviews, opinions about learning by reading fiction – the Cognitive Reading Motive as well as the learning potential of reading fiction – were mixed, although most interviewees do experience reading fiction as instructive. Learning by reading fiction is highly valued by 11 of the 15 interviewees: to 6, it was the most important reading motive, to another 5 it was the second most important reading motive.<sup>361</sup> The Cognitive Reading Motive therefore seems to be important. Some interviewees explained that their interpretation of the Cognitive Reading Motive was closely linked to other motives. For Pauline, the Cognitive and Aesthetic Reading Motives are closely linked. Although her first impetus for reading is the need to immerse herself in a story (the Hedonistic Reading Motive), this is only possible if a book meets her expectations on a cognitive and aesthetic level. These expectations are based on the opinions of critics in the newspaper she reads or on her orientation at book shops or the library. For Pauline, if a book does not meet a certain cognitive and aesthetic level, she will not be able to enjoy reading and forget her day-to-day worries. For Peter, the Cognitive Reading Motive forms a sort of foundation for the other motives. Without wanting and being able to learn (the Cognitive Reading Motive), it is not possible for him to enjoy reading (the Hedonistic Reading Motive), to talk to other people about books (the Status Reading Motive), or to enjoy the style of a book (the Aesthetic Reading Motive). The Cognitive Reading Motive is most important to him, together with the Hedonistic Reading Motive. Finally, Adrian noted that learning is more efficient and enjoyable when one enjoys the reading.

Most interviewees appreciate the learning opportunities fiction offers them on diverse subjects. They are aware of this learning potential, which makes them cherish their reading. As theorists from various fields of study have already made clear (see Section 1.2: *Motives for individual reading*), readers acknowledge many diverse topics about which they can learn something. During the interviews, the interviewees indeed listed a number of different topics in which reading fiction enabled them to learn. Chapter 5 discusses three main topics of learning by reading fiction that are experienced by the interviewees.

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<sup>361</sup> For Peter, this motive is most important, together with the Hedonistic Reading Motive.

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Nonetheless, not all interviewees see reading fiction as a way to learn – or they do not see it as such anymore – and for them, the Cognitive Reading Motive does not play a role in their reading. Marlene especially did not experience reading fiction as instructive and finds it hard to imagine what she could learn from reading fiction. Matthias – a journalist – prefers to read nonfiction or narrative nonfiction when he is curious to learn more about, for example, history. Like Matthias, other interviewees also experience a difference between fiction on the one hand and narrative nonfiction or nonfiction on the other as sources of knowledge, but claim that they do learn from reading fiction and highly value this.

### *Aesthetic Reading Motive*

The Aesthetic Reading Motive concerns the need felt to *experience* the style or theme of a book. People with an Aesthetic Reading Motive read a book, for example, because they enjoy the use of language, or love books by a particular author because of his or her style. Respondents to the individual survey were presented with three statements that relate to the Aesthetic Reading Motive:

- 9.a: I sometimes enjoy the style of a book.
- 9.k: I appreciate beautiful language.
- 9.m: I enjoy a well-composed book.

In the corresponding survey question, no distinction was made between reading fiction or nonfiction. It is possible that this motive applies more to reading of fiction.<sup>362</sup> As seen in Section 3.5: *The book list: Nonfiction and other notable genres*, almost all book discussion groups focus purely on fiction. Although members may choose to focus (more) on nonfiction in their individual reading, the image exists that individually, most respondents tend to read fiction (or: tend to read fiction as well).<sup>363</sup> Dijkstra found the Aesthetic Reading Motive to be important to literary experts (*professional* readers, who were excluded from the current study); Duyvendak found this reading motive to be important to non-professional readers as well.<sup>364</sup>

In general, respondents reacted positively to these three statements: for each statement, over 90% of all respondents chose ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’:

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<sup>362</sup> Duyvendak 2003, pp. 190-191. This is confirmed by the interviewee Matthias for instance, who often reads nonfiction as well, and claims aesthetic aspects are less important when reading to gather information.

<sup>363</sup> Individual survey question 7 and interview themes 1, 2, and 3: questions 4, 12, 14, and 20 in particular.

<sup>364</sup> Duyvendak 2003, pp. 190-191.

**Table 4.4** Responses to statements about the Aesthetic Reading Motive, in percentages. Source: individual survey question 9. For exact numbers, see Appendix 2.2.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9.a (n=865) [enjoy style of book]	40.12%	53.41%	6.01%	0.23%	0.23%
9.k (n=869) [beautiful language]	42.46%	48.91%	8.17%	0.23%	0.23%
9.m (n=870) well-composed book]	31.72%	61.15%	7.01%	0.00%	0.11%

The highly positive responses to the three statements indicate that this reading motive is very important to members of book discussion groups, and more important than the Hedonistic and Status Reading Motives. The motive was important to many of the interviewees as well, although only three named it as the most important motive.<sup>365</sup> The Aesthetic Reading Motive was named the least important reading motive by only to one interviewee, Peter. For twelve of the fifteen interviewees, a book being well-written was a condition for better enjoyment of the book or even for reading the book at all, and there is no clear or existing boundary between the Aesthetic and Hedonistic Reading Motive. This indicates small differences between the theoretical motives for reading and the experience of actual readers. These interviewees enjoy a story when it is well-written; when a book is not well-written, the readers cannot immerse themselves in the story. Furthermore, Afra claimed to regularly read books in English and German because she thinks these are beautiful languages and this contributes to her joy in reading.

The non-existing boundaries between a Hedonistic and an Aesthetic Reading Motive as experienced by interviewees contradict the existence of two separate reading motives – one hedonistic motive and one literary-aesthetic motive – used by Witte, Dijkstra, and Duyvendak.<sup>366</sup> Also, these findings are not in line with the outcomes of the factor analyses described above, which indicated that statements 9.a, 9.k, and 9.m form one component (i.e. testing the Aesthetic Reading Motive), whilst statements 9.d, 9.h, and 9.o form one component (i.e. testing the Hedonistic Reading Motive), which supports the work of Witte, Dijkstra, and Duyvendak. For some interviewees, there are indeed clear differences between the Aesthetic and the Hedonistic Reading Motive. For Bart, for instance, aesthetic aspects are more important than a story-line. Peter, Addie and Therese acknowledge the fact that aesthetic aspects are less important to them when reading individually and purely for recreation – instead of reading a book for their book

<sup>365</sup> To Yvonne, this reading motive, together with the Aesthetic Reading Motive, forms the most important reading motive.

<sup>366</sup> Witte 2008, pp. 132-140. Competence levels 1 and 4; Dijkstra 1992, pp. 34-37, 50-52; Duyvendak 2007, pp. 218-219; 2003, pp. 16-24, 181-183.

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discussion group. This implies that, part of the Hedonistic *Reading* Motive is exchanged for an Aesthetic *Membership* Motive when they start reading for their book discussion group.

Furthermore, the outcomes of the survey show that a number of characteristics relate to the importance of this motive to respondents. There is a strong link between participants' educational level and the Aesthetic Reading Motive. The Aesthetic Reading Motive is more important to respondents with a higher educational background, than to those with a lower educational background. This finding supports Witte's literary competence levels as it indicates that education relates to the way people experience reading. The six subsequent literary competence levels Witte describes only include an understanding of aesthetic aspects starting at level four.<sup>367</sup> Furthermore, Ganzeboom and Kraaykamp both stress that the complexity of a cultural product should be well-adjusted to one's ability to process these complex cultural products in order for them to enjoy the products.<sup>368</sup> Kraaykamp indicates that at a higher educational level, more time is spent on reading higher-level materials and on teaching literary knowledge. Next to parental socialisation, this educational socialisation enables people to enjoy more complex texts later on in life.<sup>369</sup> So appreciation for aesthetic aspects increases as one's educational level increases. The findings also relate to some extent to Dijkstra's idea. She claimed that only professional readers could have an aesthetic motive, which implies being well-educated *in the field of literature*.<sup>370</sup> Duyvendak already showed that non-professional readers are familiar with this motive as well: however, respondents to her study generally had a high educational background as well.<sup>371</sup>

The Aesthetic Reading Motive seems to be more important to younger survey respondents – who also have a higher educational background as compared to older respondents – than it is to older respondents. An explanation for this is not easily given, apart from looking at the educational level of these respondents. In the remainder of this section, it will become clear that younger respondents are generally more inclined to give positive reactions than older participants are. In contrast to this specific finding, one of the interviewees explained that in her case, the Aesthetic Reading Motive gained importance as she grew older. Dorothy said that when a story catches her attention, she might read the book and in doing so only pay attention to the storyline itself, wanting to know how it will end. She will then reread the book while also paying attention to aes-

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<sup>367</sup> Witte 2008, pp. 136-138.

<sup>368</sup> Ganzeboom 1989, pp. 44-52; Kraaykamp 1993, pp. 137-147.

<sup>369</sup> Kraaykamp 2007, p. 133. Both the works of Witte and Kraaykamp refer to *secondary* educational levels.

<sup>370</sup> Dijkstra 1992, pp. 34-37.

<sup>371</sup> Duyvendak 2003, pp. 178; 191.



thetic aspects. Over the years, however, the storyline has become less important to her: a book should contain more than just a story. Just reading a beautiful story is a waste of time to her now.

The Aesthetic Reading Motive is more important to members of wild groups and members of groups without a coach than it is to members of organised groups and groups with a coach. It is possible that readers with an Aesthetic Reading Motive do not feel the need to join an organised or coached group. It is possible that organised or coached groups may help readers to appreciate aesthetic aspects of literature more; readers who already appreciate these aspects of literature may feel less of a need to join such a group. The relationship between the Aesthetic *Membership* Motive and these two group characteristics (see Section 4.2: *The Aesthetic Membership Motive*) may help to interpret this outcome (Section 4.3).

### *Hedonistic Reading Motive*

The Hedonistic Reading Motive means that people read because they want to *relax*, immerse themselves in a book, *enjoy* themselves. People with a Hedonistic Reading Motive, for instance, forget about their daily worries and dive into the story of a book. Three statements relating to the Hedonistic Reading Motive:

- 9.d: I like to immerse myself in a fictional story.
- 9.h: I love getting absorbed in a book.
- 9.o: I like forgetting about my day-to-day worries by reading.

To some researchers discussed in Section 1.2: *Motives for individual reading*, aspects belonging to the Hedonistic Reading Motive play an important role in the reasons for people to read fiction: Pette even sees this as the most important reason people have for reading.<sup>372</sup> Looking at the responses, the Hedonistic Reading Motive indeed scores relatively high – not as high as the Aesthetic Reading Motive –, though not all three statements were equally important to the respondents.

**Table 4.5** Responses to statements regarding the Hedonistic Reading Motive, in percentages. Source: individual survey question 9. For exact numbers, see Appendix 2.2.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9.d ( <i>n</i> =871) [immerse in made up story]	21.93%	51.01%	23.42%	2.07%	0.57%
9.h ( <i>n</i> =873) [absorbed in a book]	39.63%	45.93%	12.60%	1.37%	0.46%
9.o ( <i>n</i> =871) [forgetting day-to-day worries]	27.90%	51.89%	17.68%	2.07%	0.46%

<sup>372</sup> Pette 2001, pp. 41-46.

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For survey respondents, the Hedonistic Reading Motive seems to be important, but less important than the Aesthetic Reading Motive;<sup>373</sup> for eight of the fifteen interviewees the Hedonistic Reading Motive was the most important of the reading motives.<sup>374</sup> This is the least important reading motive to only one interviewee, Bart, though he does find it important. He enjoys the style more than the storyline. Other interviewees also love getting immersed in a story, are curious about how the story will develop, and empathise with the characters. As previously discussed in the findings concerning the Aesthetic Reading Motive, for many interviewees, the boundaries between the Aesthetic and Hedonistic Reading motive are *not* relevant for them *as a reader*: they experience a very strong connection between the two motives. When a book is well-written, readers tend to enjoy it more easily; when a book is badly written or when the style does not appeal to a reader, it is hard to enjoy the story.

There are a number of links between this motive and personal and group characteristics. This is one of few motives in which, considering the statistics, a correlation was found between the sex of the respondents and their reactions to the statements (or: the importance of the Hedonistic Reading Motive). Compared to males, females are more likely to see reading as an escape from their daily activities or worries. This corresponds to the fact that females have more of a preference for reading fiction as opposed to non-fiction than males do.<sup>375</sup>

Similar to findings concerning the Aesthetic Reading Motive, younger respondents also have a stronger Hedonistic Reading Motive than older respondents do. As a reader grows older, the Hedonistic Reading Motive loses value. This is illustrated by for instance the view described above by interviewee Dorothy (62), who no longer wants to read a book just for the story. She is of the opinion that books that are beautiful to read, but do not offer anything more than beauty, are a waste of time at her age. Respondents with a middle or low educational background also have a stronger Hedonistic Reading Motive than respondents with a high educational background. As for age and educational level, the outcomes support Witte's literary competence levels (see Section 1.2: *Motives for individual reading*).<sup>376</sup> Witte places the aspects belonging to this reading motive at the start of his six consecutive competence levels: this implies that reading as a way to relax is seen as a competence readers have in an early stage in their reading careers. It is a level readers can revert to throughout their life as a reader, even after they

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<sup>373</sup> Compare Tables 4.5 and 4.7.

<sup>374</sup> To Yvonne, this reading motive, together with the Aesthetic Reading Motive, forms the most important reading motive.

<sup>375</sup> Hartley 2002, p. 59; Summers 2003, p. 246.

<sup>376</sup> Witte 2008, pp. 132-135.

develop further and have mastered subsequent competence levels. Furthermore, compared to people with a higher educational background, people with a lower educational background tend to choose more accessible books – as well as other media – that more easily enables one to escape, such as romantic fiction.<sup>377</sup>

Members of wild groups and members of groups without a coach react more positively to statements regarding the Hedonistic Reading Motive. These readers are more likely to see reading as a way to enjoy themselves. It is possible that readers in organised and coached groups focus more on objective discussions. This could cause readers with a Hedonistic Reading Motive to choose to join a wild group and/or a group without a coach. The results considering the age of the group are indistinct: the results show no increase or decrease when groups have existed longer, nor is there an inverted U-relationship. There is no clear image arising.

### *Status Reading Motive*

The Status Reading Motive concerns people's need to *distinguish* themselves as (specific types of) readers. People with a status motive like to be visible as a reader with a certain literary taste or skill. They distinguish themselves from others who do not read or read different types of books, and conform themselves to a group of readers they want to belong to. Other than the Cognitive, Aesthetic and Hedonistic Reading Motives, this Status Reading Motive assumes a social environment that influences reading behaviour.

Five statements regarding aspects of the Status Reading Motive were included in the individual survey:

- 9.b: Reading is customary in my family.
- 9.e: I like receiving reading tips.
- 9.f: People react positively when they find out I like to read.
- 9.i: Most of my friends regularly read books.
- 9.j: I like recommending books to other people.

Following studies described in the first chapter, the Status Reading Motive was given a very broad interpretation in this study. Aspects considering for instance the respondents' social environment – whether they are surrounded by readers or non-readers – and talking about books with other people outside the book discussion group were categorised in the Status Reading Motive as well. So, besides directly asking whether respondents like using reading as a way to establish an image of themselves as a reader

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<sup>377</sup> Kraaykamp 2007, p. 133.

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(statement 9.f; but also 9.e and 9.j), it was investigated whether the respondents' social environment contained fellow readers (9.b and 9.i).

Compared to other reading motives, the Status Reading Motive appears to be least relevant for respondents, though statements still score relatively high on agreement (with each of the statements, more than half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed):

**Table 4.6** Responses to statements regarding the Status Reading Motive, in percentages. Source: individual survey question 9. For exact numbers, see Appendix 2.2.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9.b ( <i>n</i> =865) [customary in family]	29.36%	49.25%	15.03%	5.55%	0.81%
9.e ( <i>n</i> =872) [receiving reading tips]	34.86%	56.54%	8.03%	0.23%	0.34%
9.f ( <i>n</i> =866) [people react positively]	9.24%	46.07%	40.30%	3.58%	0.81%
9.i ( <i>n</i> =871) [most of friends read]	16.99%	60.51%	18.94%	3.33%	0.23%
9.j ( <i>n</i> =869) [recommend books to others]	15.42%	55.35%	26.70%	1.73%	0.81%

The Status Reading Motive was also a topic during the interviews. Although the term 'status' was avoided because of a possible negative connotation, most interviewees recognised the intention of the questions considering this motive and responded with a smile: intentionally acting to create a certain status is not considered positive, and admitting having a Status Reading Motive seems to be recognised by these interviewees as a non-socially desirable answer. Thirteen interviewees indicated that the Status Reading Motive was the least important reading motive for them: most of them even claimed it was of no importance at all. However, during some interviews it became clear that the importance of status differs for the diverse communities the interviewees are involved in and there is a difference of status within the book discussion group and outside the book discussion group as well. Dorothy, for instance, does not find it important for *outsiders* to appreciate her as an avid reader: indeed, she hides her reading behaviour from friends in her hometown because she would feel embarrassed if they found out that she reads so much. She does not want her friends to feel uncomfortable around her. This difference between status outside the book discussion group and status within the book discussion group will return in the discussion of the results on the Status Membership Motive in the next section.

The survey outcomes indicate there are strong relationships between this motive and personal and group characteristics. The sex of the participant seems to have a small link with the Status Reading Motive: females like receiving reading tips more than males do. This is in line with Summers's findings, who claims that females have a 'social engage-

ment' with reading more than males do, which not only includes book discussion group membership, but also the fact that females are more active on book-related online social networking websites and discuss books with peers more than males do.<sup>378</sup> The other personal characteristics age and educational level show the strongest links with the Status Reading Motive. The social environments of readers with a higher educational background (also the younger respondents here) are more likely to include readers than the environments of other respondents, which corresponds to Dijkstra's findings.<sup>379</sup> These readers are more used to meeting other readers and see reading as a natural activity. It is possible that this makes them more confident to join a wild and uncoached group where there is less guidance in choosing and discussing books. Also, these readers may have less difficulty finding fellow readers to set up a wild group of their own.

Statements 9.i and 9.e are the most distinctive statements regarding this motive. Statement 9.i (Most of my friends regularly read books) especially distinguishes readers who belong to diverse book discussion groups: members of wild, all-female groups without a coach often have a book-reading circle of friends. It is conceivable that precisely these groups of friends decide to set up their own, independent book discussion groups.

#### 4.2 MEMBERSHIP MOTIVES

In addition to the reading motives, membership motives were investigated by using the individual survey (Appendix 2.2: individual survey questions 9 and 10) and the interviews. Along with statements on learning through book discussion group membership (see Section 5.2: part of individual survey question 10), these survey questions contained 17 statements regarding the six theory-based membership motives to which the respondents could react. Again, this was done by indicating their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree – agree – undecided – disagree – strongly disagree). The statements were formulated in line with studies relevant to book discussion group membership motives as described in Section 1.2, from which six membership motives were distilled. The 17 statements on motives for membership (translated from Dutch) are:

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<sup>378</sup> Summers 2013, p. 248.

<sup>379</sup> Dijkstra 1992, pp. 65-69.

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**Table 4.7** Overview of statements regarding membership motives (individual survey questions 9 and 10).

Question number	Statement
9.c	I like talking about books or literature.
10.b	The discussions in the book discussion group(s) allow me to better appreciate the structure of a book.
10.c	I like taking part in a club activity.
10.d	I think reading on my own is boring.
10.e	Being a member of (a) book discussion group(s) makes me read on a regular basis.
10.g	I think it is a nice way to create a distinct profile of myself as a reader.
10.j	I get positive reactions from my environment for being an active reader.
10.k	I do not have a lot of time to look up extra information on a book.
10.l	I appreciate learning new things from the book discussion group(s).
10.m	I think it is important to be in a club.
10.o	People in my vicinity appreciate that I am socially active because of the book discussion group(s).
10.p	I like noticing that I am enjoying language or style more thanks to the book discussion group(s).
10.q	I find it difficult to choose a book from the inconveniently arranged supply.
10.t	The most important thing about the book discussions are the conversations about our own experiences.
10.u	By being a member of the book discussion group(s), I can more easily join in conversations about books that take place outside the book discussion group(s).
10.v	The book discussion group meetings are enjoyable.
10.x	My book discussion group / groups at least enable(s) me to talk to my friends regularly.

It was intended to test all six theory-based membership motives by means of these statements. These membership motives were also investigated by means of the interviews in a similar way as the reading motives. Interviewees were asked to list the most important reasons for them to participate in a book discussion group (see Appendix 3.2: interview theme 4). Then they were given the names and descriptions of the six original theory-based membership motives. Examples were provided when desired. The interviewees were asked to rank the membership motives in order of importance, and explain their choices. This information was used to check the practical use of the theory-based motives as well as to provide information about the importance of the membership motives to book discussion group participants. Furthermore, interviewees were asked to think of reasons for them to *stop* being a member of their book discussion group. The answers also provided information about important aspects of and conditions for book discussion group participation, and will be used to illustrate the findings presented below. Two interviewees recently stopped participating in their book discus-

sion group. Yvonne left her library-organised group and – although she continues to read – did not look for a new group to join. Therese’s book discussion group decided to stop discussing books though continues to meet 2-3 times a year to go for a walk and catch up. Yvonne and Therese were able to indicate the reasons for their decision to stop. All other interviewees were asked to think of potential reasons for leaving their book discussion group. Some of them formulated answers immediately, whereas to others, the question itself came as a bit of a shock. Everyone except Addie was able to think of reasons: practical reasons, reasons concerning the content of the discussions or book choices, or reasons resulting from changes in the balance between the members. All of them hoped not to have to make this decision any time soon or ever. These findings, together with the findings regarding the six membership motives, may help to explain and illustrate certain outcomes of the survey or provide an opportunity to examine a motive more in depth.

Similar to the investigation of reading motives, it was first tested whether the statements could be grouped into different membership motives that match the six theory-based membership motives as presented in Section 1.2. The statements, presented in table 4.7, were intended to test various aspects of all six theory-based membership motives. Originally, the Cognitive Membership Motive was intended to be tested with the help of statements 10.l and 10.t; the Aesthetic Membership Motive with the help of statements 10.b and 10.p; the Hedonistic Membership Motive with the help of statement 9.c; the Status Membership Motive with the help of statements 10.g, 10.j, 10.o, and 10.u; the Social Membership Motive with the help of statements 10.c, 10.d, 10.m, 10.v; and finally the Practical Membership Motive with the help of statements 10.e, 10.k, 10.q, and 10.x. It was expected that the statements might measure more diverse or different aspects than perhaps originally intended: 10.t for instance not only indicated whether someone wanted to *learn* about personal insights, but could also be interpreted at a more *social* level. To investigate how best to group these statements in a similar way to the statements on reading motives (Section 4.1), a number of statistical tests were carried out, starting with the calculation of the Cronbach alpha coefficient of the original groups of statements.

The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the statements regarding these diverse membership motives indicates that there is no good internal consistency. The two statements belonging to the Cognitive Membership Motive showed unacceptable internal consistency (.191). The internal consistency of both the Social Membership Motive (.531) and the Practical Membership Motive (.506) is poor. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the statements regarding both the Aesthetic Membership Motive (.610) and the Status Membership Motive (.694) are acceptable. In the case of the Status Membership Motive,

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internal consistency is even good (.718) when the third statement (*By being a member of the book discussion group(s), I can more easily join in conversations about books that take place outside the book discussion group(s)*) is removed.

As expected, a number of statements could be interpreted in a different way than the original grouping indicated. It was necessary to find a better grouping. Similar to the analysis of the reading motives, correlations between statements were investigated. The 17 statements on reading motives were tested on suitability for factor analysis. The correlation matrix showed a small number of coefficients of .3 and over. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .792; Bartlett's test of Sphericity reached significance (.000). These outcomes, together with the high response rate of  $n=877$ , support that the data is suitable for factor analysis.

Principal component analysis showed there are five components with eigenvalues exceeding 1. These explain the following percentages of the variance respectively:

- Component 1: 22.942%
- Component 2: 11.224%
- Component 3: 8.228%
- Component 4: 7.299%
- Component 5: 6.622%

The screeplot shows a break after the fifth component:

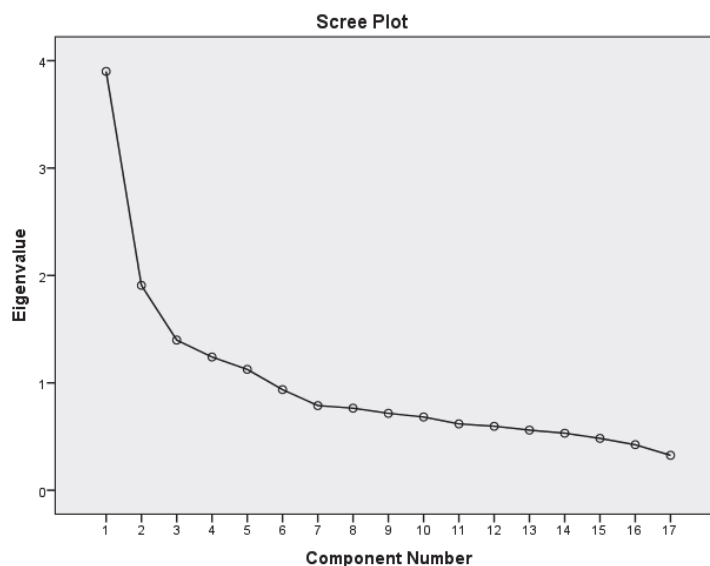


Figure 4.4 Scree plot factor analysis statements on membership motives.



It was decided to retain five components for further investigation. Varimax rotation was used to interpret the components:

**Table 4.8** Rotated component matrix: five components extracted. Varimax rotation.

Component → ↓ Statement	1	2	3	4	5
10.j	.783				
10.o	.775				
10.g	.639				
10.q		.772			
10.e		.663			
10.d		.661			
10.u	.338	.485	.318		
10.k		.403			
10.p			.758		
10.b			.756		
10.l			.474		
10.c				.844	
10.m				.830	
10.v					.734
10.t					.669
10.x					.634
% of variance explained	13.641	12.985	11.394	10.305	9.833

This option to retain five components explained a total of 58.16% of the variance. When choosing to retain five components however, the only statement belonging to the theory-based Hedonistic Membership Motive did not correspond to any of the five components, which supports its distinguishing character ('component' 6). Other components show a resemblance to the original theoretical idea of classification, but two changes to the original formation of membership motives were introduced. First, the Cognitive and the Aesthetic Membership Motives were combined into one Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive (component 1). Second, the Social Membership Motive was split into a Societal Membership Motive (component 4) and a Social Membership Motive (component 5).

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### *Component 1: Status Membership Motive*

- 10.j: I get positive reactions from my environment for being an active reader.
- 10.o: People in my vicinity appreciate that I am socially active because of the book discussion group(s).
- 10.g: I think it is a nice way to create a distinct profile of myself as a reader.

### *Component 2: Practical Membership Motive*

- 10.q: I find it difficult to choose a book from the inconveniently arranged supply.
- 10.e: Being a member of a book discussion group / book discussion groups makes me read on a regular basis.
- 10.d: I think reading on my own is boring.
- 10.k: I do not have a lot of time to look up extra information on a book.
- 10.u: By being a member of the book discussion group(s), I can more easily join in conversations about books that take place outside the book discussion group(s).

### *Component 3: Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive*

- 10.p: I like noticing that I am enjoying language or style more thanks to the book discussion group(s).
- 10.b: The discussions in the book discussion group(s) allow me to better appreciate the structure of a book.
- 10.l: I appreciate learning new things from the book discussion group(s).

### *Component 4: Societal Membership Motive ch Belonging to a club in general*

- 10.c: I like taking part in a club activity.
- 10.m: I think it is important to be in a club.

### *Component 5: Social Membership Motive ch Belonging to this specific club*

- 10.v: Meetings of the book discussion group are enjoyable.
- 10.t: The most important thing about the book discussions are the conversations about our own experiences.
- 10.x: My book discussion group / groups at least enable(s) me to talk to my friends regularly.

### *Other: Hedonistic Membership Motive*

- 9.c: I like talking about books and literature.

One statement, 10.u, related to three components. It was decided to assign this statement to the component to which it related with the highest eigenvalue (component 2: .485).

The results of this analysis based on five components plus the Hedonistic Membership Motive and the outcomes of the Cronbach alpha coefficient showed that the initial defining of six membership motives and the phrasing and classification of statements for these motives, is somewhat problematic. Because of the promising outcomes of the factor analysis, it was decided to adopt these outcomes as a new categorisation of the statements, and to let go of the original grouping of the statements following the theory-based membership motives. Furthermore, the interviews made clear that the membership motives can be experienced with some overlap: for some interviewees, there were no strict boundaries between the Social and Hedonistic Membership Motives. The same applies to the Cognitive and Aesthetic Membership Motive: this was already concluded after the component analysis described above.

In the remainder of this section, the results are presented per membership motive, similar to the presentation of the findings regarding the reading motives in Section 4.1. To provide a clear structure, the diverse membership motives will be discussed in the same order as they were presented at the end of Section 1.2., though the Cognitive and Aesthetic Membership Motive are grouped together and the Social Membership Motive is split into a Social and a Societal Membership Motive.

Per membership motive, general findings are presented considering the occurrence and importance of the motive. These findings were derived from the interviews and the individual survey. Relationships between the membership motive and characteristics of the respondents and of the groups they participate in, taken from the outcomes of the survey, will be discussed as well. This was done to anticipate the fourth research question, on connections between characteristics, motives and learning. The various characteristics and statistical tests used to examine this subject were introduced in Section 4.1 (Table 4.4). Significant outcomes ( $p \leq .05$ ) relating to connections between a specific characteristic and a specific statement regarding a reading motive are presented per motive in Appendix 2.2.1. The outcomes are discussed below.

### *Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive*

If people intend to *learn* by reading and discussing books with a group, they have a *Cognitive Membership Motive*. It means people are members of book discussion groups because they want to learn by participating in a community rather than reading – and perhaps learning – individually. Based on Wenger's theory of communities of practice,

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and various studies on book discussion groups (see Section 1.3),<sup>380</sup> it was expected that the added value of a group discussion may intensify the learning itself, and moreover, people may learn *different* aspects when reading and discussing with a group instead of reading individually. For instance, group discussion enables people to learn more at a social level, such as learning more about your friends, developing your own social skills, or learning about cultural conventions. But it may also mean that people learn about literary analysis, or become acquainted with books or genres they would not otherwise have read individually. Respondents to the individual survey were asked whether they find it important to learn from their book discussion group membership. For more than half of the respondents, it was very important that they learn from their participation in the book discussion group:

**Table 4.9** Responses to individual survey question 20: Do you think it is important that you learn new things by being part of (a) book discussion group(s)? n=859.

61.23%	Yes, certainly
30.38%	Yes, a little
8.38%	No, not important

The *Aesthetic Membership Motive* concerns the need to *experience the style or theme of a book*. This motive implies that people take part in book discussion groups in order to get more out of their reading experience. Talking about books is part of the book reading process, and it enables participants to get more pleasure from reading and enjoy the style or theme of a book. Some readers do not specifically notice style but focus mainly on the narrative thread. Other members of their book discussion group who do focus on style might pay attention to it in the group.

Factor analysis of the statements from individual survey questions 9 and 10 supported combining the Cognitive and the Aesthetic Membership Motives into one membership motive. Findings from the interviews support this creation of one *Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive*. Noteworthy is the fact that during a number of interviews, the *Aesthetic Reading Motive* was linked with the *Hedonistic Reading Motive*, while when considering *membership* motives, the *Aesthetic Membership Motive* verged more on the *Cognitive Membership Motive* for many interviewees. For six interviewees, reading in preparation for the book discussion group meeting caused members to pay more attention – or pay attention in a more conscious way – to aspects like the style and

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<sup>380</sup> Benjamins, Nagtegaal & Van Voorst 2011; Duyvendak 1994, 2005; Kooy 2003, 2006a, 2006b; Peplow 2011; Poole 2000, 2003.

structure of a book compared to when they read individually. Having to formulate your opinion concerning style and structure makes you read much more consciously, and makes you aware of why you like or dislike certain styles.

Survey question 10 included four statements concerning the combined Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive:

- 10.b: The discussions in the book discussion group(s) allow me to better appreciate the structure of a book.
- 10.l: I appreciate learning new things from the book discussion group(s).
- 10.p: I like noticing that I am enjoying language or style more thanks to the book discussion group(s).

The reactions to these statements are very positive:

**Table 4.10** Responses to four statements regarding the Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive in percentages. Source: individual survey question 10. For exact numbers, see Appendix 2.2.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10.b ( <i>n</i> =874) [appreciates structure]	26.66%	56.86%	15.10%	1.26%	0.11%
10.l ( <i>n</i> =870) [learning new things]	10.57%	61.84%	24.14%	2.99%	0.46%
10.p ( <i>n</i> =869) [enjoying language]	10.70%	59.38%	24.51%	4.37%	1.04%

A vast majority of the respondents appreciates learning new things (10.l), among which are recognising the structure of a book (10.b) and appreciating language and style (10.p). Although members like the fact they are learning, not all use this acquired knowledge or skills in conversations outside their book discussion group.

As described in the previous section, the Cognitive Reading Motive was an important motive for interviewees. Reading and discussing books together in a group increases the learning potential of fiction and for many interviewees, the cognitive motive is an important *membership* motive as well (Joan, Pauline, Karin, Adrian, Dorothy, Afra, Yvonne, Therese, Rita, Francis, and Matthias).

To Addie, the learning opportunities of the book discussion group faded since she started following a literature course programme for six years ago. Bart – a former literature teacher – gives lectures on literary works in his spare time. For him, the learning opportunities of the book discussion group meetings are not that important as he learns so much already when preparing his lectures. Learning especially *what* people might learn by reading and discussing books is the topic of Chapter 5.

Discussing aesthetic aspects was experienced as instructive to thirteen interviewees. To Karin, Rita, Francis, and Matthias, the Aesthetic Membership Motive was not important. Rita and Francis admit they learn about style and structure from the book dis-

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cussion group meetings, but do not find it the most important aspect of the discussions. According to Karin, enjoying the style of a book is a very personal matter. A book discussion can give you more insight, but it will not influence whether you like the style of a book. Afra and Marlene, however, both say their opinions on style or on a specific author may change because of becoming acquainted with different points of view by fellow members.

The survey outcomes indicate that there are several relationships between this motive and characteristics. Younger respondents and respondents of wild groups are generally more keen to learn new things from their membership. Interviewee Pauline can be seen as an example of this type of respondent. Pauline is eager to learn and thinks she should gain something from the membership. She would even consider leaving her group if the discussions become superficial.

To some survey respondents, ageing means being able to *enjoy* activities more and more, as can be seen from responses to individual survey question 22 (open-ended question). This respondent illustrates:

Female (72): *I do not need to learn in school, I have done enough of that in my life. I am allowed to just enjoy [now].*

This may suggest that survey respondents interpreted the term 'learning' as *formal* learning; in the interviews it was stressed that this research focuses on *informal* learning.

Although most respondents to individual survey question 12 (open-ended question) – aged  $\geq 65$  – are very active in attending courses and education (including courses for senior citizens), other respondents, like the one quoted above, indeed see their age as a reason not to be involved in these activities. For example, the oldest respondent writes:

Female (96): *Too old to participate in courses; I am interested in 'the human being'.*

Her view is shared by other respondents as well, for instance:

Female (89): *With my age comes that I do not feel the need to participate in a course or training in order to learn. I still learn a lot from life itself.*

Older participants in particular seem to appreciate learning about language and style: this could possibly relate to having a more extensive reading history as one grows older *and* the longer one's group exists. Reading is a skill that one develops over time; it requires practice and continues to develop:

Female (70): *It remains very fascinating to talk about literature with others. Most of them are very experienced readers.*

Respondents with a lower educational background and members of groups with a coach see the book discussion group more as a way to appreciate the aesthetic aspects of books. It is possible that readers with a lower educational background profit more from the discussions with fellow readers in gaining insight into these aspects. Coaches seem to have a positive effect on guiding people to value aesthetic aspects in their reading. Respondents to the individual survey question 12 indeed stress the positive effect a coach can have on the learning opportunities of the meetings:

Female (64): *Initially, the reason [joined] was [my] interest in literature; now [the main reason] is the professional guidance.*

Female (71): *I think it is enriching to learn more about the book from the coach: [about things like] the author, poetry, music, film, character of the age, et cetera.*

Female (68): *In our group, we are given extracts. My former group had a Dutch expert as a coach, which was more engrossing.*

Female (67): *I will keep being a member because I still like to read and I do not want to miss the information provided by the coach.*

Female (69): *Because of our coach, I understand more of the purpose of the book.*

Female (46): *Because our group has a different coach now, we have better information on the books and the quality of the discussions has increased. The social contact has become less important.*

A number of interviewees also think the professional coach will positively influence a book discussion group's learning opportunities (Joan, Afra, Addie, Yvonne, and Therese), though having a member who is an expert in a relevant field or who knows more about the topic or theme of a book may fulfil this role as well, in the event that the members of a group have *complementary* competences. This results in a different kind of community than when the members have more *overlapping* competences.<sup>381</sup> Therese would consider joining a literary book discussion group again if the group were to discuss aesthetic aspects. She believes that more attention would be paid to these aspects in a group with a coach, or a group consisting of more avid readers than her former group consisted of. Addie also thinks her book discussion group would benefit from having a professional coach.

This could indicate that people with a high Cognitive Membership Motive would rather join a book discussion group that has a coach. Yvonne, for instance, did not al-

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<sup>381</sup> See also Wenger 1998, p. 76. This subject will return in Chapter 5.

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ways appreciate the limited time the coach allowed for discussing personal experiences, but she does believe that the group learned from the coach. Yvonne said that when looking for a new group to join, she would join a group with a coach again because of these learning opportunities. However, looking at their most important role (Section 3.4), coaches mainly act as discussion leaders, which helps the group to stay on topic. Most coaches are seen as equal interlocutors, not as persons standing above the other members.

### *Hedonistic Membership Motive*

This motive means people participate in book discussion groups because they want to *relax*, immerse themselves in a discussion about books, and enjoy themselves. Participants specifically enjoy the social aspect of discussing books, preparing for the discussion on the book, and sharing reading experiences.

One statement regarding the Hedonistic Membership Motive was included in the individual survey:

- 9.c: I like talking about books and literature.

Most respondents enjoy their book discussion group meetings.

**Table 4.11** Responses to one statement about the Hedonistic Membership Motive in percentages. Source: individual survey question 9. For exact numbers, see Appendix 2.2.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9.c (n=872) [talking about books]	25.80%	54.93%	18.12%	0.57%	0.57%

Enjoying talking about books, the Hedonistic Membership Motive, was also very important to eleven interviewees. Listening to others, sharing the joy of reading, is enriching. For some interviewees, the Hedonistic Membership Motive may verge on the Social Membership Motive: Addie, Yvonne, and Marlene, for instance, specifically state that they enjoy the personal conversations that emerge from discussing the themes of the books. Book discussions and personal discussions become intertwined.

Liking to talk about books is more prevalent among younger members, members with a higher educational background, and members of wild groups; there is a correlation between these characteristics. Perhaps enjoying talking about books not only indicates having a Hedonistic Membership Motive, but also implicates feeling comfortable doing so: speaking freely without feeling restrained by insecurity, lack of knowledge or lack of confidence in discussion. The group being together for 5-9 years indicates also



that the group has had time to establish a safe environment where discussions can take place in an enjoyable way.<sup>382</sup>

### *Status Membership Motive*

Taken together, three statements in the individual survey test the Status Membership Motive. All three statements were originally formulated in line with the theory-based Status Membership Motive:

- 10.g: I think it is a nice way to create a distinct profile of myself as a reader.
- 10.j: I get positive reactions from my environment for being an active reader.
- 10.o: People in my vicinity appreciate that I am socially active because of the book discussion group(s).

This membership motive concerns people's need to *distinguish* themselves as – socially active – readers. Reactions to the three statements show that the Status Membership Motive is not very important to the respondents:

**Table 4.12** Responses to three statements regarding the Status Membership Motive in percentages. Source: individual survey question 10. For exact numbers, see Appendix 2.2.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10.g ( <i>n</i> =867) [create profile]	3.92%	28.95%	46.83%	15.11%	5.19%
10.j ( <i>n</i> =865) [positive reactions active reader]	2.77%	25.43%	55.49%	12.14%	4.16%
10.o ( <i>n</i> =870) [appreciation socially-active]	1.84%	18.39%	56.90%	18.28%	4.60%

Being a reader can be made visible through book discussion group membership in two ways: internal visibility for fellow members of their group, and external visibility to a reader's social environment outside their book discussion group. Statement 10.g can be interpreted in both ways; statements 10.j and 10.o both tend to specifically concern the external visibility. As introduced in the previous section, for a number of interviewees, there is a clear difference between outside-group status and inside-group status. To Pauline, for instance, having a status as an active reader in the eyes of outsiders is not at all important, but she does like her fellow book discussion group members to see her as the active reader who always finishes her book on time for the meeting. This also indicates that she herself assigns a different status to her fellow book discussion group members than to other people she knows, which include readers and non-readers. Ad-die likes the fact that her fellow members see her as an expert and ask her questions

<sup>382</sup> Long stresses the importance of the group becoming a safe environment for having open discussions. Long 2003, p. 187.

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during the discussions because she has been following a literature course programme for the past six years. She likes passing on the knowledge she acquired there. The possibility and ability to have in-depth talks about books with fellow readers is appreciated by many of the interviewees, but most do not see this as particularly related to 'status'.

Of the personal characteristics, only the educational level of the participant exhibits a link with the Status Membership Motive. This link is however very strong. Participants with a low and middle educational background react more positively to statements representing the Status Membership Motive. For them, it is more important or applicable for the book discussion group membership to be used to create a profile as a socially active reader.<sup>383</sup> Comparing these outcomes to the outcomes regarding the link between personal characteristics and the Status *Reading* Motive, a clear division arises between respondents with a higher educational background and respondents with a lower educational background. Readers with a higher educational background are more likely to be surrounded by fellow readers in their family and friends (see Section 4.1: reactions to statements 9.b and 9.i). The Status Reading Motive is more an expression of conformism than of distinction. Reading and participating in a book discussion group is more remarkable for readers with a low educational background: being a reader is less natural in their social environment of family and friends. For them, the visible membership of a book discussion group makes a more clear statement of being a reader. Reading in a group instead of reading alone may yield more appreciation or understanding in the social environment for the activity of reading itself.

Members of groups that have existed 30 years or more experience that they are appreciated for being socially active. It is possible that a group that has existed longer is taken more seriously by outsiders than a group that has existed only for a short time. An older group has already proven it is steady, which could be interpreted as having a high quality. A young group still has to earn respect by proving it can develop its practices in an appropriate way that makes it useful for the group to stay together.

### *Social Membership Motive*

The original Social Membership Motive has now been divided into a Social and a Societal Membership Motive. The statements that now form the Social Membership Motive regard the value of the meetings of the *specific book discussion group one belongs to*. This motive indicates that people enjoy the social aspect of the gathering, meeting the group, talking about subjects other than books – all things that come to meeting with and be-

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<sup>383</sup> See also Kraaykamp 1993, pp. 173-180.

longing to this specific group of fellow readers. In contrast to the *Societal* Membership Motive is more about club membership in general. The Social Membership Motive also differs from the *Hedonistic* Membership Motive, which specifically concerns enjoying talking about books.

The following three statements were formulated to investigate the importance of the Social Membership Motive:

- 10.t: The most important thing about the book discussions are the conversations about our own experiences.
- 10.v: Meetings of the book discussion group are enjoyable.
- 10.x: My book discussion group / groups at least enable(s) me to talk to my friends regularly.

Results of the statements testing the Social Membership Motive show that a large majority sees the book discussion group meetings as enjoyable, whereas the other two statements seem less important:

**Table 4.13** Responses to three statements regarding the Social Membership Motive in percentages. Source: individual survey question 10. For exact numbers, see Appendix 2.2.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10.t ( <i>n</i> =871) [own experiences]	5.86%	22.96%	33.18%	31.69%	6.31%
10.v ( <i>n</i> =874) [enjoyable]	34.55%	61.10%	3.89%	0.34%	0.11%
10.x ( <i>n</i> =869) [talk to friends]	4.60%	29.46%	37.63%	22.55%	5.75%

The Social Membership Motive focuses on the relationships that exist between the members. The atmosphere within the group is a delicate point. Interviewees specifically refer to the relationships between members and having balanced discussions. Afra appreciates the fact that she can discuss freely in her group: everything goes on very harmoniously. An important condition for Marlene's participation is that the relationships between the members are good. Matthias remarked that one of the members of his group just did not fit in very well and this person decided to leave the group. According to Matthias, people tend to notice such things themselves. Five interviewees, Karin, Afra, Yvonne, Therese, and Matthias specifically mention intrusive or dominant fellow members as a threat to the book discussion group. Karin, Therese and Afra would definitely not like one person dominating discussions and/or book choices. Matthias, Yvonne and Therese have experiences with dominant people in their group: Yvonne experienced her coach to be dominant which did not leave enough room for the participants' opinions or discussion points. This is one reason why Yvonne decided to leave her group, although she valued the expertise of the coach. The coach and participants

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were not equal discussion partners. In Matthias's group, one woman dominated the discussions and book choices in a negative way (e.g. not wanting to discuss certain topics and not wanting to read certain books). She decided to leave the group on her own account.

Responses to statements in the survey were diverse. In general, respondents see the meetings as enjoyable, but using the books as a starter for conversations about own experiences (10.t) is seen as the most important discussion topic by less than a third of the respondents. This contradicts the findings of Long and Kooy, who specifically stress the possibilities book discussion groups offer for discussing personal experiences.<sup>384</sup> Long even links this to her explanation for the overrepresentation of females in book discussion groups. In the Netherlands, where females also form the majority of the book discussion group population, this explanation might not apply to all book discussion groups.<sup>385</sup>

Respondents with a lower educational background are more interested in conversations about personal experiences than respondents with a higher educational background. These discussions do not occur at the expense of discussions more directly related to the book (concerning the structure, style, language).<sup>386</sup> Members with a lower educational background seem to be more eager to interact with one another and create meaningful discussions together.

There is no correlation between the age of the group and the Social Membership Motive. To a number of interviewees, however, the social aspect has clearly become more important during their membership (Karin, Marlene, Therese, Rita, Matthias, and Francis), and many survey respondents also recognise the growing bond between members over the years.<sup>387</sup> In the interviews, however, it became clear that for a number of interviewees, the balance between the social aspect and the cognitive potential of a book discussion group is precarious. For Therese's former group, group H, the growing social aspect of the meetings got in the way of actually discussing the books, and this was one reason why the group stopped discussing books altogether. Some of her fellow members were not reading that attentively anymore, or stopped finishing the books.

The younger the respondents, the more they experience the meetings of their book discussion group as enjoyable. They could be looking for nice ways to fill their free time and thus score higher on the Hedonistic Reading Motive and the Hedonistic Member-

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<sup>384</sup> Long 2003, pp. xiv-xv, 21, 62-73, 219-220. Kooy 2006a, pp. 661-662.

<sup>385</sup> Duyvendak (2005 p. 187-190) for instance adopts this explanation. For a number of Dutch groups (such as a part of the *SLD* groups) it seems to be relevant.

<sup>386</sup> See the outcomes of the Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive.

<sup>387</sup> See Appendix 2.2: the responses to individual survey question 12.

ship Motive. Older respondents are generally less focused on relaxing and enjoying themselves.

It is possible that wild groups and groups without a coach are formed by friends, more so than organised groups and groups with a coach. It seems that in organised groups without a coach, there is more room for enjoyment and being together with friends. In Yvonne's organised group (former group F), their professional coach guarded this balance very strictly and made sure the discussions did not go off topic. Personal conversations were cut short. For Yvonne, there was too little room for personal conversations and this was one reason for her to quit her membership. Nonetheless, she does acknowledge the importance of preventing the book discussion group from changing into a 'tea party', but the balance between the two is difficult. Pauline (member of groups B and C – both without a coach) also experiences tension between the social, enjoyable side of the meeting and the more serious book discussions. Pauline would like her groups to have more in-depth conversations on the book but she fears this will endanger the sociability of the meetings. In both her groups, there is no professional coach who can act as the discussion leader and be blamed for interrupting social conversations. In a group of peers or friends, it may be harder to be the one to ask for more in-depth conversations at the expense of social talk. To 'stay on track', it seems, agreement on the position of the social aspects of the book discussion group is very important: the whole group must have the same intentions in the discussions. Afra mentioned a member in her group who quit because she wanted to have very personal discussions rather than more objective discussions about the book. This did not fit the expectations of the other members, who were primarily focused on literary discussion. To have a fruitful community of practice, it is important that members all have the same motives and ascribe meaning to their practice.<sup>388</sup> This also came up in Therese's experiences. She noticed a growing clash in motives of members: some were eager to read; others had a practical motive and only read the six books a year chosen by their group. Therese often felt the need to go on discussing a book when others were already done discussing.

Members of all-female groups are more used to belonging to an environment of readers; they like to take part in social, enjoyable, activities. Interviewee Therese (former member of all-female group H and member of mixed-sex group I) saw a difference in social aspects between her former all-female group and her current mixed-sex group, and thought that this may be ascribed to the difference in composition of both groups: for the all-female group, the social aspect was more important, but this caused the group to talk less and less about the books, resulting in it eventually no longer being a book

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<sup>388</sup> See Wenger 1998, pp. 73-77.

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discussion group. For Therese, being a member in a group of like-minded people who have a lot in common (all being female is one possible aspect, or having the same age) results in a safe group that provided the opportunity of a certain deepening of understanding. However, one disadvantage she mentioned was that this apparent familiarity too quickly leads to thinking a topic needs no further discussion. She felt that a more diverse membership (e.g. males *and* females) would prevent a discussion from ending too soon.

### *Societal Membership Motive*

Whereas the Social Membership Motive concerns the *relationships that exist between the members* of the specific book discussion group one participates in, the Societal Membership Motive concerns a feeling of a person being generally inclined to participate in clubs. Two statements together form the Societal Membership Motive:

- 10.c: I like taking part in a club activity.
- 10.m: I think it is important to be in a club.

The Societal Membership Motive refers to *enjoying being active with others*. In addition to enjoyment, this motive ascribes importance to being socially active within a club. Responses show that over three quarters of the respondents enjoys being part of a club. More than half of the respondents find it important to be socially active in a club:

**Table 4.14** Responses to four statements regarding the Societal Membership Motive from individual survey question 10.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10.c ( <i>n</i> =871) [like to participate]	16.99%	60.62%	19.75%	1.95%	0.69%
10.m ( <i>n</i> =868) [important to participate]	9.10%	46.66%	33.99%	7.95%	2.30%

The outcomes regarding the link between the educational background and the Societal Membership Motive relate to the interpretation of the outcomes of the Social Membership Motive: members with a lower educational background are more focused on the group process, on interaction, and on creating meaning together.

Educational level exhibits a correlation with age of the participant and affiliation of the group. Older respondents are more motivated to take part in organised activities: they find it more important than younger respondents do. Members of organised groups also think it is more important to participate in clubs. It is possible that they

ascribe more value to 'official' groups and clubs, though this does not show in the outcomes relating to this group's characteristics and the Status Membership Motive.

Members of all-female groups also see more importance in club membership, and enjoy this more than members of mixed-sex groups do. As described in Section 3.3, half of the organised all-female groups (52 in total) are affiliated with women's organisations. It is possible that members of all-female groups are more aware of the emancipatory value of being part of a club together and therefore respond more positively to these statements.

### *Practical Membership Motive*

Finally, the Practical Membership Motive implies that people participate in a book discussion group because it has one or more *practical advantages* for them. A common example of a manifestation of the Practical Membership Motive is the pressure-of-time motive (see statement 10.e). In total, four statements form this motive:

- 10.d: I think reading on my own is boring.
- 10.e: Being a member of a book discussion group / book discussion groups makes me read on a regular basis.
- 10.k: I do not have a lot of time to look up extra information on a book.
- 10.q: I find it difficult to choose a book from the inconveniently arranged supply.
- 10.u: By being a member of the book discussion group(s), I can more easily join in conversations about books that take place outside the book discussion group(s).

Three of these statements (10.e, 10.k, 10.q) were originally formulated in line with the theory-based Practical Membership Motive. Statement 10.d was originally formulated to investigate the theory-based Social Membership Motive. Placing it next to statements 10.e, 10.k and 10.q, enabled a more practical or pragmatic interpretation of this statement. People with a Practical Membership Motive want to read but do not take enough time to do so when reading individually. The meeting with their group allows them to take time out specifically for reading. For a number of interviewees for instance, the upcoming gathering of their book discussion group meant they increased their reading time to make sure they read the book in time for the gathering. Furthermore, people also find it convenient that their group chooses what to read next, or provides copies of the books. The membership makes reading more accessible and more of a matter of course.

Responses to the four statements show that this is not the most important membership motive to book discussion group participants. The first and fourth statements espe-

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cially are not seen as valuable: a vast majority of the respondents disagrees or strongly disagrees with these statements.

**Table 4.15** Responses to four statements regarding the Practical Membership Motive from individual survey question 10.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10.d ( $n=874$ ) [reading alone is boring]	0.46%	2.06%	9.50%	44.62%	43.36%
10.e ( $n=871$ ) [read on regular basis]	10.79%	41.22%	20.21%	20.67%	7.12%
10.k ( $n=867$ ) [no time for information]	1.61%	20.18%	34.37%	39.33%	4.50%
10.q ( $n=874$ ) [difficult to choose]	2.17%	15.79%	14.87%	46.00%	21.17%
10.u ( $n=874$ ) [conversations outside group]	2.40%	34.44%	37.30%	20.82%	5.03%

The Practical Membership Motive is valued in diverse ways by the respondents to the survey as well as the interviewees. Respondents certainly do not experience reading alone as boring (statement 10.d): in any case they can – naturally – be typified as *readers*, though the company during the meetings is highly valued by many respondents (see also table 4.14: statement 10.v of the Social Membership Motive) and almost all interviewees. For most interviewees, the Practical Membership Motive is not an important motive for being a member of a book discussion group; only Adrian sees this as the most important motive for his membership. He values the help in choosing book titles, as well as the motivation to take time to read. Though not to the same extent as Adrian, the motivation to take time to read a book and finish it before the meeting is recognised by half of the interviewees (Joan, Pauline, Karin, Afra, Addie, Marlene, Rita, and Francis), as well as by half of the survey respondents. Most interviewees have no problems finding book titles to read, but do appreciate that the book discussion group makes them read more diverse or other books than they would normally read. For Adrian and Francis, the group really is a big help in finding a title to read, although Francis says that now, after nine years of membership, he himself knows what to look for when choosing a good book. For some, the book discussion group does guide them towards reading very specific books: Bart for instance reads world literature, including such complex works as *In Search of Lost Time* (1913 - 1927) by Marcel Proust or *Ulysses* (1922) by James Joyce, and Francis would not read so many Dutch debut novels if it weren't for his book discussion group.

This is one of few motives that exhibit a link with the sex of the participant. Although it is important to realise that the overall level of agreement to this statement is very low



(see table 4.25), males tend to be less negative than females. As Summers describes, females are more used to socially interacting about books.<sup>389</sup> For them, the need to make reading more of a matter of course by participating in a book discussion group is less present. Males who do not have this social engagement with reading miss the opportunities to exchange reading experiences, which makes reading a more 'lone voyage' than for females. Similar to males, there were a higher percentage of older respondents who found reading alone boring. A similar explanation may be considered: younger respondents may more easily fulfil the need for social engagement about books outside their book discussion group as well, for instance on the Internet. Responses to all other statements regarding the Practical Membership Motive relate to age as well: in general, older participants are more practically motivated than younger participants. One exception is that younger respondents feel they do not have a lot of time to look up information on a book (10.k). This may have to do with obligations in working and/or family life. At first, it appears as if this finding does not correspond with the fact that older respondents need a book discussion group to get around to reading (statement 10.e). This might not have that much to do with the availability of time, although it seems that most older respondents have busy lives as well.

The age and educational level of the participants have the strongest links to the Practical Membership Motive. Younger participants seem to be more used to sharing opinions and views on books or other subjects with others in their daily activities. Members with a lower educational background have a stronger Practical Membership Motive. Considering statement 10.d, again, it is possible that these readers have fewer opportunities outside their book discussion group for social engagement about books considering the fact that there are fewer readers to be found among their friends and family (see Status Reading Motive). Reading may be less of a matter of course and meetings with the book discussion group help to finish a book on time (10.e). A lower educational background could imply fewer reading experiences and the book discussion group can help in choosing a books.

Members of organised groups and groups with a coach look more for the practical advantages of a book discussion group. Having the need for or feeling comfortable with a supportive organisation is in line with this motive. A professional coach has the expertise required to select books and to provide extra information on the book. This expertise and coaching makes reading more meaningful and may make reading less boring. Members of wild groups and groups without a coach may have to organise more for

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<sup>389</sup> Summers 2013, p. 248. See also the Status Reading Motive.

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themselves (where to meet, what to read, methods of discussion) and are not looking for practical solutions provided by someone else.

### 4.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, it was investigated what motives people have for reading and for book discussion group membership (research question II). This was done by means of the interviews and the individual survey, which included several statements regarding reading motives and membership motives. The reactions to the survey items regarding reading motives were positive and respondents recognise many of the statements. Most positive were the reactions to all three statements regarding the Aesthetic Reading Motive, complemented by 9.h – *I love getting absorbed in a book* (the Hedonistic Reading Motive) and 9.e – *I like receiving reading tips* (the Status Reading Motive). The two statements with the least positive reactions (9.f – *People react positively when they find out I like to read*, and 9.j – *I like recommending books to other people*, both belonging to the Status Reading Motive), were still recognised by more than half of the respondents.

The reactions to statements testing membership motives seem more diverse. Reactions to statements regarding the Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive (10.b, 10.l, 10.p), the Hedonistic Membership Motive, (9.c – *I like talking about books and literature*), the Practical Membership Motive (10.e – *Being a member of a book discussion group makes me read on a regular basis*), the Societal Membership motive (10.c – *I like taking part in a club activity*, and 10.m – *I think it is important to be in a club*), and the Social Membership Motive (10.v – *The book discussion group meetings are enjoyable*) were positive: each of the statements received responses in which more than half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Other statements were less approved of, specifically 10.d – *I think reading on my own is boring*, and 10.q – *I find it difficult to choose a book from the inconveniently arranged supply*, regarding the Practical Membership Motive: both statements received responses in which more than half of the respondents disagreed or even strongly disagreed.

Factor analysis and findings from the interviews led to the identification of four reading motives and six membership motives. Overall, respondents have diverse motives that are important to them when reading or participating in their book discussion groups. The Cognitive, Aesthetic and Hedonistic Reading Motives are all very important to respondents; the Status Reading Motive is less important. Of the membership motives, the Cognitive-aesthetic and Hedonistic Membership Motives are the most important; the Practical Membership Motive is not important to most respondents.

Furthermore, it was investigated whether personal characteristics and group characteristics are linked to the motives people have for reading books and being a member of a book discussion group. Many reactions to statements regarding the diverse reading and membership motives are indeed related to the characteristics of the respondents and groups. The strongest link between *personal characteristics* and motives was the *age* and *educational level* of the participant; the personal characteristic that showed only a minor link with motives was the sex of the participant. Of the *group characteristics*, being member of an *organised or a wild group* and *having a coach or not* both had strong links to members' motives. Again, similar to the sex of the participants, the composition of a group also only shows few links to members' motives. The age of the group certainly shows links with the members' motives, but no clear development emerged.

The outcomes can be illustrated by imagining two basic stereotype book discussion groups that were introduced in Section 3.6:

- Group 1: Organised group with a coach, members have a lower educational background than the members of group 2, members are older than members of group 2, there are fewer males among the members than in group 2. Members are very motivated to take part in a group activity.
- Group 2: Wild group without a coach, members have a higher educational background than the members of group 1, members are younger than group 1, although the majority of the members are female, there are more males among the members than in group 1. Members are motivated to read and they find their group meetings enjoyable.

The next chapter will investigate learning in the book discussion group. The relation between personal and group characteristics and learning will be studied using the individual survey and the interviews. Chapter 6 combines the outcomes of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 to answer the fourth research question.



## CHAPTER 5

### Learning by reading and discussing books

*Thus, what people in book groups notice most, even celebrate, is the kind of alchemy that brings a group of people together to a new level of understanding – of books, self, others, or the world – that is achieved through the expression and appreciation of their divergent perspectives.*

Elizabeth Long 2003, p. 110.



As Long aptly describes, participants of book discussion groups experience the discussions they engage in as meaningful. Participating in a book discussion group enables people to reach a new 'level of understanding', in other words, it enables people to learn. Research question III is the topic of this chapter: *In participants' experience, what do they learn from taking part in their book discussion group?* Answers to this question are based on *self-reported learning outcomes* from respondents to the individual survey (questions 9, 10 and 17) and the interviews (themes 5 and 6).<sup>390</sup> To anticipate research question IV – *What connections exist between characteristics of participants and their book discussion groups, participants' motives, and their experienced learning outcomes?*, findings are related to personal and group characteristics of respondents. The fourth research question is answered in Chapter 6.

The first section explores learning by reading; the second section investigates learning by participating in a book discussion group. With the help of a factor analysis of the survey outcomes and an analysis of the outcomes of the interviews, seven main learning topics were determined:

Section 5.1 Learning by reading:

- Learning from reading fiction
- Learning about literature
- Personal development and broadening one's horizons

Section 5.2 Learning through membership:

- Learning from discussing and learning about discussing
- Learning about literature
- Diversification of taste
- Personal development and broadening one's horizons

A number of statements from the individual survey were used to investigate these learning experiences as well as the relationships between learning experiences and personal and group characteristics. Findings were linked with personal and group characteristics of respondents. Not all topics are supported by the survey questions; some arose during the interviews following the survey. In these cases, the interviews were the only source of information and no calculations could be made to find relationships between the specific learning experience and personal and group characteristics.

Although it is impossible to strictly separate professional and personal development, this study investigates learning that is primarily situated in the context of personal life and leisure time, and not learning organised by work or intended purely for the benefit

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<sup>390</sup> The individual survey including responses is included in Appendix 2. For a complete overview of the six interview themes and corresponding questions, see Appendix 3.

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of one's professional life. Though the learning investigated here is not formal learning, it does affect one's professional situation as well. The impossibility of separating one's personal and professional learning immediately became tangible in a number of interviews. Teachers or former teachers of Dutch (Pauline, Dorothy, Bart) or English (Karin) already had some knowledge of literature before they became members, like Peter who studied Dutch linguistics and literature. Matthias is a journalist and is aware of this influencing how he reads fiction. Other professions or fields of expertise also influence people's methods of reading and discussing, as well as their learning experiences, in the case of Francis, for instance, who is a psychologist. Joan originally started her book discussion group because she was motivated to learn more about literature which might come handy in her profession as a university teacher.

To situate the interviewees' informal learning, it is important to realise that book discussion groups exist within a spectrum of institutionalised groups that range from those that have a professional leader and that consist of people with the intention of learning by participating in the group, to gatherings of friends who just enjoy discussing books that they have read together. Some of the interviewees had a clear vision on their learning in the book discussion group, whereas for others learning was a far more unconscious process, or even a less important aspect of their membership.

This chapter has a similar design to that of the fourth chapter on motives: first the outcomes on reading motives and the relationship between reading motives and characteristics were described per motive, followed by the outcomes on membership motives and the relationships with the characteristics per motive. Finally, an overview of the findings was presented per characteristic. Here, in Chapter 5, first the findings on learning by reading fiction and the relationships with characteristics are presented per subject (Section 5.1), followed by the presentation of the findings on learning through book discussion group membership and the relationships with membership per subject (Section 5.2). In Section 5.3, the findings are integrated with the findings about motives (Chapter 4) and presented in two parts: first the findings on relationships between motives, learning and personal characteristics are presented, followed by the findings on the relationships between motives, learning and group characteristics. With this, the fourth and final research question will be answered: *What connections exist between characteristics of participants and their book discussion groups, participants' motives, and their experienced learning outcomes?*



## 5.1 LEARNING BY READING

Sociologist Knulst posits that when people make a choice to participate in a cultural activity, they consider the expected benefits participation may have in social, cognitive and hedonistic areas and the investments in time and money required to participate.<sup>391</sup> In this chapter, cognitive benefits from *reading* and *participating* in a book discussion group play a central role: *learning as it is experienced by participants*. First, views and opinions on learning by *reading* fiction were explored in the interviews and the individual survey. To find an answer to the third research question, respondents to the individual survey were asked to react to several statements on learning. They were first asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree – agree – undecided – disagree – strongly disagree) to three statements on experiences in learning by *reading*. Translated from Dutch, the three statements about learning by reading are:

**Table 5.1** Overview of statements regarding learning by reading fiction (individual survey question 9).

Question number	Statement
9.g	Reading contributes to my personal development.
9.l	Reading makes me smarter.
9.n	Reading enables me to learn more about a subject I am interested in.

Because of the small number of statements considering learning by reading, no factor analysis was done. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the three statements is .665 and the internal consistency is therefore acceptable.<sup>392</sup> As anticipated, the survey only had an exploratory role in investigating learning by reading. This was a larger theme during the interviews. Interviewees were asked to indicate what they think they or other readers can learn from reading fiction. Furthermore, a number of topics that emerged in the literature study (see Section 1.3) were presented to the interviewees, after which they were asked to react to these topics (see Appendix 3.2: question 25). ‘General knowledge’ and ‘Specific knowledge’ were mostly discussed together and in relation with the ques-

<sup>391</sup> Knulst 1989. Ganzeboom also found that availability of time is an issue (Ganzeboom 1989, pp. 36-38) while the availability of money seems to only be important when *buying* books (Ganzeboom 1989, pp. 35-36). These are not to be considered as motives but rather as *conditions* and can be studied as aspects of what makes a book suitable for a book discussion group. Hartley for instance found several book discussion groups who only chose to read books that met certain practical requirements, for instance books that are low in price or available in paperback, or books that are available in the library, or books that do not exceed a certain number of pages: see Hartley 2002, pp. 46-47.

<sup>392</sup> Because of the small number of statements, a factor analysis was not relevant.

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tion of whether one can learn facts from fiction. The 'broadening of one's horizons' and 'knowledge of the self' were strongly linked. 'Staying active' was intertwined with the various topics, and not so much seen as an entirely separate topic. Combined with the survey data, three topics will be discussed in this section:

- Learning from reading fiction.
- Learning about literature.
- Personal development and the broadening of one's horizons.

They resemble the topics Long describes in her study. Where possible, outcomes of survey items relating to these topics are used to investigate connections between learning experiences and personal and group characteristics. This is done to anticipate research question IV. The investigation is done in a similar way to the investigation of relationships between motives and characteristics. Respondents were grouped according to personal characteristics as well as according to characteristics of the group in which they participate, and two statistical tests were used for calculations. These groups and statistical tests were introduced in Chapter 2 and used in Chapter 4:

**Table 5.2** Overview of groups of respondents and statistical tests.

Personal characteristics		
Sex	two categories: ♂ =male ♀=female	independent Mann-Whitney U test <sup>393</sup>
Age	four categories: 1=age 20-34 2=age 35-49 3=age 50-64 4=age ≥65	Kruskal-Wallis test
Educational level	three categories: L=low educational level M=middle educational level H=high educational level	Kruskal-Wallis test
Characteristics of the book discussion group <sup>394</sup>		
Affiliation of the group	two categories: W=wild groups O=organised groups	independent Mann-Whitney U test
Composition of the group	two categories: A-F=all-female groups M-S=mixed-sex groups	independent Mann-Whitney U test
Coach	two categories: +=with a coach -=without a coach	independent Mann-Whitney U test
Age of the group	five categories: 1=0-4 years 2=5-9 years 3=10-19 years 4=20-29 years 5=≥30 years	Kruskal-Wallis test

In a number of cases, there are significant differences between different types of respondents' answers. These form the basis of the presentation of the results, similar to the research described in Sections 4.1 and 4.2. Outcomes are presented per learning topic in a table in Appendix 2.2.1. Only *significant* outcomes ( $p \leq .05$ ) relating to connections between a specific characteristic and a specific statement regarding a learning topic are presented. Where possible, interpretations or explanations of these outcomes are discussed below.

<sup>393</sup> Non-normal distribution.

<sup>394</sup> Members of two groups were counted twice: once according to the characteristics of book discussion group 1, and once according to the characteristics of book discussion group 2.

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### *Learning from reading fiction*

Following various studies discussed in Section 1.3, reading fiction is seen as enabling people to learn about various aspects such as emotions and cultural conventions. With the help of the individual survey and the interviews, it was investigated whether respondents themselves experience that they learn from reading individually. Two general statements from the individual survey relate to this subject (but do not specifically focus on reading *fiction*):

- 9.l: Reading makes me smarter.
- 9.n: Reading enables me to learn more about a subject I am interested in.

**Table 5.3** Responses to two statements about learning from reading fiction, in percentages. Source: individual survey question 9. For exact numbers, see Appendix 2.2.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9.l ( <i>n</i> =863) [reading makes me smarter]	14.48%	45.31%	35.34%	3.82%	1.04%
9.n ( <i>n</i> =871) [learning about an interesting subject]	27.55%	60.05%	11.60%	0.80%	0.00%

Respondents to the survey recognise the possibilities of learning about specific subjects. This was also the case for a number of interviewees. The interviews specifically asked whether respondents thought they could learn about a particular subject by reading *fiction*. The premise that reading *fiction* is instructive – as stated in Chapter 1 – turns out to be seen as valid by almost all interviewees. Various topics were brought up. Karin for instance praises the book *De schilder en het meisje* [*The painter and the girl*] by Margriet de Moor (2010), which taught her about painting techniques and how a painter looks at the world. Yvonne learned about medical techniques by reading *De engelenmaker* [*The Angel Maker*] by Stefan Brijs (2005). Francis, who is very interested in both World Wars, thinks he can learn many things from reading fictional works about these subjects. He appreciates the fact that authors research their topics before writing, but acknowledges that an author's artistic freedom also allows him to bend facts. Interviewee Matthias is less positive on authors who neglect to do thorough research. When a fictional work deals with a subject he himself knows a lot about, such as agriculture, he is irritated when so-called facts are not accurate. Therese and Karin on the other hand do not always question whether information presented in a fictional work is true or not – e.g. information on another culture or country. They mostly accept the information as being true. For Pauline, a work of fiction may form a starting point: when reading about an interesting subject, she will look for other sources of information to gain more knowledge.

Survey outcomes considering the relationship between characteristics and this learning topic do not provide outcomes that can easily be interpreted. Older respondents more strongly experience learning about a specific subject through reading than younger respondents do, while younger respondents (more than older respondents) think reading makes them smarter. Moreover, compared with members of mixed-sex groups, members of all-female groups see reading more as a way to learn about a specific subject.

### *Learning about literature*

Learning about literature includes learning about writers, genres, literary history, and the practice of literary analysis. The majority of the interviewees claim that reading individually allows them to learn about literature, although this is not easily achieved. Educational background plays an important role in some cases: their previous or current education helps them specifically in interpreting and analysing books. When Pauline's high school teacher taught her class about reading Dutch literature, she was amazed by the world beyond the book: the meaning of structure and intertextuality. What makes us deem a story *literary*? She does not imply knowing what is and what is not literature, but she does think that through reading, she has got to know this form of art better and better. The fact that analysing and interpreting books is difficult makes it interesting to her. Getting to know the world beyond the book is exactly what she tries to teach her pupils, now that she is a high school teacher in Dutch language and literature herself.

Other interviewees who studied literature as well (Peter, Dorothy, and Bart) are also aware of the value of their educational background when reading a book. Dorothy points out that the practice of analysing books calls for extensive reading: the more one reads, the more easily one can analyse and interpret a book. Peter and Bart recognise that their educational background causes them to automatically pay attention to for instance the structure of a book or a writer's style. For Peter, the context of a book is more important than its so-called literary quality, and Bart is cautious about letting the meaning of a book get overshadowed by the jargon and taxonomy he learned during his education.

Karin, who studied English literature, points out that educational background in literature does not always indicates whether readers find it easy to practice literary analysis or learn about literature when reading. Though she is well aware of literary history and analysis, she does not read as an academic would. When reading, she is initially intrigued by the storyline itself. She visualises the story and continues reading specifically because of the story. Sometimes she notes down what she thinks is an important scene, but continues her reading. When she finishes a book, she may think about why she

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thought these scenes were important. She needs the interaction of the book discussion group to give this aspect meaning.

Other interviewees also indicate that learning about literature individually is not easily done. Marlene thinks one's educational background will help in being able to learn about literature by reading individually. One needs knowledge and reading skills in order to enjoy reading. In Yvonne's experience, she only can analyse a book if she finds the book attractive. Others need information or interaction with other readers to make progress in analysing books. When reading individually, Therese still notices that talking about a book with other readers helps her interpret a book. She also reads reviews that help her interpret books. When reading, Rita approaches texts in a more business-like manner, looking for facts when analysing the storyline. She really needs her book discussion group to learn about literature. Joan on the other hand is well aware of the literary aspects of a book when reading individually, but at the same time she is aware of the fact that for her, reading individually is not enough to improve her knowledge and literature skills. This was the main reason for her to found her book discussion group. Afra also thinks that learning about literature is hard to do individually. She specifically values Dorothy's role in her book discussion group, who helps others learn about literature in the meetings. Addi even felt the need to take a literature course in addition to her book discussion group membership.

For Matthias, Adrian, and Francis, analysing books or learning about literature in a different way is not important when reading individually. Matthias says he learns about writers, but not about literary movements just by reading. Interpreting a work can be learned, but this is a vague topic for him. He does not like academic prose or books written by literary scholars who claim their stories have several layers. Adrian and Francis do not pay any attention to this subject when reading individually. For Adrian, it is nice that his book discussion group pays attention to those sides of reading that he would not pay attention to when reading on his own. There is so much to learn about all sorts of cultural manifestations, and Adrian has many interests. For now, the book discussion group offers him knowledge about literature, but he also has other interests. For Francis, literary analysis is not the most important aspect of reading a book. He thinks it is hard: what makes one book better than the other? He leaves these sorts of questions to academics and his fellow book discussion group members.

### *Personal development and broadening one's horizons*

Reading can lead to personal development or self-insight and the broadening of one's horizons. The interviews made clear that these terms are intertwined: personal devel-

opment includes self-awareness, and this is often linked with knowledge of other people and things, or, the broadening of one's horizons. In the individual survey, one statement referred to learning about personal development:

- 9.g: Reading contributes to my personal development.

**Table 5.4** Responses to one statement regarding learning about personal development in percentages. Source: individual survey question 9. For exact numbers, see Appendix 2.2.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9.g ( $n=872$ ) [personal development]	25.80%	54.93%	18.12%	0.57%	0.57%

Many respondents see reading books as a contribution to their personal development. Again, in this statement, the type of *reading* was not specified: no distinction was made between reading fiction and reading nonfiction or reading books, magazines or newspapers. The interviews were used to gain more insight into this subject. Here, the focus was on reading fiction. For the interviewees, self-development and the broadening of one's horizons were intertwined. For all members, the broadening of one's horizons is to a lesser or greater extent made possible by reading fiction. The broadening of one's horizons may include different aspects: learning more about other countries or cultures, different religions, or political views, and social issues, for instance, and with this interviewees also reflect on their own relationships with these aspects. Reading about other cultures and realising the contrasts within an interviewee's own environment can be confronting, for instance.

*Fiction* specifically is seen as a source of knowledge by many interviewees. Fiction can make social issues more clear and understandable to readers. In this way, reading fiction enables people to broaden their horizons. Specifically experiencing a world from the different perspective of the main character of a book enables readers to learn about the world and at the same time puts their own thoughts and experiences into perspective. For instance, Pauline experiences that she as a reader has a dialogue with the book she reads: she analyses her reactions when reading. What makes her feel or think this way about something she just read? Why can she empathise with characters that act, think, or feel so differently from the way she acts, thinks or feels? This dialogue causes her to consciously learn about herself.

Learning about the self and others is possible when a reader can empathise with the main characters of a book despite their differences. Both Pauline and Karin were disturbed when reading books written through the eyes of a killer (*Een nagelaten bekentenis* [A Posthumous Confession] by Marcellus Emants (1894) and *Indian Killer* by

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Sherman Alexie (1996) respectively). Fiction opens a reader to thinking or seeing things differently, without necessarily changing their own viewpoints.

Francis expressed this ability of fiction very well. As mentioned above, he has an interest in both World Wars and has read many nonfiction works on these subjects. However, in addition to reading about the facts, he now appreciates fictional works on the wars very much as these works enable him to imagine the situations of people who went through the wars. This was less so in the case of reading nonfiction on the same subjects.

The findings of links between age and responses to this statement do not exhibit a clear development; the link with educational background is more evident. Respondents with a higher educational background experience more that reading contributes to their personal development. Similar to the findings presented in Chapter 4 and Section 5.2, it seems that respondents with a higher educational background are more focused on their own development and on reading itself than on the group process.

More so than members of organised groups and groups with a coach, members of wild groups and groups without a coach see reading as a contribution to their personal development. Similar to respondents with a higher educational background, these respondents feel they can develop themselves as well and feel less of a need for a book discussion group to do so. Members of organised book discussion groups and groups with a coach experience more of a need for the group and/or coach to make reading more meaningful. Finally, members of all-female groups experience reading more as a contribution to their personal development than members of mixed-sex groups do, but the reason behind this remains unclear.

### 5.2 LEARNING THROUGH MEMBERSHIP

In the first chapter, it was stated that learning is a social activity with both individual and group results.<sup>395</sup> Following learning by reading fiction, learning through book discussion group membership is the final research topic of this study. This topic was investigated by means of the individual survey (Appendix 2.2: individual survey questions 10 and 17) and the interviews. In total, the individual survey contained 20 statements about learning through membership. Respondents were asked to react on a five-point Likert scale to these statements indicating their level of agreement (strongly agree – agree –

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<sup>395</sup> See Chapter 1. Cf. Kerka 1996, p. 88-89; Kooy 2006a, p. 662-663; Wenger 1998, p. 3-17.



undecided – disagree – strongly disagree). The statements were formulated in line with studies relevant to learning in a book discussion group as described in Section 1.3. Translated from Dutch, these statements are:

**Table 5.5** Overview of statements regarding learning from membership (individual survey questions 10 and 17).

Question number	Statement
10.a	Because of the book discussion group(s), I learn more about literature or another subject that I am interested in.
10.f	The discussions contribute to my personal development.
10.h	Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate certain books less.
10.i	Because of the discussions, I find more depth (layers) in a book.
10.n	Because of the discussions, I learn more about the other members' personalities.
10.r	I am more open to other people's views and opinions thanks to the discussions.
10.s	Since I joined the book discussion group(s), my taste in books has changed.
10.w	Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate writers, genres or categories of books more which I did not like before.
17.a	I learn about literature in general (about literary movements and literary history, for example).
17.b	I learn about certain writers.
17.c	I learn how to analyse books (how to recognise and interpret motives and narrative perspectives, for example).
17.d	I understand a book better because I am able to find the deeper layers within the story.
17.e	I learn about a particular subject.
17.f	I learn how to form an opinion on certain subjects.
17.g	I have learned how to be a better debater.
17.h	I learn about the opinions of other members of the book discussion group.
17.i	I learn how to express myself better.
17.j	I learn to better appreciate other readers' opinions.
17.k	I am developing / have developed a taste for certain books.
17.l	The meetings contribute to my personal development.

These statements were intended to investigate various subjects that can be learned by participating in a book discussion group. Are they indeed recognised by members of book discussion groups? A factor analysis was done to categorise the statements into various topics.

First, the Cronbach alpha coefficient of these statements is .895: the internal consistency is good. With the help of a factor analysis, it was investigated which statements exhibited a correlation. Suitability for factor analysis was tested first: the correlation

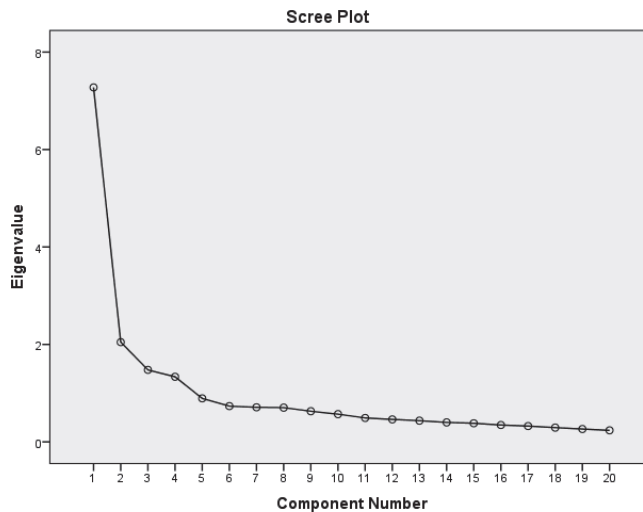
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matrix showed only a small number of coefficients of .3 and above. The Kayser-Meyer-Oklín value was .915. Bartlett's test of Sphericity reached significance (.000). These outcomes, together with the high response of  $n=877$ , support the data is suitable for factor analysis.

Principal component analysis showed that there are four components with eigenvalues exceeding 1. These explain the following percentages of the variance respectively:

- Component 1: 36.376%
- Component 2: 10.233%
- Component 3: 7.388%
- Component 4: 6.681%

The scree plot shows a break after the fourth component:



**Figure 5.3** Scree plot factor analysis statements on learning through membership.

Following these outcomes, it was decided to retain four components for further investigation. Varimax rotation was used to interpret the components:

**Table 5.6** Rotated component matrix: four components extracted. Varimax rotation.

Component → ↓Statement	1	2	3	4
17.i	.794			
17.j	.785			
17.g	.764			
17.h	.737			
17.f	.714	.341		
17.k	.625	.360		.322
17.e	.622	.474		
17.l	.601	.388	.318	
17.a		.717		
17.b	.435	.686		
17.c	.426	.676		
17.d	.434	.672		
10.f			.771	
10.i		.326	.658	
10.n	.316		.589	
10.a		.443	.567	
10.r	.344		.419	.337
10.s				.815
10.w				.671
10.h				.652
% of variance explained	24.559	15.693	10.622	9.804

This option to retain four components explained a total of 60.68% of the variance. The results indicate that the statements can be grouped into four different components: each component stands for a different subject tested with survey questions 10 and 17. For instance, the subject of component 1 can be described as: *Learning from discussing and learning about discussing*. The six statements that belong to this component all test the respondents' opinions on this subject. Three more components arise: one more is formed by six statements, the last two by four statements each.

*Component 1: Learning from discussing and learning about discussing*

- Statement 17.e: I learn about a particular subject.
- Statement 17.f: I learn how to form an opinion on certain subjects.
- Statement 17.g: I have learned how to be a better debater.

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- Statement 17.h: I learn about the opinions of other members of the book discussion group.
- Statement 17.i: I learn how to express myself better.
- Statement 17.j: I learn to better appreciate other readers' opinions.

### *Component 2: Learning about the subject of literature*

- Statement 17.a: I learn about literature in general (about literary movements and literary history, for example)
- Statement 17.b: I learn about certain writers.
- Statement 17.c: I learn how to analyse books (how to recognise and interpret motives and narrative perspectives, for example).
- Statement 17.d: I understand a book better because I am able to find the deeper layers within the story.
- Statement 10.a: Because of the book discussion group(s), I learn more about literature or another subject that I am interested in.
- Statement 10.i: Because of the discussions, I find more depth (layers) in a book.

### *Component 3: Personal development*

- Statement 10.f: The discussions contribute to my personal development.
- Statement 10.n: Because of the discussions, I learn more about the other members' personalities.
- Statement 10.r: I am more open to other people's views and opinions thanks to the discussions.
- Statement 17.l: The meetings contribute to my personal development.

### *Component 4: Development of taste / diversification*

- Statement 10.s: Since I joined the book discussion group(s), my taste in books has changed.
- Statement 10.w: Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate writers, genres or categories of books more which I did not like before.
- Statement 10.h: Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate certain books less.
- Statement 17.k: I am developing / have developed a taste for certain books.

As Table 5.6 makes clear, eleven statements related to more than one component. In almost all cases, it was decided to assign these statements to the component to which they related with the highest eigenvalue. In some cases, based on content analysis, it was

decided otherwise: statements 10.i and 10.a are both semantically more similar to component 2 (.326 and .443 respectively) than to component 3 (.658 and .567 respectively); statement 17.k is semantically more related to component 4 (.322) than to component 1 (.625), and finally statement 17.l is more similar to component 3 (.388) than component 1 (.601). Four topics will therefore be discussed below. The third component, personal development, is in line with the interview outcomes extended to include broadening one's horizons. This topic was not clearly included in the survey. For most interviewees, broadening one's horizons and personal insight or personal development were topics that are strongly intertwined. This combined topic was also an important subject of learning by reading (Section 5.1).

Besides this, the interviews were used to gather more qualitative information. Similar to the investigation of the reading motives, membership motives and learning by reading fiction, the interviewees were first asked to formulate what they think they learn from their participation in their book discussion groups. Next, they were given six topics (see Appendix 3.2: interview theme 6, question 33) that members may learn from book discussion group participation. The 'knowledge of the self' was strongly linked with broadening one's horizons which many interviewees explicitly formulated pro-actively. 'Staying active' was not so relevant to most respondents. Furthermore, the reactions to 'Literature' that concerned 'getting to know other books that one would not have read individually', will be discussed separately. In this way, the results can be discussed ordered according to the outcomes of the survey item factor analysis.

To anticipate the final research question, it was investigated whether there are relationships between characteristics of the respondents and the group they participate in, and the topics respondents learn about in their experience. This was done in a similar way as in Sections 4.1, 4.2, and 5.1.<sup>396</sup> Where possible, outcomes of statements relating to these topics will be used to investigate connections between learning experiences and personal and group characteristics. Information gathered by means of the interview questions is used below to explain or illustrate outcomes of the individual survey.

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<sup>396</sup> See also Appendix 2.2.1.

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### *Learning from discussing and about discussing*

The first learning topic concerns learning from discussing and learning about discussing. The following six statements from individual survey question 17 can be related to learning in general from discussing, and more specifically learning how to discuss:

- 17.e: I learn about a particular subject.
- 17.f: I learn how to form an opinion on certain subjects.
- 17.g: I have learned how to be a better debater.
- 17.h: I learn about the opinions of other members of the book discussion group.
- 17.i: I learn how to express myself better.
- 17.j: I learn to better appreciate other readers' opinions.

**Table 5.7** Responses to six statements belonging to the first component from individual survey question 17.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
17.e (n=851) [particular subject]	8.46%	57.11%	29.14%	5.05%	0.24%
17.f (n=850) [forming opinions]	7.06%	52.47%	34.94%	5.29%	0.24%
17.g (n=850) [better debater]	4.47%	42.59%	41.76%	10.24%	0.94%
17.h (n=852) [getting to know opinions]	10.33%	80.16%	8.92%	0.59%	0.00%
17.i (n=851) [expressing myself]	3.29%	34.78%	45.36%	14.57%	2.00%
17.j (n=849) [appreciating opinions]	6.95%	63.25%	24.50%	4.83%	0.47%

Reactions to these statements show that learning about other members' opinions (17.h) as well as learning to appreciate other participants' opinions (17.j) are most strongly recognised as learning outcomes within this component. Developing the ability to express oneself (17.i) is only a minor learning outcome of book discussion group membership. Responses are positive: most positive are the reactions to 17.h and 17.j. These two statements have a specific interpretation that relates to the book discussion group. Other learning subjects included in the remaining four statements concern knowledge and above all skills that can also be achieved in other situations outside the book discussion group. As Marlene remarks: she learned more about debating during her work in politics than in her book discussion group. She is not alone in this: the interviewees are all active people. The book discussion group meetings only take a few hours a month at the most and are often one of the participants' many activities.

This is the only learning component with a link between the sex of the participants and their responses: similar to the reading motives (Section 4.1) and membership motives (4.2), sex turns out to play a minor role in the relationships between personal character-

istics and learning. Here, females indicate that they learn about a particular subject and that they learn to express themselves better more than males did.

The age and educational level of the participants show strong links with the participants' responses to learning components. Older participants and participants with a lower educational background indicated more strongly that the book discussion group helps them develop discussion skills. The learning possibilities offered by group dynamics are less evident for respondents with a higher educational background: they focus less on learning by exchanging views and complementing each other in discussions. The starting level is lower, so that a stronger development can be achieved.

Members of all-female groups more strongly indicate that they learn about a particular subject than members of mixed-sex groups do. There is no directly apparent explanation for this. As seen in Chapter 4, members of all-female groups generally tend to react more positively to statements than members of mixed-sex groups do. Females generally also reacted more positively to this specific statement than males did. Group dynamics may increase this learning experience in all-female groups.

Members of groups without a coach more strongly indicated learning about the opinions of the other members. It is possible that members of groups with a professional coach see the coach as an expert and as knowing 'the right answers', which leaves less room for different points of view. Also, coaches may focus more on discussing books a certain way by providing information about the author, revealing the book's structure and layers and analysing the story. This may also leave less room for discussing members' opinions. Also, as Yvonne experienced, a coach may limit discussions that become more personal and which do not directly relate to the book.

Finally, the age of the group relates to experienced learning outcomes (inverted-U relationship). These outcomes suggest that a group needs time to settle and become a safe environment, in which everyone can express their opinions and be open to each other. Members become familiar with each other's views and opinions in time, which was for instance expressed by this respondent to individual survey question 12:

*Female (62): I have noticed that the social aspect is important too, because the members of the group are getting very old and therefore conversations are becoming less profound. Moreover, you know each other too well, not many surprising things are said.*

These outcomes imply that after some years, people are not only familiar with each other's views and opinions, but also that these no longer fundamentally evolve.

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### *Learning about literature*

Learning about literature by participating in a book discussion group (literary knowledge as well as literary analysis) was investigated by means of the interviews and with the help of six statements in the individual survey:

- 10.a: Because of the book discussion group(s), I learn more about literature or another subject that I am interested in.
- 10.i: Because of the discussions, I find more depth (layers) in a book.
- 17.a: I learn about literature in general (about literary movements and literary history, for example).
- 17.b: I learn about certain writers.
- 17.c: I learn how to analyse books (how to recognise and interpret motives and narrative perspectives, for example).
- 17.d: I understand a book better because I am able to find the deeper layers within the story.

**Table 5.8** Responses to six statements on learning about literature by membership. Source: individual survey questions 10 and 17.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10.a ( <i>n</i> =870) [literature or subject]	28.74%	60.80%	9.20%	1.15%	0.11%
10.i ( <i>n</i> =870) [layers]	21.15%	69.20%	8.97%	0.57%	0.11%
17.a ( <i>n</i> =851) [literature in general]	9.28%	53.00%	26.56%	10.46%	0.71%
17.b ( <i>n</i> =853) [writers]	14.30%	74.33%	9.14%	1.99%	0.23%
17.c ( <i>n</i> =855) [analyse books]	10.53%	62.69%	20.23%	6.08%	0.47%
17.d ( <i>n</i> =860) [understand books]	14.77%	68.37%	13.49%	3.14%	0.23%

Overall, respondents recognise that these statements and responses are positive, though learning about literature in general (statement 17.a) is less self-evident. This could indicate that book discussion groups tend to focus on a specific book during a meeting, but that there is less attention for placing the book within a broader literary-historical perspective. In addition to getting to know new writers, books or genres, members may increase their familiarity with literary knowledge or skills such as literary analysis. As stated in Section 4.1, for many interviewees, the boundaries between the theoretical Cognitive and the Aesthetic Membership Motive are not clear. Here, learning and aesthetics are combined in this learning topic. During the interview questions on learning about literature, things such as an author's style, layers within a story, and narrative mode were also important aspects. For Joan, practicing literary analysis was an im-



portant reason to start her book discussion group. She wanted to read more Dutch-language literature and pay active attention to literary analysis: when reading individually, she does not take the time and the effort to do this. Other interviewees also recognise this and tend to pay less or no attention to literary analysis when reading individually. The fact that book discussion group membership helps readers to learn more about literature than reading alone is also recognised by many of the interviewees, even outside the actual meetings. Prior to the meetings, most respondents claim to read with extra care – some make notes, write down interesting quotations, or look up extra information – when reading for their book discussion groups, some may even read a book twice, or reread a book they already read before individually.

During the meetings, Joan, Marlene, Rita, Yvonne, and Addie's groups work with a list of discussion points including aspects of literary analysis, such as motifs, narrative modes, settings, and characters. This gives the meetings a base and structure. It forces participants to support their opinions with arguments: it makes the meetings instructive, specifically on the subject of literature. Therese's former group and Matthias and Bart's groups had worked with lists of questions or discussion points but decided not to use them anymore. Group D still has a list with questions but only uses it casually: it is not used when other, more interesting points for discussion come up.

Older participants more strongly indicate that they learn to analyse books. This is a skill that requires practice and experience. Older readers have had more time to read, which may positively influence the development of analysis skills in their book discussion group.

Respondents with a low or middle-level educational background more strongly indicate that they learn about literature and analysing books. These respondents have a lower starting level on this subject, so it may be that more progress is therefore visible. Furthermore, exchanging interpretations in a group may specifically help in learning about literary analysis. As seen before, respondents with a low or middle-level educational background are more focused on learning together. Specifically the statements about analysing books exhibit an inverted-U relationship: it is possible that analysis is a skill that does not connect respondents with a low educational background as much as it does respondents with a middle-educational level background.

Composition of the group turns out to have a strong link with the experienced learning outcomes of the members on the subject of literature. Members of all-female groups more strongly indicated that they learn about literature or another subject, about writers, analysing books, and finding deeper layers within books than members of mixed-sex groups did. More research is required to explain this difference.

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Members of groups with a coach more strongly indicated that they learn about literature in general (10.a and 17.a), and therefore more strongly claim to acquire *knowledge*. Members of groups without a coach on the other hand more strongly indicated that they learn how to analyse books (17.c), which is the development of a *skill*. The coach brings knowledge to the group, knows more on the subject of literature (genres, or literary history for instance) and even provides information. In the interviews, it became clear that in some groups that do not have a coach, members take turns introducing the book at the beginning of a meeting, which means that extra preparation time is invested by that member (in Addie, Bart, Francis, and Matthias's groups, Therese's philosophical group). For the development of a *skill*, in this case literary analysis, members of groups without a coach more strongly indicated that it seems better that members are among equals: they have to analyse the book together. A coach may pay attention to literary analysis as well but his or her status as an expert may result in this being more in the form of knowledge transfer to the other members as opposed to being a more active practice in which everyone participates and can thus better develop this skill. These findings are supported by the information gathered in the interviews. Joan believes that a group needs at least one person who is good at literary analysis to prevent the discussions from being bogged down when a book is difficult. In groups F and J, it is the professional coach from the library who fulfils this role; in group D, it is interviewee Dorothy who mostly has the role of the expert while Afra is the discussion leader. In addition to Dorothy, Bart also more or less spontaneously fulfils the role of the expert at his group's meetings. Both Dorothy and Bart studied Dutch linguistics and literature and are former teachers. Though an expert may have a positive effect on the learning outcomes of the members, Dorothy and Bart are aware of the danger of being too intrusive during the discussions, as a consequence of being seen as the expert. During the interview, Dorothy repeatedly expressed her respect for fellow members' views and said she is conscious of her role. Others see and appreciate her (for instance, interviewee Afra of the same group) as the expert but she does not want to impose her views or knowledge. Bart, also an expert on the field of literature, is aware of himself being somewhat intrusive now and then (this was confirmed by his wife and fellow member of group L, who was in the same room during the interview...). Sometimes he deliberately keeps his mouth shut during discussions.

The most important group characteristic relating to respondents' learning experiences regarding this component is the age of the group. Though at first sight the outcomes seem to vary, a more self-evident line emerges here than in the outcomes considering the relationships between *motives* and age of the group discussed in Chapter 4. Considering learning, respondents from groups in the 0-4 years age category had the

least positive responses to all six statements of this component. Learning about literature is a subject in which a group definitely needs to develop. Furthermore, an inverted-U relationship was found more often than in Chapter 4. Here, the inverted-U relationship indicates that at first learning opportunities increase, but after a certain point in time, these opportunities decrease.

A condition for learning about literature that emerged from the surveys is the book the group reads and discusses which must lend itself to literary analysis, and the level of difficulty must match the competence of the group. The book list presented in Appendix 1.3 illustrates that not all types of books are considered valuable for book discussion groups. The book list is analysed in Section 3.5. Book discussion groups generally focus on present-day literature, and most books were originally written in Dutch.

The book list provides insight into the reading habits of book discussion groups. However, it does not necessarily reveal books that were liked by all members or even all groups, or books that prompted successful discussions. Groups try to choose books that are suitable for their discussions but not all books turn out to be a success. Over time, these groups build a shared repertoire of books they have discussed, and participants develop a shared practice through their discussions. Groups build experience in choosing books and may develop certain ways of choosing the ‘right’ books for their group, depending on the expectations they have of a book and of a discussion. In the group survey, groups were asked to name one book that produced a fruitful discussion and one book that turned out not to be suitable for good discussion.<sup>397</sup>

Biting off more than one can chew is not a good starting point for a discussion. Some books prove to be **too complicated or too heavy** for a book discussion group, most certainly when the group has just started. Books that proved to be unsuitable to some groups were for instance:

Allesandro Baricco – *Questa Storia*. Too complicated, different plot lines, reading the book should bring joy, [but] the author’s meaning [was] hard to grasp.

Geert Mak – *De eeuw van mijn vader*. This was our first book. Some members of the group had not read a book in a long time. This was too ambitious at that point in time.

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<sup>397</sup> Based on group survey questions 26 (n=203) and 27 (n=198). Groups were allowed to name other books than they entered on the book list of recently read novels. Some titles mentioned here therefore do not appear on the book list.

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Philip Roth – *The Human Stain*: too hard and too ambitious, we therefore did not finish the book.

Charlotte Mutsaers – *Rachels rokje* [meaning ‘Rachel’s skirt’]: hard to read, incomprehensible (we wear trousers).

Herman Melville – *Moby Dick*. Many of the members did not get through this bulky, stiff work [...].

A book that is too difficult for all members of a group is not likely to lend itself to a fruitful discussion. On the other hand, a **book with insufficient depth** certainly does not lend itself to a good discussion either:

Marianne Fredriksson – *Skilda verkligheter*. Should be part of the Harlequin romance novel series.

Ray Kluun – *Love Life*. We think it lacks literary quality.

Wim de Bie – *Meneer Foppe*. Rubbish.

Carlos Ruiz Zafón – *The shadow of the wind*. The group thought the book was too simple for a book group discussion. The novel was not appealing to most of us.

Nelleke Noordervliet – *Snijpunt*. Not profound enough. Eventually it did not say anything at all. What did the author mean??

Frank Westerman – *Ararat*. We all agreed: it did not lead to anything – no points for discussion. Maybe this was because it is nonfiction.

Vonne van der Meer – *Eilandgasten*. Short stories [that] only lead to few points for discussion.

These books did not have enough depth or starting points for discussion, according to some responding groups. When the group has a **unanimously positive view of the book**, this may have the same effect on the discussion. Little remains for a good discussion in the event that every member loved the book:<sup>398</sup>

Federica De Cesco – *Aischa*. We all agreed it was great.

Phillipe Claudel – *Monsieur Linh and his Child*. No discussion because everybody thought it was a beautiful book.

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<sup>398</sup> This is similar to what Hartley found in her study: ‘When everyone loves a book the discussion peters out early’. Hartley 2002, p. 79. Wenger sees that for some communities with a joint enterprise, ‘disagreement can be viewed as a productive part of the enterprise’. Wenger 1998, p. 78.

Suzanna Jansen – *Het pauperparadijs*. The discussion was limited, because we were so united in our positive view of this book.

For other groups, a unanimously positive view of the book is indeed the starting point of a good discussion. When everyone enjoyed reading the book, there seems to be too little input for a good discussion:

Suzanna Jansen – *Het pauperparadijs*. We unanimously thought the book was good: praising comments.

Amos Oz – *A Tale of Love and Darkness*. A touching story, brilliantly written, nicely structured. Captivating background. Appealed to everyone. Beautiful scenes that created a stir. Good discussion.

A **unanimously negative view of the book**, however, never seems to lead to a good discussion:

José Saramago – *Blindness*. Everybody thought it was a horrible, frightening book.

Arnon Grunberg – *De asielzoeker*: [It] sketches an ugly world, unnecessarily rude.

Houellebecq – *Atomised*. Everybody thought [it was] horrible.

Robert Anker – *Hajar en Daan*. Vulgar.

Most groups see **differences in opinions on the book** or **different reading approaches** as fruitful starting points of the session:

Discussions regarding everyone's opinions always arise. Everyone sheds light on the book in a different way, by which your opinion can be complemented and maybe gain depth.

Arnon Grunberg – *Tirza*. Fascinating, provoking, daring; caused a fiery discussion.

Jan Siebelink – *Suezkade* provided a lively discussion because of the differences in opinions – from negative to positive.

Different opinions are not always seen as a good thing. One group experiences discussions as positive *despite* of the existing differences at the start of the meeting:

Despite differences in opinions on the books, we end with a meaningful discussion.

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Moreover, in rare cases differences in opinion may stand in the way of a good discussion.

Dimitri Verhulst – *The Misfortunates*. Some of us did not see what attracted others to the book: the humour, the vulgarity.

Book discussion groups have to develop a way of finding books that are suitable for their group and which match their level and goals. When there is no professional coach in charge of choosing the books, a good help for finding the right book may be a list of books composed by the local library. Joan's group used to use such a list: since the group stopped using the list, the book choices are more often disappointing to Joan. Matthias's group still uses such a list: the group can borrow enough copies of these titles from the local library, though there is a waiting list for popular books. Other groups for instance use newspaper reviews to help them choose books.

### *Personal development and broadening one's horizons*

Four statements all relate to personal development and self-insight. Responses to these statements indicate that many respondents experience a link between book discussion group participation and their self-development.

- 10.f: The discussions contribute to my personal development.
- 10.n: Because of the discussions, I learn more about the other members' personalities.
- 10.r: I am more open to other people's views and opinions thanks to the discussions.
- 17.l: The meetings contribute to my personal development.

**Table 5.9** Responses to four statements on learning through membership about personal development and broadening one's horizons. Source: individual survey questions 10 and 17.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10.f (n=873)	14.09%	62.66%	20.50%	2.52%	0.23%
10.n (n=872)	11.12%	63.99%	22.02%	2.29%	0.57%
10.r (n=870)	6.21%	54.71%	29.20%	8.05%	1.84%
17.l (n=850)	12.24%	58.47%	25.18%	3.65%	0.47%

Moreover, during the interviews, personal development turned out to be strongly linked with the subject of broadening one's horizons which was not represented in the individual survey. For many interviewees, it is not easy to separate broadening one's horizons and gaining self-insight, because gaining self-insight often includes comparing that of yourself with others: not only with other book discussion group members, but also with other characters and situations in books, or society. 'I want to know' and 'know yourself' are two statements by interviewee Afra: she wants to know what humans are like, what the world is like. That never ends: curiosity about the world around you and getting to know yourself is what Afra says she is engaged in and she says they are inextricably linked. Reading itself is a way to gain self-insight, for instance through identification.<sup>399</sup> Moreover, gaining self-insight is a learning result which a community of practice – such as a book discussion group – can contribute to.<sup>400</sup> Long and Hartley specifically emphasise the value of *book discussion groups* for participants to gain self-insight.<sup>401</sup>

The level of agreement on membership statement 10.r – *I am more open to other people's views and opinions thanks to the discussions* – may be experienced as relatively low compared to the responses to the other three statements. This specific learning outcome may be more clearly reached by other means in one's social or professional life than the membership of the book discussion group: a book discussion group usually takes up just a small part of someone's life;<sup>402</sup> or people who join a book discussion group can tend to be open to other viewpoints already.

The older the respondent, the more they experience that the discussions help in being open to other people's views and opinions. This result corresponds with the findings on learning from discussing and about discussing through membership. Also, it seems to

<sup>399</sup> See for instance Pette 2001, p. 303, on the connection readers can make between the book they read and their everyday life.

<sup>400</sup> Wenger 1998, pp. 149-163, see also Section 1.3.

<sup>401</sup> Long 2003, pp. 144-188; Hartley 2002, pp. 127-128.

<sup>402</sup> See for instance Antikainen 1998, p. 220.

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relate to the two older female respondents quoted in Section 4.2: *Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive*, who both experience that at their age, they learn more about life and people than about specific subjects.

The lower a participant's educational background, the more he or she experiences that they learn to be more open to other people's views and opinions. As seen before, respondents with a lower educational background are more focused on the development of the group than on the self, and these outcomes are a manifestation of that as well.

The affiliation of the group has the strongest links with the experienced learning outcomes of this component. Meeting and discussing contributes more strongly to personal development for members of wild groups. Members of organised groups on the other hand experience being more open to other people's views and opinions thanks to the book discussion group. Wild groups could possibly consist more of groups of like-minded friends, whereas organised groups are composed of people with more diverse opinions – which results in more learning experiences on this aspect.

Finally, members of groups without a coach more strongly experience learning about other members' personalities than members of groups with a coach do. As seen before, a coach may lead the discussion in such a way that the focus is on the book instead of on personal experiences. This corresponds to the findings of the interviews. The extent to which book discussion groups allow their discussions to be more personal as opposed to purely literary discussions differs from group to group. Group D (interviewees Adrian, Dorothy, and Afra) which has a steady discussion leader, consciously chooses to keep a distance from personal discussions as they do not want to make members feel uncomfortable. Yvonne and Rita's library groups (Groups F and J respectively) also mainly focus on literary discussions and have a professional coach leading the discussion. In all other groups, the focus is on literary discussions as well, but for some groups personal issues are discussed, not always triggered by the book but when members catch up before or after the book discussion itself. Francis would like his group take more room for discussing personal issues triggered by the theme of a book. Although a number of interviewees experience the conversations on personal issues caused by the book as positive, for all interviewees, the discussion on the book itself forms the main reason that the group gets together.

Conversations about the personal lives of the participants may increase the members' mutual appreciation, make them more open to other members' viewpoints, allow them to develop self-insight and broaden their horizons. Book discussions are the starting point for these conversations. In addition to the personal and group characteristics, the theme of the book discussed is also an important factor that relates to learning about the



self, the other, and the world. This is illustrated for instance in these replies to the question of which book made for a very successful meeting of the book discussion group (group survey question 26):

Marianne Fredriksson – *According to Mary Magdalene*. Because of this book, we – different religions – came closer together.

Dorothee Sölle – *Jesus of Nazareth*. At first, this book sparked disgust. However, the book also raised many questions for discussion. Since then, there has been a different atmosphere within the group – a closer, mutual bond and familiarity.

Every book until now, because everyone always has a very explicit opinion and personal things do come up.

These responses indicate that different opinions are a good foundation for starting meaningful discussions and coming to better understandings. Nonetheless, provoking discussions on sensitive subjects is not always seen as positive. In the historical book discussion groups as described by Lubbers, dogmatic books were deliberately avoided in order to prevent readers from having religious disputes.<sup>403</sup> Nowadays, book discussion group organiser *SLD* also chooses the books for its members carefully and for instance tries to avoid too emotionally charged topics.<sup>404</sup> In one of the online book discussion groups Fister studied, books on controversial or emotionally sensitive topics were not avoided. However, the discussions on too sensitive topics such as religion and politics were left out, in order to maintain a nice atmosphere.<sup>405</sup> Opinions on the book itself however may be expressed: even better, differences in opinions make for good discussions: opinions on the theme or topic are however better not discussed in the online environment.<sup>406</sup> These examples illustrate how books can provoke heated discussions about issues when read in the context of a book discussion group.

### *Diversification of taste*

The fourth learning process that emerged during the research can be captured with the term *diversification of taste*. It includes the members' development in literary taste as a result of book discussion group participation. As mentioned above, the book discussion group causes members to get acquainted with books they would normally not have

<sup>403</sup> Lubbers 2011, pp. 171-172.

<sup>404</sup> See Section 3.4: *Choosing a title*.

<sup>405</sup> Fister 2005, p. 306.

<sup>406</sup> Fister 2005, pp. 306, 308.

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read.<sup>407</sup> Also, members experience learning about literature from their membership (see this section: second learning component). This could cause member's tastes in books to change as well. The following four statements regarding this subject were included in the individual survey:

- 10.h: Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate certain books less.
- 10.s: Since I joined the book discussion group(s), my taste in books has changed.
- 10.w: Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate writers, genres or categories of books more which I did not like before.
- 17.k: I am developing / have developed a taste for certain books.

**Table 5.10** Responses to four statements on learning through membership: diversification of taste. Source: individual survey questions 10 and 17.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10.h ( <i>n</i> =868)	3.00%	13.02%	26.27%	46.43%	11.29%
10.s ( <i>n</i> =871)	1.84%	18.25%	32.72%	38.46%	8.73%
10.w ( <i>n</i> =872)	9.86%	51.38%	25.80%	11.24%	1.72%
17.k ( <i>n</i> =850)	4.94%	44.12%	40.12%	10.00%	0.82%

Responses to these statements vary: statements 10.h has the lowest level of agreement of all 20 statements on learning from book discussion group membership, while responses to statement 10.w are far more positive with three out of five respondents who agree or strongly agree with this statement.

So, it seems that respondents experience that they develop a taste for a specific type of books (17.k) and appreciate books more which they disliked before (10.w), but this development is generally not at the expense of what their reading preferences were before (10.h and 10.s). Interviewees point out that the book discussion group helps them to increase their literary spectrum: getting to know about more authors and different books. All fifteen interviewees pointed out that – to a lesser or greater extent – because of their membership, they read books they otherwise would not have read on their own: in Bart's case this is relatively rare; for Francis, it is very clear that he never would have read ten Dutch-language debut novels per year if it was not for his participation in a book discussion group. Francis however sees that this gave him a very good introduction to reading fiction, which he was indeed looking for when he became a member of this group. Interviewees indicate that reading other books than they would have read on their own, broadens their literary spectrum. Peter and Matthias considered themselves

<sup>407</sup> See Section 4.2: *Practical Membership Motive*.

as broadly interested readers but still broaden their literary horizons by reading for their group or by getting advice from fellow members. Negative prejudices about books or authors do not always prove to be accurate: readers may be pleasantly surprised by a book. Peter and Dorothy experience that they have a good view of books and that their negative prejudices are most often correct. Moreover, some interviewees see boundaries in their openness to getting to know other books than they would normally read. Therese, who sees reading new, unfamiliar books as inspiring, noticed she became tired of considering reading a book she did not feel like reading time after time. Because her time to read was limited, she could no longer read the books she herself preferred. Francis – who started reading fiction again since he became a member – prefers reading foreign classics, but his book discussion group is still focused on reading Dutch-language debut novels. So, reading for a book discussion group can not only open up a new reading experience, it can be limiting for some as well.

Most interviewees like to read broadly: they value the fact that the book discussion group evidently contributes to reading books from a broader spectrum and enjoy breaking free of their own reading habits.<sup>408</sup> Increasing one's literary spectrum is seen as something positive. Most members felt the need for new input when they became a member of their book discussion group. Mostly, interviewees value this, even if not all books are appreciated. It can be an eye-opener to see other points of view on a book you do not appreciate yourself.

The relationship between book discussion group participation and respondents' own taste in books is however relatively low, looking at the responses to statements 10.h and 10.s. This outcome was confirmed by the interviews: eight out of fifteen interviewees feel their membership has somewhat changed their individual reading behaviour; for others, it did not. For eight of fifteen interviewees, the group has influenced their own individual reading behaviour as well. Karin has become the reader she was as a child: spending more time reading, and reading 'decent books' again instead of only 'snacks', as she calls books that she reads purely for relaxation. Joan and Afra see their own development as a reader has intensified and quickened through book discussion group participation. Peter, Pauline, Marlene and Yvonne sometimes read more books from authors they read for the book discussion group, or more books in other genres they read thanks to the group. Yvonne is no longer a member of her group, but stays in contact and now and then reads a book that her former group is reading on her own. Before his membership, Francis mainly read nonfiction. Since his membership, however, he almost exclusively reads fiction. Though he reads different fiction individually than he does for his book

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<sup>408</sup> Joan, Peter, Pauline, Adrian, Dorothy, Afra, Addie, Yvonne, Bart, Marlene, and Francis.

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discussion group – foreign classics versus Dutch debut novels – he ascribes his appreciation of fiction to his book discussion group. The remaining seven interviewees say their individual reading behaviour is not or is hardly influenced by their book discussion groups. In addition to the types of books they read for the group meetings, interviewees like to read other types of books as well, other genres or authors for instance.<sup>409</sup> Reading other types of books may fulfil a different need, for instance, as a way to relax for Joan, Peter, Karin, Pauline, Rita, and Matthias, or because one wants to know more on a specific subject, as four male interviewees Peter, Adrian, Bart, and Matthias indicated.

Older respondents experience more that being a member of their groups has changed their taste in books. Perhaps they have this experience because older readers have already read more books than younger readers have. Older readers may see more of a clear development in their reading and the influence the book discussion group has on their reading. Younger readers may still be searching more in their taste in books and may not yet have a clear view of their own reading development.

The educational level of the participants shows the strongest links with this particular learning aspect. The lower the educational background of the participant, the more strongly he or she experiences a development in taste because of the book discussion group. It is possible that the initial taste of readers with a lower educational background deviates more from the books read in the book discussion group than is the case with respondents with a higher educational background.<sup>410</sup> Moreover, respondents with a lower educational background may have less reading experience than respondents with a higher educational background, and therefore discover more new types of books and go through a clearer development in taste. At first sight, this last explanation does not seem to directly correspond with the findings considering the relationship between age and learning described above. It is possible that respondents with a lower educational background are more consciously working on their development and therefore are more aware of it, which can affect their self-reported learning outcomes.

Similar to respondents with a lower educational background, members of organised groups more strongly experience a development in their taste than members of wild groups do, in a way that they have less appreciation for certain books. Organisations may have a strong influence on what the group reads, whereas all wild groups are free to find their own reading material. For members of organised book discussion groups,

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<sup>409</sup> Joan, Peter, Pauline, Adrian, Karin, Afra, Addie, Therese, Francis, Rita, Bart, and Matthias.

<sup>410</sup> See Section 3.2: *Educational level*. See also Kraaykamp 1993, pp. 111-148.

book choices can deviate more from a reader's own taste or knowledge about the book supply than for members of wild groups who have to look for suitable books together.

The group having a coach or not strongly relates to members experiencing going through a process of diversification, more clearly than it does for members of organised groups. A coach may have more influence on the book choice but also on the discussion of the book, which both affect the members' taste in books changing.

Finally, the longer a group exists, the more strongly the members experience a development in taste. This is the only learning aspect where a clear increase in learning experience is visible when the group has existed longer (other than for instance the inverted-U relationships that emerged when studying the relationships between age of the group and learning about literature through membership). Change in taste takes time: a group that has existed longer has built an extensive reading history together, in addition to the members' own individual reading histories. A more clear development will emerge in one's own taste during the membership.

### 5.3 CONCLUSION

Chapter 5 answered the third research question: *In participants' experience, what do they learn from taking part in their book discussion group?* This was done with help of the individual survey, which included several statements considering learning by reading fiction and learning through book discussion group membership. Factor analysis and findings from the interviews led to the identification of three learning by reading subjects and four learning through membership subjects. Section 5.1 investigated the relationships between personal and group characteristics and experienced learning by reading fiction. Section 5.2 investigated the relationships between personal and group characteristics and experienced learning through book discussion group membership. In both sections, the findings were presented and interpreted per learning subject.

A vast majority of survey respondents and interviewees claim to learn from reading fiction or literature and from discussing books in their book discussion group: both differ in experienced learning opportunities and outcomes. Learning about the subject of literature seems to be difficult to achieve when reading individually: for many, the book discussion group (and the coach) helps them learn specifically about this topic. Furthermore, broadening one's horizons and one's self-development are important, intertwined learning topics that may be achieved by reading literature as well as by discussing it together with fellow readers. Two specific learning outcomes or subjects of development that may be achieved from participating in a book discussion group –

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learning to discuss and diversification in book taste – are recognised by but show less prominent outcomes among most book discussion group participants.

There are several connections between characteristics of members and their groups and their experienced learning outcomes. This study showed that the age and educational level of a participant and affiliation of the group and having a coach or not have strong links with experienced learning outcomes. The outcomes can be illustrated by imagining two basic stereotype book discussion groups that were introduced in Section 3.6:

- Group 1: Organised group with a coach, members have a lower educational background than the members of group 2, members are older than members of group 2, there are fewer males among the members than in group 2. Members focus on learning about literature together. They more strongly report the experienced learning outcomes on various topics because of reading and more specifically because of their membership.
- Group 2: Wild group without a coach, members have a higher educational background than the members of group 1, members are younger than group 1, although the majority of the members are female, there are more males among the members than in group 1. Members more strongly report that reading individually contributes to their personal development.

This was the last chapter including presentation and interpretation of the results of the surveys and interviews. The next chapter combines the outcomes of Chapters 3, 4 and 5 and leads up to answering the fourth research question. To conclude, the study itself is discussed, including the methods used, practical implications, and ideas for future research.

## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusions and discussion





## 6.1 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHARACTERISTICS, MOTIVES AND EXPERIENCED LEARNING OUTCOMES

The image of the book discussion group that arises from two surveys – one group survey ( $n=211$ ) and one individual member survey ( $n=877$ ) – meets the expectations. Present-day book discussion groups consist mainly of females. The average age of participants is 65. The majority of the participants have completed a high level of education; overall, younger participants have achieved a higher educational level than older participants. The book discussion groups existed an average of 12 years. Over half of the book discussion groups were affiliated to an organisation ('organised groups'). Less than half of the book discussion groups made use of a professional coach: these are mostly the organised groups. In organised groups, participants are older and have a lower educational background than participants of unaffiliated, 'wild' groups. Wild groups have more males among their members than organised groups. Book discussion groups tend to focus on modern Dutch-language literature, however, a broad spectrum of literature is read, including non-Dutch literature and classics.

Previous studies among book discussion groups in the Netherlands produced similar data, although it seems that – similar to the Dutch reading public in general – book discussion group members have grown older. During the last decade, no rejuvenation of this face-to-face form of the book discussion group has taken place. Dutch book discussion groups resemble groups in countries such as the US, the UK, and Australia, though Dutch groups do not prefer to read works by female authors specifically.

Survey respondents ( $n=877$ ) and interviewees ( $n=15$ ) combine various *reading motives*: the Cognitive, Aesthetic and Hedonistic Reading Motives are important to many book discussion group participants when reading individually. The Status Reading Motive did not turn out to be important to these respondents. Looking at *membership motives*, the Cognitive-aesthetic, Hedonistic, Social and Societal Membership Motives all are important to book discussion group participants. Both the Status and Practical Membership Motives are much less relevant to respondents in general.

A large majority of respondents experiences reading books individually and participating in a book discussion group as a way to learn. Learning about literature by reading individually is experienced as difficult: the book discussion group may help on this specific topic. Another important learning topic is personal development, linked with broadening one's horizons. Survey respondents and interviewees experience learning about these topics from reading individually as well as from their book discussion group membership. The influence of the book discussion group on one's development of their taste in books, as well as one's development in discussion skills, is limited.

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Following the learning outcomes experienced by book discussion group participants, it can be asked whether participants experience that their group *constructs new knowledge* during the discussions, or whether this learning can be interpreted as a mere calculation of individual knowledge, views, or opinions. In other words: Does the group learn, or do the individual members learn? Researchers who have studied learning in the book discussion group in various ways state that the discussions that take place in a group enable individual participants to learn.<sup>411</sup> The groups creating knowledge that is new to *all* members of the group is less often expressed. Smith, for instance, states that during discussions in 'cooperative turns several speakers work together to make a single point.'<sup>412</sup>

The interviewees were asked, in their experience during their group's discussions, whether they thought new knowledge was created that would not have been obtained without the group. Almost all interviewees agree on this, but the extent to which this happens is experienced very differently. In the interviews, eight of the interviewees were convinced that the discussions provided knowledge that was new to all members and was produced by means of discussion. One saw the development of their group's book list as a clear indication of the learning result of the group: more complex books and more complex themes were read and discussed by their group. In her eyes, this was in her eyes a result of the way they discussed the books and how these discussions continued to develop. It influences the book choice they make. More reserved on this issue were six interviewees who recognised the possibility, but at the same time thought it was rarely achieved in their group. Moreover, one interviewee was less convinced that new knowledge was built during discussions. Though participants may not always experience that a new level of understanding is reached in the *whole* group, filling in each other's knowledge is seen as valuable and the members of the group do experience individual learning effects.

Finally, to answer research question IV, the relationships between personal and group characteristics, reading and membership motives, and experienced learning outcomes were investigated. In Sections 4.1 and 4.2, relationships between personal and group characteristics and motives were presented and interpreted per motive. In Sections 5.1 and 5.2, relationships between personal and group characteristics and experienced learning outcomes were presented and interpreted per learning topic. Below, all these outcomes are combined and grouped together by the personal characteristics first and

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<sup>411</sup> See for instance Poole 2003, p. 85: 'The club's space is one that nurtures and embraces differences of opinion. Club members value their discussions as opportunities to learn new ideas.'

<sup>412</sup> Smith 1996, pp. 184-185.

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subsequently by group characteristics. Interpreting these outcomes, the correlations between various personal and group characteristics as presented in Table 4.3 have been taken into account. Appendix 2.2.2 provides an extensive overview of all results of the survey items per characteristic. Results show that the educational level of a participant is the most important factor, because it relates strongly to the type of group one participates in (organised or wild, coach or no coach), the reading motives and membership motives one has, and the learning outcomes one experiences achieving through reading and book discussion group membership.

### *Personal characteristics: Sex, age and educational level*

Three personal characteristics were defined: sex, age (four age categories) and educational level (three levels). It was investigated whether respondents with differing personal characteristics have different motives or experienced learning outcomes. There is a correlation between age and educational level of the participants: younger respondents have a higher educational background than older respondents. This correlation will help to interpret the outcomes of the study.

Because of the overrepresentation of females among book discussion group members, and the emancipatory history of the phenomenon of the book discussion group, it was to be expected that female members of book discussion groups would differ from male members of book discussion groups, considering their motives and/or experienced learning outcomes. No strong relationships between the **sex of the participants** and their motives and experienced learning outcomes were found. Females tend to agree more strongly on a few statements regarding the Hedonistic and Status Reading Motives, and more strongly indicate that they learn from discussing and about discussing.

It is possible that the overrepresentation of females in book discussion groups is the cause of these modest outcomes: females outnumbered males by far within the survey sample as well. This could result in survey questions and statistical tests not being sufficient for illuminating the possible differences between motives and/or experienced learning outcomes of males versus females. Other research methods could help to gain more insight on this matter.

Besides this, it remains unsolved why so few men participate in book discussion groups. More specific research on male participants of book discussion groups and on male readers who do *not* participate in book discussion groups may yield more insight into the differences between male and female readers and male and female book discussion group members.

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This research shows that *within this group of readers*, motives and experienced learning outcomes are not linked with the sex of the participant. It is possible that male book discussion group members do not differ from female book discussion group members in terms of their motives and experienced learning outcomes. After all, these males *are* readers and *are* motivated to participate in a book discussion group. Dividing these respondents into these two categories does not produce explanations or insights as was expected. Here, as well as in other research among readers, the division between male and female readers should not be seen as the most important characteristic revealing grand explanations for people's reading behaviour, or, as also in this specific case, people's motives for discussing books and their experienced learning outcomes.<sup>413</sup> Instead of looking at this *personal characteristic*, a research based on for instance the *Big Five personality traits* may yield more valuable outcomes.<sup>414</sup>

In contrast, there are strong outcomes considering relationships between motives and experienced learning outcomes, and **age** and **educational level of the participant**. The correlation between these two personal characteristics is visible in the outcomes of studying motives and experienced learning outcomes. The strong link between age and educational level and motives and experienced learning outcomes is reflected in the clarity of most of the outcomes, which show many increasing or decreasing relationships between reactions to statements as respondents grow older and/or have a higher educational background, as well as inverted-U relationships (first increasing, then decreasing, as one grows older and/or first increasing, then decreasing, as one's level of education increases).

For younger respondents, all reading motives and the Social Membership Motive are more important than for older respondents. For older respondents, the Societal Membership Motive is more important than for younger respondents. These outcomes also relate to the outcomes considering participants' educational level. For participants with a lower educational background, the Hedonistic *Reading* Motive is important, whereas for participants with a higher educational background, the Hedonistic *Membership* Motive is more important. With regard to other motives, respondents with a lower educational background find *membership* motives to be more important than members with a higher educational background, whereas for the latter, *reading* motives are more important than for respondents with a lower educational background.

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<sup>413</sup> See also Summers, 2013 pp. 243-244, 248.

<sup>414</sup> For research on the Big Five personality traits relating to reading behaviour, see for instance Kaiser and Quandt 2015 and Schutte and Malouff 2004.

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Regarding experienced learning outcomes, the age of the participant has a – partly indistinct – link with motives and experienced learning by reading and membership. When it comes to learning through membership, older respondents experience achieving more learning outcomes than younger respondents. In addition, there is a distinct and strong link between educational level and motives and learning experiences: the lower a respondents' level of education, the more he or she experiences learning about various aspects through their membership of the book discussion group. Members who achieved a high educational level are more focused on learning by reading individually. Similarly, respondents with a lower educational background have stronger membership motives; respondents with a higher educational background have stronger reading motives.

These outcomes show that one's age and educational background relate to one's views on reading, membership, and learning, and therefore one's motives for reading and discussing books and the learning outcomes one is trying to achieve. Over time and with the passing in and out of stages of life, motives for membership appear to shift, as these survey respondents have noticed, and this relates to possible learning outcomes as well.<sup>415</sup>

Female (62): *As a young mother, just having finished my education, to me staying informed seemed the most important reason [to join a book discussion group]. I have noticed that the social aspect is important too, because the members of the group are getting very old and conversations are becoming less profound.*

Female (58): *In the stage of [having] a young family: to keep reading and discussing; later on because it is so enriching in many ways!*

For younger readers who often have many other activities such as a busy working life and/or a young family, the book discussion group is for instance a way to continue reading. Over time, this becomes less essential, making room for other motives and learning outcomes. Certain life events may also cause changes:

Female (79): *Initially, I became a member because I moved here and did not know anyone. Because I have been a reader since childhood, a book discussion group was the most obvious choice.*

Female (76): *After my husband suddenly passed away, I became an avid reader once again thanks to the book discussion group.*

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<sup>415</sup> Individual survey question 12. Hartley found respondents who specifically referred to the importance of reading and discussing when having young children, for the intellectual challenge (or, as one of the respondents put it: '... to prevent brain death...'). Hartley 2002, p. 29.

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Younger respondents and respondents with a higher educational background generally have stronger reading motives than older respondents and respondents with a lower educational background. They are more motivated to read individually and more strongly indicate that they learn from reading individually. Older respondents and respondents with a lower educational background have stronger membership motives and indicate more strongly experienced learning outcomes thanks to the participation in their book discussion group. Older participants indicate more strongly that they are flexible in their own views: they are open to other views and they allow their taste in books to be changed by the experiences in the book discussion group. As seen in Chapter 5, these experiences include not only the exchange of opinions or interpretations but also reading books one normally would not have read individually. Chapter 4 showed that older participants seem to value being part of a club more, and here, membership seems to be connected to their learning experiences more than is the case with younger participants. Older participants more strongly value the opportunity to share and exchange in a group in such a way that it influences their own views.

Some statements considering learning by reading produce a less clear image: though the statements can be interpreted very generally and similarly, respondents from different age categories value the statements differently. Important factors in their lives relating to age that may connect to these outcomes are not made clear by the survey questions. In general, young respondents are likely to have less reading experience than older respondents and therefore more strongly experience learning from reading. Reading is a skill that develops over time and readers may experience a clearer development in their skills at the beginning of their 'reading career'. There are also differences in membership motives: for younger respondents, the Hedonistic and Social Membership Motives are more important, while for older respondents the Societal and Practical Membership Motives are more important. The Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive is relevant to younger and older respondents, but the interpretations of this motive vary.

A clear difference emerged between the motives and experienced learning outcomes among readers of different educational backgrounds. The only *reading* motive that is more relevant to respondents with a lower and middle educational background than for respondents with a higher educational background is the Hedonistic Reading Motive. On the other hand, the only *membership* motive that is more important to members with a higher educational background than to members with a lower and middle educational background is the Hedonistic Membership Motive. Besides that, the outcomes show that respondents with a lower and middle educational background generally have stronger membership motives, and respondents with a higher educational background generally have stronger reading motives. Combining these findings with the results of

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the investigated experienced learning outcomes reveals a difference between respondents with a lower educational background and respondents with a higher educational background. Respondents with a lower educational background seem to appreciate the opportunities a book discussion group offers them in terms of learning opportunities more than respondents with a higher educational background do. Also, they more strongly indicated that they indeed seize these opportunities. They are more focused on creating meaning together, and learning about various aspects including both literary and social aspects. These members are more focused on the group process.

Though respondents with a lower educational level are more focused on membership motives, to some highly educated respondents to individual survey question 12 and the interviews, finding people with an equally high educational level to discuss literature with was an important condition when joining a book discussion group:

Female (62): *I became a member in order to discuss literature with people with a high educational level. The fact that many members studied very different things made the discussions extra fascinating.*

Female (65): *Initially, I joined the book discussion group in order to have contact with fellow professionals and women with the same educational level.*

Interviewee Matthias also specifically wanted to find highly educated conversation partners after he moved from a university town to a small village. In fact, most interviewees found that other members' educational levels were similar (Joan, Pauline, Peter, Addie, Yvonne, Marlene, Therese, Karin, Francis, and Matthias). Almost all interviewees mention having a similar educational level as a convenient or even necessary condition in order to have fruitful book discussions. Not only do these members find it easier to have effective discussions (they are quicker to understand each other); they also indicate that there is a connection between educational level and a certain attitude, interest or motivation during discussions. Joan even cautiously noted that the fellow group members who have an academic master's degree more easily find each other in discussions compared with other members who have a vocational university bachelor degree (and with that definitely count as highly educated).

Kraaykamp states that readers enjoy processing complex cognitive information adjusted to their competence level.<sup>416</sup> Translated to the book discussion group, this would indicate that participants prefer to be in a group with other participants who have a similar educational level. Besides this, social recognition – distinguishing oneself from non-readers or types of readers one does not identify with, and conforming to certain

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<sup>416</sup> Kraaykamp 1993, pp. 137-147.

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types of readers one does identify with – is also important to many readers.<sup>417</sup> In terms of a community of practice, this would also indicate book discussion groups to be a more homogenous type of community of practice than one with a lot of diversity.<sup>418</sup>

In addition to – or according to some respondents, in connection with – educational level, many group members seem to share attitudes or points of view, be it on politics (Peter), being open instead of dogmatic (Bart), having the same mentality (Therese), sharing values and standards (Marlene) or having similar opinions on social issues (Adrian). These similar attitudes make group members feel connected to one another and give them the same frame of reference for their discussions.

Judging from the number of findings considering the educational level of the respondent, and the significance of many of these outcomes, this personal characteristic has a strong link with motives for reading and discussing as well as learning experiences. The image that arises from both the investigations considering motives and learning experiences shows that respondents with a lower educational background are more focused on interacting with fellow members and the group process than respondents with a higher educational background are. Respondents with a higher educational background are more focused on their own, individual reading and learning experiences, even with regards to their book discussion group participation. It is possible that respondents with a lower educational background are more conscious of their learning experiences in the book discussion group as the Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive is more relevant to them. This indicates that to these respondents, the opportunities of the early modern book discussion groups that were founded in the 1970s in the Netherlands still apply. It is possible that book discussion group members with a lower educational level specifically look for groups that enable them to learn: this is also indicated by the fact that the educational level of participants in organised groups is lower than the educational level of participants in wild groups (Section 3.3). Organised groups are likely to receive professional support, such as a coach, to help with book choices, and to provide extra information on the book.

### *Group characteristics: Affiliation, composition, having a coach or not, and age of the group*

Four group characteristics were defined: affiliation of the group, composition of the group, having a coach or not, and age of the group (five age categories). It was investigated whether respondents from various groups have different motives or experienced

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<sup>417</sup> Kraaykamp 1993, pp. 171-181.

<sup>418</sup> Wenger 1998, pp. 75-76.



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learning outcomes. Correlations exist between the affiliation of the group and having a coach or not: more organised groups have a coach than wild groups do. Furthermore, members of wild groups are younger and have a higher educational background than members of organised groups; also, wild groups have more males among their members than organised groups. These correlations will help to interpret the outcomes of the study.

Two group characteristics produced little and/or indistinct outcomes. First, the links between the **composition of the group** and motives and experienced learning outcomes are, compared with those of other characteristics, not very strong and moreover not easy to interpret. For members of all-female groups, the Status Reading Motive as well as the Cognitive-aesthetic, Social, and Societal Membership Motives are more important than for members of mixed-sex groups. Members of all-female groups also more strongly indicated that they learned from reading and discussing books. Nonetheless, compared to other group characteristics, there is not a very strong link between composition, motives and learning experiences. Also, no strong confirmations of specifically all-female group learning aspects as described by Long and Kooy were found in this study. Kooy specifically states that the females in her groups felt more at ease in discussing – mainly personal experiences – among a group of females: sharing similar experiences was highly valued.<sup>419</sup> Long also points to the specific discussion of personal issues in all-female groups.<sup>420</sup> Nonetheless, the outcomes of the current study find no preference for discussing personal experiences or more strongly experienced learning outcomes considering personal development in all-female groups compared to mixed-sex groups.

A number of interviewees in the current study considered the differences between all-female groups and mixed-sex groups: members of both types of groups raised the topic. Six of fourteen groups represented by the interviewees are mixed-sex. Both Adrian (group D) and Matthias (group N) are the only males in their mixed-sex group. Matthias's female group members explicitly looked for another male to become a member of their group, because they saw their mixed-sex group with only one male member more as a female group. They wanted to have more 'male energy'. For a while, Matthias did think it would be nice to not be the only male in the group. During their discussions, he is occasionally asked 'what do *men* think of this?' He was not offended by this, but does not see himself as a representation of all men. Having another male in the group could mean that discussions would proceed somewhat differently, and that other views would

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<sup>419</sup> Kooy 2006a, p.664.

<sup>420</sup> Long 2003, pp. 71-72.

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be presented, but at the moment the general feeling in the group is that they have enough members.

Adrian himself does not mention his exceptional position, but his group member Afra who was also interviewed has noticed that more men would be welcome in the group: opposite opinions can make the discussion more interesting. But at the same time, she stresses that the *book* is the source of the discussion, not the person. Afra, the discussion leader, sees it as her job to keep an eye on the discussions and prevent them from getting too personal as that may cause tensions. The book plays the central role. The kind of person you are plays a role, but not the most important role.

Marlene (all-female group G) and Pauline (mixed-sex group B and all-female group C) also value the opportunities within a group consisting of both males and females – especially when it comes to learning opportunities. Having both males and females among the members is one way of bringing more diversity to a group. Pauline is aware that she especially enjoys the input of the two male members in group B. She likes being confronted with other points of view, and the difference in being male or female seems like one obvious difference between people. Her now all-female group C used to have one male member. This former male member was altogether a very different person than the other five female members the group had at that time. Because he was so different and lived his life in a very different way than the other members, Pauline loved hearing what he had to say. His views on life were new to Pauline and she learned from getting to know these very different viewpoints. Pauline's fellow member in group C, Karin, has very different memories of this male member. She also considered him very different from the other members, but for her this did not work out positively. He wanted to talk more about the book and did not like the group to wander off too often on personal conversations. Apparently, the group did not work out for this man himself, as he abruptly stopped attending.

Karin thinks it is no coincidence that their group now consists of females only. Males have different opinions and, according to her, this influences the way people act when they are together in the book discussion group. The members share more than just a love for reading books, and that is also what holds the group together. Addie (all-female group E) also sees the advantages of her group being an all-female group, as they have very personal conversations when discussing books. The theme of a book can be important to a member for personal reasons, and the atmosphere in the group allows them to talk in depth on personal experiences. This relates to the assumption of Kooy, who included only females in the teacher book discussion group she founded for her study: she assumes that the fact that the group consists of only females makes the partic-

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ipants feel more at ease.<sup>421</sup> The females who wanted to participate in the group specifically requested to keep the group all-female. In this particular case, the group was set up to discuss the experiences of novice teachers in their profession. Having the books as a starting point for discussion, the discussions were specifically intended to address personal experiences. The participants were convinced male participants would change the course of the discussions and they would feel less safe in expressing themselves.

Second, the outcomes considering the **age of the group** are difficult to interpret. Although it seems that the age of the group does relate to motives and learning outcomes, no clear image arises regarding motives. Considering learning experiences: these seem to at first increase as a group grows older, but later on, learning experiences decrease.

The link between the age of the group and the motives of its members was difficult to interpret. The average age of the groups participating in this study is approximately 12 years (Table 3.19), varying from very new groups that have just met twice, to four groups which have been meeting for more than forty years (Table 3.20). Looking back at the history of book discussion groups as summarised in Chapter 1, many groups founded in the 1970s in the Netherlands were inspired by a cognitive motive. Of the responding groups, 21 groups originated in the 1970s, the decade in which many book discussion groups were founded in the Netherlands, as well as the first book discussion group organisations. Catching up on educational opportunities was the main motive for many women to organise book discussion groups during second-wave feminism. Most participants in present-day book discussion groups have a high educational background. It is therefore possible that the cognitive motive is subject to generational shifts. Furthermore, groups can go through a development over time, build a shared history, and motives may change. Indeed, many links between the age of the group (five categories) and the respondent and his or her motives emerged in this study. However, no clear images arise other than the outcomes relating to the age of the respondents (four categories). Half of the outcomes do not show a clear increasing or decreasing relationship or inverted-U relationship between responses and the age of the group of respondents. Groups that have existed for 5-9 years reacted most positively to half of the eight statements that show significant outcomes. The combination of motives and statements that are important to various groups of respondents however does not form a clear image of these various groups: no clear development of motives throughout the years emerged. It seems that the Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive does not shift along with the age

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<sup>421</sup> Kooy 2006a, pp. 663-664; 672.

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of the group, and this motive is equally important to new groups as it is to groups that were founded years ago. Educational opportunities are still valued.

Though no link was found between answers to statements considering the Practical, Social, and Societal Membership Motives, and no clear development can be identified in group members' motives over time, development in individual motives does not seem unfamiliar to most book discussion group participants. The fact that the Social Membership Motive does not seem to relate to the age of the group is remarkable, considering the fact that several respondents to the individual survey as well as interviewees indicated that the social aspect of the book discussion group gained importance throughout the years – as previously discussed in Section 4.1. For some respondents to individual survey question 12, for example, social contact has become more important throughout the years:

Female (66): *I stay a member because of the social contact. In the meantime, things have happened to some members.*

Male (76): *The personal contact with fellow members was not my goal [of joining a book discussion group], but I have started to appreciate it.*

Female (57): *Still, the interest in world literature [is important]. But [with] added value: for 21 years now discussing books with other women brings enrichment, personal issues arise, and we have become a close group.*

Though for others, for instance, the value of discussing books together has become more clear:

Female (64): *At first, my reason for becoming a member of a book discussion group was the social contact. By now, the discussions on books are the most important reason [for me] to stay a member of this group.*

In contrast, interviewee Therese noticed after her book discussion group had existed for ten years (she was one of the original members) that she was getting tired of discussing literature, 'always having to have an opinion'. It is possible that this feeling influences her experienced learning outcomes as well.

So the outcomes indicate that the age of the group and motives are linked; however, the results of this study are not sufficient to shed light on this relationship and describe a generally applicable development in motives. Other research methods could produce a clearer image. More factors could be considered, such as how often groups meet, and how steady the core of the group is. Also, the outcomes could indicate that the development of a book discussion group is a complex process that requires different and more

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detailed research to find patterns over time. A longitudinal study should be considered to investigate group development.<sup>422</sup>

A somewhat clearer image arose in the investigation of the relationship between the age of the group and experienced learning outcomes. Here, more inverted-U relationships arose which indicate the learning potential of a book discussion group. Learning more clearly relates to the age of a group than motives do. Reading is a skill that develops over time and requires practice,<sup>423</sup> and the learning opportunities of groups change over time as well.<sup>424</sup>

Furthermore, whereas respondents of groups that had existed for 5-9 years scored higher on motives, groups that had existed for 10-19 years scored higher on learning experiences. Finally, the longer a group exists, the more strongly the members experience a development in taste. This is the only learning aspect in which a clear increase in learning experience is visible when the group has existed longer (other than for instance the inverted-U relationships that emerged when studying the relationships between the age of the group and learning about literature through membership).

Some interviewees discussed the development of their own learning opportunities in the book discussion group, or the development of the group as a learning environment over the years. Addie for instance explained how she no longer experiences learning in her group. She experiences learning from the literary course she attends at a senior citizen's organisation, where books are discussed in a far more in-depth way than at her book discussion group. She does however value the exchange of reading experiences and opinions with her fellow group members and finds this to be instructive as well. She would really like her group to work with a list of discussion points, however, to give the discussions more depth.

Some interviewees see a development in the level of the books they read (Dorothy and Afra); others do not specifically notice such a development (Marlene). A group aging does not necessarily mean the group develops positively in terms of learning opportunities. Discussions may become more superficial or dull (Karin, Therese). However, getting to know each other better and better is valuable to all interviewees.

More important as well as more evident are the relationships between motives, experienced learning outcomes and the **affiliation of the group** as well as the group **having a**

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<sup>422</sup> On group development, see for instance Tuckman and Jensen 1977. The process of 'forming, storming, norming, performing, adjourning' they describe may take place in a book discussion group.

<sup>423</sup> See for instance Witte 2008.

<sup>424</sup> Wenger 1998, p. 45.

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**coach or not:** two characteristics that exhibit a correlation. Coaches are more likely to work with organised groups than with wild groups.

Participants in wild groups and groups without a coach are more motivated in general. Only the Societal and Practical Membership Motives are more important to members of organised groups than to members of wild groups. Members of groups with a coach tend to agree more strongly with statements considering the Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive and the Practical Membership Motives; members of groups without a coach tend to agree more strongly with statements considering reading motives in general and the Social Membership Motive. Outcomes of the investigation on experienced learning outcomes are in line with the outcomes regarding motives: again, members of groups with a coach are more conscious of their learning about literature through membership while members of groups without a coach are more focused on learning about literature through reading itself. Moreover, learning through membership is more related to personal development for members of groups without a coach.

Personal development is more important to members of wild groups and groups without a coach than to members of organised groups – in both reading and membership. It seems that members of these groups, who are younger and have achieved a higher level of education than members of organised groups and groups with a coach, are more focused on their own individual development, ways to enjoy themselves, and their status. Members of wild groups and members of groups without a coach have stronger reading motives than members of organised groups and members of groups with a coach. More strong membership motives were also found, and these motives relate more to the joy of reading, learning and talking. Setting up and arranging a wild group without the support of a professional book discussion group organisation and a coach may require more effort and therefore more enthusiasm than being a member of an organised group. Also, it is possible that readers with a higher educational background more strongly feel that they can set up and manage a book discussion group without the help of an organisation or professional coach.

Members of organised groups are more focused on learning about literature in their book discussion groups and are more engaged with other people's views and development in taste of books than members of wild groups. Members of organised groups, who are older and have a lower educational background, have a higher expectation to learn from the opportunities to exchange knowledge and opinions in the group. The organised nature of their group may more accurately meet their expectations of learning and being part of a community. Members of organised book discussion groups think it is important to be part of a club. Also, they value the support from their organisation. A respondent to the individual survey expresses this support as follows:

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Female (68): *Thanks to Senia, I value this book discussion group more than my other group. It gives me structure and something to hold on to.*

Members of groups with a coach tend to respond more positively to statements about the *membership* motives. Membership in a group with a coach certainly has an added value to those members, then: thanks to the coach, more enjoyment is experienced from the language and style of a book, for instance. The outcomes of the Practical Membership Motive component also show clear differences between groups with a coach and groups without a coach: the coach helps select the right books for the group and provides extra information on the books; groups without a coach are more focused on regularly seeing friends.

A coach influences the experienced learning outcomes of a group on the subject of literature. The coach enables the group to learn about several aspects of this topic – by bringing in expertise and structuring the discussions, as the interviews show. This is also illustrated by the response of a wild group with a coach to group survey question 26:

*All meetings are special. Members are enthusiastic and the guidance of the Dutch literature expert has a clear added value.*

However, the interviews made clear that this expert role does not have to be fulfilled by a professional coach, but can be fulfilled by one or more members.

In addition, the presence of a coach seems to make the discussions more objective or distant. This increases the learning opportunities about literature, but decreases learning opportunities about social and personal subjects. There is less room to enjoy social interaction which can be instructive as well when it comes to learning about other members for instance, and personal development.

### *Overview: Characteristics, motives and learning*

The previous three subjects of personal and group characteristics, reading and membership motives, and experienced learning outcomes from reading and discussing literature were combined. Based on the outcomes, two stereotype book discussion groups were defined:

*Group 1:* Organised, with a coach, members are older and have achieved a less high level of education, there are fewer males in this group than in group 2. Members of group 1 are very motivated to take part in a group activity. More strongly than members of group 2, they express a focus on learning about literature together. They more strongly

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report experienced learning outcomes on various topics because of reading and more specifically through their membership.

*Group 2:* Wild, without a coach, members are younger and have achieved a higher level of education, there are more males in this group than in group 1. Members of group 2 are more motivated to read individually than members of group 1 and both enjoy and develop themselves by reading. They find their group meetings enjoyable. They more strongly indicate that reading individually contributes to their personal development.

The outcomes of the study enable a definition of these two stereotype book discussion groups that differ not only in the members' characteristics, but also in which reading and membership motives the participants have, as well as the experienced learning outcomes of reading and book discussion group participation. The study shows that members within one book discussion group often share certain characteristics, of which educational background seems to have the strongest links with motives and experienced learning outcomes. It seems that educational background plays a role in deciding what type of book discussion group (wild/organised, with/without coach) one wants to join or find.

### *The 'ideal' book discussion group*

Studies of book discussion groups have not led to a unanimous conclusion with respect to the ideal composition of a group for the most valuable discussions. What is seen as a valuable discussion depends on what participants want to achieve: for instance, being able to share personal experiences, enjoying the meeting with friends, or learning about literature. In her research on *online* book discussion groups, Fister noticed an enormous diversity between members, for example with respect to race, educational level, sex, income, and age.<sup>425</sup> This diversity partially resulted from the fact that, being organised online, the groups are accessible to many different kinds of people. The diversity was considered as a strength and it contributed to lively discussions. One of the members, for instance, characterised discussions of the online group she was member of as always providing a fresh view, in contrast to the more predictable discussions of her homogeneous face-to-face group. Long also sees diversity as a key to fruitful discussions: 'It is only through the sharing of differences that a book discussion becomes something more than reading a book alone', she states.<sup>426</sup> But at the same time, she acknowledges the

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<sup>425</sup> Fister 2005, p. 305.

<sup>426</sup> Long 2003, p. 110.



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importance of existing similarities between members as a starting point for discussions: 'On the other hand, people must have enough in common to be able to talk to rather than past each other and, as well, to be comfortable enough with each other to sustain a deep and sometimes personal discussion'.<sup>427</sup> Similarities between members were also noticed by other researchers that studied book discussion groups.<sup>428</sup> It seems that book discussion group participants look – intentionally or non-intentionally – for fellow members with whom they share at least some characteristics.<sup>429</sup>

The current study confirms that most book discussion groups consist of people that share a number of characteristics, such as age, sex and educational level. However, as Long observed in her study, members themselves may experience the differences between members to be prominent. In her study, Long observed that many book discussion groups emphasise the diversity in their group, though to her as a sociologist the groups seemed very homogenous (in terms of class, race, sex, social status, political ideology, region). She has three explanations for this perception. First, relatively small social differences seem larger within small groups such as these book discussion groups. Second, the European-American upper-middle-class members tend to not see anything other than their own race or social class.<sup>430</sup> Third, the intimacy of group settings combined with the fact that not all members of a group are equally close to each other could enhance the awareness of differences.<sup>431</sup>

In his theory about communities of practice, Wenger stresses that such a community needs both diversity and homogeneity in order to be productive: he sees homogeneity in a group of people with diverse characteristics or backgrounds mainly as a result of working together and having the same, mutual engagement. Besides this, depending of the

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<sup>427</sup> Long 2003, p. 110.

<sup>428</sup> For instance, the participants in the Kooy's and Pelletier's studies by definition shared the same profession as they specifically studied teacher book discussion groups. For the participants in Kooy's study, sharing experiences with fellow teachers who were in the same stage of their career was seen as fruitful. Kooy 2006a, p. 663: '[The participants] recognised an opportunity to meet with those sharing similar teaching experiences.' Pelletier also studied teacher book discussion groups. Though the members of these groups were all teachers, she also stressed that there were differences between the teachers: 'The group crossed all grade levels and disciplines [...] this contributed to the discussion and to the ability of the group to see other teacher's points of view.' Pelletier, 1993 p. 9.

<sup>429</sup> See for instance Sedo 2004, p. 17: 'The book club women in this study, seek communities of like-minded individuals who are generally at the same life stage as themselves, who generally have the same level of education, and who are generally from a similar socio-economic class.'

<sup>430</sup> This is comparable to a comment made by one interviewee, who is often very surprised by the narrow views of the world her fellow participants can have. During the book discussions about specific themes, it seems that some members do not have a good idea of what the world is like. She believes she has a different world view, because of her experiences as a teacher in special education, and because she lived abroad for several years.

<sup>431</sup> Long 2003, p. p109-110.

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goal of the group, it is more important to have overlapping or complementing skills.<sup>432</sup> Gibson and Vermeulen studied team learning behaviour and the relationships with the level of heterogeneity of the group as well as the 'subgroup strength'. Next to sex and age, the researchers included profession and ethnic background to define the level of heterogeneity. Subgroup strength is a degree of overlap of several demographic characteristics among subsets of participants in a group. They found a U-shaped relationship between the level of heterogeneity of a group and learning behaviour within these groups. So very homogenous groups as well as highly heterogeneous groups score the highest on learning behaviour. Furthermore, they found an inverted-U relationship between subgroup strength and learning behaviour: groups with moderate subgroup strength score better on learning behaviour than groups with weak or strong subgroup strength.<sup>433</sup>

How do the interviewees experience the variety of characteristics within their group, and what are the effects on their experienced learning outcomes? Similar to participants in Long's study (as mentioned above), a majority of the interviewees admits that their group is homogenous (e.g. age, sex, profession, religion, but most of all educational background), but at the same time emphasises the differences that exist between members. Only four of fifteen interviewees insist there are more differences than similarities between the members of their group: all three interviewed members of group D, and the interviewed member of group M, though the latter did notice that all members may be classified as upper-class. All four underline the importance of these differences in having fruitful discussions. Several other interviewees also think that differences can make the discussions more lively, fun or instructive. When these differences are not found in their group, they express the wish to have a more heterogeneous group. Some groups would like to see an 'outsider' – a male, someone of a different age category, or someone with a different cultural background – as a new member, but groups seem resigned to their members' characteristics: at the moment, no group was actively looking for a member to make their group more diverse. As one interviewee described it: new members are mostly found among the group of friends or acquaintances of the existing members, and because of this, the group continues consisting of people who share a number of characteristics. But sharing characteristics does not automatically mean that people share the same opinions and views, she stresses: the differences in opinions and views are what produce the interesting discussions.

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<sup>432</sup> Wenger 1998, pp. 75-76.

<sup>433</sup> Gibson and Vermeulen 2003, pp. 225-226.

## 6.2 METHODS

### *The use of surveys and interviews*

This study made use of surveys and interviews. The methods used to find respondents for both the surveys sufficed for finding a large amount of respondents. However, it must be taken into account that no representative sample surveys were held. It is possible that certain book discussion groups were not willing to respond or were not reached at all in the search for respondents. The fifteen interviewees are also not representative of all book discussion group participants, but their cooperation provided information that supplemented the survey outcomes and interpretations.

Both methods rely on self-report by respondents. It is possible that respondents gave socially desirable answers, specifically during the less anonymous interviews. The term Status Reading / Membership Motive was changed into 'appreciation motive' to prevent people from being reticent about having this motive. The reactions of interviewees (smiling, laughing, etc.) showed that they were not 'tricked' by renaming this motive. In addition to changing the term itself, several extra questions were formulated to investigate this motive in a more indirect way, such as: *Do you talk to other people about your membership?* More ways of investigating the status motive for reading and for membership are however desirable. During the pilot interviews, the term *hedonistic* also appeared suspicious because of possible negative connotations: this problem was easily solved by changing the name of the reading and membership motive into 'enjoyment motive' in the interviews. This seems to have solved a possible problem for the Hedonistic Reading / Membership Motive in this self-report-based study. Other topics of the interviews may not be classified as delicate.

Furthermore, considering the study of learning outcomes, only *self-reported* learning outcomes were investigated by means of the individual survey and the interviews. It is possible that respondents' experiences differ from learning outcomes that are measured using different research methods at times in which they have a different aim of studying. Complementing methods may also offer more insight into this topic and the relationships between characteristics, motives and learning.

### *The use of theory-based motives*

A difficulty studying the membership motives turned out to be the usability of the theory-based membership motives. When designing the statements concerning motives for the survey, it became clear that a single motive can have very diverse interpretations.

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The results showed that answers to the different statements on a single motive caused very diverse responses. The interviews also made clear that different responses to a single motive are of different value to the interviewees. Furthermore, to many interviewees, boundaries between some of the motives were not clear or relevant, for instance the difference between the Aesthetic and Hedonistic Reading Motives, between the Cognitive and Aesthetic Membership Motive, and between the Social and Hedonistic Membership Motive. The outcomes of the survey and the interviews led to a redefining of three of the six motives: the Cognitive and Aesthetic Membership Motive were combined into one Cognitive-aesthetic Membership motive and the Social Membership Motive was split into a Social and a Societal Membership motive.

This need to redefine membership motives shows that studying actual readers contributes to theory about readers and their considerations as well. The theoretical motives are not directly applicable in empirical research. Formulating a larger number of sub-motives could solve the problem of the diverse responses to a single motive that are not equally important to a single respondent. Furthermore, defining a number of motives should be reconsidered, given the fact that for interviewees, the boundaries between these motives were not clear and major connections were experienced between a number of motives. Collecting of reading experiences and discussing experiences could contribute to further development of existing theories about why people read and participate in book discussion groups. Such experiences might be more easily collected when taking into account online book discussion groups or other digital forms of expressing reading experiences.<sup>434</sup>

### 6.3 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

#### *Setting up and facilitating book discussion groups*

The image that arises from this study may serve organisations and libraries that are interested in facilitating or supporting readers and book discussion groups. Groups that grow older have older members as well. To ensure that all of these enthusiastic readers will still be able to participate in their book discussion groups, libraries should make sure that these groups can make use of large-print books, or be assisted in working with an e-reader. In addition to facilitating existing groups or starting new groups within this target audience, libraries should make younger readers and males aware of the value and

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<sup>434</sup> The Reading Experience Database is a project that should have a Dutch-language compeer. See <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/RED/> [website accessed on September 20, 2015].

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enjoyment a book discussion group can provide. This could be achieved by campaigning among the library members in their target audience, but also among non-library members. On top of advertisements and information, libraries could organise public book discussion events, which seem to be popular among younger readers. This may get more people enthusiastic about reading in groups. A book discussion group specifically helps readers to learn about literature and literary analysis, which is harder to accomplish as an individual reader.

The study offers insight into the motives people have for reading and participating in a book discussion group. Motives for individual reading differ from motives for book discussion group participation. The book discussion group has a clear added value on top of reading individually. Facilitators of book discussion groups should be aware of the various motives possible participants may have. When looking for new audiences for book discussion groups, facilitators must be aware of the differences between people with a high educational background and people with a lower educational background. People with a high educational background may be more interested in participating in an independent book discussion group without a coach deciding what to read and what to discuss. These groups may be facilitated by providing other things than a coach or a set of discussion questions, but they may value extra literary activities or easy accessible copies of the book or e-book they want to read. People who achieved a middle or low educational background may specifically value the support of an organisation and/or coach in providing information about literature and supporting members with literary analysis.

### *Formal education*

This study focused on informal learning. It showed that participants experience learning from reading and participating in a book discussion group in their spare time. Reading and book discussion group membership are experienced as contributing to a reader's development. It demonstrates the importance and joy of reading and discussing literature. In addition to book discussion group meetings that take place in participant's spare time, book discussion groups are also active in other settings and serving other goals, such as in formal educational settings: literature lessons in high schools or groups that help people with functional illiteracy reading.

The outcomes derived from informal educational settings, may be translated to formal educational settings as well. They may help book discussion group facilitators in formal educational settings who want to compose successful book discussion groups and fruitfully facilitate those groups. Working with book discussion groups may be

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productive for literature lessons in high schools. It is to be expected that groups of students with a similar literary competence level and more or less similar motives will provide the most instructive conditions. However, results from this study arise from motivated adult readers, and the high school setting will differ substantially. For many respondents who already have an extensive reading history, book discussion group participation did not lead to a change in taste. High school readers with less extensive reading histories may be more open to taste development and changes in motivation. Furthermore, as Smith pointed out, the classroom setting, including a teacher, has implications for the feeling of equality among the members of the student book discussion group. This may influence the freedom to discuss and openly develop.<sup>435</sup>

Other forms of the book discussion group, such as online varieties, may be even more suitable for making young people enthusiastic about reading and exchanging reading experiences.

### 6.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study has contributed to a deeper understanding of the characteristics and practices of present-day Dutch book discussion groups, the motives people have for reading in a group, and their experienced learning outcomes. This was achieved using surveys and interviews. Complementing research methods that can provide further valuable information include participant observation, group interviews, discussion analyses, and/or a longitudinal study.

A number of issues require further investigation. First, the underrepresentation of male readers in book discussion groups could not be completely explained. Though very few differences were found between motives of male and female book discussion group participants and no differences in learning experiences, it remains unclear why so few males participate in these groups. Including male readers that do not participate in a book discussion group in a qualitative study may shed more light on possible differences between male and female readers. Second, the diversity of the characteristics of members within one single book discussion group requires further investigation. Most interviewees experienced their group to consist of people with similar characteristics. More large-scale data is needed on the diversity of members within groups, including information about for instance profession, ethnic background, or socio-economic background. The relationships between members of wild groups may help to find out how

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<sup>435</sup> See also Smith 1996, pp. 185-186.

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these groups are formed and may explain why groups mostly consist of members with similar characteristics: for instance, are these groups of friends, colleagues, neighbours? And how do groups find new members? In addition, future research should focus on motives of *potential* book discussion group participants: not only male readers, but also younger readers. The book discussion group is very valuable to participants, but no rejuvenation takes place within the groups in their current form. Why is this, and how can younger readers be made enthusiastic about starting or joining a group? How can this specific audience – which is not only young but has most likely achieved a high educational level – be facilitated? Is the online variety of the book discussion group a complete alternative for these readers?

To some extent, group development over time was a topic of the current study: motives and experienced learning outcomes of members of groups of various ages were compared. A number of outcomes indeed showed a development: an increasing, decreasing, or inverted-U relationship between the age of the group and a motive or learning experience. Some of the outcomes were hard to interpret. To gain more insight into group development, this should be investigated in a longitudinal study. Outcomes may contribute to a better understanding of the development of informal learning processes.

When studying the group's processes and learning in the group, future research should also pay attention to other demographic characteristics, and moreover, the way the characteristics are distributed among the members. The concept of subgroup strength may yield interesting information, though the current study shows that besides characteristics, the motives people have are also important factors that relate to experienced learning outcomes.

The focus of this study was on groups that meet face-to-face. Studies in other countries often include online book discussion groups and compare online groups with face-to-face groups, though the sample size of these studies are mostly small. It would be interesting to compare the outcomes of the current large-scale survey on characteristics, motives, and experienced learning outcomes to the characteristics, motives, and experienced learning outcomes of participants in online groups. Because of the great diversity of online possibilities for exchanging reading experiences, the research should consider the different manifestations of book discussions or book discussion groups and compare the different possibilities they offer to users. The various forms of book discussion groups could influence motives and experienced learning outcomes, just as the affiliation of face-to-face groups affects members' motives and their experienced learning outcomes. Furthermore, the reading habits of online groups require more investigation; a comparison with the reading habits of face-to-face groups would be interesting for the study of reading habits of various readers in the Netherlands.

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Further investigations should also concentrate on the different roles of a coach and/or discussion leader, on differences and similarities between professional coaches and fellow members who fulfil a coach-like role, and between the roles of coaches of wild groups and organised groups. Also, the status the members ascribe to a coach may be interesting: for instance, do members see the coach as a fellow member, or as an expert who knows ‘the right answers’? And do discussion guides on paper distributed by organisations fulfil a similar role?

In addition to online platforms for exchanging reading experiences, other forms of activities for readers are interesting to examine. Literary events (such as *Das Magazin*) specifically refer to book discussion groups, but are mostly more open, and claim to attract many ‘younger’ participants. The relationship between members of groups that meet physically and readers who share their reading experiences online or participate in literary events should be investigated as well: are book discussion group members also using *Goodreads* to post their comments, and do they visit literary festivals as well?

This study focused on the experienced learning outcomes of reading and discussing *fiction*. While some learning outcomes may generally be linked with for instance discussing and forming an opinion, most outcomes are specifically linked with fiction as opposed to nonfiction. Studying nonfiction book discussion groups will complement the information about book discussion group participants’ motives and learning experiences. Not only groups that read about history, philosophy, or religion may provide interesting new insights with complementing implications for using book discussion groups in more formal educational settings; groups that read – and maybe even discuss – in a foreign language will be of interest when studying learning in the book discussion group as well.

Book discussion groups set up in the Netherlands in settings other than spare time environments should be given more attention in research as well. Book discussion groups are implemented in literature lessons in high schools, to educate groups of people with functional illiteracy, as therapy groups, and in prisons. The reading motives and membership motives of participants most likely differ from leisure readers; experienced learning outcomes will differ as well, intentionally. Participants in leisure book discussion groups are well aware of the values of reading and the added values of book discussion group membership. Studying these other types of groups may yield even more information on the values of reading literature and discussing books with others.

In a time where people tend to spend less and less time reading, it is important to increase the awareness of the values and the pleasure of reading fiction and exchanging reading experiences.



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- Wenger, E., McDermott, R., Snyder, W. M. (2002). *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge*. Boston: Harvard Business Press.
- Witte, T. C. H. (2008). *Het oog van de meester: Een onderzoek naar de literaire ontwikkeling van havo- en vwo-leerlingen in de tweede fase van het voortgezet onderwijs*. Delft: Eburon.

Information required to complete the information on the book list (Appendix 1.3) was gathered with use of a number of book-related websites:<sup>436</sup>

- Canon books and authors : [http://www.dbnl.org/letterkunde/enquete/enquete\\_dbnlmnl\\_21062002.htm](http://www.dbnl.org/letterkunde/enquete/enquete_dbnlmnl_21062002.htm)
- NRC / NPS Beste Boek: [http://vorige.nrc.nl/kunst/article1777932.ece/Het\\_beste\\_boek\\_voor\\_mannen\\_en\\_vrouwen](http://vorige.nrc.nl/kunst/article1777932.ece/Het_beste_boek_voor_mannen_en_vrouwen)
- Stichting Literatuurclubs Drenthe: <http://www.literatuurclubsdrenthe.nl/>
- Boekenweek: <http://www.boekenweek.nl/>
- Nederland leest: <http://www.nederlandleest.nl/>
- F. Bordewijkprijs: <http://www.jancampertstichting.nl/cms/Prijzen/f-bordewijk-prijs1/>

<sup>436</sup> Websites were all accessed in July, August, September and October 2012.

- P.C. Hooftprijs: <http://www.pchooftprijs.nl/>
- Constantijn Huygensprijs: <http://www.jancampertstichting.nl/cms/Prijzen/c-huygens-prijs1/>
- Anton Wachterprijs: <http://www.antonwachterprijs.nl/>
- E. du Perronprijs: <http://www.tilburguniversity.edu/nl/over-tilburg-university/schools/geesteswetenschappen/duperronprijs/laureaten/>
- AKO Literatuurprijs: <http://www.akoliteratuurprijs.nl/>
- Libris literatuurprijs: [http://www.libris.nl/?llp\\_archief](http://www.libris.nl/?llp_archief)
- NS Publieksprijs: <https://nspublieksprijs.nl/mediaroom>
- Gouden Uil: <http://www.goudenboekenuil.be/>
- Boek-delenprijs: <http://www.literatuurplein.nl/litprijs.jsp?litPrijsId=90>
- Nobel Prize: [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/)
- Booker Prize: <http://www.themanbookerprize.com/>
- Pulitzer Prize: <http://www.pulitzer.org/>
- Tony Award: [http://www.tonyawards.com/en\\_US/index.html](http://www.tonyawards.com/en_US/index.html)
- Oprah's book club: <http://www.oprah.com/book-list/Oprahs-Book-Club-The-Complete-List/>
- Information on film adaptations: <http://www.imdb.com/>
- Complementing general information on Dutch language authors and prizes: <http://www.literatuurplein.nl/> and <http://www.deboekensalon.nl/>
- Information on translations of Flemish books: <http://buitenland.vfl.be/en/content/163>
- Information on British authors: <http://literature.britishcouncil.org/>
- Information on translations: <http://www.goodreads.com/work/>
- Diverse websites of publishers.
- Diverse websites of authors.
- For the years of first publication, mainly the PICARTA catalogue was used.

# Appendix 1 Group survey

## 1.1 INSTRUCTION

This questionnaire is intended for book discussion groups. Every book discussion group should fill out the questionnaire **only once**, for example during a meeting. It is important that the questionnaire is filled out with as many people as possible.

The questions concern the current situation; how does your book discussion group function at the moment?

Filling out these questions will take approximately twenty minutes. Of course, any information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality. Please give one answer per question, unless stated otherwise.

In addition, there is also a separate “Questionnaire for members of book discussion groups” for every individual member of your book discussion group. Every member should fill this out separately, either on paper or on the Internet ([www.ou.nl/leesclubonderzoek](http://www.ou.nl/leesclubonderzoek)). It is important that your book discussion group fills out the group questionnaire first, before the members fill out their separate questionnaires. The more members participate, the better the survey will be!

Thank you for your cooperation!

## APPENDIX 1

### 1.2 SURVEY QUESTIONS INCLUDING OUTCOMES

*The first questions will address the general characteristics of your book discussion group*

1. To be sure that the separate questionnaires of the members will be linked to the correct book discussion groups, you should fill in your name and location (for example where you usually meet) below.

If your book discussion group does not have a name, you may make one up. Please do not use general names like 'Book discussion group' since that will make it difficult to link the questionnaire for members to the questionnaire for the book discussion group. When members fill out the "Questionnaire for members", they should write down the name and location of the book discussion group so the information can be linked. Therefore, it is important that every member remembers which name and location is written down on this questionnaire.

What is your book discussion group called and where do you usually meet?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

*[This information was used to link respondents of the members survey to the responding groups of the group survey. 199 groups wrote down a name for their group; 196 groups wrote down the name of the place or region their group was active in.]*

2. How many people does your book discussion group consist of – a possible supervisor excluded?

*n*=211

9.3 people

3. How many members are filling out this questionnaire together – a possible supervisor excluded?

*n*=209

6.8 members

4. What does your book discussion group consist of?

*n*=209

2	Only males
166	Only females
41	Both: 2.39 males and 6.46 females

5. How many years does your book group exist?

*n*=199

Lowest value	0.0 years (recently founded)
Highest value	40.0 years
Mean	12.770 years
Mode	3.0
Median	10.0 years



## GROUP SURVEY

6. What is roughly the age of most of the members of your book discussion group?

*n=xxx*

X	Under 20 years old
X	Between 20 and 30 years old
X	Between 30 and 40 years old
X	Between 40 and 50 years old
X	Between 50 and 60 years old
X	Between 60 and 70 years old
X	Between 70 and 80 years old
X	Over 80 years old
X	Varied

[Not valid]

7. What is highest level of education or training successfully completed by most members of your book discussion group?

*n=201*

0	Primary education (age 4 to 12) ( <i>lager onderwijs / basisonderwijs</i> )
14	Secondary education: preparatory middle-level vocational education (age 12 to 16) ( <i>lbo / vmbo / mavo / mulo</i> )
10	Secondary education: higher general continued education (age 12 to 17) ( <i>mms / hbs</i> )
13	Secondary education: Senior general secondary education (age 12 to 17) / University Preparatory Education (age 12 to 17 or 18) ( <i>havo / vwo</i> )
15	Vocational Education / career and technical education ( <i>mbo</i> )
93	Vocational university (professional university, or college of higher vocational studies) / Academic bachelor ( <i>hbo / wo kandidaats / wo bachelor</i> )
57	Academic master / post-academic degree ( <i>wo doctoraal / wo master / post-wo</i> )

8. Is your book discussion group officially connected to an umbrella organisation, library, bookshop or the like?

*n=209*

7	No, it used to be but not anymore
79	No, the book discussion group has never officially been connected to anything
	Yes, to an adult education centre
	Yes, to HOVO (offers courses at an academic level to people above fifty. It belongs to AIUTA and EFOS, two international organisations, and is also part of the worldwide LiLLWeb).
38	Yes, to a library
52	Yes, to a women's club
	Yes, to a bookshop
	Yes, to a residents' association
10	Yes, to another organisation, namely ____ [ <i>Originally, XXX responding groups chose this answer. Their specification made it possible to rearrange XXX answers in the above mentioned classes.</i> ]

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9. Where does your book discussion group usually meet?

*n*=211

172	At one of the members homes
21	In a library
0	In a bookshop
7	In a community centre
6	In the building of the organisation (other than library, bookshop or community centre)
3	In a café
2	In a restaurant
0	Other, namely [7 groups explained in this option their meeting place: all answers could be assigned to one of the above mentioned categories].

10. How often does your book discussion group meet in a year?

*n*=208

2	3 times or less
104	4-6 times
73	7-9 times
26	10-12 times
0	13-15 times
3	16 times or more

11. Book discussion groups can have a particular purpose. You can, for example, discuss books about a particular subject, or you can meet because you want to keep up with recent Dutch literature.

Does your book discussion group have a particular purpose? If so, what is your purpose?

*n*=208

97	No
111	Yes, namely Diverse characterisations were given. Many were on reading and discussing literature in general. Some more specific themes that emerged are: 15 keeping up with Dutch literature / reading recently published Dutch literature 13 reading more diverse books / books one would otherwise not have read 10 reading Dutch literature 10 reading recently published literature 5 motivating each other to read / enlarging the enjoyment of reading 4 reading English literature

12. Every book discussion group has its own character. How would you briefly describe your book discussion group's character?

*n*=205

[Open-ended question].

13. Meetings of book discussion groups can have an established pattern. For example: First everyone gets a chance to talk briefly about his / her first impression, after which we discuss the content. Then we compare the book to other books and to conclude everyone tells how his or her opinion about the book has changed.

## GROUP SURVEY

Do the meetings of your book discussion group follow an established pattern? If so, what does it look like?

*n*=210

27	No
183	Yes, namely [Diverse patterns of meetings were described, including the reference to the example above]

14. The meetings of book discussion groups can take place in several different settings. For example, one book discussion group may talk sitting at a table while everyone is taking notes, while another club may talk sitting on a couch, having a drink and a bite to eat. How would you briefly describe the setting of your book discussion group?

*n*=206

[Open-ended question]

15. How are the books that you read selected? Indicate for each sentence to what extent it applies to your book discussion group.

	Yes	No	Do not know / not applicable
The coach decides which book we will read. ( <i>n</i> =188)	23	90	75
The coach chooses from books that the members have suggested. ( <i>n</i> =185)	20	88	77
The organisation that our book discussion group is connected to selects the books. ( <i>n</i> =192)	40	79	73
The members have a discussion and make the decision themselves (and possibly vote). ( <i>n</i> =191)	96	53	42
The members take turns deciding which book they are going to read. ( <i>n</i> =189)	48	93	48
Other, namely... ( <i>n</i> =157)	41	16	100

*Other, namely... (n=41)* [Most responding groups used this space to explain their answer]:

24	Members choose from a list of books suggested by organisation or library: Senia / ANBO, Vrouwen van Nu, Zin, PBCG, OBD, lists of books that are available for groups at the library.
6	Members choose in turns (fixed order / no fixed order)
5	Members and coach choose together (for instance, coach chooses a number of books and members choose a number of books / coach chooses books from a list provided by members)
4	Members choose, the member that had suggested the chosen book prepares the discussion / members choose and prepare in turns.
1	All members write down a book title on a paper. At random, a title is chosen.
1	Members buy yearly the five books of Noordhoff Grote Lijsters, <sup>437</sup> the sixth book they choose together.

<sup>437</sup> See [www.lijsters.nl](http://www.lijsters.nl) [website accessed September 1, 2015].

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16. Does your book discussion group have a coach?

*n*=211

64	Yes
147	No: You may skip the next two questions and go directly to question 19.

17. Where does s/he come into this? What are his / her tasks?

Indicate for each sentence what applies to your book discussion group: Always, often, sometimes, never.

*n*=64

The coach...	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Do not know
is the discussion leader. ( <i>n</i> =62)	40	8	10	3	1
helps interpreting the book. ( <i>n</i> =61)	23	20	10	6	2
is an equal interlocutor during the discussion. ( <i>n</i> =63)	47	12	2	1	1
provides additional information on the book or writer. ( <i>n</i> =63)	39	6	7	10	1
provides subjects of discussion. ( <i>n</i> =63)	25	8	16	12	2
takes care of the administration (for example arrange a location, inform members about appointments). ( <i>n</i> =63)	31	5	5	16	6

18. Are there any other tasks your coach fulfils? If so, which?

*n*=61

37	No
24	Yes, ... [open-ended question, answers included: maintaining contact with organisation, distribution of books, organising extra activities, communication between meetings]

*These questions concern the meetings of your book discussion group and the books you discuss.*

19. Which kinds of books does your book discussion group read? Indicate for each category what applies to your book discussion group: often, sometimes or never.

*n*=

Category:	Often	Sometimes	Never
Drama ( <i>n</i> =193)	-	13	180
Poetry ( <i>n</i> =194)	5	56	133
Prose (novels and/or stories) written in or before 1945 ( <i>n</i> =199)	29	110	60
Prose (novels and/or stories) written after 1945 ( <i>n</i> =203)	187	15	1
Young adult ( <i>n</i> =192)	1	29	162
Politics ( <i>n</i> =190)	1	34	155
History (nonfiction) ( <i>n</i> =192)	11	53	128
Historical novels (fiction) ( <i>n</i> =193)	17	136	40
(Auto)biographies and/or diaries and/or letters ( <i>n</i> =193)	6	74	113
Detectives and/or thrillers ( <i>n</i> =194)	-	41	153

## GROUP SURVEY

Category:	Often	Sometimes	Never
Fantasy ( <i>n</i> =192)	4	37	151
Science fiction ( <i>n</i> =191)	-	15	176
Graphic novel and/or other forms of comics ( <i>n</i> =193)	-	7	186
Regional novel ( <i>n</i> =194)	1	28	165
Travel stories ( <i>n</i> =192)	1	59	132
Art and art history ( <i>n</i> =192)	-	15	177
Literary history and/or literary theory ( <i>n</i> =193)	-	12	181
Psychology ( <i>n</i> =192)	4	35	153
Religion and/or philosophy and/or philosophy of life ( <i>n</i> =192)	4	28	160
Books on current social developments ( <i>n</i> =194)	7	49	138
Economy ( <i>n</i> =192)	1	5	186
Biology and/or nature ( <i>n</i> =192)	1	6	185

20. Is there another category of books your book discussion group reads? If so, which?

*n*=204

192	No
12	Yes, namely
	* like noted above, but only books written in English;
	* chicklit: not so much different but very international oriented;
	* mostly Dutch literature;
	* "Nederland leest"; <sup>438</sup>
	* fiction concerning (overall) themes such as war and peace, American literature, Eastern Europe, etcetera;
	* novels;
	* novels, literary nonfiction;
	* literary nonfiction: sometimes;
	* literary nonfiction (for instance: Geert Mak – <i>Hoe God verdween uit Jorwerd</i> , Frank Westerman – <i>De graanrepubliek</i> , Suzanna Jansen – <i>Het pauperparadijs: een familiegeschiedenis</i> );
	* magazine, travel report;
	* books that were nominated for prizes;
	* winners of literary prizes (libris or ako).

21. In general, does your book discussion group read recently published books (past five years) or older books?

*n*=211

7	Only recently published books
115	Mostly recently published books
78	As much recently written books as older books
10	Mostly older books
1	Only older books

<sup>438</sup> See the introduction to the book list (Appendix 1.3) for an explanation on "Nederland leest".

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22. Does your book discussion group read books that were written in Dutch or in other languages (possibly translations)? More than one answer possible.

$n=XXX$

XXX	Books that were originally published in Dutch
XXX	Books that were originally written in a language other than Dutch, but were translated into Dutch
XXX	Books that were originally written in a language other than Dutch, in their original language
[Not valid]	

23. Does your book discussion group pay attention to the gender of the writers of the books? If so, what do you choose to read?

$n=208$

-	Yes, we only read books written by male authors
8	Yes, we read more books written by male authors than by female authors
10	Yes, we read as much books written by male authors as by female authors
1	Yes, we read more books written by female authors than by male authors
-	Yes, we only read books written by female authors
189	No, we do not pay any attention to that

24. Which book are you reading at the moment?

$n=207$

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

*[For convenience of comparison, outcomes of question 24 are combined with outcomes of the next question and presented at the end of this group survey].*

25. What are the last five books your book discussion group has read? If your book discussion group has read less than five books thus far, please write down all books you have read up till now.

$n=209$

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

*[Et cetera].*

*[For convenience of comparison, outcomes of question 25 are combined with outcomes of the previous question and presented at the end of this group survey].*

26. Which book turned out to lead to a successful meeting? Why?

$n=203$

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

## GROUP SURVEY

57 groups responded that they could not name a specific title because all or most meetings were successful, success is not primarily depending on the book, or the group does not exist long enough to give an answer. Respondents emphasised the value of exchanging opinions and views, and that every book can cause captivating discussions.

146 groups responded with a specific title or a number of titles or a specific meeting in mind:

27. Which book turned out to be less suitable for a meeting of your book discussion group?

*n*=198

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

28. Does your book discussion group engage in activities other than discussing books? Activities can be combined with the discussions but do not have to be. (More than one answer possible)

*n*=206

Several groups indicated they plan activities once a year, specific at the end of each season, or for special occasions (such as lustre, special birthdays) only.

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47	No
	Yes:
111	We visit literary activities together (for example lectures by writers)
	40 groups specified literary activities (answering categorie 7):
	25: visiting the theatre or a play, some groups specifically noted they visited a play based on the book that was read (for instance, <i>Lords of the tea</i> );
	9: Making a literary walk, <sup>439</sup> a poetry walk, or an excursion related to a specific book <sup>440</sup>
	4: Visiting a literary or poetry festival (such as Oerol <sup>441</sup> and Zomer Zinnen <sup>442</sup> , or special events of Nederland Leest);
	3: Devote a meeting to poetry;
	2: Diner in style of a book or literary theme; <sup>443</sup>
	2: Visiting a "book city"; <sup>444</sup>
	1: Visiting a library;
	1: Visiting a publisher;
	1: Visiting evenings with authors organised by coordinating organisation;
	1: Visiting the lectures <i>Remarkable Books</i> at the University of Groningen; <sup>445</sup>

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<sup>439</sup> If these take place when visiting a city, these answers are also counted in answering option 5: We visit cities.

<sup>440</sup> Visiting Veenhuizen as a result of reading *Het Pauperparadijs* was written down twice: once specifically organised by Senia.

<sup>441</sup> See the website <http://www.oerol.nl/> (website accessed on August 20 2012).

<sup>442</sup> See the website <http://www.zomerzinnen.nl/> (website accessed on August 20 2012).

<sup>443</sup> These answers are also counted in answering option 2: We have dinner together, either at home or in a restaurant.

<sup>444</sup> Book cities are cities known for their (second hand) book stores or large annual book markets, such as Bredevoort.

## APPENDIX 1

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	1: Visiting the local literary café;
	1: Watching interviews with authors;
	In one group members draw attention to activities related to the book discussion group and variable members attend these activities
87	We have dinner together, either at home or in a restaurant
70	We watch a film together, either at home or in a cinema
27	We visit cities
29	We visit museums
30	Other, namely
	74 groups noted down one or more activities and/or sometimes specified the occasion or frequency activities were planned. In case of merely elaboration on one of the above categories (for instance: seeing the film of a specific book), the answer was reclassified in the matching answering option (in case of the example: answering option 3). Answers or part of answers referring to literary activities were classified under answering option 4: We visit literary activities together.
	30 answers remained in this categorie and described one or more non-literary other activities:
	5: Not specified;
	5: Socially get-together, for instance over a drink or coffee;
	4: Walking;
	3: Celebrating special occasions such as each lustre of the group or special birtdays of members;
	3: Going away for a weekend or week together;
	3: Visiting a lecture;
	2: Making a bicycle tour;
	2: Sailing;
	2: Visiting a concert or musical;
	2: Visiting a garden with artworks;
	1: Dining together with the member's partners;
	1: Ice-skating;
	1: Share presents;
	1: Visiting graveyard;
	1: Workshop AOT.

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<sup>445</sup> In Dutch: *Spraakmakende boeken*. See the website <http://www.rug.nl/corporate/universiteit/kunstencultuur/lezingen/spraakmakendeboeken/index>, for English please add ?lang=en to this web address (websites accessed on August 20 2012).



## GROUP SURVEY

29. Below are eight possible reasons why your book discussion group gathers. Indicate for each reason how important it is for your book discussion group.

	Very important	Important	Undecided	Unimportant	Very unimportant
The book discussion group is companionable. (n=207)	81	111	15	-	-
The book discussion group makes us read. (n=205)	37	79	45	33	11
Thanks to the book discussion group we see each other regularly. (n=205)	26	88	56	30	5
Thanks to the book discussion group we learn about literature. (n=208)	52	102	39	11	4
Thanks to the book discussion group we learn about a particular subject. (n=208)	29	94	47	25	13
Thanks to the book discussion group we get to know each other better. (n=207)	21	104	62	16	4
The book discussion group contributes to our personal development. (n=206)	36	128	37	5	-
By being part of a book discussion group we show other people that we are readers. (n=205)	1	7	23	45	129

30. If you have any further comments, you can write these down below.

This was the end of this questionnaire. Thank you for taking part in this survey! As you might know, this questionnaire is part of a doctoral research on book discussion groups of the Open Universiteit Nederland. For further research, we are still looking for book discussion groups that are willing to take part in the second part of this survey. This might entail that several meetings are attended, members will be interviewed or that your book discussion group is asked to answer a few more questions.

If your book discussion group is possibly willing to take part in further research, you can – without any obligations – fill in the form below. Of course, any information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality, as will the results of the inquiry.

If you fill out the form below, you will receive notice if your book discussion group is eligible for further research and you are then asked if your club still wants to participate. If your book discussion group decides at that moment not to participate, the information below will of course be destroyed immediately.

## APPENDIX 1

Name contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your cooperation!

You may send this questionnaire without a stamp before December 1 2009 to:

*[Address was provided]*

For further questions you can contact Marjolein van Herten:

*[Address and supplemental contact information was provided]*

## 1.3 THE BOOK LIST

Combined outcomes of questions 24 and 25:

24. Which book are you reading at the moment?

25. What are the last five books your book discussion group has read? If your book discussion group has read less than five books thus far, please write down all books you have read up till now.

In total, 1222 book titles were written down by the responding groups of which 1220 could be identified or partly be identified. This 1220 responses were identified as 510 different titles written by 362 different authors.<sup>446</sup> 370 titles were only written down once; 59 titles appeared two times in the survey, the other 81 titles three times or more. The list below shows book titles in alphabetical order by name of the author. Independent of the language book discussion groups had read the books, in this list the book titles are presented in English as well as in Dutch. In case there is no English translation of the book, the title is presented in the original language.

The list is completed with extra information. Some of this information may help to interpret the popularity of a book among book discussion group. The information that is added (if applicable) is the following:

2. Number of times the book title appeared in the survey;
3. Name of the author;
4. Title in English: in case the book is not originally written in English, the title of the English translation. When there is no English translation of the book available, the title is represented in the original language (except Dutch: see point 4);
5. Title in Dutch: in case the book is not originally written in Dutch the title of the Dutch translation is represented here. When there is no Dutch translation available, please see the representation of the book under point 3;
6. Year the book was first published in the original language / If *translated* into Dutch: year the book was first published in Dutch;
7. Country of origin of the book;
8. The sex of the author;
9. Abbreviation of a particular detail, as follows:

Abbreviation	Clarification	Frequency	Oeuvre or title
CANB	Canon list Dutch language books.	Once-only in 2002	Title
CANA	Canon list Dutch language authors.		Oeuvre
	Both lists based on a survey among members of the <i>Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde</i>		
NRC + rank number	10 'best Dutch-language books ever' list published by NRC and NPS, based on approximately 6.500 votes by readers	Once-only in 2007	Title

<sup>446</sup> Abdolah's *De Koran / De Boodschapper*, Bordewijk's *Blokken / Knorrende beesten / Bint*, and Elsschot's *Lijmen / Het Been* have all been counted as single titles. One multi-title group added their list of books. Participants mostly read individually, but once every year they read and discuss the same book. Of their list, only this book is added in the book list.

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Abbreviation	Clarification	Frequency	Oeuvre or title
SLD + season	Reading list of Stichting Literatuurclubs Drenthe, appr. 4 books per year, written or translated into Dutch	Annual since season 1970-1971	Title
WEEK + year	CPNB Boekenweekgeschenk: free book as gift when buying another book. The book is especially written for this campaign.	Annual (spring) since 1930	Title
LEES + year	Nederland Leest (comparable with the concept of One Book, One City): the book is freely distributed in libraries and schools, several activities are organised.	Annual (autumn) since 2006	Title
BOR + year	F. Bordewijkprijs: winners for Dutch prize for proze. In 1948-1978 it was named <i>Vijverbergprijs</i> .	Annual since 1948	
HOO + year	P.C. Hooftprijs: winners of the Dutch award for oeuvre, alternating granted to proze, essays, and poetry.	Annual since 1947	Oeuvre
HUY + year	Constantijn Huygensprijs: winners of Dutch prize for oeuvre.	Annual since 1947	Oeuvre
ANT W + year	Anton Wachterprijs: winners and nominees for best debut novel written in Dutch.	Biannual since 1977	Title
ANT N + year			
PER O + year	E. du Perronprijs: winners of this award for people or institutes that actively contribute to culture and by this helped the advancement of mutual understanding and between different communities living in the Netherlands.	Annual since 1986	Oeuvre or title
PER T + year			
AKO W + year	AKO Literatuurprijs: winners and shortlist nominees for this Dutch prize for fiction and nonfiction written in Dutch.	Annual (autumn) since 1987	Title
AKO N + year			
LIB W + year	Libris Literatuur Prijs: winners and shortlist nominees for this Dutch prize for fiction written in Dutch.	Annual (spring) since 1994	Title
LIB N + year			
NS W + year	NS Publieksprijs: winners and shortlist nominees for the public award for the best book written or translated into Dutch. In 1992-2000 the prize was named <i>Trouw publieksprijs</i> and in 1987-1991 <i>CPNB oeuvreprijs</i> , both had a different format and are not included here.	Annual (autumn) since 2001	Title
NS N + year			
UIL L + year	Winners of Gouden uil literatuurprijs (since 1995);	Annual (spring) since 1995	Title
UIL P + year	Winners of Gouden uil publieksprijs (since 2000);		
UIL J + year	Winners of Gouden uil prijs voor kinder- en jeugdboeken (since 1995) Books are written in Dutch. No book was awarded in 2011, since 2012 the name has changed into Gouden boekenuil.		
BD W + year	Boek-delenprijs: winners and nominees for Dutch / Flemish prize for best discussable book.	Annual since 2006	Title
BD N + year			
NOBEL + year	Nobel Prize in Literature: winner of prestigious international literary prize.	Annual since 1901	Oeuvre

## GROUP SURVEY

Abbreviation	Clarification	Frequency	Oeuvre or title
BOOK W + year	Man Booker Prize for Fiction: winners and shortlist	Annual since 1969	Title
BOOK N + year	nominees for this prize for a work of fiction written in English by a citizen of the Commonwealth of Nations, the Republic of Ireland, or Zimbabwe.		
PUL W + year	Pulitzer Prize (fiction): winners and shortlist nominees	Annual since 1918	Title
PUL N + year	for this prize for a work of fiction written by an American author.		
TONY + year	Antoinette Perry Award for Excellence in Theatre, category Best Play: winners of American prize for best play on Broadway.	Annual since 1947	Title
OPR + year	Oprah's book club: books that were discussed by Oprah during her television show.	1996-2010: 70 books in total	Title
FILM NL + year	Adapted for film and released in Dutch cinema theatres (restricted to 2000 – 2010)	Only 2000-2010	Title

The outcomes of the survey questions are presented in a number of different tables:

1. The book list: overview;
2. Selection *SLD*;
3. Selection *Senia*;
4. Top ten popular titles;
5. Popular authors: number of entries and number of titles;
6. Popularity of books by original language;
7. Popularity of books: new books and classics;
8. Dutch language laureates, awards and canon lists;
9. Nobel Prize in Literature;
10. English language prizes and media attention.

## APPENDIX 1

### 1.3.1 The book list: Overview

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Abdolah, Kader	My Father's Notebook	Spijkerschrift	2000	The Netherlands	m	SLD 2001-2002; PER T 2000
11	Abdolah, Kader	The House of the Mosque	Het huis van de moskee	2005	The Netherlands	m	NRC 2; NS N 2006
1	Abdolah, Kader	-	De Koran; De boodschapper	2008; 2008	The Netherlands	m	NS N 2008 (both)
1	Abulhawa, Susan	The Scar of David (Mornings in Jenin)	Het litteken van David	2006 / 2007	USA	f	
1	Ackroyd, Peter	Chatterton	Chatterton	1987 / 1989	UK	m	BOOK N 1987
18	Adiga, Aravind	The White Tiger	De witte tijger	2008 / 2008	India (English)	m	SLD 2009-2010 ; BOOK W 2008
1	Albee, Edward	The Goat, or, Who is Sylvia?	-	2000 <sup>447</sup> / -	USA	m	TONY 2002
1	Alighieri, Dante	Divine Comedy	De goddelijke komedie	ca 1320 / 1864 <sup>448</sup>	Italy	m	
1	Alighieri, Dante	Not specified	Not specified	14 <sup>th</sup> century	Italy	m	
1	Ammaniti, Niccolò	Steal You Away	Ik haal je op, ik neem je mee	1999 / 2004	Italy	m	
1	Anker, Robert	-	Hajar en Daan	2004	The Netherlands	m	
1	Anker, Robert	-	Nieuw-Lelieveld	2007	The Netherlands	m	
1	Anonymus <sup>449</sup>	The Voyage of Saint Brendan	De reis van Sinte Brandaan	14th century; 1949; 1994	Low Countries	?	
1	Appanah, Nathacha	The Last Brother	De laatste broer	2007 / 2008	France/Mauritius (French)	f	

<sup>447</sup> First performed in 2002.

<sup>448</sup> Different editions of translations had been used by the different members of this book discussion group.

<sup>449</sup> Two editions of this medieval text had been used by members: the 1994 edition of Willem Wilmink and W.P. Gerritsen (based on the Comburg manuscript), and the 1949 edition by Maartje Draak and Bertus Aafjes (reconstruction based on the Comburg manuscript and the Van Hulthem manuscript).

## GROUP SURVEY

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
2	Asscher-Pinkhof, Clara	-	Danseres zonder benen	1966	The Netherlands/ Israel (Dutch)	f	
1	Austen, Jane	Pride and Prejudice	Trots en vooroordeel (Waan en eigenwaan)	1813 / 1922	UK	f	FILM 2005 NL 2005
1	Auster, Paul	The Book of Illusions	Het boek der illusies	2002 / 2002	USA	m	
2	Auster, Paul	Man in the Dark	Man in het duister	2008 / 2008	USA	m	
1	B., Omar	-	Oesters of merguez	2006	Flanders	m	
1	Bakker, Gerbrand	Pear Trees Bloom White	Perenbomen bloeien wit	1999	The Netherlands	m	
22	Bakker, Gerbrand	The Twin	Boven is het stil	2006	The Netherlands	m	SLD 2007- 2008; ANT N 2006; LIB N 2007
2	Barbery, Muriel	The Elegance of the Hedgehog	Elegant als een egel	2007 / 2008	France	f	FILM NL 2009
3	Barceló, Elia	Disfraces terribles	Bal masqué	2004 / 2007	Spain	f	
25	Baricco, Alessandro	Questa storia	Dit verhaal	2005 / 2007	Italy	m	SLD 2008- 2009
1	Barry, Sebastian	The Secret Scripture	De geheime schrift	2008 / 2008	Ireland	m	BOOK N 2008
1	Beerten, Els	-	Allemaal willen we de hemel	2008	Flanders	f	UIL J 2009
1	Benali, Abdelkader	Wedding by the Sea	Bruiloft aan zee	1996	The Netherlands	m	LIB N 1997
1	Benali, Abdelkader	-	De langverwachte	2002	The Netherlands	m	LIB W 2003
1	Benali, Abdelkader	-	De stem van mijn moeder	2009	The Netherlands	m	PER T 2009
1	Bennett, Alan	The History Boys	-	2004 / -	UK	m	TONY 2006; FILM 2006 NL 2007
1	Bennett, Alan	The Uncommon Reader	De ongewone lezer	2007 / 2008	UK	m	
1	Berk, Marjan	-	Zout	2006	The Netherlands	f	

## APPENDIX 1

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Bernlef, J.	-	Sneeuw	1973	The Netherlands	m	SLD 1973-1974; HOO 1994; HUY 1984
2	Bernlef, J.	-	Boy	2000	The Netherlands	m	HOO 1994; HUY 1984; LIB N 2001
3	Bernlef, J.	-	Buiten is het maandag	2003	The Netherlands	m	HOO 1994; HUY 1984; AKO N 2004; LIB N 2004
3	Bernlef, J.	-	Op slot	2007	The Netherlands	m	HOO 1994; HUY 1984
1	Biesheuvel, Maarten	-	Eva's keus <sup>450</sup>	2003	The Netherlands	m	HOO 2007
1	Blom, Lilian	-	De tuinkamer	2007	The Netherlands	f	
2	Bloom, Amy	Away	Op zoek	2007 / 2008	USA	f	
2	Boelgakov, Michail	The Master and Margarita	De meester en Margarita	1967 / 1968	Russia	m	
1	Boesberg, André	-	Tunnelkoorts	2008	The Netherlands	m	
1	Bordewijk, Ferdinand	-	Blokken; Knorrende beesten; 1934 Bint	1931; 1933;	The Netherlands	m	CANB (Bint); CANA; SLD 1986-1987 (Bint); HOO 1954; HUY 1957
1	Bosman, Machiel	-	Elisabeth de Flines: een onmogelijke liefde in de achttiende eeuw	2008	The Netherlands	m	AKO N 2008
1	Bouazza, Hafid	-	Paravion	2003	The Netherlands	m	SLD 2004-2005; AKO N 2004; UIL L 2004
1	Bowen, Elizabeth	The Last September	-	1929 / -	Ireland/UK	f	

<sup>450</sup> This book discussion group read thirteen stories out of this voluminous compilation.



## GROUP SURVEY

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
4	Boyne, John	The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas	De jongen in de gestreepte pyjama	2006 / 2006	Ireland	m	FILM 2008 NL 2009
1	Braam, Conny	-	De woede van Abraham	2000	The Netherlands	f	
1	Braam, Conny	-	Het schandaal	2004	The Netherlands	f	
1	Braam, Conny	The Cocaine Salesman	De handelsreiziger van de Nederlandse Cocaïnefabriek	2009	The Netherlands	f	
2	Brakman, Willem	-	Een winterreis	1961	The Netherlands	m	HOO 1980
1	Brakman, Willem	-	Naar de zee, om het strand te zien	2006	The Netherlands	m	HOO 1980
1	Brenton, Howard	Never So Good	-	2008 / -	UK	m	
1	Brijs, Stefan	-	Arend	2000	Flanders	m	
7	Brijs, Stefan	The Angel Maker	De engelenmaker	2005	Flanders	m	SLD 2006-2007; AKO N 2006; LIB N 2006; UIL P 2006
1	Bril, Martin	-	Verzameld werk	2002	The Netherlands	m	
1	Bril, Martin	-	De kleine keizer	2008	The Netherlands	m	
1	Brink, André	A Dry White Season	Een droog wit seizoen	1979 / 1980	South Africa (Afrikaans)	m	
1	Brink, André	Praying Mantis	De bidsprinkhaan: een waar verhaal	2005 / 2006	South Africa (Afrikaans)	m	
3	Brokken, Jan	-	In het huis van de dichter	2008	The Netherlands	m	
1	Brontë, Emily	Wuthering Heights	Woeste hoogten (De woeste hoogte, De barre hoogten, Wilde hoogten)	1847 / 1935	UK	f	SLD 1996-1997
1	Brouwer, Anna	-	Land van gebroken belofte: dochters van Rusland	2003	The Netherlands	f	
1	Brouwers, Jeroen	-	Joris Ockeloen en het wachten	1967	The Netherlands	m	CANA; BOR 1967; HUY 1993

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1. N2.	Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
3	Brouwers, Jeroen	Sunken Red	Bezonken rood	1981	The Netherlands	m	CANA; SLD 1982-1983; HUY 1993
8	Brouwers, Jeroen	-	Datumloze dagen	2007	The Netherlands	m	CANA; HUY 1993; LIB N 2008; UIL P 2008
2	Bruhns, Wibke	My father's country: The story of a German family	Het land van mijn vader: geschiedenis van een Duitse familie	2004 / 2005	Germany	f	
1	Butcher, Tim	Blood River: A Journey to Africa's Broken Heart	Bloedrivier: een reis naar het gebroken hart van Afrika	2007 / 2008	UK	m	
1	Byatt, A. S.	Possession: A Romance	Obsessie: een romance	1990 / 1991	UK	f	BOOK W 1990; FILM 2002 NL 2002;
1	Byatt, A. S.	The Children's Book	Het boek van de kinderen	2009 / 2010	UK	f	BOOK N 2009
1	Campbell, Aifric	The Semantics of Murder	De logica van het moorden	2008 / 2009	Ireland/UK	f	
1	Campert, Remco	-	Het satijnen hart	2006	The Netherlands	m	CANA; HOO 1976
1	Campert, Remco	-	Nieuwe herinneringen	2007	The Netherlands	m	CANA; HOO 1976
1	Camus, Albert	The Plague	De pest	1947 / 1948	France	m	NOBEL 1957
1	Carroll, Lewis	Alice's Adventures in Wonderland	Alice in Wonderland	1865 / 1887	UK	m	FILM 2010 NL 2010
1	Chabon, Michael	The Yiddish Policemen's Union	De Jiddische politiebond	2007 / 2007	USA	m	
1	Chang, Leslie T.	Factory Girls: From Village to City in a Changing China	Fabrieksmeisjes: indringend portret van twee jonge vrouwen in het moderne China	2008 / 2009	USA	f	
1	Chekhov, Anton	The Cherry Orchard	De kersentuin	1904 / [ca. 1904]	Russian Empire	m	

## GROUP SURVEY

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Chiara, Giovanni	-	Septemberspiegel	2002 / 2002	Italy	m	
4	Claudel, Philippe	Grey Souls (By a Slow River)	Grijze zielen	2003 / 2004	France	m	SLD 2005-2006; FILM 2005 NL 2006
4	Claudel, Philippe	Monsieur Linh and His Child	Het kleine meisje van meneer Linh	2005 / 2005	France	m	
10	Claudel, Philippe	Brodeck	Het verslag van Brodeck	2007 / 2008	France	m	
5	Claus, Hugo	The Sorrow of Belgium	Het verdriet van België	1983	Flanders	m	CANB; CANA; HUY 1979
2	Claus, Hugo	-	De geruchten	1996	Flanders	m	CANA; HUY 1979; LIB W 1997
1	Claus, Hugo	-	Onvoltooid verleden	1998	Flanders	m	CANA; HUY 1979
2	Cleave, Chris	The Other Hand (Little Bee)	Kleine bij	2008 / 2009	UK	m	
1	Coe, Jonathan	The Rain Before It Falls	De regen voor hij valt	2007 / 2007	UK	m	
3	Coelho, Paulo	The Alchemist	De alchemist	1988 / 1994	Brasil	m	
2	Coelho, Paulo	The Zahir	De Zahir	2005 / 2005	Brasil	m	
1	Coelho, Paulo	The Witch of Portobello	De heks van Portobello	2006 / 2007	Brasil	m	
3	Coetzee, J. M.	Disgrace	In ongenade	1999 / 1999	South Africa/ Australia (English)	m	SLD 2000-2001; NOBEL 2003; BOOK W 1999; FILM 2008 NL 2009
2	Coetzee, J. M.	Slow Man	Langzame man	2005 / 2005	South Africa/ Australia (English)	m	NOBEL 2003
1	Coetzee, J. M.	Diary of a Bad Year	Dagboek van een slecht jaar	2007 / 2007	South Africa/ Australia (English)	m	NOBEL 2003

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1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Coetzee, J. M.	Summertime	Zomertijd	2009 / 2009	South Africa/ Australia (English)	m	NOBEL 2003; BOOK N 2009
2	Couperus, Louis	Old People and the Things that Pass	Van oude mensen, de dingen, die voorbij gaan...	1906	The Netherlands	m	CANB; CANA
5	Courtemanche, A Gil	A Good Death	Een mooie dood	2005 / 2006	Canada (French)	m	SLD 2007- 2008
1	Danish, David	-	Een goede dag om te sterven	2006	The Netherlands	m	
1	de Bernières, Louis	A Partisan's Daughter	Een partizanendochter	2008 / 2008	UK	m	
1	de Charrière, Isabelle (or: Belle van Zuylen)	-	Rebels en beminnelijk	1760-1805 / 1971-1979	The Netherlands (French)	f	CANA
1	de Coster, Saskia	-	Held	2007	Flanders	f	
1	de Jong, Oek	-	Hokwerda's kind	2002	The Netherlands	m	LIB N 2003
1	de Jong, Pia	-	Lange dagen	2008	The Netherlands	f	UIL P 2009
4	de Kat, Otto	Julia	Julia	2008	The Netherlands	m	
1	de Loo, Tessa	-	Een varken in het paleis	1998	The Netherlands	f	CANA
1	de Loo, Tessa	The Book of Doubt	Harlekino	2008	The Netherlands	f	CANA
1	de Martelaere, Patricia	-	Nachtboek van een slapeloze	1988	Flanders	f	
1	de Moor, Margriet	First Grey, Then White, Then Blue	Eerst grijs, dan wit, dan blauw	1991	The Netherlands	f	SLD 1992- 1993; AKO W 1992
1	de Moor, Margriet	The Kreutzer Sonata	Kreutzersonate. Een liefdesverhaal	2001	The Netherlands	f	LIB N 2002
2	de Moor, Margriet	The Storm	De verdronkene	2005	The Netherlands	f	
4	de Rosnay, Tatiana de	Sarah's Key	Haar naam was Sarah	2007 / 2008	France	f	FILM 2010 NL 2010

## GROUP SURVEY

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	De Vries, Peter	The Blood of the Lamb	Het bloed van het lam (Het Lam)	1961 / 1963 <sup>451</sup>	USA	m	
1	de Winter, Leon	God's Gym	God's Gym	2002	The Netherlands	m	NS N 2003
10	de Winter, Leon	-	Het recht op terugkeer	2008	The Netherlands	m	AKO N 2008; NS N 2008
1	Delbée, Anne	Une femme Camille Claudel	Camille Claudel, een vrouw	1981 / 2009	France	f	
1	DeLillo, Don	Falling Man	Vallende man	2007 / 2007	USA	m	
1	den Doollaard, A.	-	De herberg met het hoefijzer	1933	The Netherlands	m	
1	Dermoût, Maria	The Ten Thousand Things	De tienduizend dingen	1955	The Netherlands/ Dutch East Indies	f	CANA
1	de Vos, Marjoleine	[Poetry: not specified]	[Poëzie]	Not specified (poetry publications between 2000-2008)	The Netherlands	f	
1	Díaz, Junot	The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao	Het korte maar wonderbare leven van Oscar Wao	2007 / 2007	USA	m	PUL W 2008
1	Dijksterhuis, Ap	-	Het slimme onbewuste. Denken met gevoel	2007	The Netherlands	m	
1	Dorrestein, Renate	Unnatural Mothers	Ontaarde moeders	1992	The Netherlands	f	SLD 1993-1994
1	Dorrestein, Renate	A Heart of Stone	Een hart van steen	1998	The Netherlands	f	
1	Dorrestein, Renate	-	Het duister dat ons scheidt	2003	The Netherlands	f	NS N 2004
1	Dorrestein, Renate	-	Mijn zoon heeft een seksleven en ik lees mijn moeder Roodkapje voor	2006	The Netherlands	f	

<sup>451</sup> A new translation was published in 2009.

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1. N2.	Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Dostoyevsky, Fyodor	The Village of Stepanchikovo (The Friend of the Family)	Oom Jegor (Het dorp Stepantsjikowo en zijn bewoners: uit de gedenkschriften van een vergeten burger)	1859 / 1955 <sup>452</sup>	Russian Empire	m	
2	Dubois, Jean-Paul	A French Life	Een Frans leven	2004 / 2005	France	m	SLD 2007-2008
1	Durlacher, Jessica	-	Het Geweten	1997	The Netherlands	f	
2	Durlacher, Jessica	-	Emoticon	2004	The Netherlands	f	
1	Eggers, Elle	The House of the Seven Sisters	Het huis van de zeven zusters	1998	The Netherlands	f	
1	Elsschot, Willem	Villa des Roses	Villa des Roses	1913	Flanders	m	CANB; CANA; FILM NL 2002; HUY 1951
2	Elsschot, Willem	Soft Soap; The Leg	Lijmen; Het been	1924; 1938	Flanders	m	CANB (both novels); CANA; HUY 1951; FILM NL 2000 (Lijmen)
1	Emants, Marcellus	A Posthumous Confession	Een nagelaten bekentenis	1894	The Netherlands	m	CANB; CANA
1	Enquist, Anna	The Masterpiece	Het meesterstuk	1994	The Netherlands	f	SLD 1995-1996
5	Enquist, Anna	-	De thuiskomst	2005	The Netherlands	f	NS N 2005
12	Enquist, Anna	Counterpoint	Contrapunt	2008	The Netherlands	f	LIB N 2009
1	Enquist, Per Olov	The Visit of the Royal Physician	Het bezoek van de lijfarts	1999 / 2001	Sweden	m	SLD 2002-2003

<sup>452</sup> This novel was translated by R. van Meenen en U. de Wael in 1955 and by H. Leerink in 1956. A 1962 edition of the translation of the latter was reprinted in 2007 by order of the *NRC Leesclub*, a open book discussion group for readers of the NRC newspaper.

## GROUP SURVEY

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Erasmus, Desiderius	The Praise of Folly	Lof der zotheid	1511 / 1560	The Netherlands (Latin)	m	CANB; CANA
1	Evans, Nicholas	The Horse Whisperer	De paardenfluisteraar	1995 / 1995	UK	m	
1	Fasseur, Cees	-	Juliana & Bernhard, 2008 Verhaal van een huwelijk 1936-1956		The Netherlands	m	
1	Faulkner, William	As I Lay Dying	Uitvaart in Mississippi (Terwijl ik al heenging)	1930 / 1955 <sup>453</sup>	USA	m	NOBEL 1949; OPR 2005
17	Februari, Marjolijn	The Book Club	De literaire kring	2007	The Netherlands	f <sup>454</sup>	LIB N 2008
21	Figueras, Marcelo	Kamchatka	Kamtsjatka	2003 / 2006	Argentina	m	SLD 2008-2009
1	Fitch, Janet	White Oleander	Witte oleander	1999 / 2000	UK	f	OPR 1999; FILM 2002 NL 2003
8	Foer, Jonathan Safran	Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close	Extreem luid & ongelooflijk dichtbij	2005 / 2005	USA	m	
21	Franck, Julia	The Blind Side of the Heart (The Blindness of the Heart)	De middagvrouw	2007 / 2008	Germany	f	SLD 2009-2010
1	Frayn, Michael	Copenhagen	-	1998 / -	UK	m	TONY 2000
1	Fredriksson, Marianne	Hanna's Daughters	Anna, Hanna en Johanna	1994 / 1997	Sweden	f	NS W 1998
1	Fredriksson, Marianne	According to Mary Magdalene	Volgens Maria Magdalena	1997 / 1999	Sweden	f	
1	Freriks, Kester	-	Koningswens	2001	The Netherlands	m	
1	Frisch, Max	Gantenbein (A Wilderness of Mirrors)	Ontwerpen voor een ik (Gantenbein)	1964 / 1965	Switzerland (German)	m	
1	Gaarder, Jostein	Sophie's World	De wereld van Sofie	1991 / 1994	Norway	m	FILM 1999 NL 2000

<sup>453</sup> A new translation was published in 1985.

<sup>454</sup> Maxim Februari published as female author Marjolijn Februari until September 2012.

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1. N2.	Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Gaiman, Neil	Coraline	Coraline	2002 / 2003	UK/USA	m	FILM 2009 NL 2009
1	Galloway, Steven	The Cellist of Sarajevo	De cellist van Sarajevo	2008 / 2008	Canada (English)	m	
2	Gerritsen, Esther	-	De kleine miezerige god	2008	The Netherlands	f	
1	Gilbert, Elizabeth	Eat, Pray, Love. One woman's search for everything accros Italy, India, and Indonesia	Eten, bidden, beminnen. De zoektocht van een vrouw in Italië, India en Indonesië	2006 / 2007	USA	f	FILM 2010 NL 2010
1	Giles, Gail	Right Behind You	Right behind you: kun je het verleden achter je laten?	2007 / 2008	USA	f	
40	Giordano, Paolo	The Solitude of Prime Numbers	De eenzaamheid van de priemgetallen	2008 / 2009	Italy	m	
1	Goemans, Anne-Gine	-	Ziekzoekers	2007	The Netherlands	f	ANT W 2008
1	Goeminne, Siska	-	Het Fantastische Verhaal van Ferre en Frie	2009	Flanders	f	
1	Gogol, Nikolai	The Nose	De neus	1836 / 1966	Russian Empire	m	
1	Gogol, Nikolai	Not specified <sup>455</sup>	Not specified	Not specified	Russian Empire [1831-1842]	m	
1	Gordimer, Nadine	The House Gun	Het huiswapen	1997 / 1998	South Africa (English)	f	NOBEL 1991
1	Gordimer, Nadine	The Pickup	Rite de passage	2001 / 2001	South Africa (English)	f	NOBEL 1991
1	Gorky, Maxim	Not specified <sup>456</sup>	Not specified	Not specified	Russian Empire [1892-1936]	m	
1	Gray, Simon	The Old Masters	-	2004 / -	UK	m	
1	Greene, Graham	The Human Factor	De privéfactor	1978 / 1978	UK	m	
1	Grøndahl, Jens Christian	Silence in October	Stilte in oktober	1996 / 1998	Denmark	m	

<sup>455</sup> Following a visit to the Amsterdam Hermitage, the concerning book discussion group read several books by Russian authors of the Russian Empire (1721-1917) among which Gogol, titles were not specified.

<sup>456</sup> Following a visit to the Amsterdam Hermitage, the concerning book discussion group read several books by Russian authors of the Russian Empire (1721-1917) among which Gorky, titles were not specified.



## GROUP SURVEY

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Grøndahl, Jens Christian	Den tid det tager	De tijd die nodig is	2008 / 2008	Denmark	m	
1	Groot, Jacob	-	Billy Doper	2008	The Netherlands	m	
1	Grossman, David	The Zigzag Kid	Het zigzagkind	1994 / 1996	Israel	m	
1	Grossman, Vasili	Life and Fate	Leven en lot	1980 <sup>457</sup> / 2008	Russia	m	
1	Grunberg, Arnon	-	De asielzoeker	2003	The Netherlands	m	CANA; BOR 2004; HUY 2009; AKO W 2004
15	Grunberg, Arnon	Tirza	Tirza	2006	The Netherlands	m	CANA; HUY 2009; AKO N 2007; LIB W 2007; NS N 2007; UIL L 2007; FILM NL 2010
1	Grunberg, Arnon	-	Onze oom	2008	The Netherlands	m	CANA; HUY 2009; LIB N 2009
1	Guterson, David	Snow Falling on Cedars	Ceders in de sneeuw	1994 / 1997	USA	m	FILM 1999 NL 2000
10	Haasse, Hella S.	Oeroeg	Oeroeg	1948	The Netherlands	f	CANB; CANA; WEEK 1948; LEES 2009; HOO 1983; HUY 1981; FILM NL 1993
1	Haasse, Hella S.	In a Dark Wood Wandering. A Novel of the Middle Ages	Het woud der verwachting. Het leven van Charles van Orléans	1949	The Netherlands	f	CANB; CANA; HOO 1983; HUY 1981

<sup>457</sup> Published posthumous. Originally written in 1959.

## APPENDIX 1

1. N2.	Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Haasse, Hella S.	The scarlet city. A novel of 16th-century Italy	De scharlaken stad	1952	The Netherlands	f	CANA; HOO 1983; HUY 1981
1	Haasse, Hella S.	Messages from the Blue House	Berichten van het Blauwe Huis	1986	The Netherlands	f	CANA; HOO 1983; HUY 1981
3	Haasse, Hella S.	The Tea Lords	Heren van de thee	1992	The Netherlands	f	CANA; SLD 1994-1995; HOO 1983; HUY 1981; AKO N 1993; NS W 1993
1	Haasse, Hella S.	-	Fenrir: een lang weekend in de Ardennen	2000	The Netherlands	f	CANA; HOO 1983; HUY 1981
3	Haasse, Hella S.	-	Sleuteloog	2002	The Netherlands	f	CANA; HOO 1983; HUY 1981; AKO N 2003; NS W 2003
1	Haasse, Hella S.	-	Het tuinhuis	2006	The Netherlands	f	CANA; HOO 1983; HUY 1981
3	Haddon, Mark	The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time	Het wonderbaarlijke voorval met de hond in de nacht	2003 / 2003	UK	m	SLD 2004-2005
1	Haffner, Sebastian	Defying Hitler: A Memoir	Het verhaal van een Duitser 1914-1933	2000 <sup>458</sup> / 2001	Germany	m	
1	Haggard, Henry Rider	She	Zij	1886 / [1900] <sup>459</sup>	UK	m	
1	Hahn Beer, Edith	The Nazi Officer's Wife: How One Jewish Woman Survived the Holocaust	De joodse bruid	1999 / 2004	UK	f	

<sup>458</sup> Written in 1939-1940, first published [posthumous] in 2000 and 2002.

<sup>459</sup> Publication not dated, about 1900.

## GROUP SURVEY

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Harding, Georgina	The Solitude of Thomas Cave	De eenzaamheid van Thomas Cave	2006 / 2007	UK	f	
1	Hawthorne, Nathaniel	The Scarlet Letter	De rode letter	1850 / 1916	USA	m	
1	Heller, Joseph	God Knows	God weet	1984 / 1985	USA	m	
1	Helman, Albert	-	De stille plantage	1931	The Netherlands/ Suriname (Dutch)	m	
1	Hemmerechts, Kristien	White Sand	Wit zand	1993	Flanders	f	SLD 1997-1998
2	Hermans, W. F.	The Darkroom of Damocles	De donkere kamer van Damokles	1958	The Netherlands	m	CANB; CANA; NRC 5
3	Hermans, W. F.	Beyond Sleep	Nooit meer slapen	1966	The Netherlands	m	CANB; CANA; NRC 6; SLD 1979-1980; BOR 1966; HOO 1971
1	Hermans, W. F.	From innumerable millions	Uit talloos veel miljoenen	1981	The Netherlands	m	CANA
1	Hermesen, Joke Johanna	-	De liefde dus	2008	The Netherlands	f	[SLD 2010-2011]
2	Hilsenrath, Edgar	Jossel Wassermanns Heimkehr	De thuiskomst van Jossel Wassermann	1993 / 2009	Germany	m	
1	Holland, Tom	Rubicon: The Triumph and Tragedy of the Roman Republic	Rubicon: het einde van de Romeinse republiek	2003 / 2006	UK	m	
1	Homes, A. M.	This Book will Save Your Life	Dit boek redt je leven	2006 / 2006	USA	f	
3	Hosseini, Khaled	The Kite Runner	De vliegeraar van Kabul (De vliegeraar)	2003 / 2003	Afghanistan/ USA (English)	m	SLD 2005-2006; FILM 2007 NL 2008
3	Hosseini, Khaled	A Thousand Splendid Suns	Duizend schitterende zonnen	2007 / 2007	Afghanistan/ USA (English)	m	

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1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Houellebecq, Michel	Atomised (The Elementary Particles)	Elementaire deeltjes	1998 / 1999	France	m	FILM 2006 NL 2006
1	Hustvedt, Siri	The Sorrows of an American	Het verdriet van een Amerikaan	2008 / 2008	USA	f	
1	Isegawa, Moses	Abyssinian Chronicles	Abessijnse kronieken	2001 / 1998	Uganda/The Netherlands (written in English but first published in Dutch)	m	
1	Ishiguro, Kazuo	The Unconsoled	De troostelozen	1995 / 1995	UK	m	
1	James, Henry	Washington Square	Washington Square	1880 / 1998	USA/UK	m	
1	James, Henry	The Portrait of a Lady	Portret van een dame	1881 / 1996	USA/UK	m	
1	James, Henry	The Turn of the Screw	In de greep	1898 / 1951	USA/UK	m	
17	Jansen, Suzanna	-	Het pauperparadijs: een familiegeschiedenis	2008	The Netherlands	f	
1	Japin, Arthur	In Lucia's Eyes	Een schitterend gebrek	2003	The Netherlands	m	LIB W 2004; NS N 2004
23	Japin, Arthur	-	De overgave	2007	The Netherlands	m	NS W 2008
1	Japrisot, Sébastien	A Very Long Engagement	De lange zondag van de verloving	1991 / 1993	France	m	FILM 2004 NL 2005
1	Jelinek, Elfriede	Women as Lovers	Liefhebben	1975 / 2005	Austria (German)	f	NOBEL 2004
1	Jensen, Stine	-	Dokter Jazz	2009	The Netherlands	f	
1	Jepsen, Erling	Kunsten at græde i kor	De kunst om in koor te huilen	2002 / 2002	Denmark	m	

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1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Jones, Edward P.	The Known World	De bekende wereld	2003 / 2005	USA	m	PUL W 2004
1	Kafka, Franz	The Trial	Het proces	1925 / 1982 <sup>460</sup>	Austria-Hungary/ Czech Republic (German)	m	
2	Kapuściński, Ryszard	Travels with Herodotus	Reizen met Herodotos	2004 / 2005	Poland	m	
1	Keesing, Elisabeth	-	Tijd gerecht	1993	The Netherlands	f	
1	Kehlman, Daniel	Measuring the World	Het meten van de wereld	2005 / 2006	Germany	m	
2	Kehlman, Daniel	Fame: A Novel in Nine Episodes	Roem	2009 / 2009	Germany	m	
1	Kerouac, Jack	On The Road	Op weg (Onderweg)	1957 / 1961	USA	m	
1	Khan-Din, Ayub	Rafta, Rafta...	-	2007 / -	UK	m	
1	Kieri, Katarina	Majas morsas kompis sambo - och andra noveller	De vriend van de vriendin van de moeder van Maja	2007 / 2009	Sweden	f	
1	Koch, Herman	-	Eten met Emma	2000	The Netherlands	m	
30	Koch, Herman	The Dinner	Het diner	2009	The Netherlands	m	NS W 2009
2	Koch, Natalie	Plays	Streken	2006	The Netherlands	f	SLD 2007-2008
3	Koelemeijer, Judith	-	Het zwijgen van Maria Zachea. Een ware familiegeschiedenis	2002	The Netherlands	f	NS W 2002
3	Koelemeijer, Judith	-	Anna Boom	2008	The Netherlands	f	
1	Komrij, Gerrit	-	Over de bergen	1990	The Netherlands	m	SLD 1997-1998; HOO 1993

<sup>460</sup> wel al eerder bundles, stond het daarin in NL? 1970: toneelstuk (NL uitgegeven 1971) eerste romanuitgave in NL 1982.

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1. N2.	Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Kool, Marga	-	Een kleine wereld. Terug naar het dorp van mijn ouders	2006	The Netherlands	f	
1	Koolhaas, Anton	-	Vanwege een tere huid	1973	The Netherlands	m	SLD 1974- 1975; HOO 1992; HUY 1989
1	Kosztolányi, Dezső	Anna Édes	Anna	1926 / 1982	Hungary	m	
1	Koubaa, Bart	-	De leraar	2009	Flanders	m	
1	Kouwenaar, Gerrit	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified (publications between 1941-2008)	The Netherlands	m	CANA; HOO 1970
1	Krabbé, Tim	-	Een tafel vol vlinders	2009	The Netherlands	m	WEEK 2009
1	Krauss, Nicole	The History of Love	De geschiedenis van de liefde	2005 / 2005	USA	f	SLD 2006- 2007
1	Kundera, Milan	Ignorance	Onwetendheid	2000 / 2002	Czech Republic/ France (French)	m	SLD 2003- 2004
1	Lago, Eduardo	Call me Brooklyn	Noem me Brooklyn	2006 / 2009	Spain	m	
1	Lahiri, Jhumpa	The Namesake	De naamgenoot	2003 / 2003	UK/USA	f	FILM 2006 NL 2007
1	Lalwani, Nikita	Gifted	Begaafd	2007 / 2007	India/UK (English)	f	
1	Lanoye, Tom	The Divine Monster	Het goddelijke monster	1997	Flanders	m	
4	Lanoye, Tom	-	Het derde huwelijk	2006	Flanders	m	LIB N 2007
1	Laroui, Fouad	De quel amour blessé	Judith en Jamal	1998 / 2001	Marocco/The Netherlands (French)	m	PER O 2002
2	Larsson, Stieg	The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo	Mannen die vrouwen haten	2005 / 2006	Sweden	m	FILM 2009 NL 2009
1	Laxness, Halldór	Under the Glacier (Christianity at the Glacier)	Aan de voet van de gletsjer	1968 / 2007	Iceland	m	NOBEL 1955
1	Le Clézio, J. M. G.	Onitsha	-	1991 / -	France/ Mauritius (French)	m	NOBEL 2008

## GROUP SURVEY

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Le Clézio, J. M. G.	Hasard suivi de Angoli Mala	In volle zee	1999 / 2001	France/ Mauritius (French)	m	NOBEL 2008
1	Le Clézio, J. M. G.	Révolutions	Omwentelingen	2003 / 2004	France/ Mauritius (French)	m	NOBEL 2008
1	Least Heat-Moon, William	Blue Highways: A Journey Into America	Blauwe wegen: een ontdekkingsreis door Amerika	1982 / 1984	USA	m	
1	Lessing, Doris	The Cleft	De kloof	2007 / 2008	UK	f	NOBEL 2007
3	Lewinsky, Charles	Melnitz	Het lot van de familie Meijer	2006 / 2007	Switzerland (German)	m	
1	Lieske, Tomas	-	Mijn soevereine liefde	2005	The Netherlands	m	
4	Lieske, Tomas	-	Dünya	2007	The Netherlands	m	AKO N 2008
1	Littell, Jonathan	The Kindly Ones	De welwillenden	2006 / 2008	USA (French)	m	
1	Llamazares, Julio	The Yellow Rain	De gele regen	1988 / 1990	Spain	m	
1	Luitwieler, Olette	-	Zielewind	2008	The Netherlands	f	
1	MacDonald, Ann-Marie	The Way the Crow Flies	De kraaien zullen het zeggen	2003 / 2003	Canada (English)	f	
1	Magris, Claudio	Danube	Donau: biografie van een rivier	1986 / 1988	Italy	m	
1	Makine, Andreï	Dreams of My Russian Summers	Het Franse testament	1995 / 1996	Russia/France (French)	m	
2	Mankell, Henning	Italian Shoes	Italiaanse schoenen	2006 / 2008	Sweden	m	
1	Mann, Thomas	The Magic Mountain	De toverberg	1924 / 1927	Germany	m	NOBEL 1929
1	Márai, Sándor	The Rebels	De opstandigen	1930 / 2003	Hungary	m	
1	Márai, Sándor	Válás Budán	De nacht voor de scheiding	1939 / 2006	Hungary	m	
3	Márai, Sándor	Portraits of a Marriage	Kentering van een huwelijk	1941 and 1980 / 2005	Hungary	m	
2	Márai, Sándor	Embers	Gloed	1942 / 2000	Hungary	m	SLD 2001- 2002

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1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Márquez, Gabriel García	In Evil Hour	Het kwade uur	1962 / 1967	Colombia	m	NOBEL 1982
1	Márquez, Gabriel García	Chronicle of a Death Foretold	Kroniek van een aangekondigde dood	1981 / 1981	Colombia	m	NOBEL 1982
1	Márquez, Gabriel García	Love in the Time of Cholera	Liefde in tijden van cholera	1985 / 1986	Colombia	m	NOBEL 1982; OPR 2007; FILM 2007 NL 2008
1	Márquez, Gabriel García	Memories of My Melancholy Whores	Herinnering aan mijn droeve hoeren	2004 / 2004	Colombia	m	NOBEL 1982
1	Martel, Yann	Life of Pi	Het leven van Pi	2001 / 2003	Canada (English)	m	BOOK W 2002;
2	Matsier, Nicolaas	-	Gesloten huis. Zelfportret met ouders	1994	The Netherlands	m	BOR 1995; AKO N 1994; LIB N 1995
1	Mayes, Frances	Under the Tuscan Sun: At Home in Italy	Een huis in Toscane	1996 / 1998	USA	f	FILM 2003 NL 2004
1	McCullers, Carson	The Heart is a Lonely Hunter	Het hart is een havik (Het hart is een eenzame jager)	1940 / 1960	USA	f	OPR 2004
1	McEwan, Ian	The Child in Time	Het kind in de tijd	1987 / 1987	UK	m	
1	McEwan, Ian	Enduring Love	Ziek van liefde	1997 / 1998	UK	m	FILM 2004 NL 2005
3	McEwan, Ian	Saturday	Zaterdag	2005 / 2005	UK	m	
2	McEwan, Ian	On Chesil Beach	Aan Chesil Beach	2007 / 2007	UK	m	BOOK N 2007
3	McLeod, Cynthia	The Free Negress Elisabeth	De vrije negerin Elisabeth	2000	Suriname (Dutch)	f	
30	Meijsing, Doeschka	-	Over de liefde	2008	The Netherlands	f	BOR 2008; AKO W 2008; NS N 2009
1	Meijsing, Geerten	-	Dood meisje	2000	The Netherlands	m	AKO N 2001
1	Meinderts, Koos	-	Lucas in de sneeuw	2008	The Netherlands	m	



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1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Meinkema, Hannes	-	De heiligwording van Berthe Ploos: roman in verhalen	2007	The Netherlands	f	
2	Melville, Herman	Moby-Dick; or, The Whale	Moby Dick (Moby Dick, of De witte walvisch)	1851 / 1929	USA	m	
1	Mercier, Pascal	Perlmann's Silence	Perlmanns zwijgen	1995 / 2007	Switzerland (German)	m	
1	Mercier, Pascal	Der Klavierstimmer	De pianostemmer	1998 / 2008	Switzerland (German)	m	
19	Mercier, Pascal	Night Train to Lisbon	Nachttrein naar Lissabon	2004 / 2006	Switzerland (German)	m	
1	Mercier, Pascal	Lea	Lea	2007 / 2009	Switzerland (German)	m	[SLD 2010-2011]
2	Mitchell, David	Cloud Atlas	Wolkenatlas	2004 / 2004	UK	m	BOOK N 2004
2	Morrison, Toni	Beloved	Beminde	1987 / 1988	USA	f	NOBEL 1993; PUL W 1988
4	Morrison, Toni	A Mercy	Een daad van barmhartigheid	2008 / 2008	USA	f	NOBEL 1993
1	Mortier, Erwin	My Fellow Skin	Mijn tweede huid	2000	Flanders	m	LIB N 2001
2	Mortier, Erwin	Shutter Speed	Sluiter tijd	2002	Flanders	m	
30	Mortier, Erwin	-	Godenslaap	2008	Flanders	m	SLD 2009-2010; AKO W 2009; NS N 2010
7	Mulisch, Harry	Two Women	Twee vrouwen	1975	The Netherlands	m	CANA; SLD 1976-1977; LEES 2008; HOO 1977; HUY 1977
1	Mulisch, Harry	The Assault	De aanslag	1982	The Netherlands	m	SLD 1983-1984; CANB; CANA; HOO 1977; HUY 1977.

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1. N2.	Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Mulisch, Harry	The Discovery of Heaven	De ontdekking van de hemel	1992	The Netherlands	m	CANB; CANA; NRC 1; AKO N 1993; HOO 1977; HUY 1977; NS N 2002; FILM NL 2001
2	Mulisch, Harry	Siegfried	Siegfried: een zwarte idylle	2001	The Netherlands	m	SLD 2001-2002; CANA; AKO N 2001; LIB N 2002; HOO 1977; HUY 1977.
2	Münstermann, - Hans		De bekoring	2006	The Netherlands	m	AKO W 2006
3	Murakami, Haruki	Norwegian Wood	Norwegian wood	1987 / 2007	Japan	m	FILM 2010 NL 2011
1	Murakami, Haruki	South of the Border, West of the Sun	Ten zuiden van de grens	1998 / 2001	Japan	m	
1	Murakami, Haruki	Sputnik Sweetheart	Spoetnikliefde	1999 / 2004	Japan	m	
7	Mutsaers, Charlotte	-	Koetsier Herfst	2008	The Netherlands	f	HUY 2000; HOO 2010; LIB N 2009
1	Nafisi, Azar	Things I've Been Silent About: Memories	Alles wat ik verzwegen heb	2008 / 2009	Iran/USA (English)	f	
2	Natter, Bert	-	Begeerte heeft ons aangeraakt	2008	The Netherlands	m	[SLD 2010-2011]; ANT N 2008
2	Némirovsky, Irène	Storm in June	Storm in juni	2004 <sup>461</sup> / 2005	France	f	

<sup>461</sup> Posthumous.

## GROUP SURVEY

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Nescio	Little Titans	Titaantjes	1918	The Netherlands	m	CANB; CANA; NRC 9 (together with De uitvreter and Dichtertje); SLD 1987-1988 (together with De uitvreter and Dichtertje)
1	Nichols, Linda	In Search of Eden	Zoeken naar Eden	2007 / 2007	USA	f	
1	Nijhoff, Martinus	Awater	Awater [uit de bundel: Nieuwe gedichten]	1934	The Netherlands	m	CANB; CANA; HUY 1953
1	Noordervliet, Nelleke	-	Tine of De dalen waar het leven woont	1987	The Netherlands	f	
1	Noordervliet, Nelleke	-	De naam van de vader	1993	The Netherlands	f	
19	Noordervliet, Nelleke	-	Snijpunt	2008	The Netherlands	f	
1	Nooteboom, Cees	-	Van de lente de dauw: oosterse reizen	1995	The Netherlands	m	CANA; HOO 2004; HUY 1992.
1	Nooteboom, Cees	-	Rode regen	2007	The Netherlands	m	CANA; HOO 2004; HUY 1992.
2	Obama, Barack	Dreams from my Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance	Dromen van mijn vader: een autobiografie. (Dromen van mijn vader: het verhaal van mijn familie)	1995 / 2007	USA	m	
1	O'Brien, Edna	The Light of Evening	Avondlicht	2006 / 2007	Ireland	f	
1	Ondaatje, Michael	Divisadero	Divisadero	2007 / 2007	Canada (English)	m	

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1. N2.	Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	O'Neill, Joseph	Netherland	Laagland	2008 / 2009	Ireland	m	
1	Oosterhoff, Tonnus	-	Ware grootte	2008	The Netherlands	m	
1	Otten, Willem Jan	-	Specht en zoon	2004	The Netherlands	m	HUY 1999; LIB W 2005
29	Overeem, Vincent	-	Misfit	2008	The Netherlands	m	SLD 2009-2010
1	Oz, Amos	To Know a Woman	Een vrouw kennen	1989 / 1989	Israel	m	
2	Oz, Amos	A Tale of Love and Darkness	Een verhaal van liefde en duisternis	2002 / 2005	Israel	m	
1	Oz, Amos	Scenes from Village Life	Dorpsleven	2009 / 2009	Israel	m	
1	Paasilinna, Arto	The Howling Miller	De huilende molenaar	1981 / 2001	Finland	m	
2	Palmen, Connie	-	Lucifer	2007	The Netherlands	f	BD N 2009
2	Pamuk, Orhan	My Name is Red	Ik heet Karmozijn	1998 / 2001	Turkey	m	NOBEL 2006
3	Pamuk, Orhan	Snow	Sneeuw	2002 / 2003	Turkey	m	NOBEL 2006
1	Pamuk, Orhan	Istanbul: Memories and the City	Istanbul. Herinneringen en de stad	2003 / 2005	Turkey	m	NOBEL 2006
2	Peper, Rascha	-	Wie scheep gaat	2003	The Netherlands	f	
2	Peper, Rascha	-	Verfhuid	2005	The Netherlands	f	
8	Peper, Rascha	-	Vingers van marsepein	2008	The Netherlands	f	
1	Perec, Georges	A Void	't Manco	1969 / 2009	France	m	
1	Pikkemaat, Guus	-	Eleonore van Aquitanië (1122-1204). Een bijzondere vrouw in het zomertij der middeleeuwen	2007	The Netherlands	m	
1	Pleysier, Leo	-	Wit is altijd schoon	1989	The Netherlands	m	BOR 1990; AKO N 1989

## GROUP SURVEY

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Polak, Chaja	-	Tweede vader	1996	The Netherlands	f	
1	Polak, Chaja	-	Salka	2004	The Netherlands	f	
1	Polman, Linda	With Friends like these	De crisiscaravaan	2008	The Netherlands	f	
1	Pool, Joyce	-	Groeten uit Londen	2007	The Netherlands	f	
1	Proulx, Annie	That Old Ace in the Hole: a novel	De laatste troef	2002 / 2003	USA	f	
1	Pushkin, Alexander	Not specified <sup>462</sup>	Not specified	Not specified [1820-posthumous 1841]	Russian Empire	m	
1	Ramsland, Morten	Doghead	Hondenkop	2005 / 2006	Denmark	m	
1	Redhill, Michael	Consolation	Troost	2006 / 2007	Canada (English)	m	
1	Reisel, Wanda	-	Witte liefde	2004	The Netherlands	f	AKO N 2005
3	Rosenboom, Thomas	-	Zoete mond	2009	The Netherlands	m	CANA
1	Rosoff, Meg	Just in Case	Het toevallige leven van Justin Case	2006 / 2006	UK	f	
1	Roth, Joseph	Radetzky March	Radetzkymars	1932 / 1946 <sup>463</sup>	Austria-Hungary (German)	m	
1	Roth, Philip	The Human Stain	De menselijke smet	2000 / 2000	USA	m	SLD 2005-2006; FILM 2003 NL 2003
2	Roth, Philip	The Plot Against America	Het complot tegen Amerika	2004 / 2004	USA	m	
1	Roth, Philip	Everyman	Alleman	2006 / 2006	USA	m	
1	Roth, Philip	Exit Ghost	Exit geest	2007 / 2007	USA	m	
1	Roth, Philip	Indignation	Verontwaardiging	2008 / 2008	USA	m	

<sup>462</sup> Following a visit to the Amsterdam Hermitage, the concerning book discussion group read several books by Russian authors of the Russian Empire (1721-1917) among which Pushkin, titles were not specified.

<sup>463</sup> A new revised translation is available since 2009.

## APPENDIX 1

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Roy, Arundhati	The God of Small Things	De God van kleine dingen	1997 / 1997	India (English)	f	BOOK W 1997
1	Ruebsamen, Helga	-	Het lied en de waarheid	1997	The Netherlands	f	SLD 1998-1999; BOR 1998; LIB N 1998
3	Ruiz Zafón, Carlos	The Shadow of the Wind	De schaduw van de wind	2001 / 2004	Spain/USA (Spanish)	m	
2	Ruiz Zafón, Carlos	The Angel's Game	Het spel van de engel	2008 / 2009	Spain/USA (Spanish)	m	
1	Rushdie, Salman	Shalimar the Clown	Shalimar de clown	2005 / 2005	India/UK (English)	m	
1	Russo, Richard	Bridge of Sighs	Brug der zuchten	2007 / 2008	USA	m	
2	Sampedro, José Luis	La sonrisa etrusca	De Etruskische glimlach	1985 / 2008	Spain	m	
1	Saramago, José	Blindness	De stad der blinden	1995 / 1998	Portugal	m	SLD 2001-2002; NOBEL 1998; FILM 2008 NL 2008
1	Saramago, José	Seeing	De stad der zienden	2004 / 2005	Portugal	m	NOBEL 1998
1	Saramago, José	Death with Interruptions	Het verzuim van de dood	2005 / 2006	Portugal	m	NOBEL 1998
1	Sartre, Jean-Paul	The Wall	De muur	1936 / 1962	France	m	NOBEL 1964
1	Schackmann, Wil	-	De proefkolonie	2006	The Netherlands	m	
1	Scheeren, Anke	-	De mooiste dagen zijn het ergst	2009	The Netherlands	f	
1	Scheuermann, Silke	Die Stunde zwischen Hund und Wolf	Het uur tussen hond en wolf	2007 / 2007	Germany	f	
2	Schippers, K.	-	Waar was je nou	2005	The Netherlands	m	HOO 1996; LIB W 2006
6	Schlink, Bernhard	The Reader	De voorlezer	1995 / 1996	Germany	m	SLD 1999-2000; OPR 1999; FILM 2008 NL 2009

## GROUP SURVEY

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Schlink, Bernhard	Homecoming	De thuiskomst	2006 / 2006	Germany	m	
1	Schoemans, Roger H.	-	Blizzard	2008	Flanders	m	
1	Scholten, Jaap	-	Morgenster: roman in drie delen	2000	The Netherlands	m	
2	Scholten, Jaap	-	De wet van Spengler	2008	The Netherlands	m	
2	Sebald, W. G.	Austerlitz	Austerlitz	2001 / 2003	Germany/UK (German)	m	
1	Seierstad, Åsne	Angel of Grozny: Inside Chechnya	De engel van Grozny: achttien maanden undercover in Rusland	2007 / 2008	Norway	f	
1	Seth, Vikram	A Suitable Boy	Een geschikte jongen	1993 / 2008	India (English)	m	
1	Shaffer, Mary Ann	The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society	Eilandpost (Het Literaire Aardappelschiltart Genootschap van Guernsey)	2007 / 2007	USA	f	
1	Shalev, Meir	His house in the desert (Alone in the desert)	De grote vrouw	1998 / 1998	Israel	m	
21	Shalev, Meir	A Pigeon and A Boy	Een duif en een jongen	2006 / 2006	Israel	m	SLD 2008-2009
1	Siebelink, Jan	-	De overkant van de rivier	1990	The Netherlands	m	BOR 1991
1	Siebelink, Jan	-	Vera	1997	The Netherlands	m	
5	Siebelink, Jan	In my Father's Garden	Knielen op een bed violen	2005	The Netherlands	m	AKO W 2005; LIB N 2006; NS N 2005
9	Siebelink, Jan	-	Suezkade	2008	The Netherlands	m	
1	Slee, Carry	-	Ooggetuigen	2007	The Netherlands	f	
1	Slot, Pauline	-	Zuiderkruis	1999	The Netherlands	f	SLD 1999-2000

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1. N2.	Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Slot, Pauline	-	Blauwbaard	2000	The Netherlands	f	
1	Smith, Zadie	White Teeth	Witte tanden	2000 / 2000	UK	f	
1	Spiegelman, Art	Maus: a survivor's tale	Maus: vertelling van een overlevende	1991 / 1994	USA	m	PUL W Special letters award 1992
1	Springer, F.	-	Bandoeng-Bandung: een novelle	1993	The Netherlands	m	CANA; HUY 1995; AKO N 1994
1	Stahlie, Maria	-	Boogschutters	2008	The Netherlands	f	
1	Steenbeek, Rosita	-	Intensive care	2004	The Netherlands	f	
2	Steenbeek, Rosita	-	Ander licht	2009	The Netherlands	f	
1	Steiner, Rudolf	Das Ereignis der Christus-Erscheinung in der ätherischen Welt. - 3. Aufl.; Das esoterische Christentum und die geistige Führung der Menschheit. - 4. Aufl.	Het esoterische christendom	1984 and 1995 / 1999	Austria (German)	m	
1	Steiner, Rudolf	Die Geheimwissenschaft im Umriss	De wetenschap van de geheimen der ziel	1909 / 1924	Austria (German)	m	
1	Steiner, Rudolf	Esoterische Betrachtungen karmischer Zusammenhänge. - Bd. 2	Karmaonderzoek 2	1988 / 1997	Austria (German)	m	



## GROUP SURVEY

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Steiner, Rudolf	Die Weltgeschichte in anthroposopischer Beleuchtung und als Grundlage der Erkenntnis des Menschegeistes. - 5. Aufl.	Wereldgeschiedenis in het licht van de antroposofie	1991 / 1996	Austria (German)	m	
1	Steiner, Rudolf	Die Offenbarungen des Karma. - 8e Aufl. - ; Wiederverkörperung und Karma und ihre Bedeutung für die Kultur der Gegenwart. - 4e Aufl.	Werkingen van het Karma	1992 and 1989 / 1994	Austria (German)	m	
1	Steiner, Rudolf	Esoterische Betrachtungen karmischer Zusammenhänge. - Bd. 1 (8. Aufl.), Bd. 6 (5. Aufl.)	Karmaonderzoek 1	1994 and 1992 / 1995	Austria (German)	m	
1	Stendhal	The Red and the Black	Het rood en het zwart: kroniek van 1830	1830 / 1942	France	m	
1	Stout, Gerard	-	In Paradisum: Drèents leven op eerde	2008	The Netherlands (Drèents dialect)	m	
1	Struyf, Annemie	-	Insjallah mevrouw: ontmoetingen (z)onder boerka	2004	Flanders	f	
1	Süskind, Patrick	Perfume: the story of a murderer	Het parfum: de geschiedenis van een moordenaar	1985 / 1985	Germany	m	SLD 1990-1991; FILM 2006 NL 2006
1	Svevo, Italo	Zeno's Conscience	Bekentenissen van Zeno	1923 / 1964	Italy	m	
1	Swift, Graham	Tomorrow	Morgen	2007 / 2007	UK	m	
1	Székely-Lulofs, - Madelon	-	Rubber	1931	The Netherlands	f	

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1. N2.	Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	't Hart, Kees	-	De keizer en de astroloog	2008	The Netherlands	m	
1	't Hart, Maarten	Bearers of Bad Tidings	De aansprekers	1979	The Netherlands	m	CANA
1	't Hart, Maarten	-	De jacobsladder	1986	The Netherlands	m	CANA
2	't Hart, Maarten	-	Het psalmenoproer	2006	The Netherlands	m	CANA
1	't Hart, Maarten	-	Het dovemansorendieet - Over zin en onzin van gewichtsverlies	2007	The Netherlands	m	CANA
1	't Hart, Maarten	-	Verlovingstijd	2009	The Netherlands	m	CANA
1	Tamaro, Susanna	Follow Your Heart	De stem van je hart	1994 / 1994	Italy	f	
1	Tchkotoua, Nicholas	Timeless. A love story from the Caucasus Mountains	Oneindig: een liefdesgeschiedenis uit de Kaukasus	1949 / 2009	Soviet Union/ Georgia (English)	m	
1	Terlouw, Sanne	-	Het rozeneiland	2008	The Netherlands	f	
1	Terrin, Peter	-	De bewaker	2009	Flanders	m	LIB N 2010
1	Thomése, P. F.	-	Het zesde bedrijf	1999	The Netherlands	m	
1	Thomése, P. F.	Shadowchild: A Meditation on Love and Loss	Schaduwkind	2003	The Netherlands	m	NS N 2004
1	Tillyard, Stella	Aristocrats: Caroline, Emily, Louisa, and Sarah Lennox	In naam van de liefde. Het leven van Caroline, Emily, Louisa en Sarah Lennox 1740-1832	1994 / 1995	UK	f	
1	Tolstoy, Leo	War and Peace	Oorlog en vrede	1869 / 1887 <sup>464</sup>	Russian Empire	m	

<sup>464</sup> In 2000 a new Russian edition based on an archive version (1866) was published. It is much shorter than the 1869 version. The 2000 edition was translated into Dutch in 2005 and is much more compact than previous translations. It is not known which version the book discussion group read.

## GROUP SURVEY

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Toltz, Steve	A Fraction of the Whole	Een fractie van het geheel	2008 / 2008	Australia	m	BOOK N 2008
1	Tremain, Rose	Sacred Country	-	1992 / -	UK	f	
1	Tremain, Rose	The Road Home	De weg naar huis	2008 / 2008	UK	f	
1	Treur, Franca	-	Dorsvloer vol confetti	2009	The Netherlands	f	NS N 2010
1	Trevor, William	The Story of Lucy Gault	Het verhaal van Lucy Gault	2002 / 2003	Ireland	m	BOOK N 2002
1	Trojanow, Ilija	The Collector of Worlds	De wereldverzamelaar	2006 / 2008	Germany	m	
1	Trujillo, Carolina	-	De terugkeer van Lupe García	2009	Uruguay/The Netherlands (Dutch)	f	AKO N 2009
6	Tsukiyama, Gail	Women of the Silk	De zijdewerksters	1991 / 1999	USA	f	
1	Turgenev, Ivan	A Nest of Gentlefolk (A House of Gentlefolk, Home of the Gentry)	Het adelsnest (Liza)	1859 / 1955 (2008) <sup>465</sup>	Russian Empire	m	
1	Umbgrove, Arthur	-	De hartslag van de aarde	2008	The Netherlands	m	
1	Updike, John	Rabbit, Run	Hazehart (Rabbit rent)	1960 / 1963	USA	m	
1	Updike, John	Terrorist	De terrorist: roman	2006 / 2006	USA	m	
1	Valens, Anton	-	Vis	2009	The Netherlands	m	
1	van Beijnum, Kees	Oysters at Nam Kee's	Oesters van Nam Kee	2000	The Netherlands	m	BOR 2001; FILM NL 2002
2	van Brederode, Désanne	-	Hart in Hart	2007	The Netherlands	f	
1	van Buuren, Maarten	-	Kikker gaat fietsen of Over het leed dat leven heet	2008	The Netherlands	m	
1	van der Heijden, A. F. Th.	-	Het leven uit een dag	1988	The Netherlands	m	CANA; FILM NL 2009

<sup>465</sup> The book discussion group read the new 2008 Dutch translation of this novel, "Liza", by Monse Weijers.

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1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	van der Heijden, A. F. Th.	-	Asbestemming. Een requiem	1994	The Netherlands	m	CANA; AKO N 1995
2	van der Heijden, A. F. Th.	-	Het schervengericht	2007	The Netherlands	m	CANA; AKO W 2007
1	van der Heijden, A. F. Th.	-	Doodverf	2009	The Netherlands	m	CANA
2	van der Meer, Vonne	-	De avondboot	2001	The Netherlands	f	
1	van der Meer, Vonne	-	Take 7	2007	The Netherlands	f	
5	van der Meer, Vonne	-	Zondagavond	2009	The Netherlands	f	
3	van der Pol, Marieke	Bride Flight	Bruidsvlucht	2007	The Netherlands	f	FILM NL 2008
1	van der Vlugt, Simone	The Reunion	De Reünie	2004	The Netherlands	f	NS N 2005
1	van der Vlugt, Simone	Shadow Sister	Schaduwzuster	2005	The Netherlands	f	
1	van der Vlugt, Simone	-	Herfstlied	2009	The Netherlands	f	
1	van der Zee, Sytze	-	Potgieterlaan 7: een herinnering	1997	The Netherlands	m	
1	van der Zijl, Annejet	-	Jagtlust: hoe in een Goois buitenhuis de wereld openging	1998	The Netherlands	f	
6	van der Zijl, Annejet	-	Sonny Boy	2004	The Netherlands	f	NS N 2005; FILM NL 2011
12	van Dis, Adriaan	-	De wandelaar	2007	The Netherlands	m	NS N 2007
1	van Dullemen, Inez	-	Maria Sybilla, een ongebruikelijke passie	2001	The Netherlands	f	
1	van Dullemen, Inez	-	De komst van de rustverstoorder	2004	The Netherlands	f	
1	van Keulen, Mensje	-	Een goed verhaal	2009	The Netherlands	f	LIB N 2010

## GROUP SURVEY

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	van Kooten, Kees	-	Levensnevel: verhalen	1999	The Netherlands	m	
1	van Leeuwen, Joke	-	Alles nieuw	2008	The Netherlands	f	AKO N 2009
2	van Loon, Karel Glastra	A Father's Affair	De passievrucht	1999	The Netherlands	m	SLD 2000-2001; AKO W 1999; FILM NL 2003
1	van Loon, Karel Glastra	-	Lisa's adem	2001	The Netherlands	m	
17	van Maanen, Willem G.	-	Heb lief en zie niet om	2006	The Netherlands	m	SLD 2008-2009; HUY 2004; AKO N 2007
4	van Niekerk, Marlene	The Way of the Women	Agaat	2004 / 2006	South Africa (Afrikaans)	f	
1	van Ostaijen, Paul	[Poetry: not specified]	[Poëzie]	Not specified (poetry publications between 1916-1928)	Flanders	m	CANB (for collected work: poetry); CANA
1	van Reybrouck, David	-	Slagschaduw	2007	Flanders	m	
1	van Woerden, Henk	-	Moenie kyk nie	1993	The Netherlands	m	LIB N 1994
1	van Woerden, Henk	-	Ultramarijn	2005	The Netherlands	m	SLD 2006-2007; UIL L 2006
1	van Zomerem, Koos	-	Het leven heeft geen geheimen	2004	The Netherlands	m	
1	Vasalis, M.	[Poetry: not specified]	[Poëzie]	Not specified (publications date from 1940-2009)	The Netherlands	f	CANA; HOO 1982; HUY 1974
1	Verbeke, Annelies	-	Reus	2006	Flanders	f	
1	Verheul, Kees	-	Stormsonate	2006	The Netherlands	m	

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1. N2.	Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
8	Verhulst, Dimitri	The Misfortunates	De helaasheid der dingen	2006	Flanders	m	AKO N 2006; UIL P 2007; FILM NL 2009
1	Verhulst, Dimitri	Madame Verona comes down the hill	Mevrouw Verona daalt de heuvel af	2006	Flanders	m	AKO N 2007
4	Verhulst, Dimitri	-	Godverdomse dagen op een godverdomse bol	2008	Flanders	m	LIB W 2009
8	Veronesi, Sandro	Quiet Chaos	Kalme chaos	2005 / 2006	Italy	m	FILM 2008 NL 2008
1	Vestdijk, Simon	Return to Ina Damman	Terug tot Ina Damman	1934	The Netherlands	m	CANB; CANA; SLD 2003-2004; HOO 1950; HUY 1955
1	Vestdijk, Simon	Irish Nights	Ierse nachten	1946	The Netherlands	m	CANA; HOO 1950; HUY 1955
1	Vestdijk, Simon	-	De vuuraanbidders	1947	The Netherlands	m	CANB; CANA; HOO 1950; HUY 1955
1	Vestdijk, Simon	The waiter and the living	De kelner en de levenden	1949	The Netherlands	m	CANB; CANA; HOO 1950; HUY 1955
1	Virgil	The Georgics	Georgica (De Georgica; Het landleven)	29 B.C. / 1924 <sup>466</sup>	Ancient Roman Empire	m	
1	Vlaminck, Erik	-	Suikerspin	2008	Flanders	m	
1	Voskuil, J. J.	-	Binnen de huid	2009	The Netherlands	m	CANA
1	Vuijsje, Robert	-	Alleen maar nette mensen	2008	The Netherlands	m	LIB N 2009; UIL L 2009
1	Walschap, Gerard	-	Houtekiet	1939	Flanders	m	CANB; CANA

<sup>466</sup> The newest Dutch translation, by Piet Schrijvers, *Georgica, Landleven* was published in 2004.

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1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Walser, Martin	Ein springender Brunnen	Een springende fontein	1998 / 1999	Germany	m	
1	Warren, Hans	-	Om het behoud van eenzaamheid	2001	The Netherlands	m	
1	Warren, Hans	-	Een vriend voor de schemering	2005	The Netherlands	m	
1	Wassmo, Herbjørg	Det sjuende møte	De zevende ontmoeting	2000 / 2001	Norway	f	
1	Waters, Sarah	The Night Watch	De nachtwacht	2006 / 2006	UK	f	BOOK N 2006
1	Waters, Sarah	The Little Stranger	De kleine vreemdeling	2009 / 2009	UK	f	BOOK N 2009
3	Webeling, Pieter	-	Veertig dagen	2008	The Netherlands	m	
2	Weijts, Christiaan	-	Art. 285b	2006	The Netherlands	m	ANT W 2006; AKO N 2006
2	Weijts, Christiaan	-	Via Cappello 23	2008	The Netherlands	m	AKO N 2009
1	Wei-Wei	La couleur du bonheur	De kleur van geluk	1998 / 1998	China/France (French)	f	
1	Weldon, Fay	The Stepmother's Diary	Dagboek van een stiefmoeder	2008 / 2009	UK	f	
4	Westerman, Frank	The Republic of Grain	De graanrepubliek	1999	The Netherlands	m	AKO N 1999
1	Westerman, Frank	Ararat: In search of the mythical mountain	Ararat	2007	The Netherlands	m	AKO N 2007
1	Wiener, L. H.	-	De verering van Quirina T.	2006	The Netherlands	m	LIB N 2007
2	Wieringa, Tommy	Joe Speedboat	Joe Speedboot	2005	The Netherlands	m	SLD 2005-2006; BOR 2006; AKO N 2005; LIB N 2006; NS N 2006
11	Wieringa, Tommy	Caesarion	Caesarion	2009	The Netherlands	m	AKO N 2009
2	Wilde, Oscar	The Picture of Dorian Gray	Het portret van Dorian Gray	1891 / 1893	Ireland/UK	m	
1	Wilson, A. N.	A Jealous Ghost	-	2005 / -	UK	m	

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1. N2.	Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. Media
1	Winterbach, Ingrid	The Book of Happenstance	Het boek van toeval en toeverlaat	2006 / 2008	South Africa (Afrikaans)	f	
1	Winterson, Jeanette	The Passion	Passie (De passie)	1987 / 1988	UK	f	SLD 1995-1996
1	Wolkers, Jan	Crew Cut	Kort Amerikaans	1962	The Netherlands	m	CANA; HOO 1989; HUY 1982
1	Wolkers, Jan	Return to Oegstgeest	Terug naar Oegstgeest	1965	The Netherlands	m	CANB; CANA; SLD 1970-1971; HOO 1989; HUY 1982
1	Wolkers, Jan	Summer Heat	Zomerhitte	2005	The Netherlands	m	CANA; WEEK 2005; HOO 1989; HUY 1982; FILM NL 2008
1	Woolf, Virginia	To the Lighthouse	Naar de vuurtoren	1927 / 1981	UK	f	
3	Yalom, Irvin D.	When Nietzsche Wept	Nietzsches tranen	1992 / 1995	USA	m	
2	Yerli, Nilgün	-	De garnalenpelster	2001	The Netherlands	f	PER T 2001
1	Yoshimoto, Banana	Kitchen	Kitchen	1988 / 1993	Japan	m	
1	Young-Bruehl, Elisabeth	Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World	Hannah Arendt	1982 / 2005	USA	f	
3	Zeh, Juli	Gaming Instinct	Speeldrift	2004 / 2006	Germany	f	
1	Zhang Jie	Gone is The One Who Held My Dearest in the World	Mijn moeder	1994 / 1998	China	f	
4	Zusak, Markus	The Book Thief	De boekendief	2005 / 2007	Australia	m	
1	Zwagerman, Joost	-	De buitenvrouw	1994	The Netherlands	m	SLD 1996-1997
1	Zweig, Stefan	The World of Yesterday: an autobiography	De wereld van gisteren: herinneringen van een Europeaan	1942 / 1947	Austria (German)	m	



## 1.3.2 Selection SLD

30 SLD-groups participated in this study. Together the groups handed in 172 titles (17 unique titles). Differences in responses may be attributed to the fact not every group was at the same point in their programme when filling out the survey. Moreover, some groups organise an extra meeting per season and read an extra book, next to the four fixed books bought via the SLD. Vincent Overeem's *Misfit* was at the time of the survey read by most responding groups:

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. SLD season
29	Overeem, Vincent	-	Misfit	2008	The Netherlands	m	SLD 2009-2010
24	Baricco, Alessandro	Questa storia	Dit verhaal	2005 / 2007	Italy	m	SLD 2008-2009
21	Figueras, Marcelo	Kamchatka	Kamtsjatka	2003 / 2006	Argentina	m	SLD 2008-2009
20	Shalev, Meir	A Pigeon and A Boy	Een duif en een jongen	2006 / 2006	Israel	m	SLD 2008-2009
18	Franck, Julia	The Blind Side of the Heart (The Blindness of the Heart)	De middagvrouw	2007 / 2008	Germany	f	SLD 2009-2010
16	van Maanen, Willem G.	-	Heb lief en zie niet om	2006	The Netherlands	m	SLD 2008-2009
12	Mortier, Erwin	-	Godenslaap	2008	Flanders	m	SLD 2009-2010
11	Adiga, Aravind	The White Tiger	De witte tijger	2008 / 2008	India (English)	m	SLD 2009-2010
6	Bakker, Gerbrand	The Twin	Boven is het stil	2006	The Netherlands	m	SLD 2007-2008
5	Courtemanche, Gil	A Good Death	Een mooie dood	2005 / 2006	Canada (French)	m	SLD 2007-2008
2	Boyne, John	The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas	De jongen in de gestreepte pyjama	2006 / 2006	Ireland	m	Not on SLD-list
2	Dubois, Jean-Paul	A French Life	Een Frans leven	2004 / 2005	France	m	SLD 2007-2008
2	Koch, Natalie	Plays	Streken	2006	The Netherlands	f	SLD 2007-2008
1	Brijs, Stefan	The Angel Maker	De engelenmaker	2005	Flanders	m	SLD 2006-2007
1	Hosseini, Khaled	The Kite Runner	De vliegeraar van Kabul (De vliegeraar)	2003 / 2003	Afghanistan/USA (English)	m	SLD 2005-2006

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1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex	8. SLD season
1	Schlink, Bernhard	The Reader	De voorlezer	1995 / 1996	Germany	m	SLD 1999-2000
1	Stout, Gerard	-	In Paradisum: Drèents leven op eerde	2008	The Netherlands (Drèents dialect)	m	Not on SLD-list

## 1.3.3 Selection Senia

An example of an organisation that recommends books to affiliated groups is Senia, an organisation for senior citizens. 10 groups explicitly responded they choose from the Senia-list. 9 groups handed in 46 titles (29 unique titles) they recently read. 9 titles appeared more than once in their answers. The new novel by Marjolijn Februari, featuring a book discussion group, was most popular among these groups:

1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex
6	Februari, Marjolijn	The Book Club	De literaire kring	2007	The Netherlands	f
4	Noordervliet, Nelleke	-	Snijpunt	2008	The Netherlands	f
3	Haasse, Hella S.	-	Sleuteloog	2002	The Netherlands	f
3	Tsukiyama, Gail	Women of the Silk	De zijdewerksters	1991 / 1999	USA	f
2	van Dis, Adriaan	-	De wandelaar	2007	The Netherlands	m
2	Foer, Jonathan Safran	Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close	Extreem luid & ongelooflijk dichtbij	2005 / 2005	USA	m
2	Giordano, Paolo	The Solitude of Prime Numbers	De eenzaamheid van de priemgetallen	2008 / 2009	Italy	m
2	van der Meer, Vonne	-	Zondagavond	2009	The Netherlands	f
2	Mercier, Pascal	Night Train to Lisbon	Nachttrein naar Lissabon	2004 / 2006	Switzerland (German)	m
1	Abdolah, Kader	The House of the Mosque	Het huis van de moskee	2005	The Netherlands	m
1	Bakker, Gerbrand	The Twin	Boven is het stil	2006	The Netherlands	m
1	Benali, Abdelkader	Wedding by the Sea	Bruiloft aan zee	1996	The Netherlands	m
1	Claudel, Philippe	Monsieur Linh and His Child	Het kleine meisje van meneer Linh	2005 / 2005	France	m
1	Coelho, Paulo	The Alchemist	De alchemist	1988 / 1994	Brasil	m
1	Enquist, Anna	-	De thuiskomst	2005	The Netherlands	f
1	Fitch, Janet	White Oleander	Witte oleander	1999 / 2000	UK	f
1	Fredriksson, Marianne	Hanna's Daughters	Anna, Hanna en Johanna	1994 / 1997	Sweden	f
1	Grunberg, Arnon	Tirza	Tirza	2006	The Netherlands	m
1	Hosseini, Khaled	The Kite Runner	De vliegeraar van Kabul (De vliegeraar)	2003 / 2003	Afghanistan/USA (English)	m
1	Japin, Arthur	In Lucia's Eyes	Een schitterend gebrek	2003	The Netherlands	m
1	Jansen, Suzanna	-	Het pauperparadijs: een familiegeschiedenis	2008	The Netherlands	f

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1. N	2. Author	3. Title in English	4. Title in Dutch	5. Year	6. Country	7. Sex
1	Márquez, Gabriel García	Memories of My Melancholy Whores	Herinnering aan mijn droeve hoeren	2004 / 2004	Colombia	m
1	McLeod, Cynthia	The Free Negress Elisabeth	De vrije negerin Elisabeth	2000	Suriname (Dutch)	f
1	de Moor, Margriet	The Kreutzer Sonata	Kreutzersonate. Een liefdesverhaal	2001	The Netherlands	f
1	Noordervliet, Nelleke	-	De naam van de vader	1993	The Netherlands	f
1	Ruebsamen, Helga	-	Het lied en de waarheid	1997	The Netherlands	f
1	van Kooten, Kees	-	Levensnevel: verhalen	1999	The Netherlands	m
1	Umbgrove, Arthur	-	De hartslag van de aarde	2008	The Netherlands	m
1	Wieringa, Tommy	Joe Speedboat	Joe Speedboot	2005	The Netherlands	m

### 1.3.4 Top ten popular titles

Including ties, the top ten of most popular books consists of 17 titles (399 entries, on average 23.47 reads per title):

List of popular titles by number of entries by all groups: Name of the author and title	Rank	Number of entries
Paolo Giordano – <i>The Solitude of Prime Numbers</i> (2008)	1	40
Herman Koch – <i>The diner</i> (2009)	2	30
Doesjka Meijsing – <i>Over de liefde</i> (2008)	2	30
Erwin Mortier – <i>Godenslaap</i> (2008)	2	30
Vincent Overeem – <i>Misfit</i> (2008)	3	29
Alessandro Baricco – <i>Questa storia</i> (2005)	4	25
Arthur Japin – <i>De overgave</i> (2007)	5	23
Gerbrand Bakker – <i>The twin</i> (2006)	6	22
Marcelo Figueras – <i>Kamchatka</i> (2003)	7	21
Julia Franck – <i>The Blind Side of the Heart</i> (2007)	7	21
Meir Shalev – <i>A pigeon and a boy</i> (2006)	7	21
Pascal Mercier – <i>Night train to Lisbon</i> (2004)	8	19
Nelleke Noordervliet – <i>Snijpunt</i> (2008)	8	19
Aravind Adiga – <i>The White Tiger</i> (2008)	9	18
Marjolijn Februari – <i>The Book Club</i> (2007)	10	17
Suzanna Jansen – <i>Het pauperparadijs: een familiegeschiedenis</i> (2008)	10	17
Willem G. van Maanen – <i>Heb lief en zie niet om</i> (2006)	10	17

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A number of books appeared on the SLD-lists of the current season of the survey 2009-2010 or preceding seasons 2008-2009 and 2007-2008. Some of the books were also read by other groups than SLD-groups, other books were not: Aravind Adiga – *The White Tiger* for instance was read by 7 non-SLD groups, but Vincent Overeem – *Misfit* was not read by other than SLD groups. In total, 30 responding groups used the SLD-list. If we leave out their responses, the following rank list appears:

List of popular authors by number of entries by all groups excluding SLD- groups: Name of the author and title	Rank	Number of entries
Paolo Giordano – <i>The Solitude of Prime Numbers</i> (2008)	1	40
Herman Koch – <i>The dinner</i> (2009)	2	30
Doesjka Meijsing – <i>Over de liefde</i> (2008)	2	30
Arthur Japin – <i>De overgave</i> (2007)	3	23
Pascal Mercier – <i>Night train to Lisbon</i> (2004)	4	19
Nelleke Noordervliet – <i>Snijpunt</i> (2008)	4	19
Erwin Mortier – <i>Godenslaap</i> (2008)	5	18
Marjolijn Februari – <i>The Book Club</i> (2007)	6	17
Suzanna Jansen – <i>Het pauperparadijs: een familiegeschiedenis</i> (2008)	6	17
Gerbrand Bakker – <i>The twin</i> (2006)	7	16
Arnon Grunberg – <i>Tirza</i> (2006)	8	15
Adriaan van Dis – <i>De wandelaar</i> (2007)	9	12
Anna Enquist – <i>Counterpoint</i> (2008)	9	12
Kader Abdolah – <i>The House of the Mosque</i> (2005)	10	11
Tommy Wieringa – <i>Caesarion</i> (2009)	10	11

*1.3.5 Popular authors: Number of entries and number of titles*

**List of popular authors sorted by number of entries:**

145 of 362 authors were read more than once:

Name of the author	Number of titles	Number of entries
Giordano, Paolo	1	40
Mortier, Erwin	3	33
Koch, Herman	2	31
Meijssing, Doeschka	1	30
Overeem, Vincent	1	29
Baricco, Alessandro	1	25
Japin, Arthur	2	24
Bakker, Gerbrand	2	23
Mercier, Pascal	4	22
Shalev, Meir	2	22
Haasse, Hella S.	8	21
Noordervliet, Nelleke	3	21
Figueras, Marcelo	1	21
Franck, Julia	1	21
Claudé, Philippe	3	18
Enquist, Anna	3	18
Adiga, Aravind	1	18
Grunberg, Arnon	3	17
Februari, Marjolijn	1	17
Jansen, Suzanna	1	17
van Maanen, Willem G.	1	17
Siebelink, Jan	4	16
Abdolah, Kader	3	13
Verhulst, Dimitri	3	13
Wieringa, Tommy	2	13
Brouwers, Jeroen	3	12
Peper, Rascha	3	12
van Dis, Adriaan	1	12
Mulisch, Harry	4	11
de Winter, Leon	2	11
Bernlef, J. (1937-2012)	4	9
Claus, Hugo	3	8

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Name of the author	Number of titles	Number of entries
van der Meer, Vonne	3	8
Brijs, Stefan	2	8
Foer, Jonathan Safran	1	8
Veronesi, Sandro	1	8
Coetzee, J. M.	4	7
Márai, Sándor	4	7
McEwan, Ian	4	7
Schlink, Bernhard	2	7
van der Zijl, Annejet	2	7
Mutsaers, Charlotte	1	7
Steiner, Rudolf	6	6
't Hart, Maarten	5	6
Roth, Philip	5	6
Coelho, Paulo	3	6
Hermans, W. F.	3	6
Pamuk, Orhan	3	6
Hosseini, Khaled	2	6
Koelemeijer, Judith	2	6
Morrison, Toni	2	6
Tsukiyama, Gail	1	6
van der Heijden, A. F. Th.	4	5
Murakami, Haruki	3	5
Lanoye, Tom	2	5
Lieske, Tomas	2	5
Westerman, Frank	2	5
Zafón, Carlos Ruiz	2	5
Courtemanche, Gil	1	5
Dorrestein, Renate	4	4
Márquez, Gabriel García	4	4
Vestdijk, Simon	4	4
de Moor, Margriet	3	4
Oz, Amos	3	4
Weijts, Christiaan	2	4
Boyne, John	1	4
de Kat, Otto	1	4
de Rosnay, Tatiana de	1	4



## GROUP SURVEY

Name of the author	Number of titles	Number of entries
van Niekerk, Marlene	1	4
Zusak, Markus	1	4
Benali, Abdelkader	3	3
Braam, Conny	3	3
James, Henry	3	3
Le Clézio, J. M. G.	3	3
Saramago, José	3	3
van der Vlugt, Simone	3	3
Wolkers, Jan	3	3
Auster, Paul	2	3
Brakman, Willem	2	3
Durlacher, Jessica	2	3
Elsschot, Willem	2	3
Glastra van Loon, Karel	2	3
Kehlman, Daniel	2	3
Scholten, Jaap	2	3
Steenbeek, Rosita	2	3
Barceló, Elia	1	3
Brokken, Jan	1	3
Haddon, Mark	1	3
Lewinsky, Charles	1	3
McLeod, Cynthia	1	3
Rosenboom, Thomas	1	3
van der Pol, Marieke	1	3
Webeling, Pieter	1	3
Yalom, Irvin D.	1	3
Zeh, Juli	1	3
Alighieri, Dante	2	2
Anker, Robert	2	2
Bennett, Alan	2	2
Bril, Martin	2	2
Brink, André	2	2
Byatt, A. S.	2	2
Campert, Remco	2	2
de Loo, Tessa	2	2
Fredriksson, Marianne	2	2

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Name of the author	Number of titles	Number of entries
Gogol, Nicolai	2	2
Gordimer, Nadine	2	2
Grøndahl, Jens Christian	2	2
Nooteboom, Cees	2	2
Not specified	2	2
Polak, Chaja	2	2
Slot, Pauline	2	2
Thomé, P. F.	2	2
Tremain, Rose	2	2
Updike, John	2	2
van Dulleman, Inez	2	2
van Woerden, Henk	2	2
Warren, Hans	2	2
Waters, Sarah	2	2
Asscher-Pinkhof, Clara	1	2
Barbery, Muriel	1	2
Bloom, Amy	1	2
Boelgakov, Michail	1	2
Bruhns, Wibke	1	2
Cleave, Chris	1	2
Couperus, Louis	1	2
Dubois, Jean-Paul	1	2
Gerritsen, Esther	1	2
Hilsenrath, Edgar	1	2
Kapuściński, Ryszard	1	2
Koch, Natalie	1	2
Larsson, Stieg	1	2
Mankell, Henning	1	2
Matsier, Nicolaas	1	2
Melville, Herman	1	2
Mitchell, David	1	2
Munstermann, Hans	1	2
Natter, Bert	1	2
Némirovsky, Irène	1	2
Obama, Barack	1	2
Palmen, Connie	1	2

## GROUP SURVEY

Name of the author	Number of titles	Number of entries
Sampedro, José Luis	1	2
Schippers, K.	1	2
Sebald, W. G.	1	2
van Brederode, Désanne	1	2
Wilde, Oscar	1	2
Yerli, Nilgün	1	2

### List of popular authors sorted by number of different titles.

84 of 362 authors were represented with more than one title on the book list. Not included in this list are Dante Alighieri and Nicolai Gogol. Both are included twice in the book list, but both with one identified title and one unidentified title.

Name of the author	Number of titles	Number of entries
Haasse, Hella S.	8	21
Steiner, Rudolf	6	6
't Hart, Maarten	5	6
Roth, Philip	5	6
Mercier, Pascal	4	22
Siebelink, Jan	4	16
Mulisch, Harry	4	11
Bernlef, J. (1937-2012)	4	9
Coetzee, J. M.	4	7
Márai, Sándor	4	7
McEwan, Ian	4	7
van der Heijden, A. F. Th.	4	5
Dorrestein, Renate	4	4
Márquez, Gabriel García	4	4
Vestdijk, Simon	4	4
Mortier, Erwin	3	33
Noordervliet, Nelleke	3	21
Claudel, Philippe	3	18
Enquist, Anna	3	18
Grunberg, Arnon	3	17
Abdolah, Kader	3	13
Verhulst, Dimitri	3	13
Brouwers, Jeroen	3	12
Peper, Rascha	3	12

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Name of the author	Number of titles	Number of entries
Claus, Hugo	3	8
van der Meer, Vonne	3	8
Coelho, Paulo	3	6
Hermans, W. F.	3	6
Pamuk, Orhan	3	6
Murakami, Haruki	3	5
de Moor, Margriet	3	4
Oz, Amos	3	4
Benali, Abdelkader	3	3
Braam, Conny	3	3
James, Henry	3	3
Le Clézio, J. M. G.	3	3
Saramago, José	3	3
van der Vlugt, Simone	3	3
Wolkers, Jan	3	3
Koch, Herman	2	31
Japin, Arthur	2	24
Bakker, Gerbrand	2	23
Shalev, Meir	2	22
Wieringa, Tommy	2	13
de Winter, Leon	2	11
Brijs, Stefan	2	8
Schlink, Bernhard	2	7
van der Zijl, Annejet	2	7
Hosseini, Khaled	2	6
Koelemeijer, Judith	2	6
Morrison, Toni	2	6
Lanoye, Tom	2	5
Lieske, Tomas	2	5
Westerman, Frank	2	5
Zafón, Carlos Ruiz	2	5
Weijts, Christiaan	2	4
Auster, Paul	2	3
Brakman, Willem	2	3
Durlacher, Jessica	2	3
Elsschot, Willem	2	3

## GROUP SURVEY

Name of the author	Number of titles	Number of entries
Glastra van Loon, Karel	2	3
Kehlman, Daniel	2	3
Scholten, Jaap	2	3
Steenbeek, Rosita	2	3
Anker, Robert	2	2
Bennett, Alan	2	2
Bril, Martin	2	2
Brink, André	2	2
Byatt, A. S.	2	2
Campert, Remco	2	2
de Loo, Tessa	2	2
Fredriksson, Marianne	2	2
Gordimer, Nadine	2	2
Grøndahl, Jens Christian	2	2
Nooteboom, Cees	2	2
Polak, Chaja	2	2
Slot, Pauline	2	2
Thomése, P. F.	2	2
Tremain, Rose	2	2
Updike, John	2	2
van Dullemen, Inez	2	2
van Woerden, Henk	2	2
Warren, Hans	2	2
Waters, Sarah	2	2

All other authors were represented with only one of their books on the list.

## APPENDIX 1

### *1.3.6 Popularity of books by original language*

Original language	Number of entries	Percentage	Number of titles	Percentage
Dutch	692	56.72%	254	49.80%
English	183	15.00%	122	23.92%
German	82	6.72%	31	6.08%
Italian	80	6.56%	10	1.96%
French	50	4.10%	25	4.90%
Spanish	37	3.03%	11	2.16%
Hebrew	27	2.21%	6	1.18%
Russian	11	0.90%	10	1.96%
Portuguese	9	0.74%	6	1.18%
Swedish	8	0.66%	6	1.18%
Hungarian	8	0.66%	5	0.98%
Asian	7	0.57%	5	0.98%
Afrikaans	7	0.57%	4	0.78%
Turkish	6	0.49%	3	0.59%
Danish	4	0.33%	4	0.78%
Norwegian	3	0.25%	3	0.59%
Latin	2	0.16%	2	0.39%
Polish	2	0.16%	1	0.20%
Finnish	1	0.08%	1	0.20%
Icelandic	1	0.08%	1	0.20%
Total	1220	100%	510	100%

## 1.3.7 Popularity of books: New books and classics

Number of book title entries (total) sorted by date of publication<sup>467</sup>

Year of publication	Number of different titles	Number of entries	Average number of times one title is read
2009	26	73	2.81
2008	64	303	4.73
2007	54	157	2.91
2006	42	133	3.17
2005	30	111	3.70
2004	26	63	2.42
2003	19	49	2.58
2002	15	23	1.53
2001	12	18	1.50
2000	18	21	1.17
1990-1999	85	110	1.29
1980-1989	32	46	1.44
1970-1979	6	12	2
1960-1969	13	18	1.38
1950-1959	4	5	1.25
1940-1949	10	20	2
1900-1939	24	26	1.08
before 1900	26	28	1.08
Total	506	1216	2.40

Number of *Dutch-language* book title entries sorted by date of publication

Year of publication	Number of different titles	Number of entries	Average number of times one title is read
2009	21	67	3.19
2008	43	220	5.12
2007	25	91	3.64
2006	23	88	3.83
2005	13	41	3.15
2004	12	18	1.5
2003	9	12	1.33

<sup>467</sup> As a consequence of the classification in these periods, four works were not included in this table: not specified poetry by Marjoleine de Vos, Paul van Ostaijen, Gerrit Kouwenaar and M. Vasalis. Furthermore, a number of works are made up by more than one original title with different years of publications: three works by Rudolf Steiner, one work by Sándor Márai, one work by Ferdinand Bordewijk and one work by Willem Elsschot. In those cases, the youngest year of publication was taken into account.

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Year of publication	Number of different titles	Number of entries	Average number of times one title is read
2002	7	12	1.71
2001	8	11	1.38
2000	12	15	1.25
1990-1999	36	44	1.22
1980-1989	10	16	1.60
1970-1979	4	10	2.50
1960-1969	6	10	1.67
1950-1959	3	4	1.33
1940-1949	5	14	2.80
1900-1939	11	13	1.18
before 1900	2	2	1.00
Total	250	688	2.75

Number of *non-Dutch-language* book title entries sorted by date of publication

Year of publication	Number of different titles	Number of entries	Average number of times one title is read
2009	5	6	1.20
2008	20	82	4.10
2007	29	66	2.28
2006	20	46	2.30
2005	17	70	4.12
2004	14	45	3.21
2003	10	37	3.70
2002	8	11	1.38
2001	4	7	1.75
2000	6	6	1
1990-1999	49	66	1.35
1980-1989	22	30	1.36
1970-1979	2	2	1
1960-1969	7	8	1.14
1950-1959	1	1	1
1940-1949	5	6	1.20
1900-1939	13	13	1
before 1900	24	26	1.08
Total	256 <sup>468</sup>	528	2.06

<sup>468</sup> Three titles of Rudolf Steiner were composed out of originally two different titles each. The youngest year of publication was counted. One book by Sándor Márai was composed out of two original works: here also the youngest year was counted.



## 1.3.8 Dutch language laureates, awards, and canon lists

Books featuring the 2002 canon list of the *Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde*:

Canon works: name of the author in alphabetical order and title of the work in Dutch	Number of entries
Ferdinand Bordewijk – <i>Bint</i> (1934)	1
Hugo Claus – <i>Het verdriet van België</i> (1983)	5
Louis Couperus – <i>Van oude mensen, de dingen die voorbijgaan</i> (1906)	2
Willem Elsschot – <i>Villa des Roses</i> (1913)	1
Willem Elsschot – <i>Lijmen</i> (1924); <i>Het been</i> (1938)	1
Marcellus Emants – <i>Een nagelaten bekentenis</i> (1894)	1
Desiderius Erasmus – <i>Lof der zotheid</i> (1509)	1
Hella S. Haasse – <i>Oeroeg</i> (1948)	10
Hella S. Haasse – <i>Het woud der verwachtingen</i> (1949)	1
Willem Frederik Hermans – <i>De donkere kamer van Damokles</i> (1958)	2
Willem Frederik Hermans – <i>Nooit meer slapen</i> (1966)	3
Harry Mulisch – <i>De aanslag</i> (1982)	1
Harry Mulisch – <i>De ontdekking van de hemel</i> (1992)	1
Nescio – <i>Titaantjes</i> (1918)	1
Martinus Nijhoff – <i>Awater</i> (1934)	1
Paul van Ostaïjen – <i>Verzameld werk: poëzie</i> (posthumous 1952)	1
Simon Vestdijk – <i>Terug tot Ina Damman</i> (1934)	1
Simon Vestdijk – <i>De vuuraanbidders</i> (1947)	1
Simon Vestdijk – <i>De kellner en de levenden</i> (1949)	1
Gerard Walschap – <i>Houtekiet</i> (1939)	1
Jan Wolkers – <i>Terug naar Oegstgeest</i> (1965)	1

Authors featuring the 2002 canon list of the *Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde*:

Canon authors: name of the author in alphabetical order	Number of titles	Number of entries
Ferdinand Bordewijk (1884-1965)	1	1
Jeroen Brouwers (1940)	3	12
Remco Campert (1929)	2	2
Hugo Claus (1929-2008)	3	8
Louis Couperus (1863-1923)	1	2
Tessa de Loo (1946)	2	2
Maria Derموût (1888-1962)	1	1
Willem Elsschot (1882-1960)	2	3
Marcellus Emants (1848-1923)	1	1
Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536)	1	1
Arnon Grunberg (1971)	3	17
Hella S. Haasse (1918-2011)	8	21

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Canon authors: name of the author in alphabetical order	Number of titles	Number of entries
W.F. Hermans (1921-1995)	3	6
Gerrit Kouwenaar (1923-2014)	1	1
Harry Mulisch (1927-2010)	4	11
Nescio (1882-1961)	1	1
Martinus Nijhoff (1894-1953)	1	1
Cees Nooteboom (1933)	2	2
Thomas Rosenboom (1956)	1	3
F. Springer (1932-2011)	1	1
Maarten 't Hart (1944)	5	6
A.F.Th. van der Heijden (1951)	4	5
Paul van Ostaïen (1896-1928)	1	1
Belle van Zuylen (1740-1805)	1	1
M. Vasalis (1909-1998)	1	1
Simon Vestdijk (1898-1971)	4	4
J.J. Voskuil (1926-2008)	1	1
Gerard Walschap (1898-1989)	1	1
Jan Wolkers (1925-2007)	3	3

Books featuring the 2007 NRC list of ten best Dutch language books ever:

Canon works: name of the author in and title of the work in Dutch	NRC Rank number	Number of entries
Harry Mulisch – <i>De ontdekking van de hemel</i> (1992)	1	1
Kader Abdolah – <i>Het huis van de moskee</i> (2005)	2	11
W.F. Hermans – <i>De donkere kamer van Damokles</i> (1958)	5	2
W.F. Hermans – <i>Nooit meer slapen</i> (1966)	6	3
Nescio – <i>Titaantjes</i> (1918)	9	1

F. Bordewijkprijs for title (since 1948): winners

Name of the author and title of the work in Dutch	Year of award	Number of entries
Doeschka Meijsing – <i>Over de liefde</i>	2008	30
Tommy Wieringa – <i>Joe Speedboot</i>	2006	2
Arnon Grunberg – <i>De asielzoeker</i>	2004	1
Kees van Beijnum – <i>Oesters van Nam Kee</i>	2001	1
Helga Ruebsamen – <i>Het lied en de waarheid</i>	1998	1
Nicolaas Matsier – <i>Gesloten huis</i>	1995	2
Jan Siebelink – <i>De overkant van de rivier</i>	1991	1
Leo Pleysier – <i>Wit is altijd schoon</i>	1990	1
Jeroen Brouwers – <i>Joris Ockeloen en het wachten</i>	1967	1
W.F. Hermans – <i>Nooit meer slapen</i> (the author did not accept the prize)	1966	3

## GROUP SURVEY

### P.C. Hooftprijs for oeuvre (since 1947): winners

Name of the author	Year of award	Number of titles	Number of entries
Charlotte Mutsaers	2010	1	7
J.M.A. Biesheuvel	2007	1	1
Cees Nooteboom	2004	2	2
K. Schippers	1996	1	2
J. Bernlef	1994	4	9
Gerrit Komrij	1993	1	1
Anton Koolhaas	1992	1	1
Jan Wolkers (the author did not accept the prize)	1989	3	3
Hella S. Haasse	1983	8	21
M. Vasalis	1982	1	1
Willem Brakman	1980	2	3
Harry Mulisch	1977	4	11
Remco Campert	1976	2	2
W.F. Hermans	1971	3	6
Gerrit Kouwenaar	1970	1	1
F. Bordewijk	1954	1	1
S. Vestdijk	1950	4	4

### Constantijn Huygensprijs for oeuvre (since 1947): winners

Name of the author	Year of award	Number of titles	Number of entries
Arnon Grunberg	2009	3	17
Willem G. van Maanen	2004	1	17
Charlotte Mutsaers	2000	1	7
Willem Jan Otten	1999	1	1
F. Springer	1995	1	1
Jeroen Brouwers	1993	3	12
Cees Nooteboom	1992	2	2
Anton Koolhaas	1989	1	1
J. Bernlef	1984	4	9
Jan Wolkers (the author did not accept the prize)	1982	3	3
Hella S. Haasse	1981	8	21
Hugo Claus	1979	3	8
Harry Mulisch	1977	4	11
M. Vasalis	1974	1	1
F. Bordewijk	1957	1	1
Simon Vestdijk	1955	4	4
Martinus Nijhoff (posthumous)	1953	1	1
Willem Elsschot	1951	2	3

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Anton Wachterprijs for Flemish and Dutch debut novels (since 1977): nominees and winners. Nominees are announced as from 2006

Name of author and title of the work	Year of Anton Wachter Prize	Nominee or winner	Number of entries
Anne-Gine Goemans – <i>Ziekzoekers</i>	2008	W	1
Bert Natter – <i>Begeerte heeft ons aangeraakt</i>	2008	N	2
Gerbrand Bakker – <i>Boven is het stil</i>	2006	N	22
Christiaan Weijts – <i>Art. 285b</i>	2006	W	2

E. du Perron prize for title or oeuvre (since 1986): winners

Name of author (and title of the work)	Year of AKO Prize	Oeuvre or title	Number of entries
Abdelkader Benali – <i>De stem van mijn moeder</i>	2009	T	1
Fouad Laroui	2002	O	1
Nilgün Yerli – <i>De garnalenpelster</i>	2001	T	2
Kader Abdolah – <i>Spijkerschrift</i>	2000	T	1

AKO Literatuurprijs (since 1987): nominees and winners

Name of author and title of the work	Year of AKO Prize	Nominee or winner	Number of entries
Erwin Mortier – <i>Godenslaap</i>	2009	W	30
Joke van Leeuwen – <i>Alles nieuw</i>	2009	N	1
Carolina Trujillo – <i>De terugkeer van Lupe García</i>	2009	N	1
Christiaan Weijts – <i>Via Capello 23</i>	2009	N	2
Tommy Wieringa – <i>Caesarion</i>	2009	N	11
Machiel Bosman – <i>Elisabeth de Flines: een onmogelijke liefde in de achttiende eeuw</i>	2008	N	1
Leon de Winter – <i>Het recht op terugkeer</i>	2008	N	10
Thomas Lieske – <i>Dünya</i>	2008	N	4
Doeschka Meijsing – <i>Over de liefde</i>	2008	W	30
Arnon Grunberg – <i>Tirza</i>	2007	N	15
A.F.Th. van der Heijden – <i>Het schervengericht</i>	2007	W	2
Willem G. van Maanen – <i>Heb lief en zie niet om</i>	2007	N	17
Dimitri Verhulst – <i>Mevrouw Verona daalt de heuvel af</i>	2007	N	1
Frank Westerman – <i>Ararat</i>	2007	N	1
Stefan Brijs – <i>De engelenmaker</i>	2006	N	7
Hans Münsterman – <i>De bekoring</i>	2006	W	2
Dimitri Verhulst – <i>De helaasheid der dingen</i>	2006	N	8
Christiaan Weijts – <i>ART. 285b</i>	2006	N	2
Wanda Reisel – <i>Witte liefde</i>	2005	N	1

## GROUP SURVEY

Name of author and title of the work	Year of AKO Prize	Nominee or winner	Number of entries
Jan Siebelink – <i>Knielen op een bed violen</i>	2005	W	5
Tommy Wieringa – <i>Joe Speedboot</i>	2005	N	2
Bernlef – <i>Buiten is het maandag</i>	2004	N	3
Hafid Bouazza – <i>Paravion</i>	2004	N	1
Arnon Grunberg – <i>De asielzoeker</i>	2004	W	1
Hella Haasse – <i>Sleuteloog</i>	2003	N	3
Geerten Meijsing – <i>Dood meisje</i>	2001	N	1
Harry Mulisch – <i>Siegfried</i>	2001	N	2
Karel Glastra van Loon – <i>De passievrucht</i>	1999	W	2
Frank Westerman – <i>De graanrepubliek</i>	1999	N	4
A.F.Th. van der Heijden – <i>Asbestemming. Een requiem</i>	1995	N	1
Nicolaas Matsier – <i>Gesloten huis</i>	1994	N	2
F. Springer – <i>Bandoeng-Bandung. Een novelle</i>	1994	N	1
Hella Haasse – <i>Heren van de thee</i>	1993	N	3
Harry Mulisch – <i>De ontdekking van de hemel</i>	1993	N	1
Margriet de Moor – <i>Eerst grijs, dan wit, dan blauw</i>	1992	W	1
Leo Pleysier – <i>Wit is altijd schoon</i>	1989	N	1

Libris Literatuurprijs (since 1994): nominees and winners

Name of author and title of the work	Year of Libris Prize	Nominee or winner	Number of entries
Mensje van Keulen – <i>Een goed verhaal</i>	2010	N	1
Peter Terrin – <i>De bewaker</i>	2010	N	1
Anna Enquist – <i>Contrapunt</i>	2009	N	12
Arnon Grunberg – <i>Onze oom</i>	2009	N	1
Charlotte Mutsaers – <i>Koetsier herfst</i>	2009	N	7
Dimitri Verhulst – <i>Godverdomse dagen op een godverdomse bol</i>	2009	W	4
Robert Vuijsje – <i>Alleen maar nette mensen</i>	2009	N	1
Jeroen Brouwers – <i>Datumloze dagen</i>	2008	N	8
Marjolijn Februari – <i>De literaire kring</i>	2008	N	17
Gerbrand Bakker – <i>Boven is het stil</i>	2007	N	22
Arnon Grunberg – <i>Tirza</i>	2007	W	15
Tom Lanoye – <i>Het derde huwelijk</i>	2007	N	4
L.H. Wiener – <i>De verering van Quirina T.</i>	2007	N	1
Stefan Brijs – <i>De engelenmaker</i>	2006	N	7
K. Schippers – <i>Waar was je nou</i>	2006	W	2
Jan Siebelink – <i>Knielen op een bed violen</i>	2006	N	5
Tommy Wieringa – <i>Joe Speedboot</i>	2006	N	2

## APPENDIX 1

Name of author and title of the work	Year of Libris Prize	Nominee or winner	Number of entries
Willem Jan Otten – <i>Specht en zoon</i>	2005	W	1
J. Bernlef – <i>Buiten is het maandag</i>	2004	N	3
Arthur Japin – <i>Een schitterend gebrek</i>	2004	W	1
Abdelkader Benali – <i>De langverwachte</i>	2003	W	1
Oek de Jong – <i>Hokwerda's kind</i>	2003	N	1
Margriet de Moor – <i>Kreutzersonate</i>	2002	N	1
Harry Mulisch – <i>Siegfried</i>	2002	N	2
J. Bernlef – <i>Boy</i>	2001	N	2
Erwin Mortier – <i>Mijn tweede huid</i>	2001	N	1
Helga Ruebsamen – <i>Het lied en de waarheid</i>	1998	N	1
Abdelkader Benali – <i>Bruiloft aan zee</i>	1997	N	1
Hugo Claus – <i>De geruchten</i>	1997	W	2
Nicolaas Matsier – <i>Gesloten huis</i>	1995	N	2
Henk van Woerden – <i>Moenie kyk nie</i>	1994	N	1

NS Publieksprijs (since 2001):<sup>469</sup> nominees and winners

Name of author and title of the work	Year of NS Prize	Nominee or winner	Number of entries
Erwin Mortier – <i>Godenslaap</i>	2010	N	30
Herman Koch – <i>Het Diner</i>	2009	W	30
Doeschka Meijsing – <i>Over de liefde</i>	2009	N	30
Kader Abdolah – <i>De boodschapper en de Koran</i>	2008	N	1
Leon de Winter – <i>Het recht op terugkeer</i>	2008	N	10
Arthur Japin – <i>De overgave</i>	2008	W	23
Adriaan van Dis – <i>De wandelaar</i>	2007	N	12
Arnon Grunberg – <i>Tirza</i>	2007	N	15
Kader Abdolah – <i>Het huis van de moskee</i>	2006	N	11
Tommy Wieringa – <i>Joe Speedboot</i>	2006	N	2
Jan Siebelink – <i>Knielen op een bed violen</i>	2005	N	5
Anna Enquist – <i>De thuiskomst</i>	2005	N	5
Simone van der Vlugt – <i>De reünie</i>	2005	N	1
Annejet van der Zijl – <i>Sonny Boy</i>	2005	N	6
Renate Dorrestein – <i>Het duister dat ons scheidt</i>	2004	N	1
Arthur Japin – <i>Een schitterend gebrek</i>	2004	N	1
P.F. Thomése – <i>Schaduwkind</i>	2004	N	1
Leon de Winter – <i>God's gym</i>	2003	N	1

<sup>469</sup> Before 2001, this prize was called Trouw Publieksprijs and had a different procedure than the NS Publieksprijs. Winners and nominees from the time before 2001 are not taken into consideration here.

## GROUP SURVEY

Name of author and title of the work	Year of NS Prize	Nominee or winner	Number of entries
Hella Haasse – <i>Sleuteloog</i>	2003	W	3
Judith Koелеmeijer – <i>Het zwijgen van Maria Zachea</i>	2002	W	3
Harry Mulisch – <i>De ontdekking van de hemel</i>	2002	N	1

Gouden Boekenuil (since 1995): winners of categories Literature (Lit), Public Prize (Pub), and Youth (J)<sup>470</sup>

Name of author and title of the work	Year of Uil Prize	Winner of categorie	Number of entries
Robert Vuijsje – <i>Alleen maar nette mensen</i>	2009	W Lit	1
Pia de Jong – <i>Lange dagen</i>	2009	W Pub	1
Els Beerten – <i>Allemaal willen we de hemel</i>	2009	W J	1
Jeroen Brouwers – <i>Datumloze dagen</i>	2008	W Pub	8
Arnon Grunberg – <i>Tirza</i>	2007	W Lit	15
Dimitri Verhulst – <i>De helaasheid der dingen</i>	2007	W Pub	8
Henk van Woerden – <i>Ultramarijn</i>	2006	W Lit	1
Stefan Brijs – <i>De engelenmaker</i>	2006	W Pub	7
Hafid Bouazza – <i>Paravion</i>	2004	W Lit	1

Boek-delenprijs (since 2006): nominees and winners

Name of author and title of the work	Year of Boek-delen Prize	Nominee or winner	Number of entries
Conny Braam – <i>De handelsreiziger van de Nederlandsche Cocaine Fabriek</i>	2011	N	1
Joke J. Hermesen – <i>De liefde dus</i>	2011	N	1
Thomas Rosenboom – <i>Zoete mond</i>	2011	N	3
Philippe Claudel – <i>Het verslag van Brodeck</i>	2010	N	10
Anna Enquist – <i>Contrapunt</i>	2010	N	12
Julia Franck – <i>De middagvrouw</i>	2010	N	21
Paolo Giordano – <i>De eenzaamheid van de priemgetallen</i>	2010	W	40
Suzanna Jansen – <i>Het pauperparadijs</i>	2010	N	17
Herman Koch – <i>Het diner</i>	2010	N	30
Vonne van der Meer – <i>Zondagavond</i>	2010	N	5
Erwin Mortier – <i>Godenslaap</i>	2010	N	30
Robert Vuijsje – <i>Alleen maar nette mensen</i>	2010	N	1
Leon de Winter – <i>Het recht op terugkeer</i>	2010	N	10
Jeroen Brouwers – <i>Datumloze dagen</i>	2009	N	8

<sup>470</sup> This Flemish prize does not get as many media attention in the Netherlands as the *AKO Literatuurprijs*, *Libris Literatuurprijs* and *NS Publieksprijs*. Therefore, only winners of the *Gouden Uil* are taken into consideration here. There was no award in 2011, since 2012 the name has changed from *Gouden Uil Literatuurprijs* into *Gouden Boekenuil*.

## APPENDIX 1

Name of author and title of the work	Year of Boek- delen Prize	Nominee or winner	Number of entries
Marjolijn Februari – <i>De literaire kring</i>	2009	N	17
Judith Koelemeijer – <i>Anna Boom</i>	2009	N	3
Arthur Japin – <i>De overgave</i>	2009	W	23
Ian McEwan – <i>Aan Chesil Beach</i>	2009	N	2
Doeschka Meijsing – <i>Over de liefde</i>	2009	N	30
Pascal Mercier – <i>Nachttrein naar Lissabon</i>	2009	N	19
Charlotte Mutsaers – <i>Koetsier Herfst</i>	2009	N	7
Connie Palmen – <i>Lucifer</i>	2009	N	2
Marieke van der Pol – <i>Bruidsvlucht</i>	2009	N	3
Adriaan van Dis – <i>De wandelaar</i>	2009	N	12
Gerbrand Bakker – <i>Boven is het stil</i>	2008	W	22
Stefan Brijs – <i>De engelenmaker</i>	2007	W	7
Anna Enquist – <i>De thuiskomst</i>	2007	N	5
Jonathan Safran Foer – <i>Extreem luid en ongelooflijk dichtbij</i>	2007	N	8
Arthur Japin – <i>Een schitterend gebrek</i>	2007	N	1
Nicole Krauss – <i>De geschiedenis van de liefde</i>	2007	N	1
Ian McEwan – <i>Zaterdag</i>	2007	N	3
Margriet de Moor – <i>De verdronkene</i>	2007	N	2
Orhan Pamuk – <i>Sneeuw</i>	2007	N	3
Jan Siebelink – <i>Knielen op een bed violen</i>	2007	N	5
Annejet van der Zijl – <i>Sonny Boy</i>	2007	N	6
Henk van Woerden – <i>Ultramarijn</i>	2007	N	1
Dimitri Verhulst – <i>De helaasheid der dingen</i>	2007	N	8
Tommy Wieringa – <i>Joe Speedboot</i>	2007	N	2
Bernlef – <i>Buiten is het maandag</i>	2006	N	3
Philippe Claudel – <i>Grijze zielen</i>	2006	N	4
J.M. Coetzee – <i>In ongenade</i>	2006	N	3
Anna Enquist – <i>De thuiskomst</i>	2006	N	5
Jonathan Safran Foer – <i>Extreem luid en ongelooflijk dichtbij</i>	2006	N	8
Hella S. Haasse – <i>Sleuteloog</i>	2006	N	3
Khaled Hosseini – <i>De vliegeraar</i>	2006	W	3
Arthur Japin – <i>Een schitterend gebrek</i>	2006	N	1
Margriet de Moor – <i>De verdronkene</i>	2006	N	2
Sándor Márai – <i>Gloed</i>	2006	N	2
Willem Jan Otten – <i>Specht en zoon</i>	2006	N	1
Wanda Reisel – <i>Witte liefde</i>	2006	N	1
Carlos Ruiz Zafón – <i>De schaduw van de wind</i>	2006	N	3
Jan Siebelink – <i>Knielen op een bed violen</i>	2006	N	5
P.F. Thomése – <i>Schaduwkind</i>	2006	N	1
Tommy Wieringa – <i>Joe Speedboot</i>	2006	N	2



*1.3.9 Nobel prize in literature*

Nobel Prize in Literature as from 1901: laureates

Name of the author	Year of the award	Number of titles	Number of entries
Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio (1940)	2008	3	3
Doris Lessing (1919)	2007	1	1
Orhan Pamuk (1952)	2006	3	6
Elfriede Jelinek (1946)	2004	1	1
J.M. Coetzee (1940)	2003	4	7
José Saramago (1922-2010)	1998	2	2
Toni Morrison (1931)	1993	2	6
Nadine Gordimer (1923)	1991	2	2
Gabriel Garcia Márquez (1927)	1982	4	4
Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980)	1964	1	1
Albert Camus (1913-1960)	1957	1	1
Halldór Kiljan Laxness (1902-1998)	1955	1	1
William Faulkner (1897-1962)	1949	1	1
Thomas Mann (1875-1955)	1929	1	1

## APPENDIX 1

### 1.3.10 English language prizes and media attention

Man Booker Prize for Fiction as from 1969: winners and nominees

Name of author and title of the work	Year of Booker Prize	Nominee or winner	Number of entries
A.S. Byatt – <i>The Children's Book</i> (2009)	2009	N	1
J.M. Coetzee – <i>Summertime</i> (2009)	2009	N	1
Sarah Waters – <i>The Little Stranger</i> (2009)	2009	N	1
Aravind Adiga – <i>The White Tiger</i> (2008)	2008	W	18
Sebastian Barry – <i>The Secret Scripture</i> (2008)	2008	N	1
Steve Tolz – <i>A Fraction of the Whole</i> (2008)	2008	N	1
Ian McEwan – <i>On Chesil Beach</i> (2007)	2007	N	2
Sarah Waters – <i>The Night Watch</i> (2006)	2006	N	1
David Mitchell – <i>Cloud Atlas</i> (2004)	2004	N	2
Yann Martel – <i>Life of Pi</i> (2001)	2002	W	1
William Trevor – <i>The Story of Lucy Gault</i> (2002)	2002	N	1
J.M. Coetzee – <i>Disgrace</i> (1999)	1999	W	3
Arundhati Roy – <i>The God of Small Things</i> (1997)	1997	W	1
A.S. Byatt – <i>Possession: A Romance</i> (1990)	1990	W	1
Peter Ackroyd – <i>Chatterton</i> (1987)	1987	N	1

Pulitzer Prize (fiction) as from 1948: winners. No nominees appear on the book list (finalists were only announced since 1980)

Name of author and title of the work	Year of Pul. Prize	Nominee or winner	Number of entries
Junot Diaz – <i>The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i> (2007)	2008	W	1
Edward P. Jones – <i>The Known World</i> (2003)	2004	W	1
Art Spiegelman – <i>Maus</i> (1980-1991 / 1994)	1992	Special letters award	1
Toni Morrison – <i>Beloved</i> (1987)	1988	W	2

Oprah's book club

Name of author and title of the work	Year of featuring in show	Number of entries
Gabriel Garcia Márquez – <i>Love in the Time of Cholera</i>	2007	1
William Faulkner – <i>As I Lay Dying</i>	2005	1
Carson McCullers – <i>The Heart is a Lonely Hunter</i>	2004	1
Janet Fitch – <i>White Oleander</i>	1999	1
Bernhard Schlinck – <i>The Reader</i>	1999	6

Next to specific novels, there are some "Oprah's book club authors" present on the list with one of their other writings. Oprah discussed four books by Toni Morrison (*Song of Solomon* in 1996, *Paradise* in 1998, *The*

## GROUP SURVEY

*Bluest Eye* in 2000, and *Sula* in 2002), yet the Dutch book discussion groups recently read two other titles: *A Mercy* (four groups) and *Beloved* (two groups). By Ann-Marie MacDonald, one Dutch group read *The Way the Crow Flies* in stead of Oprah's choice *Fall on Your Knees* (featuring in 2002). By Leo Tolstoy, a Dutch group read *War and Peace*, where Oprah read *Anna Karenina* (featuring in 2004). Next to Márquez' novel *Love in the Time of Cholera*, read by a Dutch group and by Oprah's book club, three more books by this author appeared on the Dutch book list: *In Evil Hour*, *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. The other Márquez novel that featured in Oprah's book club (2004), *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, did not appear on the Dutch list.



## Appendix 2 Individual survey

### 2.1 INSTRUCTION

This questionnaire is intended for individual members of book discussion groups (not for supervisors). It is important that you only think of your own book discussion groups while answering the questions.

You should fill out **this questionnaire** as an individual and **not on behalf of several members** of your book discussion group; the group questionnaire is intended for that purpose. Every member of your book discussion group can fill out his / her own questionnaire, either on paper or on the Internet ([www.ou.nl/leesclubonderzoek](http://www.ou.nl/leesclubonderzoek)). The more members participate, the better the survey will be!

It is important that your book discussion group fills out the group questionnaire **first**. On the group questionnaire you are asked to fill in a name and a location. You should fill in the same name and location on this questionnaire. This makes it possible for the researcher to link certain information.

It is possible that your book discussion group does not want to take part in the group survey, but that you are willing to fill out this questionnaire for members. There is a supplement to this questionnaire that allows you to fill in some general information on your book discussion group.

If you are a member of two book discussion groups, you have to fill out this questionnaire **only once**. However, you are asked to fill in both of the book discussion groups' names and locations that your book discussion groups have written down on the group questionnaires. You can send in your individual questionnaire with either one of the group questionnaires.

Are you a member of two book discussion groups but only one of them wants to take part in the group survey? Of the book discussion group that also fills out the group questionnaire, you only have to fill in the name and location. You are, however, asked to fill in some general information on the book discussion group that does not take part in the group questionnaire. For this purpose, a supplement has been added.

Filling out these questions will take approximately twenty minutes. Of course, any information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Thank you for your cooperation!

## APPENDIX 2

### 2.2 SURVEY QUESTIONS INCLUDING OUTCOMES

*The first question addresses the book discussion group(s) that you are a member of*

1. To be sure that the individual questionnaires are linked to the correct book discussion group(s), your book discussion group has (or: your book discussion groups have) filled in a name and location in the group questionnaire.

If (one of) your book discussion group(s) does (or: do) not take part in the group questionnaire, you may make up a name. You are asked to answer several additional questions about this book discussion group in a supplement. You should fill in the same name and location on both questionnaires.

What is your book discussion group called and where do you (usually) meet?

*n*=877

Name:

Location:

This book discussion group has filled out the group questionnaire.

---

Yes

No → A supplement with several general questions on your book discussion group has been added to this questionnaire.

---

If you are a member of two book discussion groups, what is the second book discussion group called and where do you (usually) meet?

*n*=60

Name book discussion group 2:

Location:

This book discussion group has filled out the group questionnaire.

---

Yes

No → A supplement with several general questions on your book discussion group has been added to this questionnaire.

---

*These questions regard your personal information.*

2. Are you a man or a woman?

*n*=874

---

49	Man
825	Woman

---

## INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

3. In what year were you born?

$n=870$

[In column 4 and 5, respondents are grouped into members of organised groups and members of wild groups. Some respondents are member of two book discussion groups. They are counted twice. Therefore, the sum of column 4 + 5 may be higher than the number in column 3 (see for instance year of birth 1927). Not all respondents made clear whether they are member of a wild group or an organised one. Therefore, the total number of respondents to question 3 ( $n=870$ ) is higher than the total number of respondents calculated in column 4 and 5 ( $n=828$ ).]

Year of birth	Age at time of the survey	In numbers $n=828$	Number of participants organised groups $n=497$	Number of participants wild groups $n=331$
1913	96	1	1	0
1916	93	1	1	0
1917	92	1	0	1
1920	89	3	3	0
1921	88	2	2	0
1922	87	3	1	0
1923	86	5	2	0
1924	85	2	1	0
1925	84	4	3	0
1926	83	5	2	1
1927	82	11	9	4
1928	81	18	12	6
1929	80	7	4	3
1930	79	18	12	2
1931	78	22	16	3
1932	77	16	7	5
1933	76	16	8	7
1934	75	16	11	3
1935	74	16	13	2
1936	73	23	12	5
1937	72	29	17	11
1938	71	33	22	6
1939	70	33	27	8
1940	69	42	28	11
1941	68	19	14	6
1942	67	34	20	15
1943	66	48	30	18
1944	65	26	19	6
1945	64	38	25	8

## APPENDIX 2

Year of birth	Age at time of the survey	In numbers $n=828$	Number of participants organised groups $n=497$	Number of participants wild groups $n=331$
1946	63	45	24	22
1947	62	41	23	21
1948	61	32	16	13
1949	60	28	14	16
1950	59	20	7	7
1951	58	25	13	13
1952	57	20	9	12
1953	56	19	11	6
1954	55	28	13	14
1955	54	10	3	4
1956	53	11	5	6
1957	52	14	8	6
1958	51	11	7	4
1959	50	5	4	3
1960	49	8	2	6
1961	48	3	1	3
1962	47	4	2	2
1963	46	7	4	3
1964	45	4	1	3
1965	44	4	1	3
1966	43	8	2	5
1967	42	3	2	1
1968	41	3	1	2
1969	40	4	0	5
1970	39	2	1	2
1971	38	2	0	2
1972	37	2	0	2
1973	36	1	0	1
1974	35	3	1	2
1975	34	2	0	2
1977	32	2	0	2
1978	31	3	0	3
1979	30	3	0	3
1981	28	1	0	1



## INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

4. What are the four numbers of your postal code?

$n=855$

This led to the following result:

Groningen (576 668 inhabitants) <sup>471</sup>	3
- Eastern Groningen	- 0
- Delfzijl area	- 0
- Groningen other	- 3
Friesland (646 305 inhabitants)	5
- Northern Friesland	- 0
- South-Western Friesland	- 2
- South-Eastern Friesland	- 3
Drenthe (490 981 inhabitants)	92
- Northern Drenthe	- 46
- South-Eastern Drenthe	- 31
- South-Western Drenthe	- 15
Overijssel (1 130 345 inhabitants)	68
- Northern Overijssel	- 34
- South-Western Overijssel	- 17
- Twente	- 17
Flevoland (387 881 inhabitants)	5
Gelderland (1 998 936 inhabitants)	97
- Veluwe	- 28
- Achterhoek	- 14
- Arnhem/Nijmegen	- 45
- South-West Gelderland	- 10
Utrecht (1 220 910 inhabitants)	77
North-Holland (2 669 084 inhabitants)	101
- Kop van North-Holland	- 6
- Alkmaar area	- 6
- IJmond	- 3
- Haarlem conglomerate	- 30
- Zaan district	- 2
- Amsterdam metropolitan area	- 38
- Gooi and Vechtstreek	- 16
South-Holland (3 505 611 inhabitants)	134
- Leiden conglomerate and Bollenstreek	- 7
- The Hague conglomerate	- 18
- Delft and Westland	- 24
- Eastern South-Holland	- 8

<sup>471</sup> Number of inhabitants per province on January 1, 2010. Source: <http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=03759NED&D1=0&D2=0&D3=5-16&D4=22&VW=T> [Website accessed September 21, 2015].

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- Rijnmond area	- 61
- South-Eastern South Holland	- 16
Zeeland (381 409 inhabitants)	46
- Zeelandic Flanders	- 14
- Zeeland other	- 32
North-Brabant (2 444 158 inhabitants)	73
- Western North-Brabant	- 5
- North-Brabant Middle	- 5
- North-Eastern North-Brabant	- 40
- South-Eastern North-Brabant	- 23
Limburg (1 122 701 inhabitants)	154
- Northern Limburg	- 23
- Limburg Middle	- 28
- Southern Limburg	- 103

5. What is the highest level of education or training you have successfully completed?

*n*=868

	Educational level <sup>472</sup>	In percentages
4	Primary education (age 4 to 12)	0.46
133	Secondary education: preparatory middle-level vocational education (age 12 to 16)	15.32
<b>137</b>	<b>Low educational level</b>	<b>15.78</b>
57	Secondary education: higher general continued education (age 12 to 17)	6.57
36	Secondary education: higher general continued education (age 12 to 17) / pre-university secondary education (age 12 to 17 or 18)	4.15
67	Vocational Education / career and technical education	7.72
<b>160</b>	<b>Middle educational level</b>	<b>18.43</b>
334	Vocational university (professional university, or college of higher vocational studies) / Academic bachelor	38.48
237	Academic master / post-academic degree	27.30
<b>571</b>	<b>High educational level</b>	<b>65.78</b>

*These questions regard your reading habits.*

<sup>472</sup> Dutch names for these educational levels are: 1. Lager onderwijs; 2. LBO / VMBO / MAVO (MULO); 3. MMS / HBS; 4. HAVO / VWO; 5. MBO; 6. HBO / WO Propedeuse / WO Bachelor/ WO Kandidaats; 7. WO Doctoraal / WO Master / POST-WO.

## INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

6. For how long have you been a member of your book discussion group?

If you are a member of two book discussion groups, see page 2 for the number of each book discussion group.

**Book discussion group 1:**

*n*=866

401	I joined when the book discussion group was founded
465	Other, namely for _____ years

**Book discussion group 2:**

*n*=59

29	I joined when the book discussion group was founded
30	Other, namely for _____ years

7. Do you also read books for yourself, apart from the books you read for your book discussion group(s)?

*n*=871

5	No, I do not feel the need
51	No, I do not have enough time
444	Yes, (mostly) the same kinds of books as the books I read for the book discussion group(s)
371	Yes, (mostly) different kinds of books than the books I read for the book discussion group(s), namely _____

8. Approximately how much time do you spend every week reading books – for the book discussion group as well as for other purposes – apart from books for work and/or studies?

*n*=871

19	less than 1 hour a week
98	1 to 2 hours
246	2 to 4 hours
214	4 to 6 hours
158	6 to 8 hours
66	8 to 10 hours
40	10 to 12 hours
30	more than 12 hours

## APPENDIX 2

9. These are fifteen statements that regard reading books. Indicate to what extent you agree with each of them.

In numbers	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I sometimes enjoy the style of a book. ( <i>n</i> =865)	347	462	52	2	2
Reading is customary in my family. ( <i>n</i> =865)	254	426	130	48	7
I like talking about books or literature. ( <i>n</i> =872)	225	479	158	5	5
I like to immerse myself in a fictional story. ( <i>n</i> =871)	191	453	204	18	5
I like receiving reading tips. ( <i>n</i> =872)	304	493	70	2	3
People react positively when they find out I like to read. ( <i>n</i> =866)	80	399	349	31	7
Reading contributes to my personal development. ( <i>n</i> =872)	330	482	52	5	3
I love getting absorbed in a book. ( <i>n</i> =873)	346	401	110	12	4
Most of my friends regularly read books. ( <i>n</i> =871)	148	527	165	29	2
I like recommending books to other people. ( <i>n</i> =869)	134	481	232	15	7
I appreciate beautiful language. ( <i>n</i> =869)	369	425	71	2	2
Reading makes me smarter. ( <i>n</i> =863)	125	391	305	33	9
I enjoy a well-composed book. ( <i>n</i> =870)	276	532	61	0	1
Reading enables me to learn more about a subject I am interested in. ( <i>n</i> =871)	240	523	101	7	0
I like forgetting about my day-to-day worries by reading. ( <i>n</i> =871)	243	452	154	18	4

10. These are 24 statements about being a member of (a) book discussion group(s). To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Because of the book discussion group(s), I learn more about literature or another subject that I am interested in. ( <i>n</i> =870)	250	529	80	10	1
The discussions in the book discussion group(s) allow me to better appreciate the structure of a book. ( <i>n</i> =874)	233	497	132	11	1
I like taking part in a club activity. ( <i>n</i> =871)	148	528	172	17	6
I think reading on my own is boring. ( <i>n</i> =874)	4	18	83	390	379
Being a member of (a) book discussion group(s) makes me read on a regular basis. ( <i>n</i> =871)	94	359	176	180	62
The discussions contribute to my personal development. ( <i>n</i> =873)	123	547	179	22	2

# INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I think it is a nice way to create a distinct profile of myself as a reader. (n=867)	34	251	406	131	45
Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate certain books less. (n=868)	26	113	228	403	98
Because of the discussions, I find more depth (layers) in a book. (n=870)	184	602	78	5	1
I get positive reactions from my environment for being an active reader. (n=865)	24	220	480	105	36
I do not have a lot of time to look up extra information on a book. (n=867)	14	175	298	341	39
I appreciate learning new things from the book discussion group(s). (n=870)	92	538	210	26	4
I think it is important to be in a club. (n=868)	79	405	295	69	20
Because of the discussions, I learn more about the other members' personalities. (n=872)	97	558	192	20	5
People in my vicinity appreciate that I am socially active because of the book discussion group(s). (n=870)	16	160	495	159	40
I like noticing that I am enjoying language or style more thanks to the book discussion group(s). (n=869)	93	516	213	38	9
I find it difficult to choose a book from the inconveniently arranged supply. (n=874)	19	138	130	402	185
I am more open to other people's views and opinions thanks to the discussions. (n=870)	54	476	254	70	16
Since I joined the book discussion group(s), my taste in books has changed. (n=871)	16	159	285	335	76
The most important thing about the book discussions are the conversations about our own experiences. (n=871)	51	200	289	276	55
By being a member of the book discussion group(s), I can more easily join in conversations about books that take place outside the book discussion group(s). (n=874)	21	301	326	182	44
The book discussion group meetings are enjoyable. (n=874)	302	534	34	3	1
Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate writers, genres or categories of books more which I did not like before. (n=872)	86	448	225	98	15
My book discussion group / groups at least enable(s) me to talk to my friends regularly. (n=869)	40	256	327	196	50

## APPENDIX 2

11. Below are eight possible reasons for being a member of your book discussion group. Please indicate which reason is most important to you for being a member of your book discussion group.

If you are a member of two book discussion groups, see page 2 for the number of each book discussion group.

### Book discussion group 1 Mark only one answer

- 
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| X | The book discussion group is enjoyable  |
| X | Thanks to the book discussion group I make time to read                         |
| X | Thanks to the book discussion group I see the other members on a regular basis  |
| X | Thanks to the book discussion group I learn about literature                    |
| X | Thanks to the book discussion group I learn about a different subject           |
| X | Thanks to the book discussion group I get to know the other people better       |
| X | The book discussion group contributes to my personal development                |
| X | Being a member of a book discussion group shows other people that I am a reader |
- 

### Book discussion group 2 Mark only one answer

- 
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| X | The book discussion group is enjoyable  |
| X | Thanks to the book discussion group I make time to read                         |
| X | Thanks to the book discussion group I see the other members on a regular basis  |
| X | Thanks to the book discussion group I learn about literature                    |
| X | Thanks to the book discussion group I learn about a different subject           |
| X | Thanks to the book discussion group I get to know the other people better       |
| X | The book discussion group contributes to my personal development                |
| X | Being a member of a book discussion group shows other people that I am a reader |
- 

[Not valid].

12. The reasons you have for being a member of a book discussion group can change over time. For example, you joined your book discussion group to learn more about modern Dutch literature, but now you go because of the pleasant social contacts you have thanks to the book discussion group.

Have the reasons you have for being a member of your book discussion group changed over time? If so, how?

If you are a member of two book discussion groups, see page 2 for the number of each book discussion group.

### Book discussion group 1:

*n*=665

- 
- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 426 | No   |
| 24  | Not applicable yet (group exists too short or member is active for a short time) |
| 215 | Yes ____   |
-

# INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

## Book discussion group 2

n=51

27	No
3	Not applicable yet (group exists too short or member is active for a short time)
21	Yes _____

13. In some book discussion groups, the members choose the books they will read themselves. Suppose you are asked to pick out a book that (one of your) book discussion group(s) is going to read. Which of the following statements would apply?

I would..	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
like it that the other members would read a book that I like. (n=820)	142	492	159	21	6
pick a book about a subject that affects me and/or several other members personally. (n=813)	96	454	211	44	8
pick a book about a subject that I already know something about. (n=816)	24	263	371	147	11
like to find information about the book or the subject of the book easily. (n=812)	31	323	313	129	16
not like it if the other members would not like the book or would not find it interesting. (n=824)	19	203	333	230	39
pick a book that most of the other members would not pick out for themselves so we learn something new or get acquainted with something new. (n=827)	50	364	313	98	2
pick a book that shows the other members that I know about books. (n=826)	2	19	242	389	174
pick a book that the other members would probably like. (n=833)	25	321	296	160	31
pick a book that could start a heated discussion. (n=830)	65	397	265	92	11
not want the book to be too simple for an in-depth discussion. (n=825)	63	355	248	136	23
pick a book that I would probably understand better when we read it in the book discussion group than when I read it on my own. (n=841)	131	460	176	64	10
read reviews to pick a book. (n=829)	99	484	172	65	9
ask for advice from friends, acquaintances or family. (n=824)	28	410	245	114	27

## APPENDIX 2

14. Do you tell other people that you are a member of (a) book discussion group(s)?

*n*=859

---

149	Yes, often
643	Yes, sometimes
67	No, (almost) never

---

15. Do you ever talk about books with people in your environment other than members of your book discussion group(s)? More than one answer possible.

---

14	No
484	Yes, with members of my conjugal family
462	Yes, with members of my extended family
185	Yes, with colleagues
723	Yes, with friends or acquaintances
30	Other, namely
	Diverse answers were given. These can be grouped in the following themes:
	11 spontaneously during conversations (at party's, dinners, ...)
	4 everyone / books as favourite topic
	3 students
	3 members of other book discussion groups
	2 neighbours
	1 not with everyone
	6 other

---



## INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

16. Imagine that you are reading one particular book for (one of) your book discussion group(s), and another book, that is not on the reading list of the book discussion group(s), for yourself. To what extent to you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
For the book discussion group, I pay more attention to things like motives, themes and underlying meaning while I am reading. (n=860)	130	511	109	102	8
For the book discussion group I read less intently than for myself. (n=852)		18	81	586	156
Reading a book for myself is more relaxing than when I am reading a book for the book discussion group. (n=855)	33	292	210	278	42
I often like the books I pick myself better, or find them more interesting. (n=858)	15	95	320	391	37
I clearly pick different kinds of books to read than the books we read for the book discussion group. (n=859)	19	182	235	362	61
I think it is important to read more than just the books we read for the book discussion group. (n=861)	135	509	173	36	8

17. Below are twelve statements about learning in the book discussion group. To what extent to you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

By being part of (a) book discussion group(s)...	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I learn about literature in general (about literary movements and literary history, for example). (n=851)	79	451	226	89	6
I learn about certain writers. (n=853)	122	634	78	17	2
I learn how to analyse books (how to recognise and interpret motives and narrative perspectives, for example). (n=855)	90	536	173	52	4
I understand a book better because I am able to find the deeper layers within the story. (n=860)	127	588	116	27	2
I learn about a particular subject. (n=851)	72	486	248	43	2
I learn how to form an opinion on certain subjects. (n=850)	60	446	297	45	2
I have learned how to be a better debater. (n=850)	38	362	355	87	8
I learn about the opinions of other members of the book discussion group. (n=852)	88	683	76	5	0

## APPENDIX 2

By being part of (a) book discussion group(s)...	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I learn how to express myself better. (n=851)	28	296	386	124	17
I learn to better appreciate other readers' opinions. (n=849)	59	537	208	41	4
I am developing / have developed a taste for certain books. (n=850)	42	375	341	85	7
The meetings contribute to my personal development. (n=850)	104	497	214	31	4

18. Is there anything else that you learn by being part of (a) book discussion group(s)? If so, what to you learn?  
n=201

[open-ended question] \_\_\_\_\_

19. According to you, what makes the meetings of your book discussion group(s) educational? Below are six statements. To what extent to you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

Meetings of our book discussion group are educational because ...	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Do not know / not applicable
a supervisor or members bring extra information about the book, or something that is connected to the book. (n=861)	240	505	52	22	42
a supervisor or a member provides structure to the discussion. (n=858)	131	461	178	43	45
a supervisor or a member provides subjects for discussion. (n=857)	127	486	152	36	56
members gradually are more at the same wavelength and get to know each other because of the discussion. (n=860)	94	534	188	27	17
members complement each other during the discussions. (n=858)	116	647	70	15	10
members can introduce each other to different views and opinions. (n=858)	154	627	60	9	8

20. Do you think it is important that you learn new things by being part of (a) book discussion group(s)?  
n=859

526	Yes, certainly
261	Yes, a little
72	No, not important

## INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

21. Are you at this moment learning something in your spare time (so not for a paid job)?

*n*=877

More than one answer possible.

---

188	Yes, I take courses at the community centre, club, library or a similar organisation without getting an official diploma
31	Yes, I take courses at an educational institute which will give me an official diploma or (pass) certificate
13	Yes, I take a correspondence course at an educational institute which will give me an official diploma or (pass) certificate
486	Yes, I regularly attend lectures and/or exhibitions and/or museums
37	Yes, I take a course on my own, for example with material from the library (like a language acquisition course), over the Internet or through television (like a Teleac (Dutch educational network) course)
259	No, at the moment I am not actively learning something in my spare time
155	Other, namely _____

---

22. Apart from the book discussion group(s), are you also a member of other clubs in your spare time (like sports club, social club, cultural club)?

*n*=842

---

119	No, at the moment I have no need for that
52	No, at the moment I do not have time for that
16	No, but I am intending to
655	Yes, of one or more clubs, namely _____

---

23. If you have any further comments, you can write these down below.

---

Thank you for your cooperation!

You may send this questionnaire without a stamp before December 1 2009 to:

*[Address and supplemental contact information was provided]*

For further questions you can contact Marjolein van Herten:

*[Address and supplemental contact information was provided]*

*Supplement: Information about your book discussion group(s)*

**The questions below only have to be filled in if (one of) you book discussion group(s) do(es) not want to fill out a group questionnaire. This way we know what kind of book discussion group(s) you are a member of.**

It is possible that you are a member of more than one book discussion group. There is room to write down information about two book discussion groups. If you want to write down information about a third book discussion group, please contact the researcher (see contact information on the questionnaire, or on the

## APPENDIX 2

website [www.ou.nl/leesclubonderzoek](http://www.ou.nl/leesclubonderzoek)) or make a copy of this supplement.

[The supplement included the following questions equal to questions out of the group survey:

1. Group survey question 1;
2. Group survey question 2;
3. Group survey question 4;
4. Group survey question 5;
5. Group survey question 8;
6. Group survey question 19;
7. Group survey question 20;
8. Group survey question 15;
9. Group survey question 16;
10. Group survey question 17;
11. Group survey question 18;
12. Group survey question 30.]

You may send this questionnaire without a stamp before December 1 2009 to:

*[Address and supplemental contact information was provided]*

**If you are a member of another book discussion group that has not filled out a group questionnaire, you may fill out the questions below for that book discussion group and send them along.**

*[Equal supplement was provided].*

## INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

### 2.2.1 Overview outcomes analysis motives, learning and characteristics

This appendix presents the data belonging to Sections 4.1, 4.2, 5.1 and 5.2, considering statements of the individual survey that were used to investigate motives and learning topics.

Subject	Section	Survey questions	Outcomes presented
Reading motives	4.1	-	Cognitive Reading Motive
		9	Aesthetic Reading Motive
		9	Hedonistic Reading Motive
		9	Status Reading Motive
Membership motives	4.2	10	Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive
		9	Hedonistic Membership Motive
		10	Status Membership Motive
		10	Social Membership Motive
		10	Societal Membership Motive
		10	Practical Membership Motive
Learning by reading	5.1	9	Learning from reading fiction
		-	Learning about literature
		9	Personal development and broadening one's horizons
Learning through membership	5.2	17	Learning from discussing and about discussing
		10 and 17	Learning about literature
		10 and 17	Diversification
		10 and 17	Personal development and broadening one's horizons

Apart from investigating the occurrence and importance of these motives and learning topics among survey respondents and interviewees, it was investigated whether relationships exist between motives, learning and characteristics of the respondents. Three personal characteristics and four characteristics of the group of the respondent were defined. Statistical tests were used to find relationships between the reactions to individual items from the survey belonging to the reading motives, and the diverse categories of respondents:

## APPENDIX 2

Personal characteristics		
Sex	two categories: ♂ =male ♀=female	independent Mann-Whitney U test <sup>473</sup>
Age	four categories: a=age 20-34 b=age 35-49 c=age 50-64 d=age ≥65	Kruskal-Wallis test
Educational level	three categories: L=low educational level M=middle educational level H=high educational level	Kruskal-Wallis test
Characteristics of the book discussion group <sup>474</sup>		
Affiliation of the group	two categories: W=wild groups O=organised groups	independent Mann-Whitney U test
Composition of the group	two categories: A-F=all-female groups M-S=mixed-sex groups	independent Mann-Whitney U test
Coach	two categories: +=with a coach -=without a coach	independent Mann-Whitney U test
Age of the group	five categories: a=0-4 years b=5-9 years c=10-19 years d=20-29 years e=≥30 years	Kruskal-Wallis test

Significant outcomes ( $p \leq .05$ ) relating to connections between a specific characteristic and a specific statement belonging to a reading motive or learning topic are presented per motive and learning topic in tables in this appendix. These tables also include information about the nature of this relationship. With help of the category symbols (see Table 4.3 middle column), it is indicated which group of respondents agreed more strongly to a specific statement than other groups of respondents. In case of characteristics that exist of two categories (i.e. sex, affiliation of the group, composition of the group, and having a coach or not), the respondent category that reacted most positively to a statement is reflected in the table. For example, in Table 4.6, respondents of groups without a coach reacted more positively to statements 9.a and 9.m than respondents of groups with a coach. This is visualised by the symbol ‘-’ in the table. In case of characteristics that exist of more than two categories (i.e. age, educational level, age of the group), the categories are presented in a specific order. This

<sup>473</sup> Non-normal distribution.

<sup>474</sup> Members of two groups were counted twice: once according to the characteristics of book discussion group 1, and once according to the characteristics of book discussion group 2.

## INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

order reflects the way the respondent groups have reacted to the statement. The category that reacted most positively is posed in the first position, followed by the respondent category that was second most positive when reacting, et cetera. For instance, in Table 4.10, respondents of age category b (35-49) reacted most positively to statement 9.e, followed by respondents from age category c (50-64), and thirdly age category a (20-34). Respondents from age category d ( $\geq 65$ ) reacted least positively to this specific statement. For statements 9.f and 9.j, that belong to the same reading motive, a more plain image arises with 'abcd', which means: the younger the respondent is, the more positively he or she reacted to these statements.

### *Aesthetic Reading motive:*

- 9.a: I sometimes enjoy the style of a book.
- 9.k: I appreciate beautiful language.
- 9.m: I enjoy a well-composed book.

Aesthetic Reading Motive Statement →	9.a	9.k	9.m
↓ Personal characteristic			
Sex			
Age	abcd $\chi^2=14.089$ $p=.003$		abcd $\chi^2=7.875$ $p=.049$
Educational level	HML $\chi^2=28.825$ $p<.001$	HML $\chi^2=9.448$ $p=.009$	HML $\chi^2=10.452$ $p=.005$
Aesthetic Reading Motive Statement →	9.a	9.k	9.m
↓ Group characteristic			
Affiliation of the group	W $Z=-2.042$ $p=.041$	W $Z=-3.114$ $p=.002$	
Composition of the group			
With or without coach	- $Z=-2.201$ $p=.028$		- $Z=-2.326$ $p=.020$
Age of the group	bacde $\chi^2=9.971$ $p=.041$		

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### *Hedonistic Reading Motive:*

- 9.d: I like to immerse myself in a fictional story.
- 9.h: I love getting absorbed in a book.
- 9.o: I like forgetting about my day-to-day worries by reading.

Hedonistic Reading Motive Statement →	9.d	9.h	9.o
↓ Personal characteristic			
Sex		♀ $Z=-2.530$ $p=.011$	♀ $Z=-3.170$ $p=.002$
Age	bacd $\chi^2=15.072$ $p=.002$	abcd $\chi^2=28.283$ $p<.001$	abcd $\chi^2=9.867$ $p=.020$
Educational level			MLH $\chi^2=12.053$ $p=.002$
↓ Group characteristic			
Affiliation of the group		W $Z=-2.467$ $p=.014$	
Composition of the group			
With or without coach	- $Z=-3.527$ $p<.001$	- $Z=-2.619$ $p=.009$	
Age of the group	ebacd $\chi^2=9.945$ $p=.041$		



# INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

## Status Reading Motive:

- 9.b: Reading is customary in my family.
- 9.e: I like receiving reading tips.
- 9.f: People react positively when they find out I like to read.
- 9.i: Most of my friends regularly read books.
- 9.j: I like recommending books to other people.

Status Reading Motive Statement →	9.b	9.e	9.f	9.i	9.j
↓ Personal characteristic					
Sex		♀ $Z=-3.610$ $p<.001$			
Age		bcad $\chi^2=24.568$ $p<.001$	abcd $\chi^2=9.984$ $p=.019$		abcd $\chi^2=14.622$ $p=.002$
Educational level	HML $\chi^2=7.921$ $p=.019$	HML $\chi^2=6.415$ $p=.040$		HML $\chi^2=15.060$ $p=.001$	
↓ Group characteristic					
Affiliation of the group				W $Z=-3.135$ $p=.002$	W $Z=-2.011$ $p=.044$
Composition of the group	A-F $Z=-2.526$ $p=.012$			A-F $Z=-2.948$ $p=.003$	
With or without coach		- $Z=-2.159$ $p=.031$		- $Z=-5.088$ $p<.001$	
Age of the group		cbdae $\chi^2=11.714$ $p=.020$		bdcae $\chi^2=9.629$ $p=.047$	

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### *Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive:*

- 10.p: I like noticing that I am enjoying language or style more thanks to the book discussion group(s).
- 10.b: The discussions in the book discussion group(s) allow me to better appreciate the structure of a book.
- 10.l: I appreciate learning new things from the book discussion group(s).

Cognitive-aesth. Membership Motive Statement →	10.b	10.l	10.p
↓ Personal characteristic			
Sex			
Age		abcd $\chi^2=12.338$ $p=.006$	dcba $\chi^2=12.729$ $p=.005$
Educational level	LMH $\chi^2=6.339$ $p=.042$		LMH $\chi^2=21.595$ $p<.001$
Cognitive-aesth. Membership Motive Statement →	10.b	10.l	10.p
↓ Group characteristic			
Affiliation of the group		W $Z=-3.020$ $p=.003$	
Composition of the group			
With or without coach			+ $Z=-3.417$ $p=.001$
Age of the group	bceda $\chi^2=11.132$ $p=.025$		

### *Hedonistic Membership Motive:*

- 9.c: I like talking about books and literature.

Hedonistic Membership Motive Statement →	9.c
↓ Personal characteristic	
Sex	
Age	abcd $\chi^2=18.619$ $p<.001$
Educational level	HML $\chi^2=18.427$ $p<.001$

## INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

Hedonistic Membership Motive Statement →	9.c		
↓ Group characteristic			
Affiliation of the group	W Z=-3.140 p=.002		
Composition of the group			
With or without coach			
Age of the group	bcdae $\chi^2=10.021$ p=.040		
<i>Status Membership Motive:</i>			
- 10.j: I get positive reactions from my environment for being an active reader.			
- 10.o: People in my vicinity appreciate that I am socially active because of the book discussion group(s).			
- 10.g: I think it is a nice way to create a distinct profile of myself as a reader.			
Status Membership Motive Statement →	10.g	10.j	10.o
↓ Personal characteristic			
Sex			
Age			
Educational level	LMH $\chi^2=16.048$ p<.001	MLH $\chi^2=7.112$ p=.029	LMH $\chi^2=20.145$ p<.001
Status Membership Motive Statement →	10.g	10.j	10.o
↓ Group characteristic			
Affiliation of the group	W Z=-2.566 p=.010		
Composition of the group			
With or without coach			
Age of the group	51432 $\chi^2=11.688$ p=.020		

## APPENDIX 2

### *Social Membership Motive:*

- 10.v: Meetings of the book discussion group are enjoyable.
- 10.t: The most important thing about the book discussions are the conversations about our own experiences.
- 10.x: My book discussion group / groups at least enable(s) me to talk to my friends regularly.

Social Membership Motive Statement →	10.t	10.v	10.x
↓ Personal characteristic			
Sex			
Age		abcd $\chi^2=20.226$ $p<.001$	
Educational level	LMH $\chi^2=25.361$ $p<.001$		
Social Membership Motive Statement →	10.t	10.v	10.x
↓ Group characteristic			
Affiliation of the group		W $Z=-4.964$ $p<.001$	W $Z=-5.798$ $p<.001$
Composition of the group		A-F $Z=-3.097$ $p=.002$	A-F $Z=-2.817$ $p=.005$
With or without coach		- $Z=-5.048$ $p<.001$	- $Z=-4.982$ $p<.001$
Age of the group			

## INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

### *Societal Membership Motive:*

- 10.c: I like taking part in a club activity.
- 10.m: I think it is important to be in a club.

Societal Membership Motive Statement →	10.c	10.m
↓ Personal characteristic		
Sex		
Age		dcba $\chi^2=26.038$ $p<.001$
Educational level	LMH $\chi^2=6.137$ $p=.046$	LMH $\chi^2=14.145$ $p=.001$
Societal Membership Motive Statement →	10.c	10.m
↓ Group characteristic		
Affiliation of the group		O $Z=-2.463$ $p=.014$
Composition of the group	A-F $Z=-2.623$ $p=.009$	A-F $Z=-2.235$ $p=.025$
With or without coach		
Age of the group		

### *Practical Membership Motive:*

- 10.q: I find it difficult to choose a book from the inconveniently arranged supply.
- 10.e: Being a member of a book discussion group / book discussion groups makes me read on a regular basis.
- 10.d: I think reading on my own is boring.
- 10.k: I do not have a lot of time to look up extra information on a book.
- 10.u: By being a member of the book discussion group(s), I can more easily join in conversations about books that take place outside the book discussion group(s).

Pract. Memb. Motive Statement →	10.d	10.e	10.k	10.q	10.u
↓ Personal characteristic					
Sex	♂ $Z=-2.166$ $p=.030$				
Age	dcba $\chi^2=27.076$ $p<.001$	dcba $\chi^2=18.584$ $p<.001$	abdc $\chi^2=19.663$ $p<.001$	dcba $\chi^2=63.825$ $p<.001$	dcba $\chi^2=20.653$ $p<.001$
Educational level	LMH $\chi^2=22.926$ $p<.001$	LMH $\chi^2=9.608$ $p=.008$		LMH $\chi^2=53.841$ $p<.001$	LMH $\chi^2=61.606$ $p<.001$

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Pract. Memb. Motive Statement →	10.d	10.e	10.k	10.q	10.u
↓ Group characteristic					
Affiliation of the group	O			O	
	Z=-2.036			Z=-3.162	
	p=.042			p=.002	
Composition of the group					A-F
					Z=-2.225
					p=.026
With or without coach	+		+	+	+
	Z=-3.071		Z=-2.485	Z=-3.000	Z=-3.698
	p=.002		p=.013	p=.003	p<.001
Age of the group					edcba
					$\chi^2=12.125$
					p=.016

### *Learning from reading fiction:*

- 9.l: Reading makes me smarter.
- 9.n: Reading enables me to learn more about a subject I am interested in.

Learning from reading fiction Statement →	9.l	9.n
↓ Personal characteristic		
Sex		
Age	abcd	cdba
	$\chi^2=12.570$	$\chi^2=8.274$
	p=.006	p=.041
Educational level		
Learning from reading fiction Statement →	9.l	9.n
↓ Group characteristic		
Affiliation of the group		
Composition of the group		A-F
		Z=-2.269
		p=.023
With or without coach		
Age of the group		

## INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

*Personal development and broadening one's horizons by reading:*

- 9.g: Reading contributes to my personal development.

Personal development and broadening one's horizons by reading Statement →	9.g
↓ Personal characteristic	
Sex	
Age	acbd $\chi^2=23.234$ $p<.001$
Educational level	HML $\chi^2=6.338$ $p=.042$
Personal development and broadening one's horizons by reading Statement →	9.g
↓ Group characteristic	
Affiliation of the group	W $Z=-3.734$ $p<.001$
Composition of the group	A-F $Z=-2.316$ $p=.021$
With or without coach	- $Z=-2.611$ $p=.009$
Age of the group	

## APPENDIX 2

### *Learning from discussing and learning about discussing:*

- 17.e: I learn about a particular subject.
- 17.f: I learn how to form an opinion on certain subjects.
- 17.g: I have learned how to be a better debater.
- 17.h: I learn about the opinions of other members of the book discussion group.
- 17.i: I learn how to express myself better.
- 17.j: I learn to better appreciate other readers' opinions.

Learning from / about discussing Statement →	17.e	17.f	17.g	17.h	17.i	17.j
↓ Personal characteristic						
Sex	♀ $Z=-1.972$ $p=.049$				♀ $Z=-2.354$ $p=.019$	
Age					dcba $\chi^2=14.750$ $p=.002$	dcba $\chi^2=11.088$ $p=.011$
Educational level	LMH $\chi^2=30.232$ $p<.001$	MLH $\chi^2=21.358$ $p<.001$	LMH $\chi^2=29.982$ $p<.001$		LMH $\chi^2=32.857$ $p<.001$	
Learning from / about discussing Statement →	17.e	17.f	17.g	17.h	17.i	17.j
↓ Group characteristic						
Affiliation of the group						
Composition of the group	A-F $Z=-3.086$ $p=.002$					
With or without coach				- $Z=-4.118$ $p<.001$		
Age of the group				bacde $\chi^2=10.375$ $p=.035$		



## INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

### *Learning about literature through membership:*

- 10.a: Because of the book discussion group(s), I learn more about literature or another subject that I am interested in.
- 10.i: Because of the discussions, I find more depth (layers) in a book.
- 17.a: I learn about literature in general (about literary movements and literary history, for example).
- 17.b: I learn about certain writers.
- 17.c: I learn how to analyse books (how to recognise and interpret motives and narrative perspectives, for example).
- 17.d: I understand a book better because I am able to find the deeper layers within the story.

Learning about literature through memb. Statement → ↓ Personal characteristic	10.a	10.i	17.a	17.b	17.c	17.d
Sex						
Age					dcba $\chi^2=24.651$ $p<.001$	
Educational level	LMH $\chi^2=7.209$ $p=.027$		LMH $\chi^2=26.803$ $p<.001$		MLH $\chi^2=6.612$ $p=.037$	
Learning about literature through memb. Statement → ↓ Group characteristic	10.a	10.i	17.a	17.b	17.c	17.d
Affiliation of the group						
Composition of the group	A-F $Z=-1.971$ $p=.049$			A-F $Z=-3.270$ $p=.001$	A-F $Z=-2.085$ $p=.037$	A-F $Z=-2.125$ $p=.034$
With or without coach	+		+		-	
	$Z=-3.018$ $p=.003$		$Z=-4.336$ $p<.001$		$Z=-2.913$ $p=.004$	
Age of the group	cdbea $\chi^2=19.070$ $p=.001$	dbcea $\chi^2=18.892$ $p=.001$	decba $\chi^2=15.214$ $p=.004$	dceba $\chi^2=12.618$ $p=.013$	decba $\chi^2=13.002$ $p=.011$	bdeca $\chi^2=11.913$ $p=.018$

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### *Diversification of taste:*

- 10.h: Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate certain books less.
- 10.s: Since I joined the book discussion group(s), my taste in books has changed.
- 10.w: Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate writers, genres or categories of books more which I did not like before.
- 17.k: I am developing / have developed a taste for certain books.

Diversification of taste Statement →	10.h	10.s	10.w	17.k
↓ Personal characteristic				
Sex				
Age				
	dbca	dcab		
	$\chi^2=19.441$	$\chi^2=9.078$		
	$p<.001$	$p=.028$		
Educational level				
	LMH	LMH	LMH	LMH
	$\chi^2=29.661$	$\chi^2=44.625$	$\chi^2=16.230$	$\chi^2=24.754$
	$p<.001$	$p<.001$	$p<.001$	$p<.001$
Diversification of taste Statement →	10.h	10.s	10.w	17.k
↓ Group characteristic				
Affiliation of the group				
	O			
	$Z=-2.476$			
	$p=.013$			
Composition of the group				
With or without coach				
	+	+	+	+
	$Z=-3.248$	$Z=-5.111$	$Z=-2.676$	$Z=-2.194$
	$p=.001$	$p<.001$	$p=.007$	$p=.028$
Age of the group				
		edcba	edcba	
		$\chi^2=15.386$	$\chi^2=13.773$	
		$p=.004$	$p=.008$	

## INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

*Personal development and broadening one's horizons through membership:*

- 10.f: The discussions contribute to my personal development.
- 10.n: Because of the discussions, I learn more about the other members' personalities.
- 10.r: I am more open to other people's views and opinions thanks to the discussions.
- 17.l: The meetings contribute to my personal development.

Pers. development and broadening one's horizons through membership Statement →	10.f	10.n	10.r	17.l
↓ Personal characteristic				
Sex				
Age			dbca	
			$\chi^2=10.268$	
			$p=.016$	
Educational level			LMH	
			$\chi^2=35.593$	
			$p<.001$	
Pers. development and broadening one's horizons through membership Statement →	10.f	10.n	10.r	17.l
↓ Group characteristic				
Affiliation of the group	W		O	W
	$Z=-3.205$		$Z=-2.125$	$Z=-3.873$
	$p=.001$		$p=.034$	$p<.001$
Composition of the group				
With or without coach		-		
		$Z=-2.701$		
		$p=.007$		
Age of the group				

## APPENDIX 2

### 2.2.2 Characteristics, motives and learning presented per characteristic

To investigate possible relationships between characteristics of respondents (personal and group characteristics, Chapter 3), their motives (reading and membership motives, Chapter 4) and learning experiences (learning from reading and learning from membership, Chapter 5), responses to individual survey questions 9, 10 and 17 of different types of respondents were compared. Significant outcomes per statement were presented in tables in Appendix 2.2.1 and interpreted in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. The way the outcomes were grouped per motive or learning subject was based on factor analysis of the survey questions 9, 10 and 17, complemented with results from the interviews. The interpretation of the outcomes as presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 concentrated on the factors, i.e. the motives and learning subjects.

In Sections 4.3 and 5.3, the results were discussed again, focusing on the personal and group characteristics. In addition, all outcomes on item-level will be presented here, ordered per characteristic.

#### *Personal characteristics: Sex*

##### Females

**Reading motives: Hedonistic Reading Motive.** *Females* respond more positively to the following statements than males do:

- 9.h: I love getting absorbed in a book. ( $Z=-2.530, p=.011$ )
- 9.o: I like forgetting about the day-to-day worries by reading a book. ( $Z=-3.170, p=.002$ )

**Reading motives: Status Reading Motive.** *Females* respond more positively to the following statement than males do:

- 9.e: I like receiving reading tips. ( $Z=-3.610, p<.001$ )

**Learning through membership: learning from discussing.** *Females* respond more positively to the following statements than males do:

- 17.e: I learn about a particular subject. ( $Z=-1.972, p=.049$ )
- 17.i: I learn how to express myself better. ( $Z=-2.354, p=.019$ )

##### Males

**Membership motives: Practical Membership Motive.** *Males* respond more positively to the following statement than females do:

- 10.d: I think reading on my own is boring ( $Z=-2.166, p=.030$ ).

#### *Personal characteristics: Age*

##### Younger respondents

**Reading motives: Aesthetic Reading Motive.** The *younger* the participant, the more positively he or she responds to the following statements:

- 9.a I sometimes enjoy the style of a book. ( $\chi^2=14.089, p=.003$ )
- 9.m I enjoy a well-composed book. ( $\chi^2=7.875, p=.049$ )

**Reading motives: Hedonistic Reading Motive.** The *younger* the participant, the more positively he or she responds to the following statements:

- 9.h: I love getting absorbed in a book. ( $\chi^2=28.283, p<.001$ )
- 9.o: I like forgetting about the day-to-day worries by reading a book. ( $\chi^2=9.867, p=.020$ )

**Reading motives: Status Reading Motive.** The *younger* the participant, the more positively he or she responds to the following statements:

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- 9.f: People react positively when they find out I like to read. ( $\chi^2=9.984, p=.019$ )

- 9.j: I like recommending books to other people. ( $\chi^2=14.622, p=.002$ )

**Membership motives: Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive.** The *younger* participant, the more positively he or she responds to the following statement:

- 10.l: I appreciate learning new things from the book discussion group(s). ( $\chi^2=12.338, p=.006$ )

**Membership motives: Hedonistic Membership Motive.** The *younger* the participant, the more positively he or she responds to the following statement:

- 9.c: I like talking about books or literature. ( $\chi^2=18.619, p<.001$ )

**Membership motives: Social Membership Motive.** The *younger* the participant, the more positively he or she responds to the following statement:

- 10.v: The book discussion group meetings are enjoyable. ( $\chi^2=20.226, p<.001$ )

**Learning by reading: learning from reading fiction.** The *younger* the respondent, the more positively he or she responds to the following statement:

- 9.l: Reading makes me smarter. ( $\chi^2=12.570, p=.006$ )

### Older respondents

**Membership motives: Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive.** The *older* participant, the more positively he or she responds to the following statement:

- 10.p: I like noticing that I am enjoying language or a style better thanks to the book discussion group(s). ( $\chi^2=12.729, p=.005$ )

**Membership motives: Societal Membership Motive.** The *older* participant, the more positively he or she responds to the following statement:

- 10.m: I think it is important to be in a club. ( $\chi^2=26.038, p<.001$ )

**Membership motives: Practical Membership Motive.** The *older* participant, the more positively he or she responds to the following statements:

- 10.d: I think reading on my own is boring. ( $\chi^2=27.076, p<.001$ )

- 10.e: Being a member of (a) book discussion group(s) makes me read on a regular basis. ( $\chi^2=18.584, p<.001$ )

- 10.q: I find it difficult to choose a book from the inconveniently arranged supply. ( $\chi^2=63.825, p<.001$ )

- 10.u: By being a member of the book discussion group(s), I can more easily join in conversations about books that take place outside the book discussion group(s). ( $\chi^2=20.653, p<.001$ )

**Learning through membership: learning from discussing.** The *older* participant, the more positively he or she responds to the following statements:

- 17.i: I learn how to express myself better. ( $\chi^2=14.750, p=.002$ )

- 17.j: I learn to better appreciate other readers' opinions. ( $\chi^2=11.088, p=.011$ )

**Learning through membership: learning about literature.** The *older* participant, the more positively he or she responds to the following statement:

- 17.c: I learn how to analyse books (how to recognise and interpret motives and narrative perspectives, for example). ( $\chi^2=24.651, p<.001$ )

### Inverted-U relationship

**Reading motives: Hedonistic Reading Motive.** Respondents from *age category 35-49* respond most positively to this statement (followed by respondents from age category 20-34; 50-64;  $\geq 65$ , inverted-U relationship):

- 9.d: I like to immerse myself in a fictional story. ( $\chi^2=15.072, p=.002$ )

**Reading motives: Status Reading Motive.** Respondents from *age category 35-49* respond most positively to this statement (followed by respondents from age category 50-64; 20-34;  $\geq 65$ , inverted-U relationship):

## APPENDIX 2

- 9.e: I like receiving reading tips. ( $\chi^2=24.568, p<.001$ )

**Learning by reading: learning from reading fiction.** Respondents *aged 50-64* respond most positively to this statement (followed by respondents from age category  $\geq 65$ ; 35-49; 20-34, inverted-U relationship):

- 9.n: Reading enables me to learn more about a subject I am interested in. ( $\chi^2=8.274, p=.041$ )

### Other

**Membership motives: Practical Membership Motive.** Respondents from *age category 20-34* respond most positively to the following statement (followed by respondents from age category 35-49;  $\geq 65$ ; 50-64):

- 10.k: I do not have a lot of time to look up extra information on a book. ( $\chi^2=19.663, p<.001$ )

**Learning by reading: personal development and broadening one's horizons.** Respondents *aged 20-34* respond most positively to the following statement (followed by respondents from age category 50-64; 35-49;  $\geq 65$ ):

- 9.g: Reading contributes to my personal development. ( $\chi^2=23.234, p<.001$ )

**Learning through membership: diversification.** Respondents *aged  $\geq 65$*  respond most positively to the following statement (followed by respondents from age category 35-49; 50-64; 20-34):

- 10.h: Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate certain books less. ( $\chi^2=19.441, p<.001$ )

Respondents *aged  $\geq 65$*  respond most positively to the following statement (followed by respondents from age category 50-64; 20-34; 35-49):

- 10.s: Since I joined the book discussion group(s), my taste in books has changed. ( $\chi^2=9.078, p=.028$ )

**Learning through membership: personal development and broadening one's horizons.** Respondents *aged  $\geq 65$*  respond most positively to the following statement (followed by respondents from age category 35-49; 50-64; 20-34):

- 10.r: I am more open to other people's views and opinions thanks to the discussions. ( $\chi^2=10.268, p=.016$ )

### *Personal characteristics: Educational level*

#### Lower educational background

**Membership motives: Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive.** The *lower* the educational background of a respondent, the more positively he or she responds to the following statements:

- 10.b: The discussions in the book discussion group(s) allow me to better appreciate the structure of a book ( $\chi^2=6.339, p=.042$ )
- 10.p: I like noticing that I am enjoying language or a style better thanks to the book discussion group(s) ( $\chi^2=21.595, p<.001$ )

**Membership motives: Status Membership Motive.** The *lower* the educational background of a respondent, the more positively he or she responds to the following statements:

- 10.g: I think it is a nice way to create a distinct profile of myself as a reader. ( $\chi^2=16.048, p<.001$ )
- 10.o: People in my vicinity appreciate that I am socially active because of the book discussion group(s). ( $\chi^2=20.145, p<.001$ )

**Membership motives: Social Membership Motive.** The *lower* the educational background of a respondent, the more positively he or she responds to the following statement:

- 10.t: The most important thing about the book discussions are the conversations about our own experiences. ( $\chi^2=25.361, p<.001$ )

**Membership motives: Societal Membership Motive.** The *lower* the educational background of a respondent, the more positively he or she responds to the following statements:

- 10.c: I like taking part in a club activity. ( $\chi^2=6.137, p=.046$ )
- 10.m: I think it is important to be in a club. ( $\chi^2=14.145, p=.001$ )

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**Membership motives: Practical Membership Motive.** The *lower* the educational background of a respondent, the more positively he or she responds to the following statements:

- 10.d: I think reading on my own is boring. ( $\chi^2=22.926, p<.001$ )
- 10.e: Being a member of (a) book discussion group(s) makes me read on a regular basis ( $\chi^2=9.608, p=.008$ )
- 10.q: I find it difficult to choose a book from the inconveniently arranged supply ( $\chi^2=53.841, p<.001$ )
- 10.u: By being a member of the book discussion group(s), I can more easily join in conversations about books that take place outside the book discussion group(s). ( $\chi^2=61.606, p<.001$ )

**Learning through membership: learning from discussing.** The *lower* the educational background of a respondent, the more positively he or she responds to the following statements:

- 17.e: I learn about a particular subject. ( $\chi^2=30.232, p<.001$ )
- 17.g: I have learned how to be a better debater. ( $\chi^2=29.982, p<.001$ )
- 17.i: I learn how to express myself better. ( $\chi^2=32.857, p<.001$ )

**Learning through membership: learning about literature.** The *lower* the educational background of a respondent, the more positively he or she responds to the following statements:

- 10.a Because of the book discussion group(s), I learn more about literature or another subject that I am interested in. ( $\chi^2=7.209, p=.027$ )
- 17.a: I learn about literature in general (about literary movements and literary history, for example). ( $\chi^2=26.803, p<.001$ )

**Learning through membership: diversification.** The *lower* the educational background of a respondent, the more positively he or she responds to the following statements:

- 10.h: Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate certain books less. ( $\chi^2=29.661, p<.001$ )
- 10.s Since I joined the book discussion group(s), my taste in books has changed. ( $\chi^2=44.625, p<.001$ )
- 10.w Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate writers, genres or categories of books more which I did not like before. ( $\chi^2=16.230, p<.001$ )
- 17.k: I am developing / have developed a taste for certain books. ( $\chi^2=24.754, p<.001$ )

**Learning through membership: personal development and broadening one's horizons.** The *lower* the educational background of a respondent, the more positively he or she responds to the following statement:

- 10.r I am more open to other people's views and opinions thanks to the discussions. ( $\chi^2=35.593, p<.001$ )

### Higher educational level

**Reading motives: Aesthetic Reading Motive.** The *higher* the educational background of a respondent, the more positively he or she responds to the following statements:

- 9.a: I sometimes enjoy the style of a book ( $\chi^2=28.825, p<.001$ )
- 9.k: I appreciate beautiful language ( $\chi^2=9.448, p=.009$ )
- 9.m: I enjoy a well-composed book ( $\chi^2=10.452, p=.005$ )

**Reading motives: Status Reading Motive.** The *higher* the educational background of a respondent, the more positively he or she responds to the following statements:

- 9.b: Reading is customary in my family. ( $\chi^2=7.921, p=.019$ )
- 9.e: I like receiving reading tips. ( $\chi^2=6.415, p=.040$ )
- 9.i: Most of my friends regularly read books. ( $\chi^2=15.060, p=.001$ )

**Membership motives: Hedonistic Membership Motive.** The *higher* the educational background of a respondent, the more positively he or she responds to the following statement:

- 9.c: I like talking about books or literature. ( $\chi^2=18.427, p<.001$ )

**Learning by reading: personal development and broadening one's horizons.** The *higher* the educational background of a respondent, the more positively he or she responds to the following statement:

- 9.g: Reading contributes to my personal development. ( $\chi^2=6.338, p=.042$ )

## APPENDIX 2

### Inverted-U-relationship (middle-low-high)

**Reading motives: Hedonistic Reading Motive.** Respondents who achieved *middle*-level education respond most positively to the following statement – directly followed by respondents who achieved *low*-level education:

- 9.o: I like forgetting about the day-to-day worries by reading a book ( $\chi^2=12.053, p=.002$ )

**Membership motives: Status Membership Motive.** Respondents who achieved *middle*-level education respond most positively to the following statement – directly followed by respondents who achieved *low*-level education:

- 10.j: I get positive reactions from my environment for being an active reader. ( $\chi^2=7.112, p=.029$ )

**Learning through membership: learning from discussing.** Respondents who achieved *middle*-level education respond most positively to the following statement – directly followed by respondents who achieved *low*-level education:

- 17.f: I learn how to form an opinion on certain subjects. ( $\chi^2=21.358, p<.001$ )

**Learning through membership: learning about literature.** Respondents who achieved *middle*-level education respond most positively to the following statement – directly followed by respondents who achieved *low*-level education:

- 17.c: I learn how to analyse books (how to recognise and interpret motives and narrative perspectives, for example). ( $\chi^2=6.612, p=.037$ )

### *Group characteristics: Affiliation*

### Wild groups

**Reading motives: Aesthetic Reading Motive.** Members of *wild* groups respond more positively to the following statements than members of organised groups do:

- 9.a: I sometimes enjoy the style of a book. ( $Z=-2.042, p=.041$ )
- 9.k: I appreciate beautiful language. ( $Z=-3.114, p=.002$ )

**Reading motives: Hedonistic Reading Motive.** Members of *wild* groups respond more positively to the following statement than members of organised groups do:

- 9.h: I love getting absorbed in a book. ( $Z=-2.467, p=.014$ )

**Reading motives: Status Reading Motive.** Members of *wild* groups respond more positively to the following statements than members of organised groups do:

- 9.i: Most of my friends regularly read books. ( $Z=-3.135, p=.002$ )
- 9.j: I like recommending books to other people. ( $Z=-2.011, p=.044$ )

**Membership motive: Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive.** Members of *wild* groups respond more positively to the following statement than members of organised groups do:

- 10.l: I appreciate learning new things from the book discussion group(s). ( $Z=-3.020, p=.003$ )

**Membership motives: Hedonistic Membership Motive.** Members of *wild* groups respond more positively to the following statement than members of organised groups do:

- 9.c: I like talking about books or literature. ( $Z=-3.140, p=.002$ )

**Membership motives: Status Membership Motive.** Members of *wild* groups respond more positively to the following statement than members of organised groups do:

- 10.j: I get positive reactions from my environment for being an active reader. ( $Z=-2.566, p=.010$ )

**Membership motives: Social Membership Motive.** Members of *wild* groups respond more positively to the following statements than members of organised groups do:

- 10.v: The book discussion group meetings are enjoyable. ( $Z=-4.964, p<.001$ )



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- 10.x: My book discussion group / groups at least enable(s) me to talk to my friends regularly. ( $Z=-5.798$ ,  $p<.001$ )

**Learning by reading: personal development and broadening one's horizons.** Members of *wild* groups respond more positively to the following statement than members of organised groups do:

- 9.g: Reading contributes to my personal development. ( $Z=-3.734$ ,  $p<.001$ )

**Learning through membership: personal development and broadening one's horizons.** Members of *wild* groups respond more positively to the following statements than members of organised groups do:

- 10.f: The discussions contribute to my personal development. ( $Z=-3.205$ ,  $p=.001$ )
- 17.l: The meetings contribute to my personal development. ( $Z=-3.873$ ,  $p<.001$ )

### Organised groups

**Membership motives: Societal Membership Motive.** Members of *organised* groups respond more positively to the following statement than members of *wild* groups do:

- 10.m: I think it is important to be in a club. ( $Z=-2.463$ ,  $p=.014$ )

**Membership motives: Practical Membership Motive.** Members of *organised* groups respond more positively to the following statements than members of *wild* groups do:

- 10.d: I think reading on my own is boring. ( $Z=-2.036$ ,  $p=.042$ )
- 10.q: I find it difficult to choose a book from the inconveniently arranged supply. ( $Z=-3.162$ ,  $p=.002$ )

**Learning through membership: diversification.** Members of *organised* groups respond more positively to the following statement than members of *wild* groups do:

- 10.h: Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate certain books less. ( $Z=-2.476$ ,  $p=.013$ )

**Learning through membership: personal development and broadening one's horizons.** Members of *organised* groups respond more positively to the following statement than members of *wild* groups do:

- 10.r: I am more open to other people's views and opinions thanks to the discussions. ( $Z=-2.125$ ,  $p=.034$ )

### *Group characteristics: Composition*

### All-female groups

**Reading motives: Status Reading Motive.** Members of *all-female* groups respond more positively to the following statements than members of mixed-sex groups do:

- 9.b: Reading is customary in my family. ( $Z=-2.526$ ,  $p=.012$ )
- 9.i: Most of my friends regularly read books. ( $Z=-2.948$ ,  $p=.003$ )

**Membership motives: Social Membership Motive.** Members of *all-female* groups respond more positively to the following statements than members of mixed-sex groups do:

- 10.v: The book discussion group meetings are enjoyable. ( $Z=-3.097$ ,  $p=.002$ )
- 10.x: My book discussion group / groups at least enable(s) me to talk to my friends regularly. ( $Z=-2.817$ ,  $p=.005$ )

**Membership motives: Societal Membership Motive.** Members of *all-female* groups respond more positively to the following statements than members of mixed-sex groups do:

- 10.c: I like taking part in a club activity. ( $Z=-2.623$ ,  $p=.009$ )
- 10.m: I think it is important to be in a club. ( $Z=-2.235$ ,  $p=.025$ )

**Membership motives: Practical Membership Motive.** Members of *all-female* groups respond more positively to the following statement than members of mixed-sex groups do:

- 10.u: By being a member of the book discussion group(s), I can more easily join in conversations about books that take place outside the book discussion group(s). ( $Z=-2.225$ ,  $p=.026$ )

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**Learning by reading: learning from reading fiction.** Members of *all-female* groups respond more positively to the following statement than members of mixed-sex groups do:

- 9.n: Reading enables me to learn more about a subject I am interested in. ( $Z=-2.269, p=.023$ )

**Learning by reading: personal development and broadening one's horizons.** Members of *all-female* groups respond more positively to the following statement than members of mixed-sex groups do:

- 9.g: Reading contributes to my personal development. ( $Z=-2.316, p=.021$ )

**Learning through membership: learning from discussing.** Members of *all-female* groups respond more positively to the following statement than members of mixed-sex groups do:

- 17.e: I learn about a particular subject. ( $Z=-3.086, p=.002$ )

**Learning through membership: learning about literature.** Members of *all-female* groups respond more positively to the following statements than members of mixed-sex groups do:

- 10.a Because of the book discussion group(s), I learn more about literature or another subject that I am interested in. ( $Z=-1.971, p=.049$ )
- 17.b: I learn about certain writers. ( $Z=-3.270, p=.001$ )
- 17.c: I learn how to analyse books (how to recognise and interpret motives and narrative perspectives, for example). ( $Z=-2.085, p=.037$ )
- 17.d: I understand a book better because I am able to find the deeper layers within the story. ( $Z=-2.125, p=.034$ )

*Group characteristics: Groups with or without a coach*

### Groups with a coach

**Membership motives: Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive.** Members of groups *with* a coach respond more positively to the following statement than members of groups without a coach:

- 10.p: I like noticing that I am enjoying language or a style better thanks to the book discussion group(s). ( $Z=-3.417, p=.001$ )

**Membership motives: Practical Membership Motive.** Members of groups *with* a coach respond more positively to the following statements than members of groups without a coach:

- 10.d: I think reading on my own is boring. ( $Z=-3.071, p=.002$ )
- 10.k: I do not have a lot of time to look up extra information on a book. ( $Z=-2.485, p=.013$ )
- 10.q: I find it difficult to choose a book from the inconveniently arranged supply. ( $Z=-3.000, p=.003$ )
- 10.u: By being a member of the book discussion group(s), I can more easily join in conversations about books that take place outside the book discussion group(s). ( $Z=-3.698, p<.001$ )

**Learning through membership: learning about literature.** Members of groups *with* a coach respond more positively to the following statements than members of groups without a coach:

- 10.a Because of the book discussion group(s), I learn more about literature or another subject that I am interested in. ( $Z=-3.018, p=.003$ )
- 17.a: I learn about literature in general (about literary movements and literary history, for example). ( $Z=-4.336, p<.001$ )

**Learning through membership: diversification.** Members of groups *with* a coach respond more positively to the following statements than members of groups without a coach:

- 10.h Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate certain books less. ( $Z=-3.248, p=.001$ )
- 10.s Since I joined the book discussion group(s), my taste in books has changed. ( $Z=-5.111, p<.001$ )
- 10.w Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate writers, genres or categories of books more which I did not like before. ( $Z=-2.676, p=.007$ )
- 17.k: I am developing / have developed a taste for certain books. ( $Z=-2.194, p=.028$ )

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### Groups without a coach

**Reading motives: Aesthetic Reading Motive.** Members of groups *without* a coach respond more positively to the following statements than members of groups with a coach:

- 9.a: I sometimes enjoy the style of a book. ( $Z=-2.201, p=.028$ )
- 9.m: I enjoy a well-composed book. ( $Z=-2.326, p=.020$ )

**Reading motives: Hedonistic Reading Motive.** Members of groups *without* a coach respond more positively to the following statements than members of groups with a coach:

- 9.d: I like to immerse myself in a fictional story. ( $Z=-3.527, p<.001$ )
- 9.h: I love getting absorbed in a book. ( $Z=-2.619, p=.009$ )

**Reading motives: Status Reading Motive.** Members of groups *without* a coach respond more positively to the following statements than members of groups with a coach:

- 9.e: I like receiving reading tips. ( $Z=-2.159, p=.031$ )
- 9.i: Most of my friends regularly read books. ( $Z=-5.088, p<.001$ )

**Membership motives: Social Membership Motive.** Members of groups *without* a coach respond more positively to the following statements than members of groups with a coach:

- 10.v: The book discussion group meetings are enjoyable. ( $Z=-5.048, p<.001$ )
- 10.x: My book discussion group / groups at least enable(s) me to talk to my friends regularly. ( $Z=-4.982, p<.001$ )

**Learning by reading: personal development and broadening one's horizons.** Members of groups *without* a coach respond more positively to the following statement than members of groups with a coach:

- 9.g: Reading contributes to my personal development. ( $Z=-2.611, p=.009$ )

**Learning through membership: learning from discussing.** Members of groups *without* a coach respond more positively to the following statement than members of groups with a coach:

- 17.h: I learn about the opinions of other members of the book discussion group. ( $Z=-4.118, p<.001$ )

**Learning through membership: learning about literature.** Members of groups *without* a coach respond more positively to the following statement than members of groups with a coach:

- 17.c: I learn how to analyse books (how to recognise and interpret motives and narrative perspectives, for example). ( $Z=-2.913, p=.004$ )

**Learning through membership: personal development and broadening one's horizons.** Members of groups *without* a coach respond more positively to the following statement than members of groups with a coach:

- 10.n Because of the discussions, I learn more about the other members' personalities. ( $Z=-2.701, p=.007$ )

*Group characteristic: Age of the group*

### The longer the group exists

**Membership motives: Practical Membership Motive.** The *longer* the group exists, the more positively its participants respond to the following statement:

- 10.u: By being a member of the book discussion group(s), I can more easily join in conversations about books that take place outside the book discussion group(s). ( $\chi^2=12.125, p=.016$ )

**Learning through membership: diversification.** The *longer* the group exists, the more positively its participants respond to the following statements:

- 10.s Since I joined the book discussion group(s), my taste in books has changed. ( $\chi^2=15.386, p=.004$ )
- 10.w Because of the book discussion group(s), I now appreciate writers, genres or categories of books more which I did not like before. ( $\chi^2=13.773, p=.008$ )

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### Inverted-U relationship

**Reading motives: Aesthetic Reading Motive.** Members of groups that *exist 5-9 years* respond most positively to the following statement (followed by members of groups that exist 0-4; 10-19; 20-29;  $\geq 30$  years, inverted-U relationship):

- 9.a: I sometimes enjoy the style of a book. ( $\chi^2=9.971, p=.041$ )

**Reading motives: Status Reading Motive.** Members of groups that *exist 10-19 years* respond most positively to the following statement (followed by members of groups that exist 5-9; 20-29; 0-4;  $\geq 30$  years, inverted U-relationship):

- 9.e: I like receiving reading tips. ( $\chi^2=11.714, p=.020$ )

**Membership motives: Hedonistic Membership Motive.** Members of groups that *exist 5-9 years* respond most positively to the following statement (followed by members of groups that exist 10-19; 20-29; 0-4;  $\geq 30$  years, inverted U-relationship):

- 9.c: I like talking about books or literature. ( $\chi^2=10.021, p=.040$ )

**Learning through membership: learning from discussing.** Members of groups that *exist 5-9 years* respond most positively to the following statement (followed by members of groups that exist 0-4; 10-19; 20-29;  $\geq 30$  years):

- 17.h: I learn about the opinions of other members of the book discussion group. ( $\chi^2=10.375, p=.035$ )

**Learning through membership: learning about literature.** Members of groups that *exist 10-19 years* respond most positively to the following statement (followed by members of groups that exist 20-29; 5-9;  $\geq 30$ ; 0-4 years):

- 10.a Because of the book discussion group(s), I learn more about literature or another subject that I am interested in. ( $\chi^2=19.070, p=.001$ )

Members of groups that *exist 20-29 years* respond most positively to the following statement (followed by members of groups that exist 10-19;  $\geq 30$ ; 5-9; 0-4 years):

- 17.b: I learn about certain writers. ( $\chi^2=12.618, p=.013$ )

Members of groups that *exist 20-29 years* respond most positively to the following statements (followed by members of groups that exist  $\geq 30$ ; 10-19; 5-9; 0-4 years):

- 17.a: I learn about literature in general (about literary movements and literary history, for example). ( $\chi^2=15.214, p=.004$ )

- 17.c: I learn how to analyse books (how to recognise and interpret motives and narrative perspectives, for example). ( $\chi^2=13.002, p=.011$ )

### Indistinct: Groups that exist 5-9 years

**Reading motives: Status Reading Motive.** Members of groups that *exist 5-9 years* respond most positively to the following statement (followed by members of groups that exist 20-29; 10-19; 0-4;  $\geq 30$  years):

- 9.i: Most of my friends regularly read books. ( $\chi^2=9.629, p=.047$ )

**Membership motives: Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive.** Members of groups that *exist 5-9 years* respond most positively to the following statement (followed by members of groups that exist 10-19;  $\geq 30$ ; 20-29; 0-4 years):

- 10.b: The discussions in the book discussion group(s) allow me to better appreciate the structure of a book. ( $\chi^2=11.132, p=.025$ )

**Learning through membership: learning about literature.** Members of groups that *exist 5-9 years* respond most positively to the following statement (followed by members of groups that exist 20-29;  $\geq 30$ ; 10-19; 0-4 years):

- 17.d: I understand a book better because I am able to find the deeper layers within the story. ( $\chi^2=11.913, p=.018$ )

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### Indistinct: Groups that exist 20-29 years

**Learning through membership: learning about literature.** Members of groups that *exist 20-29 years* respond most positively to the following statement (followed by members of groups that exist 5-9; 10-19;  $\geq 30$ ; 0-4 years):

- 10.i: Because of the discussions, I find more depth (layers) in a book. ( $\chi^2=18.892, p=.001$ )

### Indistinct: Groups that exist 30 years or more

**Reading motives: Hedonistic Reading Motive.** Members of groups that *exist  $\geq 30$  years* respond most positively to the following statement (followed by members of groups that exist 5-9; 0-4; 10-19; 20-29 years):

- 9.d: I like to immerse myself in a fictional story. ( $\chi^2=9.945, p=.041$ )

**Membership motives: Status Membership Motive.** Members of groups that *exist  $\geq 30$  years* respond most positively to the following statement (followed by members of groups that exist 0-4; 20-29; 10-19; 5-9 years):

- 10.o: People in my vicinity appreciate that I am socially active because of the book discussion group(s). ( $\chi^2=11.688, p=.020$ )



## Appendix 3 Interviews

### 3.1 INSTRUCTION<sup>475</sup>

*Goal of the research:* With help of these interviews, I want to find out whether people experience their book discussion group as instructive, and if so, what and how people learn from their membership. Furthermore, I want to gain insight in motives people have to participate in a book discussion group.

*Type of questions:* The questions are divided into six categories: reading habits, membership of your book discussion group, motives for reading, motives for participating in a book discussion group, learning by reading fiction, learning through participating in a book discussion group.

*Responsible authority:* The research is being conducted within the framework of a PhD-project at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences of the Open University.

*Duration:* Maximum of 90 minutes.

*Publication of the results:* In 18 months, an English-language PhD-thesis will appear. Next to the thesis, an article or contribution to a conference may be possible.

*Sample survey:* The aim is to interview members of different types of book discussion groups situated in different parts of the Netherlands. Part of these interviewees have volunteered as a result of the surveys that were held in the winter of 2009/2010.

*Use of the sound-recording:* The audio-tape will only be used by myself in order to write down your answers. During the interview, I also will make notes in order to watch over the progress of the interview.

*Anonymous processing of the results:* The results will be processed anonymously. I will need to give account to some of your personal characteristics such as age, sex, and the region you live. In the report I would like to refer to you using a first name. This does not have to be your real name. You may come up with a pseudonym. At the end of the interview, I will elaborate on this subject and we will make appointments considering your anonymity.

*Afterwards:* After the interview I will make a written report of our conversation. I want to send you the reproduction of this interview within a short time-span, per mail or per email. You may judge whether I have reproduced your answers in a correct and complete way. If anything is not correct or incomplete, I will adapt it at your request. I will come back to this issue at the end of the interview, so we can make appointments considering this subject.

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<sup>475</sup> The instruction was orally presented to the interviewees. For the formulation of this list of instruction, Emans 1990 p. 48-49 was used.

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### 3.2 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### Theme 1: Reading habits

Questions are ordered in six categories. First, I want to ask you some questions on your reading habits.

1. Have you always been a reader, or did you start reading at a later stage of your life?
2. Who has influenced your reading behaviour? For instance: parents (did your parents read to you), friends, school (teacher)? At what stage of your life?
3. Do you ask others for reading advice? Who? Do other people ask you for reading advice? Who does?
4. Have you as an adult always read the same type of books, or can you see some kind of development?
5. How much time per week do you spend on reading books (so newspapers and books for work or study are excluded)? This is a hard question: maybe you have a routine for reading: for instance you read every night in bed, or you mainly read on holidays?

#### Theme 2: Membership of the book discussion group(s)

The next questions are on your book discussion group and your membership.

6. When did you become a member of your book discussion group or groups?
7. What was the most important reason at the time to become a member?
8. What is nowadays the most important reason to stay a member?
9. Could you think of a reason to step out of your book discussion group?
10. What is the relationship between the members? Are you colleagues, friends, or strangers?
11. Do many people know you are a member of a book discussion group? Who? Do you talk to others about your book discussion group?

We continue with again some questions considering your reading behaviour, this time in relation to your book discussion group membership.

12. Next to the books you read for your book discussion group, do you still read books individually? Yes or no.
13. Since you are a member, do you read in total more books, less books, or did the amount not change?
14. Did the membership change your reading behaviour? Do you read or did you read other type or genre of books then the books you read in your book discussion group?
  - The books I read individually differ a lot from the books I read for my book discussion group (yes or no).
  - The books I read for the book discussion group are more difficult, less difficult or equally difficult than the books I read individually.
  - Since I became a member, I read different books individually than I did before (yes or no).
15. Since I am a member of my book discussion group, the books I read for myself are harder / equally difficult / more easy than the books I read before I became a member.
16. The books you read for your book discussion group, are these books you normally would not have read?
17. If so: why do you read them now?
18. Do you think it is positive you read different books?
19. Of not: do you think it is positive you read the same books?

#### Theme 3: Motives for reading

I want to ask you a number of questions concerning your motives for reading.

20. Could you indicate what is the most important or most common reason to read a book in your spare time, besides books of your book discussion group?

I have written down a number of motives for reading on separate cards. They include the following motives:



- Enjoyment:<sup>476</sup> The enjoyment motive implies you read because you enjoy reading.
  - Example: You can immerse in a story and forget about the objective world.
  - Example: You can read for hours without noticing time passing by.
  - Recognition:<sup>477</sup> The recognition motive implies you think it is pleasant to be recognised by others as a reader.
  - Example: You value the fact that friends ask you for reading advice.
  - Example: You value the fact others see you as someone who reads.
  - Cognitive: The cognitive motive implies you read because you find this instructive.
  - Note: this implies reading fiction as much as nonfiction.
  - Example: You read a book that takes part in India, and you enjoy the fact you learn some things on the Indian culture.
  - Example: you read a book on different religious convictions. You like reading how others deal with questions considering religion, because you struggle with this yourself.
  - Aesthetic: The aesthetic motive implies you read because you particularly like to experience the style or the composition of a book.
  - Example: You like to read books by a specific author or a specific literary school, because you enjoy the style of these works.
  - Example: you enjoy discovering a novel is constructed in a very good way.
  - Example: You enjoy beautiful use of language.
  - Note: think of style, use of language, construction of a novel, use of literary motives.
21. Could you place the cards in order of importance and explain your choice per card?

*Theme 4: Motives for participation in (a) book discussion group(s)*

Next to motives for reading, you will also have motives for participating in your book discussion group.

22. Again, I have written down a number of motives on separate cards, this time for book discussion group membership. They include the following motives:

- Enjoyment: The enjoyment motive implies you enjoy your participation in the book discussion group. You enjoy all activities that belong to the membership of this group.
- Note: This motive is specifically about the *book* discussions or *literary* discussions (and differs from the social motive that focuses on the *social* belonging to a group).
- Example: Participating in a book discussion group is a nice leisure activity.
- Example: You like sharing *reading* experiences with others.
- You enjoy preparing the book discussion.
- During the meeting, you immerse in the lively book discussion.
- Recognition: The recognition motive implies, you like the fact that others appreciate you as an active reader and/or as a socially active person, because of your membership.
- Example: Your family knows you are a member of a book discussion group. You think it is important that they assume they can come to you for reading advice.
- Example: Your environment knows you are a member of a book discussion group. You think it is important they know you are socially active because of your membership (among other things).

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<sup>476</sup> The Hedonistic Reading Motive was called enjoyment motive during the interviews deliberately, in order to avoid negative connotations as much as possible. This also applies to the membership motive with the same name.

<sup>477</sup> The Status Reading Motive was called *recognition motive* during the interviews in order to avoid negative connotations as much as possible. This also applies to the membership motive with the same name.

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- Cognitive: The cognitive motive implies you like to learn from your book discussion group participation.
- Example: After the discussion, you like describing that you have learned other possible interpretations of the book.
- Example: During the discussion, you think it is important that you all together learn about the book everyone has prepared.
- Aesthetic: The aesthetic motive implies that you participate in the book discussion group because the preparations and meetings enable you better to enjoy the style or Construction of a book.
- Example: Thanks to your membership, you like that you read books in a more conscious way and that you pay more attention to the style of a book.
- Example: Thanks to the discussions you value the construction of a book better. You like the fact you can enjoy this better when you read now.
- Social: The social motive implies that you like seeing your fellow members regularly for conversation on the book but also on other things you talk about together.
- Note: This motive is specifically about group aspects: the *social aspect*, the sociability or companionableness, the personal conversations, eating together, ... (and it therefore differs from the enjoyment motive that focuses on the *literary aspect* of the discussion).
- Example: You enjoy being active in a group.
- Example: You like the fact you also have personal conversations.
- Example: You think it is enjoyable to see and talk to others.
- Example: You think it is nice that you will keep seeing your fellow members regularly thanks to the book discussion group and this way you stay in contact with each other.
- Practical: The practical motive implies that you like the fact that you make time to read thanks to the planned meeting of the book discussion group, or you like the fact that you do not have to make your own choice what to read out of the large number of available books.
- Example: Thanks to the book discussion group membership you make sure to take time to read regularly, otherwise you would not take as much time for reading.
- Example: You like to read books but have too little time to make a good choice out of the large amount of books. Your book discussion group membership helps you to choose.
- Example: You think it is hard to make a good choice out of the large amount of books. Thanks to the book discussion group, choosing gets more easy.

23. Could you place the cards in order of importance and explain your choice per card?

### *Theme 5: Learning by reading fiction or literature*

Researchers from different fields of study, such as literature theory and psychology, have claimed that reading fiction or literature enables people to learn about several areas. First I want to ask you whether you think that reading fiction or literature in general, *so not specifically in a book discussion group setting*, enables you to learn.

24. Do you think reading fiction or literature enables you to learn?

25. If so: what is it you learn?

The researchers I told you about, think people learn about several different area's by reading fiction or literature. I have written down a number of these area's on a sheet of paper. Could you tell me your opinion on learning about these area's?<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>478</sup> In practice, most interviewees did not need the examples that were offered to them as a support to this question.

## INTERVIEWS

- General knowledge: Learning as increasing general knowledge implies that by reading fiction or literature, you build up very broad knowledge about several different areas. You learn about different subjects, also outside the scope of your own field of study or profession.
  - Example: General knowledge on Dutch politics.
  - Example: General knowledge on the situation in the Middle-East.
  - Specific knowledge: Learning as a way to gain specific knowledge implies that by reading fiction or literature, you learn about a specific topic or theme: you deepen your knowledge on this specific subject.
  - Note: Deepening instead of broadening knowledge.
  - Example: You know a lot of Dutch history, but by reading fiction set in eighteenth century Holland you deepen your knowledge on this subject.
  - Example: History / religion / America / ...
  - Broadening of horizons: Broadening of your horizons implies that you learn about public ways of thinking or viewpoints, that may differ from your own. You learn about people's behaviour in certain situations.
  - Example: Other cultures (Islam) or other social worlds than your own. The story in the books play in different environments than your own environment. This enables you to learn many new, unknown things.
  - Example: Plots on other values and standards.
  - Example: Plots concerning taboos (suicide, homosexuality, relationships, ...)
  - Literature: Learning about literature implies that by reading fiction or literature you learn about literature itself: about the books you read, the authors and literary movements, you learn interpreting books and discovering multiple layers in a book, you learn to analyse stories.
  - Example: When rereading a book, the surprising ending of it turns out to be fully prepared.
  - Example: Because you have read a number of books belonging to magic realism, you recognise style elements from this period.
  - Example: when you read a book, you are aware of the possible multiple layers in the book next to the literally interpretation of the story.
  - Knowledge of the self: Developing knowledge of the self implies by reading you better get to know your own opinions, possibilities and limitations.
  - Example: You develop your own opinions on certain social issues such as politics, religion, values and norms, because you **read** about these topics.
  - Example: You become aware of what you think is important, because you **read** about certain topics.
  - Example: You become aware of things you are good at, but also of things you are not good at, because you **read** about certain topics.
  - Staying active: Staying active means that by reading literature, you keep using earlier acquired knowledge and skills, and with this you stay alert.
  - Example: By now you know a lot about literature, by reading books you keep your knowledge on the same level.
  - Example: By now you know some things about analysing novels. By reading and analysing novels on a regular basis you maintain these abilities.
  - Note: compare this to learning a foreign language. When you do not keep using this language (speaking or reading for instance), you lose your abilities to use and understand it.
26. In general: do you agree that reading fiction or literature enables a person to learn about these areas? On a personal level: does this apply to you?
27. Is it important to you that reading enables you to learn?
28. Are you aware of potential learning when you are reading?

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29. Do you mainly learn from books that treat of your own situation or environment, or on the contrary: do you mainly learn from books that treat of subjects that stand further away from your environment or situation (for instance, books that take place in a different culture)?

### *Theme 6: Learning through participation in (a) book discussion group(s)*

30. Using extra materials:

- Does your book discussion group use extra information on the book / special book discussion group editions of novels / lists of questions?
- Does your coach or the organisation your group is affiliated with provide a number of questions for each session?
- How does your group handle these questions or other materials?
- Does your group discussion accurately follow a list of questions?
- Why does your group use these materials?

We talked before about learning by reading fiction. You not only read individually, you are also a member of a book discussion group. The last theme of this interview is potential learning through participating in a book discussion group.

Researchers from different fields of study, such as literature theory, sociology and psychology, have claimed that people learn about several area's from reading fiction or literature.

31. Do you think participating in a book discussion group enables you to learn?

32. If so: what is it you learn?

The researchers I told you about, think people learn about several different area's by participating in a book discussion group. I have written down a number of these area's on a sheet of paper. Could you tell me your opinion on learning about these area's?

33. In general: do you think someone can learn about the following aspects by participating in a book discussion group? And on a personal level: does this apply to you?<sup>479</sup>

- Social: Learning at a social level implies you get to know your fellow members and their opinions well, thanks to the meetings.
- Example: Thanks to the book discussion group you discuss certain topics (such as politics) that come up during meetings. This makes that you get to know your fellow members well.
- Knowledge of the self: Learning about knowledge of the self implies you better get to know your opinions, possibilities and limitations, thanks to the meetings of your book discussion group.
- Example: By the **discussion** that arises as a result of the books, you get to know your own opinion about specific social issues, such as politics, religion, values and norms.
- Example: You listen to the opinions of each other. You compare other opinions to your own. You can position your opinion and, if applicable, adjust it.
- Example: Thanks to the **discussions** that arise as a result of the books, you discover what you think is important.
- Example: Thanks to the **discussions** that arise as a result of the books, you discover what it is you are good at, and what you are less good at.
- Language: Learning about language implies that, thanks to the meetings, you get better in putting into words your own perceptions.
- Example: You know your own opinion, but now you will have to make your opinion clear to others.

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<sup>479</sup> In practice, most interviewees did not need the examples that were offered to them as a support to this question.

- Literature: Learning about literature implies that, thanks to the meetings of your book discussion group you learn different about literature than you would have when reading individually without your book discussion group: you get to know different interpretations than your own, you get to know other books than you would have read individually.
  - Example: You would never have read a book by Harry Mulisch. Thanks to the book discussion group you did get acquainted with this author.
  - Example: you are convinced that the book you have read, has a specific interpretation. During the discussion however, you get to know multiple other possible interpretations.
  - Example: During the discussion it is pointed out there are a number of recurrent motives in the book, that you did not notice before.
  - Example: Similarities / differences:
  - The plots in the books you read in your book discussion group connect with the living environment of the members. This makes that there is a lot of recognition and understanding. In this way, a lot can be learned (deepening).
  - The plots in the books you read in your book discussion group differs from the living environment of the members. This makes that there is a lot of new, unfamiliar things to be learned (broadening).
  - Staying active: Staying active means that by talking about literature, you keep using earlier acquired knowledge and skills, and with this you stay alert.
  - Example: By now you know a lot about literature, by **talking actively** about books you keep your knowledge on the same level.
  - Example: By now you know some things about analysing novels. By reading intensively and analysing novels **for your book discussion group** you maintain these abilities.
  - Note: compare this to learning a foreign language. When you do not keep using this language (speaking or reading for instance), you loose your abilities to use and understand it.
34. Is it important to you that participating in a book discussion group enables you to learn?
35. Are you aware of potential learning during the book discussion group meetings?
36. What makes a book discussion group instructive according to you?
37. I will make three statements on learning in the book discussion group. In general: can you indicate to what extent you agree with these statements? And on a personal level: to what extent do these statements apply to you?
- Cooperation between the members: Learning through cooperation means, the members find new interpretations or discoveries during the joint discussion. Together you build up to these new insights. Together, you develop new knowledge. You learn at a different level then when you would read the book individually, without your book discussion group.<sup>480</sup>
  - Example: see the book discussion group as an orchestra.<sup>481</sup> Every member plays his own part, but only when playing together this leads to a composition. Everyone reacts to each other and his or her playing improves. The composition sounds better than the individual parts alone.
  - Similarities between members: Learning through similarities implies your book discussion group is instructive because the members share a similar background (for instance age, education, religion), by which you all understand each other well. This enables you to discuss constructively.

<sup>480</sup> In practice, most interviewees reacted very positive to this statement. However, when it was then emphasised that the group together creates knowledge that is new for *every* member, positive answers were given more hesitant, with limitations or were taken back.

<sup>481</sup> Long (2003) and Marshall, Smagorinsky and Smith (1995) used the metaphor of making music together for the interaction in the book discussion group.

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- Example: because you all share a certain frame of reference (for instance because you all work in health care / you all grew up in the same area / you all attended the same study / you all have the same age), you easily understand each other when discussing a subject that relates to this frame of reference. This enables you to discuss more profoundly.
- Differences between members: Learning because of differences implies that the members have different backgrounds (for example age, education, religion). This enables you to learn different points of view.
- Example: The members of your book discussion group do not share the same religion. During the discussions you get to know each others religion and beliefs. This is instructive.
- Example: Because you all have a very different age, you all have different baggage and living environment. The fact that you have different viewpoints makes your discussion instructive.

### *Closing*

At the end of the interview, personal characteristics (sex, age, occupation or former occupation) as well as information on the book discussion group (age, composition, affiliation, coach, types of books read) and membership (duration) is gathered or checked. Also, Appointments considering anonymity are made, as well as appointments considering the member's check of the report of the interview.

### 3.3 OVERVIEW OF THE INTERVIEWEES

Interviewees are presented as follows:

X. Pseudonym (sex, age), residence, occupation:

- Member of book discussion group X
- Specific role in book discussion group X
- Years of membership (when applicable: since the start)
- Date and duration of the interview

1. Joan (female, 53), Gelderland, Assistant professor in Cultural Sciences:

- Member of Group A
- Founder of Group A
- 15 years of membership (since the start)
- September 16 2010, 1:23 hours

2. Peter (male, 31), Limburg, Editor / corrector:

- Member of Group B
- No specific role
- 2.5 years of membership (since the start)
- September 17 2010, 1:15 hours

3. Pauline (female, 31), Gelderland, High school teacher Dutch language and literature:

- Member of Group B and C
- No specific role in Group B; founder of Group C
- Group B: 2.5 years of membership (since the start); Group C: 6.5 years of membership (since the start)
- October 5 2010, 1:44 hours

4. Karin (female, 33), Gelderland, Housewife (two young children), formerly high school teacher English language and literature:

- Member of Group C
- No specific role
- 5.5 years of membership
- May 6 2011, 1:57 hours

5. Adrian (male, 74), Limburg, Retired, master degrees in mathematics and physics: formerly worked as automation engineer:

- Member of Group D
- No specific role
- 4.5 years of membership
- October 13 2010, 1:32 hours

6. Dorothy (female, 62), Limburg, Retired, formerly teacher Dutch language and culture for foreigners:

- Member of Group D
- Informal leader
- 12 years of membership
- October 18 2010, 1:36 hours

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7. Afra (female, 61), Limburg, Retired, formerly executive secretary:

- Member of Group D
- Administration
- 16 years of membership (since the start)
- November 10 2010, 2:03 hours

8. Addie (female, 65), Limburg, Retired, formerly high school teacher textile crafts:

- Member of Group E (Next to her membership of this book discussion group, Addie visits a literary course at HOVO.)
- No specific role
- 13 years of membership (since the start, but with short interruption)
- October 20 2010, 1:50 hours

9. Yvonne (female, 58), Limburg, Housewife (two grown-up children live independent by now), formerly radiographer:

- Former member of Group F
- No specific role
- 3 years of membership
- October 21 2010, 1:05 hours

10. Marlene (female, 61), Limburg, Active in several boards (a.o. politics). Formerly worked in tourist industry and as member of the municipal executive:

- Member of Group G
- Discussion leader
- 21 years of membership
- November 1 2010, 1:44 hours

11. Therese (female, 61), Gelderland, Retired, formerly teacher at vocational education, specialty personal interaction studies<sup>482</sup> at teacher education:

- Former member of Group H; member of *philosophical* group I
- No specific role in Group H and I
- Group H: 10 years of membership (since the start); Group I: 4 years of membership (since the start)
- November 11 2010, 1:32 hours

12. Rita (female, 57), Limburg, Housewife (two grown-up children live independent by now), formerly nurse, active as volunteer in nursing and geriatric care, in boards, and as teacher sewing:

- Member of Group J
- No specific role
- 8 years of membership
- November 25 2010, 1:27 hours

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<sup>482</sup> Name of this subject is 'omgangskunde' in Dutch.



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13. Bart (male, 80), Utrecht, Retired, formerly high school teacher Dutch language:

- Member of Group K and L (Next to his membership of two book discussion groups, Bart has been giving lectures on literary works for 13 years.)
- Founder of and reader in Group K; No specific role in Group L
- Group K: 20 years of membership (since the start); Group L: 22 years of membership (since the start)
- November 29 2010, 2:42 hours

14. Francis (male, 66), Utrecht, Retired, formerly healthcare psychologist<sup>483</sup> :

- Member of Group M
- Takes care of the annual poetry night
- 10 years of membership
- December 7 2010, 2:13 hours

15. Matthias (male, 52), North Brabant, Writer (informative texts on nature and agriculture) and journalist:

- Member of Group N
- No specific role
- 3 years of membership (since the start)
- October 25 2011, 1:41 hours

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<sup>483</sup> In Dutch: 'GZ-psycholoog'. <http://www.psynip.nl/engels/nip-big-registrations> (website consulted on May 24th 2011, after recommendation by interviewee Francis).

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### 3.4 OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS OF THE INTERVIEWEES

The book discussion groups that are represented by interviewees are presented as follows:

Group X (founding year):

- Composition (number of members: when applicable number of females and number of males)
- Affiliation
- Coach or no coach
- Type of books that are read

Group A (1995):

- All-female (6 members)
- Affiliated to library<sup>484</sup>
- No coach
- Prose (mainly modern)

Group B (2008):

- Mixed (8 members: 6 females, 2 males)
- Wild
- No coach
- Prose

Group C (2005):

- All-female (6 members)
- Wild
- No coach
- Prose (mainly modern)

Group D (1994):

- Mixed (11 members: 10 females, 1 male)
- Wild<sup>485</sup>
- No coach<sup>486</sup>
- Prose and poetry

Group E (1997):

- All-female (10 members)
- Wild
- No coach<sup>487</sup>
- Prose (mainly modern), mainly Dutch/Flemish

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<sup>484</sup> This group works with book lists from their library and receives books from their library. The meetings are at home.

<sup>485</sup> Formerly affiliated to a library.

<sup>486</sup> One of the members has this role.

<sup>487</sup> A professional coach helped the group to start up, during their first meeting.

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### Group F (2005):

- All-female (10 members)
- Affiliated to library
- Coach
- Prose (modern), mainly Dutch/Flemish

### Group G (1987):

- All-female (13 members)
- Wild<sup>488</sup>
- No coach
- Prose (mainly modern), mainly Dutch/Flemish

### Group H (1998):

- All-female (8 members)
- Wild<sup>489</sup>
- No coach
- Prose (mainly modern)

### Group I (2006):

- Mixed (9 members: 5 females, 4 males)
- Wild
- No coach
- Philosophical works

### Group J (2001):

- All-female (18 members)
- Affiliated to library
- Coach
- Prose

### Group K (1990):

- All-male (2 members)
- Wild
- No coach
- Prose and poetry, mainly classics, mainly in original language

### Group L (1988):

- Mixed (8 members: 6 females, 2 males)
- Wild
- No coach
- Prose (mainly modern), some poetry

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<sup>488</sup> Two of the members work at a library as volunteer. They bring along information on books and writers to the meetings.

<sup>489</sup> This group worked with book lists from their library during their first year.

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### Group M (1976):

- Mixed (12 members: 6 females, 6 males)
- Wild
- No coach
- Prose (mainly modern, mainly debut), only Dutch/Flemish

### Group N (2008):

- Mixed (9 members: 8 females, 1 male)
- Affiliated to library<sup>490</sup>
- No coach
- Prose (mainly modern), incidentally nonfiction

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<sup>490</sup> This group works with book lists from their library and receives books from their library. The meetings are at home.

## Summary

In the **introduction** of this thesis, four research questions were phrased:

- I. What are characteristics of present-day book discussion groups in the Netherlands?
- II. What motives do participants have for taking part in their book discussion group?
- III. In participants' experience, what do they learn from taking part in their book discussion group?
- IV. What connections exist between characteristics of participants and their book discussion groups, participants' motives, and their experienced learning outcomes?

**Chapter 1** introduced the topic of this study – the book discussion group – with help of various national and international studies. In order to restrict the subject of study and answer research question I, a definition of the book discussion group was formulated:

a book discussion group is a *fixed group of non-professional readers who meet physically to discuss books (fiction or nonfiction) that they all have read on their own or read together.*

In order to answer research question II, four reading motives and six book discussion group membership motives were formulated. The four reading motives are:

1. *Cognitive Reading Motive*: If people intend to *learn* by reading, they have a *Cognitive Reading Motive*.
2. *Aesthetic Reading Motive*: This motive concerns the need to *experience* the style or theme of a book.
3. *Hedonistic Reading Motive*: This motive means people read because they want to *relax, immerse themselves* in a book, *enjoy* themselves.
4. *Status Reading Motive*: The status motive concerns peoples need to *distinguish* themselves as readers.

The six book discussion group membership motives are:

1. *Cognitive Membership Motive*: If people intend to *learn* by reading and discussing books with a group, they have a *Cognitive Membership Motive*.
2. *Aesthetic Membership Motive*: This motive concerns the need to *experience* the style or theme of a book. This motive implies people attend book discussion groups in order to get more out of their reading experience.
3. *Hedonistic Membership Motive*: This motive means people participate in a book discussion group because they want to *relax, immerse themselves* in a discussion about books, *enjoy* themselves.
4. *Status Membership Motive*: This motive concerns peoples need to *distinguish* themselves as readers. People may want to distinguish themselves by being a member of a

book discussion group because it shows they are active readers, or that they are socially active.

5. *Social Membership Motive*: This motive indicates people enjoy the *social aspect of the gathering*, meeting the group, talking together also on other subjects than books, all things that come to meeting with and belonging to this group of fellow readers.
6. *Practical Membership Motive*: This motive includes the practical advantages of reading in a group.

Studies on learning by reading and learning through membership were explored in preparation of finding an answer to research question III. Main learning themes for reading and discussing books are learning about literature (for fiction groups), the broadening of one's horizons, and the gaining of self-insight.

Combining the findings concerning the first, second and third research question, will lead to an answer to research question IV.

In **Chapter 2**, the search for suitable methods to answer the four research questions was described. The advantages and disadvantages of methods used in other studies on readers and on book discussion groups were investigated, as well as the potential of these methods for the current study. Two methods were selected: surveys and interviews. With help of the group survey, characteristics of book discussion groups would be gathered, such as, the age of the group, the affiliation of the group, and the reading habits of the group (*research question I*). With help of a second survey, the individual survey, characteristics of members would be gathered, such as sex, age, and educational level (*research question I*). Besides this, this survey would be used to question the individual motives members have for reading and for membership (*research question II*). Also, it would be used to gather information on learning experiences of reading and book discussion group membership (*research question III*). Individual interviews would be used to find more in-depth information about motives (*research question II*) and learning (*research question III*), that could be used to supplement, illustrate, or explain the information gathered by the individual survey.

Furthermore, seven characteristics were selected that would form the basis of the search for links between characteristics, motives, and learning outcomes (*research question IV*). Based on theories discussed in Chapter 1, it was expected that these seven characteristics could be related to member's motives and/or learning experiences. The seven characteristics are formed by three personal characteristics and four group characteristics:

1. Sex (male; female);
2. Age (20-34; 35-49; 50-64; ≥65 years);
3. Educational level (low; middle; high);

4. Affiliation of the group (wild groups; organised groups);
5. Composition of the group (all-female groups; mixed-sex groups);
6. Coach (with a coach; without a coach);
7. Age of the group (0-4; 5-9; 10-19; 20-29;  $\geq 30$  years).

The interviews could gather more in-depth information on reading habits of participants related to their book discussion group membership, their motives for reading and for participating in a book discussion group, and their views and experiences on learning from literature and from book discussion group participation. Interview questions were formulated.

In **Chapter 3**, a number of characteristics of book discussion groups and their members were investigated by means of a group survey and an individual survey in order to find an answer to **research question I: *What are characteristics of present-day book discussion groups in the Netherlands?*** As was expected, the majority of the book discussion group participants is female (94%), the average age is somewhat higher than expected (65), and the majority (65%) has a high educational background – as was expected. A majority of the groups (58%) is affiliated with an organisation. Most groups are all-female (79%). A minority of the groups has a coach (30%). On average, groups exist almost 13 years. A number of correlations exist between various characteristics:

- Between the age and educational level of the participant (the median age of respondents with a high educational background is the lowest, and the median age of respondents with a low educational background is the highest);
- Between the sex of the participant and the affiliation of the group (wild groups have significantly more males among their members than organised groups do);
- Between the age of the participant and the affiliation of the group (the average age of participants of wild groups is significantly lower than the average age of participants of organised groups);
- Between the educational level of the participant and the affiliation of the group (members of wild groups have a significantly higher educational background than members of organised groups do);
- Between the presence or absence of a coach and affiliation of the group (organised groups have a coach significantly more often than wild groups do).

Furthermore, the reading habits of book discussion groups were investigated. Other than expected, book discussion groups tend to read very diverse types of books. This is despite the fact in most groups, the members have to find agreement on which books to read. The focus is however on modern Dutch fiction, and prize-winning novels are popular among groups. Next to these books, that are popular among regular readers in



the Netherlands as well, book discussion groups have a broad interest and the diverse-ness of titles that are being read is eye-catching.

**Chapter 4** gives an answer to **research question II: *What motives do participants have for taking part in their book discussion group?*** Not only motives for book discussion group participation were presented, also the motives respondents have for reading individually. The results were gathered with help of the individual survey, that contained a number of statements regarding reading motives and membership motives. Respondents were asked to react to these statements by means of a five-point Likert-scale. The data gathered with the help of the interviews was used to illustrate and explain the outcomes. It was necessary to reconsider the theory-based membership motives. The Cognitive and Aesthetic Membership Motives were combined to one Cognitive-aesthetic Membership Motive. The Social Membership Motive was split into one Social Membership Motive and one Societal Membership Motive.

The Aesthetic, Cognitive and Hedonistic Reading Motives all turned out to be very important to respondents. The Status Reading motive was less important. Of membership motives, the Cognitive-aesthetic and Hedonistic Membership Motives were most important, the Practical Membership Motive was least important.

Next, the respondents were classified by differing characteristics: by three personal characteristics (sex, age, educational level) and four group characteristics (affiliation, composition, coach, number of years the group exists). Connections between characteristics and motives were investigated. In this way it was possible to anticipate research question IV (Chapter 6). The most important characteristics turned out to be age and educational level of the participants, and the affiliation of the group and the presence or absence of a coach. Younger respondents, who achieved a high educational level, have stronger *reading* motives. They participate in wild groups without a coach. Older respondents, who achieved a lower educational level, have stronger *membership* motives. They participate in organised groups with a coach.

**Chapter 5** gives an answer to **research question III: *In participants' experience, what do they learn from taking part in their book discussion group?*** Based on learning experiences reported by interviewees and individual survey respondents, a number of learning topics were described. Learning from reading *fiction* (for instance about a specific topic that is described in the book) is acknowledged and valued by most participants of the study.

Learning about the subject of literature itself seems to be difficult for readers to achieve by reading individually: here, the book discussion group clearly has an added

value, specifically when there are literature experts among the members or when the group has a coach.

Personal development and broadening one's horizons is mainly achieved by reading itself. The added value of the book discussion group is not only reached by reading a broader spectrum of books, but also by the exchange of views and opinions on the book and its theme with fellow members. Although many groups are composed of members with similar characteristics, most members do experience differences between the participants. These differences make the discussions instructive. Theories have shown that reading fiction is experienced as having great influence on the forming of self-identity. The role a book discussion group plays in the gaining of self-insight differs per group. A number of groups specifically tries to avoid very personal conversations because it is important that every member feels comfortable in the group. Other groups do talk about personal issues before or after the book discussion, when catching up. To some groups, however, the book itself is reason to talk about personal issues. It takes time for a group to create an environment where it is possible to have fruitful personal discussions.

Learning to discuss and the diversification of taste through membership both are learning subjects that play a minor role.

In addition, the respondents were classified by differing characteristics: by three personal characteristics (sex, age, educational level) and four group characteristics (affiliation, composition, coach, number of years the group exists). To anticipate research question IV, links between characteristics and learning experiences were investigated. Again, age and educational level of the participants and affiliation of the group and the presence or absence of a coach, were most distinctive characteristics. Younger respondents, who achieved a high educational level, more strongly report that reading individually contributes to their personal development. They participate in wild groups without a coach. Older respondents, who achieved a lower educational level, more strongly report that they experience to learn about various topics because of reading and more specifically because of their membership. They participate in organised groups with a coach.

Chapter 6 gives an answer to **research question IV: *What connections exist between characteristics of participants and their book discussion groups, participants' motives, and their experienced learning outcomes?*** The outcomes of the study enable a definition of these two stereotype book discussion groups that differ not only in the members' characteristics, but also in which reading and membership motives the participants

## SUMMARY

have, as well as the experienced learning outcomes of reading and book discussion group participation:

*Group 1:* Organised, with a coach, members are older and have achieved a less high level of education, there are fewer males in this group than in group 2. Members of group 1 are very motivated to take part in a group activity. More strongly than members of group 2, they express a focus on learning about literature together. They more strongly report experienced learning outcomes on various topics because of reading and more specifically through their membership.

*Group 2:* Wild, without a coach, members are younger and have achieved a higher level of education, there are more males in this group than in group 1. Members of group 2 are more motivated to read individually than members of group 1 and both enjoy and develop themselves by reading. They find their group meetings enjoyable. They more strongly indicate that reading individually contributes to their personal development.

The study shows that members within one book discussion group often share certain characteristics, of which educational background seems to have the strongest links with motives and experienced learning outcomes. It seems that educational background plays a role in deciding what type of book discussion group (wild/organised, with/without coach) one wants to join or find.

The methods that were used are discussed, specifically considering their impact on the type of data that was gathered. To conclude, practical implications for book discussion group organisations and in formal education are discussed, and ideas for future research are suggested.



## Samenvatting

In de **introduction** van dit proefschrift werden vier onderzoeksvragen geformuleerd:

- I. Wat zijn de eigenschappen van moderne Nederlandse leesclubs?
- II. Welke motieven hebben leden voor leesclubdeelneming?
- III. Wat ervaren leden te leren van leesclubdeelneming?
- IV. Welke verbanden bestaan er tussen eigenschappen van leden en hun leesclubs, de motieven die leden hebben, en wat zij ervaren te leren van leesclubdeelneming?

In **Hoofdstuk 1** werd het onderwerp van deze studie – de hedendaagse leesclub – geïntroduceerd met behulp van diverse nationale en internationale studies.

Om te komen tot een antwoord op onderzoeksvraag I, werd een definitie van de leesclub vastgesteld:

*een leesclub is een vaste groep van niet-professionele lezers die fysiek bij elkaar komen om te discussiëren over boeken (fictie of non-fictie) die zij allen vooraf gelezen hebben, of die zij samen lezen.*

Om onderzoeksvraag II te beantwoorden, werden vier leesmotieven en zes lidmaatschapsmotieven geformuleerd. De vier leesmotieven zijn:

1. Het cognitieve leesmotief geldt voor mensen die willen leren door te lezen;
2. Het esthetische leesmotief geldt voor mensen die de stijl of thema van een boek willen ervaren;
3. Het hedonistische leesmotief geldt voor mensen die willen opgaan in een verhaal, die willen genieten van lezen en willen ontspannen;
4. Het statusleesmotief geldt voor mensen die zichzelf als lezer willen profileren.

De zes lidmaatschapsmotieven zijn:

1. Het cognitieve lidmaatschapsmotief geldt voor mensen die willen leren door middel van hun lidmaatschap;
2. Het esthetische lidmaatschapsmotief geldt voor mensen die met hulp van hun leesclub beter de stijl of het thema van een boek willen kunnen ervaren;
3. Het hedonistische lidmaatschapsmotief geldt voor mensen die willen ontspannen door deel te nemen aan een leesclub en willen genieten hiervan;
4. Het statuslidmaatschapsmotief geldt voor mensen die zich middels hun leesclubdeelneming willen profileren als lezer of als sociaal-actief;
5. Het sociale lidmaatschapsmotief geldt voor mensen die genieten van het sociale aspect van de leesclub, van het praten over andere zaken dan boeken, en van andere zaken die komen kijken bij het horen bij een groep;
6. Het praktische lidmaatschapsmotief geldt voor mensen die praktische voordelen zien in het deelnemen aan een leesclub.

Om onderzoeksvraag III te beantwoorden, werd het onderwerp leren door lezen en leesclubdeelname bestudeerd. Belangrijkste onderwerpen die lezers leren door (fictie) te lezen en te bespreken, lijken het leren over literatuur zelf, het verbreden van de eigen horizon, en het verkrijgen van meer zelfinzicht.

Om onderzoeksvraag IV te beantwoorden, zullen de uitkomsten van de eerste drie onderzoeksvragen moeten worden gecombineerd.

In **Hoofdstuk 2** wordt de zoektocht naar geschikte methoden beschreven: de voor- en nadelen van methoden die eerder gebruikt zijn in onderzoeken naar lezers en leesclubs worden afgewogen, en de bruikbaarheid van deze methoden voor de huidige studie. Twee methoden worden geselecteerd: vragenlijsten en interviews. Met behulp van een groepsenquête zullen eigenschappen van leesclubs in kaart worden gebracht, zoals leeftijd van de leesclub, de manier waarop de leesclub georganiseerd is en wat er gelezen wordt in de leesclub (*onderzoeksvraag I*). Middels een tweede vragenlijst, voor de individuele leden van leesclubs, worden eigenschappen van leden van leesclubs in kaart gebracht, zoals leeftijd, geslacht en opleidingsniveau (*onderzoeksvraag I*). Daarnaast worden vragen gesteld over de motieven die leden hebben voor lezen en leesclubdeelname (*onderzoeksvraag II*). Ook worden er vragen gesteld over wat leden ervaren te leren van lezen en leesclubdeelname (*onderzoeksvraag III*). Individuele interviews zorgen voor diepgaandere informatie over motieven (*onderzoeksvraag II*) en leerervaringen (*onderzoeksvraag III*) om zo de informatie die is verzameld met behulp van de enquêtes, aan te vullen, te illustreren, of te verklaren.

Bovendien worden zeven eigenschappen geselecteerd die de basis vormen om relaties tussen eigenschappen, motieven en leerervaringen te zoeken (*onderzoeksvraag IV*). Deze zeven eigenschappen bestaan uit drie persoonlijke eigenschappen en vier groeps-eigenschappen:

1. Geslacht (man; vrouw);
2. Leeftijd (20-34; 35-49; 50-64; ≥65 jaar);
3. Opleidingsniveau (laag; midden; hoog);
4. Organisatie van de groep (georganiseerd; wild);
5. Samenstelling van de groep (alleen vrouwen; gemengd);
6. Begeleiding (met een begeleider; zonder een begeleider);
7. Leeftijd van de groep (0-4; 5-9; 10-19; 20-29; ≥30 jaar).

De interviews zijn bedoeld om diepgaandere informatie te verzamelen over leesgewoonten in samenhang met leesclubdeelname, motieven om te lezen en om lid te zijn van een leesclub, en ervaringen met leren door lezen en leesclubdeelname. Interviewvragen werden opgesteld.

In **Hoofdstuk 3** worden eigenschappen van leesclubs en leden onderzocht, om een antwoord te vinden op onderzoeksvraag I. Zoals werd verwacht, is het merendeel van leesclubleden vrouw (94%). De gemiddelde leeftijd was iets hoger dan verwacht (65 jaar). 65% van de deelnemers is hoogopgeleid. Meer dan de helft van de deelnemende leesclubs (58%) is aangesloten bij een organisatie of bibliotheek. De meeste groepen (79%) bestaan alleen uit vrouwen. Een minderheid van de groepen (30%) heeft de beschikking over een professionele begeleider. Gemiddeld bestaat een groep 13 jaar. Er bestaat een aantal correlaties tussen eigenschappen:

- Tussen leeftijd en opleidingsniveau van de deelnemers (hoogopgeleiden zijn significant jonger dan laagopgeleiden);
- Tussen geslacht van de deelnemers en organisatie van de groep (in wilde groepen zijn significant meer mannen actief dan in georganiseerde groepen);
- Tussen leeftijd van de deelnemers en organisatie van de groep (de gemiddelde leeftijd van leden van wilde groepen is significant lager dan de gemiddelde leeftijd van leden van georganiseerde groepen);
- Tussen opleidingsniveau van de leden en organisatie van de groep (leden van wilde groepen zijn significant hoger opgeleid dan leden van georganiseerde groepen);
- Tussen organisatie van de groepen en het hebben van een professionele begeleider of niet (georganiseerde groepen hebben significant vaker de beschikking over een begeleider dan wilde groepen).

Daarnaast wordt onderzocht wat er gelezen wordt in leesclubs. Anders dan verwacht, blijken leesclubs heel breed te lezen, ondanks dat in de meerderheid van de groepen de leden samen de boeken uitkiezen zonder tussenkomst van een begeleider of organisatie. De meeste groepen lezen moderne, Nederlandstalige romans. Ook zijn prijswinnaars populair. Naast deze boeken, die ook het gewone leespubliek in Nederland aanspreken, blijken leesclubs een brede interesse te hebben: de diversiteit in titels die gelezen zijn, is opvallend.

In **Hoofdstuk 4** wordt onderzoeksvraag II beantwoord. De motieven die leden hebben om individueel te lezen en om lid te zijn van een leesclub werden onderzocht met behulp van de individuele enquête en de interviews. In de enquête werd aan respondenten gevraagd te reageren op een aantal stellingen op een vijfpuntsschaal. De interviews werden vervolgens gebruikt om de motieven diepgaander te onderzoeken. Het bleek noodzakelijk om de theoretische lidmaatschapsmotieven te herformuleren. Het cognitieve en esthetische lidmaatschapsmotief werden gecombineerd tot een cognitief-esthetisch lidmaatschapsmotief. Het sociale lidmaatschapsmotief werd gesplitst in het sociale lidmaatschapsmotief en het verenigingslidmaatschapsmotief.



Het esthetische, cognitieve en hedonistische leesmotief waren alle drie heel belangrijk voor deelnemers aan dit onderzoek; het statusleesmotief veel minder. Van de lidmaatschapsmotieven waren met name het cognitief-esthetische en het hedonistische lidmaatschapsmotief belangrijk; het praktische lidmaatschapsmotief was het minst belangrijk.

Vervolgens werd onderzocht of er verbanden aan te tonen zijn tussen verschillende groepen respondenten en hun motieven. Respondenten werden gegroepeerd volgens persoonlijke eigenschappen (geslacht, leeftijd en opleidingsniveau) en eigenschappen van de groep waarvan ze lid zijn (organisatie, samenstelling, begeleider of niet, aantal jaar dat de groep bestaat), en hun antwoorden werden vergeleken met elkaar. Dit werd gedaan in voorbereiding op het beantwoorden van de vierde onderzoeksvraag in Hoofdstuk 6. Het bleek dat er een sterk verband bestaat tussen motieven en leeftijd en opleidingsniveau van de deelnemers, en tussen motieven en organisatie van de groep en het hebben van een begeleider of niet. Jongere respondenten, die hoger opgeleid zijn dan oudere, hebben sterkere leesmotieven. Zij zijn vaker lid van wilde groepen zonder begeleider. Oudere respondenten, die lager opgeleid zijn dan jongere, hebben sterkere lidmaatschapsmotieven. Zij zijn vaker lid van georganiseerde groepen met een begeleider.

In **Hoofdstuk 5** wordt onderzoeksvraag III beantwoord. Op basis van antwoorden van respondenten van de individuele vragenlijst en van de deelnemers van de interviews, werd een aantal onderwerpen beschreven waarover mensen ervaren te leren door te lezen en door deel te nemen aan een leesclub. De meeste deelnemers van dit onderzoek herkennen dat ze kunnen leren van het lezen van fictie (bijvoorbeeld over een specifiek onderwerp dat een rol speelt in een boek), en waarderen dit.

Leren op het gebied van literatuur blijkt moeilijk te zijn wanneer er individueel wordt gelezen. De leesclub biedt een duidelijke meerwaarde, met name wanneer er experts op het gebied van literatuur lid zijn van de leesclub, of wanneer er een begeleider is.

Persoonlijke ontwikkeling en het verbreden van de eigen horizon wordt vooral bereikt door individueel lezen. De leesclub biedt een meerwaarde, omdat lezers in aanraking komen met andere boeken dan de boeken die men uit zichzelf zou hebben gekozen. Ook het uitwisselen van inzichten en meningen met andere leden draagt hieraan bij. Ondanks dat leden van leesclubs vaak veel eigenschappen met elkaar delen, ervaren zij dat er verschillen zijn, die ervoor zorgen dat leesclubdeelname leerzaam is. Verschillende studies hebben gewezen op de invloed van het lezen van fictie op zelfinzicht. Of een leesclub hieraan bijdraagt, ligt aan de manier waarop in een groep wordt gediscussieerd. Een aantal groepen gaat juist persoonlijke gesprekken naar aanleiding van een boek uit

de weg. Andere groepen bespreken wel persoonlijke zaken voorafgaand of na afloop van de discussie. Voor weer andere groepen is het juist het boek dat de aanleiding is voor het houden van persoonlijke gesprekken. Groepen hebben tijd nodig om een veilige omgeving te vormen waar leden prettige persoonlijke gesprekken kunnen voeren.

Het leren discussiëren door lidmaatschap, en de invloed van de leesclub op de eigen literaire smaak, spelen beide een minder grote rol.

Vervolgens werd onderzocht of er een verband bestaat tussen eigenschappen van leden en hun leesclub, en wat de leden ervaren te leren van lezen en leesclubdeelname. Er zijn duidelijke verbanden tussen leeftijd en opleidingsniveau van de deelnemers en wat zij ervaren te leren, en tussen de georganiseerdheid van de groep en het hebben van een begeleider of niet, en wat de leden ervaren te leren. De jongere leden, die vaak hoger zijn opgeleid, en vaker lid zijn van wilde groepen zonder begeleider, geven sterker aan dat zij vinden dat lezen bijdraagt aan hun persoonlijke ontwikkeling. Oudere leden, die vaak minder hoog zijn opgeleid, en lid zijn van georganiseerde groepen met een begeleider, geven sterker aan dat zij vinden dat ze leren over diverse onderwerpen door te lezen, en met name door hun leesclubdeelname.

In **Hoofdstuk 6** wordt onderzoeksvraag IV beantwoord. Op basis van de uitkomsten die beschreven werden in de voorgaande hoofdstukken, kunnen er drie stereotype leesclubs worden omschreven:

Groep 1: Georganiseerde groep met begeleider, de leden zijn ouder dan de leden van groep 2, de leden zijn lager opgeleid dan de leden van groep 2, en er zijn minder mannen lid van groep 1 dan van groep 2. Leden van groep 1 zijn erg gemotiveerd om deel te nemen aan een groepsactiviteit. Sterker dan leden van groep 2, geven zij aan dat ze gezamenlijk willen leren over literatuur. Zij geven sterker aan dat zij over verschillende onderwerpen leren door te lezen en met name door deel te nemen aan een leesclub.

Groep 2: Wilde groep zonder begeleider, de leden zijn jonger dan de leden van groep 1, de leden zijn hoger opgeleid dan de leden van groep 1, en ondanks dat vrouwen nog altijd in de meerderheid zijn, zijn er wel meer mannen lid van groep 2 dan van groep 1. Leden van groep 2 zijn meer gemotiveerd om individueel te lezen dan de leden van groep 1, en zij zien dit vooral als vermaak en als manier om zichzelf te ontwikkelen. Zij genieten van leesclubdeelname. Sterker dan de leden van groep 1, geven zij aan dat zij vinden dat individueel lezen bijdraagt aan persoonlijke ontwikkeling.

De studie laat zien dat leden van leesclubs veel eigenschappen met elkaar delen. Opleidingsniveau blijkt een sterke band te hebben met de motieven en de leerervaringen van leden. Het lijkt erop dat opleidingsniveau bepaalt van welk type leesclub iemand lid wordt (wild of georganiseerd, met of zonder begeleider).

## SAMENVATTING

De gebruikte methoden worden geëvalueerd, met name in relatie tot het type informatie dat zij hebben opgeleverd. Ten slotte wordt in dit hoofdstuk de praktische toepasbaarheid van de resultaten voor leescluborganisatoren en het onderwijs beschreven, en worden ideeën voor toekomstig onderzoek geopperd.



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Heerlen / Roermond, 26 oktober 2015.





## Curriculum Vitae

Marjolein van Herten was born on January 25<sup>th</sup> 1981 in Brunssum, the Netherlands. After completing her pre-university education at Eijkhagen College in Landgraaf in 1999, she studied Dutch linguistics and literature at the Radboud University in Nijmegen. In 2005, she graduated. Her research master's thesis was on the 17<sup>th</sup>-century handwritten collection of rhetoricians plays of *Trou Moet Blijcken*.

She continued her studies at the Radboud University, and in 2006, she achieved a post-doctoral degree as a secondary school teacher of Dutch language and literature. After working as a teacher, she started her PhD-research in 2008 at the Open University in Heerlen. Since 2012, she works as a teacher at this university.

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