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**Navigating identities: Stories of belonging of second-generation migrant youth in the Netherlands**

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## **Abstract**

In my research encounters, I explored highly educated second-generation migrant youth; who are from a non-European background sense of belonging and identities by using their narratives. I did this by examining how they perceive themselves but also the politics behind their belonging within Dutch society through an intersectionality lens. These narratives provided insight into how the image of the migrant is socially reproduced. This social exclusion is a reflection on how integration policies are practiced and perceived in the Netherlands in specific spaces like neighbourhood, school and university. The study followed a life course and intersectionality approach through fifteen in-depth qualitative interviews. In keeping with this essence, the research is composed in a story-like way to capture all individuals' narratives.

Stories were collected from young people who have a mixture of ethnic backgrounds, but their stories overlap and their similarities. By doing so, the results from these stories show that integration in the Dutch society happened early in their lives within themselves, but there comes a turning point where they are called out on their differences. They are breaking the status quo, though it is not easy, they are informing both the ethnic Dutch on who they are and within their ethnic communities. These young people are redefining social and cultural capital to their advantage through their multi-layered identity.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

In simplistic terms why, this story is relevant to development because “the world is now, for everyone” (Glissant 1990:35). Development is centred around the individual and celebrating difference; to learn from others. This means sharing spaces, making the world equal because it is not. A generation of youth are demanding their rights they received by birth. They are demanding exactly that, the world is for everyone, that encompasses their layers of identities and belonging.

Migration being a global phenomenon has led to porous national borders; a redefinition of citizenship and the sentiment towards a country. Development is not just about the global south but the relations between people; thus, by incorporating Glissant's poetics of relation within this story to explore the depth of relation of identity and belonging. Diversity within a country is inevitable and thus has become “one of the most pressing and challenging issues of our time” (Ghorashi and Ponzoni 2013:162). Which links to Yuval-Davis' argument

for the need to define citizenship in a multi-layered perspective to include all people's identities within these spaces. Integration policies can only become successful when these layers are included, and everyone has a fair chance.

### **Keywords**

Second-generation migrant, Youth, Identity, Relational Belonging, Social and cultural Capital, Diversity, the Netherlands



# Chapter 1 Once upon a time there were fifteen stories

*“In the world through which I travel I am endlessly creating myself. I am part of Being to the degree that I go beyond it” -Frantz Fanon (2008:179)*

My research will be told in a story-like way. It is unfortunately not a crime thriller leaving the reader in suspense until the last paragraph but rather tells the readers immediately what the story is about. It is about fifteen stories of second-generation migrant youth who are highly educated in the Netherlands. It is about their personal narratives. It is about how they make sense of themselves within a society who has other notions on who they should be. It is about how they make sense of their migrant background. It is about how their experiences have shaped them and to be unapologetic about their backgrounds. It is about demanding their rights. It is about redefining social capital, to break status quo, to make sense of diversity and what it should mean in the Netherlands.

I heard fifteen stories brim-full with experience and zest from incredible young people. These stories and partially my own story as the author, make up this story which is being read right now. The essence of their stories is what truly carries this piece of writing. I use the words given to me to paint a picture of the realities and feelings of how these fifteen people have shaped their identities and sense of belonging. Call it a story within a story, I would like to share one of the fifteen, to open the main story; it is about the life of an extraordinary young woman who I met along the way of my research journey:

Yasemine<sup>1</sup>, young black Muslim woman, in her final stages of her bachelor’s degree. She has many identities, she realises this. She has parents who grew up in very different parts of the world. Tunisia and Suriname came together and created her but, what shaped her was the Netherlands and her experiences. Her world was a mixture of cultures, within her house and outside her doorstep. Her neighbours made their way from many countries, settling, creating a sense of home and future within the Netherlands. At a young age she was comfortable with her three cultures, she was able to speak her mother’s and father’s native languages with ease. Until she started school, teachers advised her parents in order to develop her Dutch better, she would have to become monolingual. Better integrated it was supposed. She was forced to choose one identity. She lost all her languages because she had to conform.

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<sup>1</sup> Alias 23 year-old female with Surinamese and Tunisian descent personal interview August 2019 refer to *appendix 1*

Thinking back to this moment she felt robbed of her identity. Who was she and how would she reconnect, search her way back to this security?

She went to school that was labelled as ‘the black school’ in the area, here, culture and religion were celebrated. Although rowdy it felt free. There was a class specially dedicated to teaching about different cultures and religions. Special festivals and international days celebrated these flavours coming to the Netherlands. She says it is very nice when there is a good mixture because when differences are celebrated, people have a wider perspective. She could use her three cultures by being able to relate to many, Yasemine was able to sit with everyone even if it meant that these groups were segregated from one another. After some time, it was noticed her Dutch was struggling and so it was advised to move schools. She was moved to a ‘white’ school in order to improve her Dutch. It was very stiff. It was a Christian faith-based school where each class would start with a prayer. Yasemine was brought up Muslim, she identifies being Muslim. She positioned her hands in the way she served her god. She was shunned for this; it was the incorrect way. There was only one other Muslim girl in her class who she could share glances of understanding with. Teachers, though not directly at her would bully students who were not ethnic Dutch.

A stark memory of when she knew that although she chose one identity, her Dutch identity, she was not wholly that. She was walking home from school one day, someone shouted at her calling her the N- word. She knew she did not fully belong. This memory took her to another moment growing up where boys would pick on her and ask how many camels, they would need to give to her father in order to go out with her. These tempestuous few seconds tumble into a constant questioning of who she is. She says you must do so many things to become only part Dutch and on the other side, the children from other migrant backgrounds call you a *Bounty*<sup>2</sup>. She was on the School Debate team in both schools, where various topics would be addressed. The stiff school would make it difficult to be able to debate because it became personal, hostile. If the side agreed to her personal beliefs and experiences teachers called her out and said she was exaggerating. It did not feel safe.

Now at university, which she chose not because it was the best for the field, she wants to pursue but because it was comfortable in diversity. Here, she went to a workshop during her first year where they spoke of social capital and having these flavours makes her an asset, it gives her advantages in various contexts. To be a Muslim black woman, has had the odds stacked against her but forming it into social capital, Yasemine is able to relate to

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<sup>2</sup> A slang word referring to the chocolate which has a coconut centre describing a ‘black’ person who acts and identifies with ‘white’ culture

more people. She was able to see that she has much more to offer. Although there is still a lingering of identity crises, she must play certain roles in the Netherlands and in Tunisia, where either makes her feel she belongs neither here nor there. But she has been able to discover a richer self and with that emanates it in her everyday life. She is breaking the status quo. She is tired of giving disclaimers to her way of life. She was raised to be unapologetic about herself. She has been spear-heading through her university career with this always in mind. She is part of the fight to create these spaces like university to be more inclusive and aware of diversity.

This story gives an indication of how the conversations flowed starting from even before they were born, how they grew up and where they are now. In my research encounters, I explored highly educated second-generation migrant youth who are from a non-European background their sense of belonging and identities by using their narratives. I did this by examining how they perceive themselves but also the politics behind their belonging within Dutch society through an intersectionality lens. These narratives provided insight into how the image of the migrant is socially reproduced. This social exclusion is a reflection on how integration policies are practiced and perceived in the Netherlands in specific spaces like neighbourhood, school and university. These narratives have paved a story of experiences.

## **Setting the scene**

To position this story within a particular context, I needed to delve into to how these images were socially reproduced; why there was a group of people who are Dutch citizens but do not feel wholly so. I investigated how Dutch public policies paint a certain picture revolving around citizenship, integration and how identity is wrapped in between. The Netherlands is one of the European countries who prides themselves in not having a 'race' discourse (Yanow and Van Der Haar 2013:229). The Netherlands has led to a different type of classification of the population, that being with the birthplace (Van Schie 2018:68).

Allochthon is the term used to describe those who are not born in the Netherlands but also who does not have Dutch ancestry. As opposed to those who are born in the Netherlands and do have Dutch ancestry, Autochthon. This term came into play through Hilda Verwey-Jonker in 1971 all to avoid the word 'migrant' which would lead to the Netherlands seen as a country of immigrants (Yanow and Van Der Haar 2013:234). As Yanow and Van Der Haar mention is that these terms are used in official parliamentary debates and seep further down to other spaces like neighbourhoods, schools and workplace (2013:229). The turn of the 21st century allochthon was sub-divided by Statistics Netherlands where it

classified between ‘western’ allochthon and ‘non-western’ allochthon (Van Schie 2018:69). Even with this sub-division, it classifies a certain preference. The ‘western’ allochthon covers Europe, North America, Oceania, Japan, and Indonesia. Turkey is excluded from Europe. According to the statistics bureau the reason for this classification is due to socio-economic and cultural differences. They believe that there is much crossover with socio-economic levels and birthplace (Van Schie 2018:76). Which leads to this whole notion that “integration is not and never will be possible” (Yanow and Van Der Haar 2013:230). This is striking when trying to place second-generation migrants within this discourse, who have been born in the Netherlands but has an ancestry of another place.

A large part of this labelling comes down to language use within policies, where it can shape a person in a certain way or if left ambiguous is open for interpretation thus discrimination (Yanow and Van Der Haar 2013:230). “It is an authenticity discourse over ‘who really belongs here?’” (Yanow and Van Der Haar 2013:246). Thus, creating the space for discussion over the politics of belonging. “The ‘stuff’ of which both allochthons and autochthons are made is built in- their identity is essential – and it is eternal – their ‘origins’ are always identifiable; no amount of time will turn on allochthon into an autochthon” (Yanow and Van Der Haar 2013:246). What Yanow and Van Der Haar speak of shows that regardless of what the policy is trying to do or classify it is halting the process of integration purely by the language use that is being used in politics but what is also being trickled down to the everyday life (2013:231). This will be extended further by using politics of belonging as a way to frame these integrations polices and to take it a step further. This would be by looking at how these considered ‘allochthons’ are using this identity.

An example of where there has been a political clash that has trickled down to everyday life is far-right former Dutch political party leader, Geert Wilders, who is notorious for extending this unwelcome feeling and politicising who belongs and who does not. In one of his speeches he spoke of ‘western’ elite and how Islamisation is part blame for the decay in Dutch cities. He blames mass-immigration for the burdening of the welfare and the taxpayer’s euros (Wilders 2009). He was able to gather a crowd of people to chant ‘fewer, fewer, fewer’ in reference to fewer immigrants settling in the Netherlands (The Guardian 2014). This deepening sense of Islamophobia is happening in Europe and for this specific story, the Netherlands. Vellenga states that around two thirds of Muslims living in the Netherlands had experienced discrimination in various forms (2018:176). It is not getting any easier as recently as August 2019 there came an official act as a Burqa Ban, where no one was allowed to be covered in public spaces like public transport, schools, hospitals and government buildings.

If they were caught, then police could act after the person opposes to take it off and fine the person between EU150-EU415 (DutchNews.nl 2019).

The dichotomy between allochthon and autochthon along with the realities happening in the Netherlands paints a good backdrop as to why this story explored in my research is needed and needed for the voices of these specific characters to use their narratives and voices to portray a message towards this context. As Crowley puts it, “not to belong is to be constantly vulnerable to the accusation of trespass even when in legalistic terms it is utterly groundless” (1999:17). Belonging is seen as a political tool to be used as a way against those who are considered as ‘outsiders’ (Favell and Geddes 1999:10). Yuval-Davis points to the core of the politics of belonging: Belonging becomes political when this feeling of safety is threatened (2006:197).

In 2015 the Dutch prime minister confessed that migrants living in the Netherlands were being discriminated particularly those who were trying to gain access to highly skilled jobs. What deepened this problem was that he stated that it was up to the migrants to “fight their way in” (Waldring et al. 2015:38). This meant that there is no government support to this discrimination. In Waldring et al. (2015) Study on second generation migrant professionals in leadership positions, shows that there are success stories. Despite all the political raucous, they have been able to succeed in their careers but there is still a lingering of discrimination in varying degrees. The study focuses on Moroccan and Turkish Dutch who have management positions and therefore slightly older than my focus group (Waldring et al. 2015:41). The study is framed from a power perspective as to who holds the power and thus performs the discrimination. It concludes that within the office this is happening as the hegemonic group rules what happens. Ghorashi and Ponzoni argue that regardless of this negative image that has socially excluded individuals with a refugee background have tried to turn the image around to a more positive perspective (2013:169).

I take parts of both these studies where I research these fifteen individuals to celebrate the positives but never disregarding that discriminations has happened throughout their life. Most studies look at the participant in a specific scene of their life and usually is the most present, I want to deepen the narrative by looking at the individual as a whole, their layers of identity that are added to it when they become older. It shows that spaces are never neutral. It becomes a retrospective reflection on their lives and their future lying ahead.

## **The questions being answered**

This story answers the following questions to give a better understanding to the certain themes that the words form into. The main question is: *How does the narratives of highly educated second-generation migrant youth in the Netherlands shape their sense of belonging within their residential neighbourhood, school and university?* This question has many components to it and so to give guidance in answering such a big question I divided it into smaller questions: *What are their narratives of belonging? And how did these narratives change over space and time? Does integration policy still and if yes in what way influence second-generation migrants?*

## **Character Sketch**

The following is a description of who will be the characters of this story but also conceptualising their realities within the Netherlands. It is a way to define second-generation highly educated youth in a specific context. These concepts are often contested in who and what spaces define them as.

## **Second-generation migrants**

I chose to explore second-generation migrants as my characters for this story as they are the protagonists who have a special niche when thinking about the whole sense of belonging within the Netherlands. Along with the dichotomy of the allochthon and autochthon in Dutch public policies, they become an interesting puzzle piece which plainly speaking, the characters I present have a non-European background, therefore they fit into the allochthon category and then further it into the 'non-western' allochthon. Thus, means that they can never integrate and never feel Dutch. By using these characters and the way they speak of their identities, it taps into this and in some sense can answer this question, if there is no possible way of integrating across this dichotomy. Furthermore, these characters' identities are deepened for I decided to explore characters who are also university graduates. This channels into a further unknown, where most studies have surrounded second-generation migrants and much of first-generation migrants with their socio-economic standing (Bolzman et al 2017).

Additionally, when second generation migrants were studied it was predominantly the large group who have blue-collared jobs (Van Ours and Veenman 2003:740). When referring back to this classification of the 'western allochthon' and 'non-western allochthon' also shows a reason why I decided not to focus on a specific 'country of origin'. Turkish and

Moroccans are the only classified ethnicities within the reports and is ambiguously worded to use as a description and other ethnicities (Cousee et al 2011:11).

They are the children of first-generation migrants; in this specific context they have been raised and socialised in the Netherlands. It is this sense that the place where the child grows up has shaped him or her. In the Netherlands there is not a specific definition of what are the characteristics of second-generation migrants, but rather mention that they are the descendants of the migrant groups who settled in the Netherlands. I use Bolzman's definition to conceptualise my focus group: where second-generation migrants have been socialised "and are exposed to its social institutions starting at early ages" (2017:3). The specific distinction between where their parents grew up and where they grew up. There lingers a complexity because of its broad umbrella, there are many factors that come into play like race, gender or class (Anthias 2009:7).

"The immigrants' descendants would be indistinguishable from the rest of the population" (Castles and Davidson 2000:6) in the hopes that integration policies are successful and favourable to those who are naturalising to the Netherlands. That being said, second-generation migrants are a special niche, they are adding valuable insight towards integration policies; they should be presented with the same opportunities as their ethnic Dutch counterparts. This generation can add valid insight towards integration policies: "integration by children of immigrant parentage born in the country of migration-is crucial to this process, for it is these children who constitute a growing share of metropolitan youth today" (Crul and Heering 2008:19). These children are legally supposed to have the same opportunities as those who were born from country-of-origin parents. Much focus has been placed on the trajectories (the interrelationships among different social decisions of the children of immigrants) (Bolzman et al. 2017:3) with the emphasis on comparative approaches. These comparisons vary, looking at indicators like "integration policies, educational policies, attitudes toward ethnic minorities, size of localities, heterogeneity of the population in terms of ethnic composition" (Bolzman et al 2017:6).

One comparative study looked at second generation migration of Turkish and Moroccan origin in Dutch cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam. I explore (Crul and Heering 2008:19). The study's main aim was to investigate the structural integration "analysing the access to and participation in domains such as education and the labour market" (Crul and Heering 2008 :161). In this study it concluded that there was a mixture of optimism and pessimism when thinking about gaining access into the labour market. Additionally, around 50% of the participants did not complete their high school diploma in order to be allowed in the job

market which added to mixed sentiment (Crul and Heering 2008 :161). It portrays how Turkish and Moroccan second-generation migrants are compared to one another with the constant variable being the of Dutch-origin parents' counterparts. The gap here, is that there is very little depth in emotions and the simple day to day living where the study does not focus on certain indicators which conclude if integration is successful or not. Henceforth, this is a more quantitative approach to the evaluation of integration. The comparison sample within Rotterdam did not want to admit entirely that discrimination and racism towards their Moroccan and Turkish counterparts exists. Also, the gap of how second-generation migrants were dealing with integration.

Previous studies have been centred around education and job opportunities (Crul and Heering 2008) but there needs to be more focus on the “micro-social conditions of data collection in research designs” (Bolzman et al 2017:6). There is this sense “that integration and identity are not only socially constructed, but mutually constructed by the immigrant groups and the society they are becoming a part of” (Sardinha 2009:20).

### **Youth in between cultures**

I decided to focus on youth, firstly my own positionality as someone who is also considered youth and with that could relate to my participants. Huijsmans mentions that to open this dialogue of youth then “discourses about young people and practices can direct to attention to the lived experiences of being young” (2016:5). In creating this story, I am trying to achieve that these lived experiences of being young can open the dialogue to identities and belonging. Youth is complex especially when it comes to this story and how to define youth because it cuts cross various cultures who have various meanings on what is youth and who is considered Young. Youth in contemporary society is part and parcel of the global world (Huijsmans 2018:126). Therefore, this story is not only located in the Netherlands but is situated in the wider global story.

Youth are raised in relation to the world but also raised with values in very different contexts. There is a need for balance between these different contexts. In their homes, they play a certain role and adhere to specific social roles placed upon them, and again when outside of their homes. Numerously this was shown with the relation between authoritative figures and being considered younger than these figures (Huijsmans 2016:5). Elders are respected as the authority figure but growing up in a Dutch society where this relationship is not entirely the same. Youth here means those who have been raised in Dutch society, but it goes beyond this. They have an extension into the rest of the world because of varying



cultures they have been brought up in. Even so, they go beyond this too, because they have or are attending research universities. They are able to gain access to a world of work that is homogenous in their demographic, it is not kind to those who have migrant backgrounds. It also opens the dialogue for social class and how much of that plays a role in obtaining a university degree and gaining access to the highly skilled workforce. Furthermore, within these varying cultures it also creates certain social gender roles in which these young people must also contend with.

When putting a number on youth, in the Netherlands, the chronological age refers to the ages 0-24 (YouthPolicy.org 2014). Around a third of the Dutch population is considered young and one in five youth has an ethnic background (YouthPolicy.org 2014). The Netherlands has shifted their youth policy focus to a more positive outlook with an aim to “guide children, young people and their parents in their opportunities and foster their empowerment” (Cousee et al. 2011:8). In which the individual is placed at the centre rather than a standardised outline of what is considered best for the youth, hence placing youth back into the policy. This links to these fifteen individuals where, their stories fit into being young in the Netherlands and the opportunities that has been created focused for youth. Not only are these young people defined through Dutch policies but also in their households, their migrant backgrounds and what it means to be young. Therefore “youth is not a coherent and uniform unit” (Bayat and De Koning 2005:60).

Although the Dutch youth policy seems positive, it also depends on the ethnicity of the youth. Youth from a migrant background particularly males are seen as problematic to the Dutch society (Bayat and De Koning 2005:60). They are criminalised within the media, socially reproducing a negative image which filters down to every aspect of society (Muller 2016:30). In Muller’s study he furthers this argument, to which youth of a migrant background are ‘hanging around’ with very little everyday purpose and this has been criminalised because it leads to crime and poverty (2016:34).

“Youth Islam is in a way, the self-consciousness of a larger counter-culture that is deconstructing and criticising the dominant culture from inside” (Bayat and De Koning 2005:60). This can be interpreted that the dominant culture of these migrant communities within the Netherlands but also the Netherlands as whole. These young people are altering cultures forming a hybrid of the Dutch and migrant together.

## **The plot**

This story is comprised of seven chapters: the first serves as an exposition. It highlights the beginning of the journey, the ideas, the questions and how the journey ventures. The second chapter is the story about how I went about collecting the fifteen stories and to put their essence within this one. The third chapter will explain the elements of the story, the theories that were used to classify the genre of this story. The fourth chapter places the story in a specific context as to necessitate the urgency of reading this story. The reality as it is not a fairy tale but there are fifteen silver linings. The fifth and sixth chapter is where the fifteen stories come together. The fifth chapter tells the tales of the struggle of never feeling Dutch enough. That spaces are never neutral. The sixth chapter tells the reader that although there may be struggles, they are unapologetically who they are. The last chapter serves as a denouement, where these fifteen individuals in their own way are demanding that spaces become neutral.

## Chapter 2 A short tale about collecting stories

*“Thinking thought usually amounts to withdrawing into a dimensionless place in which the idea of thought alone persists. But thought in reality spaces itself out into the world. It informs the imaginary of peoples, their varied poetics, which it then transforms, meaning, in them its risk becomes realised” (Glissant 1990)*

The following words of Edouard Glissant rounds off my methodology quite well, the conversations I had with my participants was very much a reflection of their lives and with that where they are now. The conversation allowed for this thought to be shaped into words as their narrative, the relations between themselves and their place within Dutch society.

### **Putting the Intersectional and Life course glasses on**

I was sitting at a café with a blank email message open the cursor kept blinking becoming a blur, in my thoughts I was lost as to how I was going to structure the initial contact with people who could possibly become the core of my research. Suddenly, it became very real and daunting. Now, sitting in a similar setting but with retrospective thoughts about how the process evolved. I am and will be forever grateful for everyone who participated but for someone who was not able to participate because of the criteria. Amir, who was a past student of my supervisor was my foot in the door to gain access to my participants. After speaking to Amir (Abadi 2019)<sup>3</sup> in my research design process, he was able to pave a way to the ‘problematique’ of my research. The conversation was mainly speaking about his past experiences, his life story and gaining knowledge of how his life was situated within this politics of identity. After speaking to Amir, he advised to tap into those who are trying to gain access to a job market which has been dominated by white males (Van Ours and Veenman 2010).

This is how the life course and intersectionality approach became my guideline as to how I was going to go about my research. Through life course, I wanted to use people’s real-life experiences, their stories to gain a better understanding which formed their narrative (Bolzman et al 2017). The intersectionality lens was going to explain the various layers to this person, as there is no such thing as a sedentary identity, which was also the case to argue against integration policies. A concept created by Kimberle Crenshaw; intersectionality was to raise awareness that people living in marginal lines was because of their identity but was

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<sup>3</sup> Personal interview with A. Abadi about Second Generation migrants on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019 in Leiden, the Netherlands

singled to one of these identities. Rather there many parts of their identity that is marginalised (Crenshaw 1991:1244). Crenshaw argues that this reductionist view of looking at identity is how “the social world is constructed” (Crenshaw 1991:1245). During an intersectionality talk, Crenshaw mentioned something quite striking where she said that intersectionality has allowed for people to understand their thick, descriptive dimensions of life<sup>4</sup> (Crenshaw 2019, public interview). These layers all form the being of a specific individual and how there is contestation between these identities. Either between the identities or towards other identities. Intersectionality uses characteristics which an individual may identify with and these characteristics then overlap, creating the complexities of social construction and reproduction. For example, the differences between men and women in various spaces and on top having physical features which are not considered Caucasian. I used intersectionality as part of my research through simply seeing identity as something not sedentary, that there are many layers which are contended with and some of those layers marginalising second-generation migrant youth. Intersectionality also in relation to the Dutch Society, particularly in the workforce that has been mentioned is predominantly white males.

In Crul and Heering (2008) they mention how not only does the country of origin have an effect but also the subcategories they also identify with like the Kurdish in Turkey. Also, Anthias (2009) says that there are many more layers when mentioning second-generation migrants. It was pertinent to use intersectionality in way to unpack these identities and their sense of belonging. Intersectionality is a tool I used to flesh out the complexities of these many layers in Relation to Belonging within the Dutch society. These highly educated second-generation migrant youth have many layers where they are being marginalised through certain identities like gender, ethnic background, and religion. The beauty of these participants is how they use these layers to their advantage, they turn the marginalisation into something positive, to stay true to themselves.

In trying to use these approaches, I chose a qualitative, personal interview method as the best way to collect stories and narratives for my research (Bolzman et al 2017). Through this method, I was able to collect more than just a verbal response but facial expressions, pauses and thought processes (Babbie 2016:317). Also, for the flexibility of the loose structure, a personal interview had, I was able to mould my research objectives into what the responses gave me, it created fluidity (Babbie 2016:317).

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<sup>4</sup> Public interview with K. Crenshaw on Intersectionality at the Rode Hoed, Amsterdam, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

## Ready, Set, Go

When I finally racked up the courage to write a template to explain my research and ethical implementations to the prospective participants, I was shocked that after I hit the send button how quick of a response I received. In my first week I already had four interviews lined up. I was ready to meet my participants anywhere in the Netherlands. My first interview happened on the start of a heatwave in the Netherlands in a warm Mexican restaurant in Amsterdam on my birthday. I was so nervous as to how things were going to happen and if I was cut out for this whole research. The friendly face who greeted me and his whole zest for life made it very comfortable and once again I was fired up and motivated to continue.

Reaching the restaurant, like all my participants I had no idea who I was going to meet. I did not want to come to the interview with any preconceived notions. Every participant I met wore a warm smile and was enthusiastic to help; a certain solidarity between university students going through similar feelings of writing up a research paper. After an introduction to me and the positionality of myself as the researcher within my research, many of my participants found it quite interesting that although very different stories there were similar patterns. I am South African, but I moved to Qatar when I was three, this place was my frame of reference to growing up. It was my life story. I explained to the friendly face in front of me that this going back to South Africa and being seen as a south African and being able to speak the same language, I was not the same. Nor was I perceived the same in the Arab culture, but I belong more to that than the South African culture. As I mentioned before, much self-reflection was done after each person's story. After some small talk to get comfortable with one another and to catch a breath before diving in, I would take out my trusty leather-bound notebook and mechanical pencil, ready to scribble away and listen to yet another incredible story.

I kept everyone anonymous as best to my ability where nobody's name was written in this notebook. I also decided to not audibly record the interviews; this was a practical decision as I knew that I would not have enough time to transcribe. It also forced me to keep attentive to the person in front of me and what they were telling me, almost making it as intimate as possible. It is someone's story and their personal experience, I wanted to keep it as respectful as I could.

The interviews I had with my participants followed a similar way, we had some coffee and they spoke about their life and the current issues revolving around identity and this feeling or non-feeling of being Dutch. I had a loose guideline which I mainly used to be able to get the conversation back on track as each participant had their own train of thought and

emphasised on various topics. The interview would follow the life course approach accordingly by of course starting at the beginning and then following the various stages throughout their life (Bolzman et al. 2017). The beginning of when they were not even born like where their parents came from and how they came to the Netherlands. I tried to focus on certain spaces like their neighbourhood, school, university and workplace if they were at a stage in their life pursuing their careers. Through the course of their life it was clear that there were distinct moments where there was some sort of disillusionment of when they did not feel like they fully belonged in the society they grew up in.

After the first participant it did not seem like an interview anymore, it became a conversation with similar experiences. With my life experiences I was pleasantly surprised that there were many commonalities between us. It became an exchange of stories and feelings which was so insightful and further gave me much self-reflection on my life and my narrative. With this exchange I needed to constantly remind myself of the reflexivity of collecting these stories and my own (Medved and Turner 2011:109). I needed to be alert in my own identity and relation to the young people expressing their identity (Medved and Turner 2011:109). This exchange ranged from two to four hours. It did indeed become draining, to focus on the person in front of you and the amount of information you receive in those few hours.

I met with 8 men and 7 women who had a variety of Moroccan, Kurdish, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Afghani, Tunisian and Surinamese backgrounds. I met some through an initial contact, Amir, who contacted them first and sent over the contact details of those who were willing to participate. Afterwards, I used the snowball technique and asked my already-participants if they could forward more prospective participants. Their ages ranged from 20 to 27. Out of this group, they attended universities across Leiden, The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Delft and Amsterdam; some already had a degree or were pursuing their first, second or even a third. They lived in various cities and towns across the Netherlands which demographically ranged from either predominantly ethnic Dutch or mixed migrant neighbourhoods. Although there was variety, all fifteen of these young people, had ambition and a strong sense of who they were.

A second method to add to this story was to review the policies that has created a vicious social reproducing cycle of this exclusion. I did this through a secondary data of reviewing literature revolving around Dutch Integration policies; public policies which have been using the allochthon and autochthon dichotomy and the current events pertaining to the Islamophobia within the Netherlands. This was in effort to place this story in the realities

of what is currently happening and what has led it to get to the specific position it is now. By implementing this method, I was limited to the bias of the published works, this already placed the integration policies in a specific context (Thompson 2017). Secondary data meant questioning which part of the population's opinion it represented (Thompson 2017).

Like my participants, my data analysis process became quite colourful, I manually highlighted the themes with various colours that came out of the interviews. Specific colours represented codes which painted the bigger themes (Basit 2010:144). There were themes that I did not even know that would come across. From my first interview I knew that my research was veering into an unexpected direction, looking back this made the process quite interesting as to how it kept growing and shaped with every interview. This correlated with the advantage of doing qualitative in-depth interviews where the research could be moulded and shaped along the way (O'Leary 2017:181).

I mentioned beforehand that the beginning of my fieldwork the response was quite fast and enthusiastic but as the month ended, I did struggle to find the last few participants. For this lag in finding participants I did have to extend my timeline but, I owe all thanks to my previous participants who were able to give me more contacts. It really became a snowball of participants collected along the journey to make a well-rounded finish.

## **Treasuring the integrity of people and their stories**

One experience in particular that made the process inspiring was, one morning in the Delft TU library café, I was conducting an interview. In the middle of the process, we were delightfully interrupted by a young man who overheard some of the conversation which he could not resist and had to talk to us about this topic of religion and trying to balance his parents' culture and expectations but also how he grew up in a country completely different. I asked him if he wanted to share his story with me and gladly accepted. This just showed how relevant these conversations were and how conversations could close the gap and reshape the negative connotation of the migrant community.

Also, it made me think about the ethical considerations of my research. I kept all my participants anonymous and never recorded their names to their stories. Their names have been changed in the present story and referenced in the following *appendix 1*. I struggled with how to go about this because it felt strange to me to name somebody who I met with another name and how to justify their pseudonyms. I decided that to keep in line with their narratives that I would ask each one to choose their own alias. We did meet in public spaces where people were able to listen to the conversation. Although most conversations were personal

and had personal political elements, I did have participants who did mention that they were not able to go back to their parents' country of origin because they were too outspoken about certain political issues; with that they were aware of themselves being watched. When discussing these issues in public spaces there is the risk of being associated to various causes, but I tried to create a friendly and comfortable atmosphere. I was trying to keep up with the ethics principle of Do No Harm. I tried to do this through my questions being broad and to read the room if a participant did not want to expand on certain topics. Part and parcel of this was by being aware of the 'dual imperative' when doing research about ethnicities and cultures (Birman 2011:156). This meant by keeping the balance between getting too emotionally involved by talking as friends and to keep it professional, as I was using their stories for research. There were two participants who asked me to not record a certain part of their interview. I respected their wishes and made it clear I was just listening and not writing. I also asked my participants to meet them in a comfortable place that best suited them so to ensure it was a comfortable and safe space to speak.

The structure of my questions was quite loose. This led to various conversations about many topics of which the conversations were not standardised in a certain way which may lead to certain participants focusing on certain points than others. Due to time constraints I was not able to fulfil part of my research design. Additionally, because of the specific time range, during the summer, I was able to meet up with participants in between their summer holidays. Therefore, I could not observe my participants in various spaces to explore their social participation part of their identity. Another implication that I noticed was that because it was the individual's narrative, they were the gatekeepers of how much information and feeling they would allow me to hear. This could be considered as an "achievement narrative" (Waldring et al. 2015) in which the individual tells me about their successes and rather not wholly focus on the discriminations or that discriminations are so subtle they do not realise or remember its significance.



## Chapter 3 The elements “to affirm the multiplicity and diversity of beings in Relation”

This chapter brings in various elements which guides the answers of this story to explore the many diverse layers that interplay with relation (Glissant 1990:XVII). Much has changed when I first started putting the metaphorical pen to paper. This change came when I collected these stories and started to realise the genre of the story as a whole. There were many elements I thought would interplay in these narratives but after listening to the fifteen stories I knew that there was one I had mentioned before coined Relational Belonging but the other came near to the end of collecting the stories which was Social Capital. I quickly realised that transnational and translocal concepts that I first developed in my proposal was ill-fitting to explain these stories.

Transnationalism was an effort to explain that a person who came from one place and living in another could feel part of both places, there was a connection to both places (Glick Schiller et al. 1995:48). Not only a strong national feeling towards both countries but a maintenance of cultural and social events and traditions (Huijsmans 2018:123). Translocal meant that there was a connection which was beyond a specific location or borders (Freitag and Von Oppen 2010:5). It popped into my head when I was on the train back home from one of my interviews that how could transnationalism exist if the individual felt neither at home or belonging to either countries. This extended to those who could physically could not go back to that country but still felt that it is a part of their identity. Translocal went out the door very quickly too, when I spoke to my first few participants who mentioned that they engaged somewhat of their migrant background but that they were not wholly involved in the diaspora community.

### Relational belonging

Edouard Glissant is the father of this theory; he beautifully opens the book the *Poetics of Relation* (1990) with some historical background. He paints a picture about the African slave trade and the torment the slaves had to endure from the beginning of their journey throughout their lives. These slaves settled in a new country with their descendants. Even though these descendants after multiple generations did not first-hand experience the same torment as their ancestors. There is still a relational feeling of this torment through the stories passed on and imprinted in their identities (Glissant 1990:7). “They live Relation and the clear way

for it, to the extent that the oblivion of the abyss comes to them and that, consequently, their memory manifests” (Glissant 1990:8). The use of this word ‘manifests’ carries a heavy weight when thinking about a person’s identity because it describes that there is this growth of this relation, it grows into an identity, another layer to these 15 stories.

Glissant argues, “it became something shared and made us, the descendants, one people among others” (1990:8). Relation is not about borders, it is not about a nation, but rather a shared feeling, a feeling that has been passed on throughout generations. Not only generations but also the relational feeling towards other second-generation migrants who are also highly educated. They become a Relation within the Netherlands. Relation explains how a multitude of identities and that identity in particular passed down from parents migrating to the Netherlands is not apolitical. It is formed through a struggle, a conflict of othering. This conflict is not necessarily from ethnic Dutch but because of their specific niche, migrant communities within the Netherlands where there is also some sort of conflict which also adds another layer to these fifteen stories.

Embedded in the political, Relation, is a way for people to retract into their genealogies due to these impermeable national borders (Diawara 2009). It is a feeling of collective sentiment, stringing a people together, creating an identity out of exile. Belonging need not be part of a physical location but belonging to a sentiment. Belonging is then something transient (Glissant 1990:14).

When reading Glissant’s words what struck me the most is his imagery about the Rhizome plant system. What makes this natural system so unique is that it describes a root system that does not have a main root but rather “a network spreading either in the ground or in the air” (Glissant 1990:11). This image takes identity as something that is not rooted, a counteraction against this notion that a root is associated with stability and firmness. Rather there are many enmeshed together to nourish the plant. I can take this one step further which proves that each part is equally important forming the fifteen people who sat before me and shared their stories. It creates a link between these second-generation migrant youth and their family’s migrant background. Through how they have been brought up, the stories and traditions. It is a link to other second-generation migrant youth who are also highly-educated through mutual feelings. Glissant speaks of this one root as a Eurocentric idea in order to justify settling down in one geographical space (1990:14). It proves that borders are not natural, that one identity is not natural, people are naturally inclining to have the desire to be transient- only then that is when a person becomes aware of themselves.

## Social and Cultural Capital

*“There is still something we now share: this murmur, cloud, or rain or peaceful smoke. We know ourselves as part and as crowd, in an unknown that does not terrify” (Glissant 1990:9).*

Pierre Bourdieu grappled with the dynamics of power in society (Claridge 2015). This dynamic is reproduced by society. Power was the product of capital, and capital was not accumulated from one source. Bourdieu (1985) argued that there were different types of capital like financial, being that there was a procurement of monetary assets. Another being social and cultural capital, the resources which is intangible, in forms of networks, social class and language (Claridge 2015). To differentiate between various types of capital, it would give spaces a multi-dimensional outlook instead of it purely being economical (Bourdieu 1985:195). That being said it creates the notion that because of this multi-dimensional perspective there is relation between these dimensions. As he says, “agents and groups of agents are thus defined by their relative positions within that space” (Bourdieu 1985:196).

He continues, “the position of a given agent within the social space can thus be defined by the positions of he occupies in the different fields” (Bourdieu 1985:197). The position of the said agent above intertwines with what I will mention in identity and the multi-layered citizen, as it becomes relational to themselves and society. These positions are also in the form of social classes and the resources of each class can determine a certain position (Bourdieu 1985:198). With my participants a part of this position is being of a different ethnic background and studying on a tertiary level which is uncommon in a Dutch context. Cultural capital is defined by Bourdieu as a form of education, formal; being the level of schooling and informal, which is embodied through family values, cultural traditions and could go as far as political parties (Erel 2010:643). Erel takes cultural capital further and divides it into national capital (2010:244). This where an individual conforms into the hegemonic culture in order to legitimise belonging, it could be in language, accent and even physical features. Cultural capital in a migrant context defines that culture that has been passed down from culture of origin.

“The social world can be uttered and constructed in different ways” (Bourdieu 1985:199). Social capital becomes redefined, when resources is looked at in a wider context. The person is able to reach to more people and cultures. Bourdieu mentions that to construct in different ways, the contributions of the individual is just as important (1985:200). This resonates with Glissant, who argues “the adventure of multilingualism and into the incredible explosion of cultures” (Glissant 1990:43). When taking these various forms of capital and

placing it within this social world it creates an individual that is able to transcend this capital into economic capital. Bourdieu argues that this can reproduce social hierarchies (Erel 2010:647). Within the context of these stories counter argues this fact. These fifteen individuals are gaining access to highly skilled jobs which places them within a higher social class, thus breaking status quo, redefining cultural and social capital.

### **Identity: a multi-layered citizen**

I use the words of Hicks to explain how identity is portrayed within this story: “we gain an understanding of ourselves and the world through the medium of interaction. We construct our understanding and learn about ourselves and the world by engaging with it. We construct our own reality, our own interpretations of how the world works, and end up with a set of beliefs about the self, others, and the world. The construction of reality and the beliefs that result from the process of “making” sense of the world change with development” (Hicks 2001:132).

“They [the individual] constantly perform in order to impose their view of the world – their social identity” (Bourdieu 1985:200). There is a grappling of where an individual fits in with society and politics, finding their place within. Yuval-Davis uses this whole notion of a multi-layered citizen to explain the complexity of this relationship, particularly when an individual is not part of the homogenous group (2010:120). She argues that citizenship has a much deeper meaning than having the rights towards a certain country (Yuval-Davis 2010:121). Thus, also fitting as to how identity and citizenship is constructed politically through policies like the dichotomy of the allochthon and autochthon. It is almost like it decides identity for a citizen. Yuval-Davis argues that citizenship includes “collectivities in different layers like local, ethnic, national, state, trans-state” (2010:122). These layers are formed by the connectedness between the various layers. There is also a connectedness in layers that are formed in spaces that are not necessarily tangible (Yuval-Davis 2010:124). Immigration has led to this multiple layered citizenship as a group from another nation-state and ethnic background come settle in another country and form “Diasporic communities” (Yuval-Davis 2010:125). Yuval-Davis mentions transversal-citizenship as something that is symbiotic to these many layers. Where an individual places their own position within society in connection with others (2010:131) this becomes quite fitting as these stories being told are from fifteen individuals positioning themselves within certain spaces, some of those spaces which do not wholly accept their identities. It is a counter-action to the homogenous view of citizenship, it celebrates that citizenship can be ever-evolving to have many definitions.

Identity and positioning of certain groups have created this ‘us’ and ‘them’ dilemma (Yuval-Davis 2010:132). This positioning thus creates a dividing line and with that benefits the homogenous group. It ties in with relational belonging as each layer of a citizen is in relation with another layer. The multi-layered citizen is also in relation with their position with others in various spaces.

## **Politics of belonging**

Belonging in the legal sense is when an individual is a citizen or owns the right to be part of the nation-state, their belonging gives them rights within its borders- “formal membership” (Crowley 1999:18). There is a sense of “commitment, loyalty and common purpose” (Crowley 1999:18). Migration has led to this concept of belonging to change due to the fact that outsiders are coming into the country, they are settling, forming families, and socialising within these borders, they soon become citizens too.

Yuval-Davis divides belonging in three segments, the one in particular, the most relatable to this study would be looking at the politics of belonging is social locations. This is where certain categories an individual will identify with and the way these categories interplay with one another but also, with other identities across the spectrum of power dynamics (Yuval-Davis 2006:199). Which identity is more fitting than the other within a specific context and historical significance and how important this contending power dynamics shifts and moulds these locations? Belonging is not only about the social construct and how the group is perceived by other groups, but there is also an element of the individual and their own cognitive processes to belong as an individual within a group or not (Yuval-Davis 2006:202). Belonging from the self can be constructed throughout history if we think about culture and the values behind each culture shapes identity and how this can be “forced on people” (Yuval-Davis 2006:203).

The political behind belonging is through this emphasis from the nation-state to preserve this notion of national identity and those who are immigrating to its borders have a one-sided process of integrating to that society (Favell and Geddes 1999:10). To bring the political to belonging gives rise to the legal framework of how belonging is shaped within policies and what the focus is of the nation-state. Furthermore, who is then excluded and on what terms they are excluded of (Favell and Geddes 1999:11). Belonging becomes political when these policies have shaped the notion of who belongs and who does not through the access to resources and the quality thereof – a political struggle to belonging (Favell and Geddes 1999:11). The politics of belonging always stresses the differences between them

and the 'other' (Crowley 1999:21) through the differences between culture, traditions and institutions which gives political leaders the fast hold that they can never belong due to these aspects.

Crowley speaks of, "belonging is an attempt to give a thicker account of the political and social dynamics of integration" (1999:22). Where it is possible to see this interplay between the legal, the citizen, the rights and how these fit into how social processes propose belonging. "Belonging is a property associated with these boundaries" (Crowley 1999:30) which shows that belonging can only be defined because of the presence of exclusion, there needs to be an 'us' and 'them' (Yuval-Davis 2006:204).

"What does exist is a space of relationships" (Bourdieu 1985:198); relational belonging, identity and politics of belonging is the foundation of this story, it links the individual stories to the realities happening within the Netherlands. It explains that integration policies in the Netherlands needs to acknowledge that there are more layers to citizenship, and an individual's identity has much relation towards the state, to themselves and to other citizens. An individual's identity is wrapped in the politics behind who belongs and who does not. Which leads this story to the next chapter which explains how integration policies are not allowing for these multi-layers to be incorporated in integration.

## Chapter 4 “Either the other is assimilated, or else it is annihilated”

To title this chapter I use Glissant (1990) to describe integration approaches and how fifteen stories are intertwined with integration. Fifteen stories are merely a few drops in a big bucket labelled the Netherlands. They are part of the second-generation migrant population who make up 8.9% of the total student population (Bolzman 2017:29). Historically, in the Netherlands, the image of a migrant has been placed in a negative light. The perception of the ‘other’ who is intruding and mistreating the social welfare, the job market and diluting the national identity (Bosma 2012:13). Migrants have settled, created families, and raised children in a dualistic way. These children have been socialised in a Dutch manner but also socialised in their family’s home. Thus, creating a cycle of integrating as much as possible but never being fully accepted. The image becomes like a broken record, stuck on a loop, screeching, bringing bitterness to those who must be in the presence of it.

Migrants do make up the bulk of the blue-collared jobs in the Netherlands due to the *guestworker* visas from mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Van Ours and Veenman 2003:740). Much of the literature published within the Netherlands has mentioned second-generation migrants of a lower social class interplaying with this image where there is little attention to higher degrees from research universities (Erel 2010:243). The negative image of the migrant does play a role in how futures are decided. Futures become murky when having to hit the wall closing off white-collared jobs which has served in favour of ethnic Dutch white males (Van Ours and Veenman 2003:740). Stories become even more singular when specific migrant groups like Moroccan and Turkish are targeted as the focal points and disregards the other diasporas living in the Netherlands.

### **Dutch integration**

The experiences of second-generation youth of migrant origins need to be contextualised within the framework of the Dutch integration policies. The Netherlands has quite an extensive integration framework; it has become quite well-known across the world for its emphasis on multiculturalism by aiming “to institutionalise cultural pluralism” (Scholten 2011:16) as a main ingredient to successful integration within the Dutch society. Fischler establishes that there is no longer an official policy only a framework (2015:7). Historically, the Netherlands is quite a melting pot of people who have migrated to its borders varying from colonial

migrants from Surinam, the Dutch Antilles to Mediterranean migrants like Morocco and Turkey which further concreted their settlement in the Netherlands once families were reunited within the Dutch borders (Scholten 2011:19). Thus, the approach to integration is to capture all migrant backgrounds but does not note those who are allochthon and autochthon (Fischler 2015:7). The Netherlands is perceived as a country who celebrates this amalgam of different ethnicities in its borders, yet there has not been a clear or certain approach towards these migrants within practice (Scholten 2011:18). Namely, the approach to integration is multicultural (Fischler 2015:8). Regardless of policy, there is no one-size fits all blueprint towards migrant integration because of this, many problems do occur within these gaps where migrants are often discriminated in various ways in different spaces for example in the workplace, the education system and residential neighbourhoods. Scholten states that what does occur in these gaps is that immigration integration takes form in what is valued by the society and the “specific normative conceptions of the nation-state” (2011:19).

In response to an integration framework, the Dutch Parliament addressed the importance of a shared ‘Dutch’ identity which those including who have a migrant background must feel included (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal 2013). The general focus of this address is through the importance of language, and civic of integration from new migrants to ensure that there is not a lost generation (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal 2013). With that it does mention those migrants who have been living in the Netherlands for a long time but does not refer to them as Dutch citizens or as second-generation migrants. There is a particular focus on the migrant youth living in the Netherlands and the problems being faced to this population. For example, the struggle to access to the labour market because of their migrant background. By addressing those who already live in the Netherlands as examples for new migrants, proves that second-generation migrants are still involved in the integration process. In addition, the parliament document mentions that there is a politics of belonging to those who have been living in the Netherlands for a long time. “Strange in the sense that they do not feel at home and accepted there, and strange in the sense that values are dominant that are sometimes far removed from their own values” (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal 2013). This is alarming that the parliament uses certain words in which it does not regard this non-belonging their fault.

Much of the dilemma to integration policies in the EU has been due to the focus on Islamic minorities (Duyvendak et al. 2005:3). There has been a spread of fear as Muslims make the bulk of the immigrants living in the Netherlands as there has been a growth of Muslim symbols in public spaces like mosques and wearing headscarves. This has led to a



growth of Islamophobia and a “retreat of multiculturalism” (Duyvendak et al. 2005:3). One example that brings it back to the struggle of a Muslim identity within the Netherlands is that, the government refuses to grant funding to Muslim organisations in which an individual cannot play out their Muslim identity (Duyvendak et al. 2005:9). This has led to integration policies and frameworks to have a negative impact in its aims. The first aim being of a socio-economic factor in the spaces of education, the labor market and residence and trying to combat the inequalities that have been experienced within these spaces. The second aim being of a socio-cultural factor which is to open up the space to welcome the different cultures (Duyvendak et al. 2005:5).

In practice it is shown within the fifteen stories told here, that yes integration was somewhat achieved but there were moments within the stories where although the individual felt integrated, the spaces would not allow integration to be possible. There is very little appreciation to welcome more cultures in the Netherlands as it has “rapidly become culturally homogenous and more uniform” (Duyvendak et al. 2005:9). This is not because of policy but rather because of the homogeneity in values the population has where difference in culture is seen as a problem. It is the practice of the policies where the problem occurs.

### **Integration is never truly the aim**

When placing these fifteen stories within the aim of integration in Dutch society, integration was successful according to them. Integration policies, the socio-economic aim, it states that integration is to happen in certain spaces like formal education hence, school (Duyvendak et al. 2005:5). My participants went to school feeling that they belonged in the society they were in and it was in schools where they were confronted with the reality of not fully belonging.

There was a stark pattern where stories correlated with teachers or teaching advisors who were the culprits of their non-belonging. Arin<sup>5</sup> who has a Kurdish background and is multilingual told me that in primary school, the Dutch language teacher asked her if she cheated on the test. For the teacher could not believe it possible that she can get the highest score if she knows more than one language. Teachers advised Ali to rather go in the lower tier for high school because it would be too academically challenging for him in which he scored high marks in the benchmark tests. He also mentioned that teachers would tell his friends not to play with him because he was a bad influence.

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<sup>5</sup> Alias 27 year-old female, personal interview July 2019

Diana<sup>6</sup> told me an interesting fact that the school curriculum for history does not even mention the slaves that the Netherlands had fault to. This gives the impression that the Netherlands almost ignores that there is such a thing as a racial discourse and dismissing it in something as big as a school curriculum it would be just as easy to dismiss people's belonging within the Dutch society.

Not only was it the teachers but fellow pupils who also commented on differences. In Ahmad's story, the turning point was close to the end of primary school. He physically fought back a fellow student after they commented that he goes back to his own country. He was preparing for a moment like this to come as he became well-versed in various martial arts from a young age. When speaking to Afeera<sup>7</sup> she told me that she knew there was a missing link but could not quite put into words, there were differences, but at school it was not necessarily welcoming to address these feelings. She mentioned that children would tease her about eating hot lunches instead of a Dutch lunch consisting of a sandwich. She even went as far as demanding her mother to buy bread so that she could be the same as her classmates. In secondary school, David<sup>8</sup> had moved to a predominantly 'white' school and was the only Muslim and immigrant student, it was difficult to find a connection with the ethnic Dutch children, they could not fully understand who he was. After 9/11 happened Samina<sup>9</sup> was called a terrorist and that her skin was 'dirty'. In retrospect she told me that the children said those things because of the place she grew up which was a predominant white village and they were not used to others looking different.

When analysing the level of integration within a residential space was trickier, I could not pick up on a specific pattern between the space of growing up and if that made a difference on how much more belonging it felt. Ahmad<sup>10</sup>, Ali<sup>11</sup> and Samina mentioned that they grew up in predominant white areas and could immediately notice they were different, but that did not make them feel any less Dutch within their own narrative. Rather I saw a pattern with those who mentioned they grew up in mixed immigrant neighbourhoods. Younes<sup>12</sup>, Abdul, Sadiq<sup>13</sup>, David and Mustafah<sup>14</sup> were one of the very few of the children out of their

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<sup>6</sup> Alias 23 year-old female from Kurdish and Turkish descent, personal interview August, 2019

<sup>7</sup> Alias 25 year-old female from Turkish descent, personal interview August, 2019

<sup>8</sup> Alias 23 year-old male from Bengali descent, personal interview August, 2019

<sup>9</sup> Alias 27 year-old female from Afghani descent, personal interview August, 2019

<sup>10</sup> Alias 24 year-old male from Afghani descent, personal interview July, 2019

<sup>11</sup> Alias 20 year-old male from Afghani descent, personal interview August, 2019

<sup>12</sup> Alias 22 year-old male from Moroccan descent, personal interview July, 2019

<sup>13</sup> Alias 25 year-old male from Moroccan descent, personal interview August, 2019

<sup>14</sup> Alias 27 year-old male from Turkish and Kurdish descent, personal interview August, 2019

neighbourhoods who went on to go study further at a research university Arin, Kenza<sup>15</sup>, Sadiq and Afeera also grew up in a similar mixed neighbourhood but mentioned that they were one of the first members of their families to go to a research university but did not mention whether this was the same compared to other neighbourhood children they grew up with. When combining these numbers, it shows that more than half of the fifteen stories had a similar setting and that they were a specific group of young people who in some sense were moving into a higher social class purely through their academic achievements. Though this analysis does not explain if there is integration or not but, it does show that second-generation migrant youth are stepping up to the plate and are fighting their way in.

The following analysis with secondary data and my participants' narrative shows how the framing of integration may intend to integrate but truly the way the average person perceives the person in front of them who does not fit into the homogenous group will not be accepted. Not only does this contend with these individuals but on other levels in which it proves that the metaphorical football game starts at 2-0. Where ethnic Dutch have the advantage because they are considered autochthon.

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<sup>15</sup> Alias 24 year-old female from Moroccan descent, personal interview July, 2019

## Chapter 5 “It’s a football game and we’re 4 points behind”

The following title of this chapter was a perfect metaphor told to me by Kenza to show that the space in which these young people have been placed within already starts with a perceived disadvantage. “They see the Moroccan first” (Kenza, July 2019). Physical features play a large role and the associations of having those features plays an even bigger role when thinking of all the negative connotations that interplay with the image of the Muslim-looking immigrant. Which Glissant speaks perfectly of what happens as “thought of the Other cannot escape its own dualism until the time when differences become acknowledged” (1990:17).

### **Spaces are never neutral**

Fifteen individuals told me about their growing up and what community they lived in, this varied from being mixed to very white. When they were children there was not much difference between them and their Dutch counterpart, they were Dutch too, it was their frame of reference. This is where the life course approach was fitting to gain this insight to those moments where this did change, these fifteen stories took a turn of disillusionment. How much they believed they were Dutch or tried to be Dutch, they were never Dutch enough. “Internal exile strikes individuals living where solutions concerning the relationship of a community to its surroundings are not, or at least not yet, consented to by this community as a whole” (Glissant 1990:19). It is always a battle in trying to prove yourself. By doing such, Diana and Yasemine said it is tiring of having to constantly give out disclaimers.

Diana who has a background in law mentioned that in Dutch law it states that no one should be discriminated against. In her story alone, it is evident this is clearly not the case. She had to defend herself from a young age, she had to become outspoken about her Kurdish culture. Due to political tension between Kurds and the Turkish it seeped into Dutch borders. Mustafah who also has a Kurdish background said: “The conflict also migrated between the Turkish and Kurdish”. Due to this transcendence of a conflict happening beyond borders, she also has to defend herself from other people with a migrant background. In such a way this speaks true to what Glissant (1990) mentions about having a relational sentiment in which as an individual existing in a different space, can relate to those who

experiencing the conflict in between the Turkish borders. It is like an individual cannot fully turn a blind eye.

Diana and Ahmad talked about the Netherlands and how it boasts that it is a tolerable and open society- they encourage individuals to be who they are. This is especially evident with various pride weeks and parades in big Dutch cities. Although this is only part definition of what it means to be tolerant and diverse. Diana used the example that whilst it was the annual LGBTQI Pride week during the summer 2019, it was in that exact moment they enforced the Burqa Ban. Netherlands uses the word, tolerable but that is the wrong word to use, because being tolerable means it allows something even though it does not agree with it. According to Mustafah the word 'tolerable' needs to be changed to 'accepting'. To be accepting is to acknowledge the struggles still faced on certain identities but also to be more active about the situation.

## Politics of Acceptance

*"I've been here 23 years and still feel like I don't belong 100%" (Ahmad, July 2019)*

Politics has indeed shaped who is accepted as Dutch and who is not. When approaching this topic during the interviews, it was a mixture of responses. There were some of my participants who were very involved in these political debates. Kenza mentioned that not only is it what happens in parliament but what is being portrayed on the media which has kept negating the migrant. It was mentioned that parliament should indeed reflect the demography of the country, which it does not do. Some participants even mentioned certain political parties who are standing up for the migrant community, demanding their presence within the Dutch government.

Younes, Samira<sup>16</sup>, Yasemine and Arin mentioned that they considered themselves lucky because their name was not as threatening. There have been known discriminatory acts against people with migratory backgrounds who have names that could not be easily pronounced and was considered stereotypically Islamic. They mentioned that some of their friends or acquaintances have fallen victim to this. Samira intentionally attaches a picture on her resume to show the recruiters that she does not wear a *hijab*<sup>17</sup>. As this gives evidence that she is more Dutch than her ethnic background. It also posits the fact that the freedom to express part of an identity which identifies with being Muslim cannot wholly do so in the

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<sup>16</sup> Alias, 23 year-old female from Moroccan descent, personal interview September, 2019

<sup>17</sup> A veil worn by Muslim women covering their head in public.

social space, it stops someone from being a multi-layered citizen (Yuval-Davis 2010). Another example some of my female participants like Samira and Samina told me was that they were considered to have more of a chance to get employed because the negative image of the immigrant usually involved the male migrant. By intersecting layers, being a woman which traditionally is someone who is marginalised, here she is not; it is an advantage compared to a male migrant. Being a migrant woman, adds to her social capital.

Even though the negative image of the immigrant has its own specificities of being Muslim and Arab-looking in which my participants with a South Asian background who do not fit into this image with their features slightly different, they still get put into the allochthon category. Abdul<sup>18</sup> who has a Pakistani background told me about a recent experience at university where a class discussion became quite heated where an ethnic Dutch commented and labelled ethnic minorities as ‘you people’, although it started as a joke it sparked the atmosphere and became nasty; it went far as “if you don’t agree then fuck off to your own country” (Abdul August, 2019). It got so out of hand that the class had to end early, but that did not stop the discussion; it went as far as forming WhatsApp groups. This shows that it is not one ethnic background that gets the grunt of the politics of belonging but rather everyone who is non-western allochthon is the Other.

This whole comment about if you do not agree then go back to your country is very confusing especially when speaking to second-generation migrants. They grew up in the Netherlands, there is no other country to go back to. Kenza who has a Moroccan background spoke of a similar sentiment and mentioned that if this is what is being shouted to you then of course a person is going to retract into their migrant community and integration stops there. It reproduces the exclusion. “Racism is not only words but a look, a feeling” (Sadiq August 2019). This feeling of non-acceptance, where neighbours who share the same country do not know one another because of the image and sentiment being thrown out into the public spaces. This reiterates the politics of belonging, where identity is classified, thus segregating groups (Crowley 1999:21). It defines who belongs and who does not.

David who has a Bengali background says: “I have to have a top level of Dutch in order for others to take me seriously”. In all of these fifteen stories, they spoke about how much more they have to do, they have to go the extra mile in order to be respected or even noticed from the homogenous group. They must navigate through their many layers to ensure that they portray the best example of not only their migrant background but also of their

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<sup>18</sup> Alias 24-year-old male, personal interview, July. 2019

Dutch identity; proving that they are just as much Dutch as an autochthon. It is about the allochthon migrant coming into the spaces dominated by ethnic Dutch, it becomes one-sided. Furthermore, the pressure of always setting an example of always putting the correct foot forward so that a person does become accepted. If not, then the negative image is reproduced once again. With politics of belonging it is a like a tightrope, very hard to keep balanced to reach the end but so very easy to fall off and have to start from the beginning. These young people need to navigate their identities well due to the pressure of not falling fault to the negative image that portrays them as ‘the other’ (Crowley 1999:21). For if they do then they are lived as the ‘other’.

### **“Diversity is just window dressing”**

When I asked Kenza about Diversity in the workplace and/or at university, she responded with the above quote. Initially when walking into my first interview I did not think this would be a topic of conversation. I was probing questions about certain discriminations faced in the workforce particularly at the beginning of the recruitment process. The participants who have a background in law, mentioned that the top Dutch law firms were extremely homogenous- there is a majority. This majority usually has blonde hair and blue eyes. This is immediately seen on the firms’ websites and social media pages. Participants did mention that there is a wind of change and companies are expanding to be more diverse.

Diversity is being recognised and realising that there are individuals who also have something to offer the company, celebrating the many layers an individual has to offer thus someone with a migrant background becomes an asset, a positive to the workplace because their identity is fluid and can shape into more contexts (Yuval-Davis 2010). Examples mentioned was through the application process which underlined that they encourage those with diversity to apply to the company. The classic saying a picture speaks a thousand words comes to mind, where words become empty, but photos are visual evidence of who they want to represent the company. Samira and Sadiq’s story countered this; where government-led departments and companies are much aware of the diversity and inclusion issue and has made great efforts to curb this by employing more people with migrant backgrounds. Kenza told me that the pressure of change has really only happened because of employees who believe the workplace needs to be inclusive. Additionally, referring back to the parliament document in which there was an address of the discriminations happening in the workplace (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal 2013).

Arin told me that due to this homogenous group within the workplace they have chosen to not go down this path, some have told me that when they research a company to apply for, when the photos show blonde haired and blue-eyed features and mainly males, they refuse to apply for this job. Yasemine has gone as far as saying she does not want to become a lawyer in the Netherlands because of the homogenous group dominating this space. When thinking back to Waldring et al. (2015) study on second-generation migrants dealing with discrimination in the workplace it proves here that discrimination is not only within the building and amongst position levels but begins in the application process. Where certain marketing tools has stopped young people from applying purely because they are not represented visually.

Another way it has been difficult to gain acceptance is through certain social norms which clash with their ethnic culture. Diana described that work colleagues would have alcohol at company events and would not understand why or be culturally sensitive to alcohol when there are Muslim colleagues.

I extended this question about their universities as well where Ahmad said that he regretted choosing the university he is attending due to there being a homogenous group, it is 'too white'. Younes and Yasemine said that they specifically chose their university because they knew it was more diverse than other Dutch universities even if it does not have the best faculty for their desired degree. Abdul transferred to another university purely because it was too daunting to be the only student with a migrant background.

## **You are an outsider**

All fifteen stories mentioned in their own words how they felt like a foreigner here (here being the Netherlands) and felt like a foreigner there (country of emigration). Their belonging in either borders were not extended to them. In both countries they were singled out as not belonging there. The Netherlands saw as coming from somewhere else and their parents' country of origin saw them as Dutch or European. Additionally, there were feelings that made them feel not even part of the ethnic community. If they did engage with the community then it was through their family or on the surface like food and gatherings. With this engagement they are still in relation with their migrant background, they share certain traditions (Glissant 1990:8). The migrant community also perceived them as foreign; this extends second-generation migrants who are highly educated into higher social capital because they have university degrees which gives them access to jobs which have been dominated by



ethnic Dutch (Bourdieu 1985). This also gives the sense of who also belongs within the migrant community, which these young people do not fully belong as well.

### **Feelings of not belonging here nor there**

The first few days Ahmad was visiting Afghanistan, it was nice because the majority looked like him. Very soon after that, that is the only thing that was really in common; frame of reference was different to his counterparts who grew up there. For Abdul, going back to Pakistan felt like home because it was similar to his upbringing in his home. Sadiq told me that going to Morocco is welcoming and yes, there is still a lot of his family who lives there but they do not understand his experiences. In the end there is only few off the surface commonalities that does not allow for participants to fully belong there as well.

Their experiences remind me of the quote, “the place was closed, but the word derived from it remains open” (Glissant 1990:75). Those with a Kurdish background, is where I saw the most of Glissant’s Relation purely because there was no country to go back to. When going back my participants felt that they could be singled out from the crowd of people by the way they presented themselves, the way they spoke, how they walked.

Mustafah who has a Kurdish and Turkish background stated: “I did not choose to stick with my community because it is a bubble”. Many of my participants had similar responses as they felt like because they studied further their frame of reference was different to the majority of their ethnic community. Inasmuch, they had more social capital and with that was moving into a social class that was rare for someone with a migrant background. The migrant community does not see Younes as one of them but rather as ‘white’ because he placed importance on his education and for that went to study at a research university. This has parallel patterns compared to Yasemine’s story in chapter 1 where she was regarded as a bounty. When growing up, Sadiq was teased by the neighbourhood children because he took school seriously and read many books. With a chuckle after this he mentioned that now, those children respect him because of his achievements. These comments which others perceived them as white interplays with their social capital because they are well-educated and regarded in a higher social class which has been classified as white (Bourdieu 1985). This also links with relational belonging through the conflict of not fully belonging in the migrant community it creates relational belonging in connection with the many identity layers (Glissant 1990)

## **Growing up in two worlds**

Although there was little engagement with the outer migrant community, there was still another culture that the individuals had to contend with and that was inside their parents' home. There was a certain role that had to be played. Akhria and Diana who are both 23 years old were thankful because even though they grew up with Muslim values their parents were still quite progressive and allowed them to do certain things which was not the norm within their migrant culture.

One aspect which came up in many stories was that these individuals had very little support during school. Many parents who did not speak Dutch that well or who did not attend school until matriculation found it difficult to help their children with schoolwork. These individuals had to figure it out by themselves compared to the ethnic Dutch pupils who indeed could seek help from their parents.

Ahmad and Ali's parents came to the Netherlands as refugees from Afghanistan. This reflected on how they were brought up with very little freedom but from their parents' perspective it was to keep their children protected and so they could not have friends, nor could they visit with friends after school. It was difficult to agree to this when they kept seeing their friends playing with one another at each other's homes and Ahmad and Ali could not. It was only later when they were older did they accept that was because of their parents' frame of reference that they were doing it to protect their children.

Diana has an older brother and in comparison, because she was a girl and her parents' culture that meant playing a certain role, there were things that she could not do which her brother could. One example she used was being in a relationship, this was not allowed and is an extremely delicate topic of conversation. "You learn to accept this" (Diana August, 2019). It is part of another intersectional layer adding to their identities and which social space each layer is brought out of. Seemingly so participants have been able to handle this well.

Samira currently 23 years old with a Moroccan descent, grew up in a similar household where because she was a girl there were certain things she was not allowed to do. Although as time has passed, she is now a young person who is living on her own. She mentioned this is quite rare in her migrant culture as children do not leave parent's house at a young age.

In the Dutch education system, it is assumed that no one will receive a complete perfect score in either a test or subject. For Abdul it was difficult to explain this to his parents who could not understand why their son could not obtain a perfect score. In Sadiq's (2019) family

home, Turkish television is always on and there is barely any chance for that to change, he has learnt to accept this, it is their way of holding onto their connections with Turkey and not entirely as important for him.

“Compared to my parents I’m Dutch-I share important values of the Dutch culture” (Mustafah August, 2019). Many stories had a similar way to explaining to me that they feel more Dutch especially in their way of thinking- many described it as ‘Dutch directness’ and with that came some tensions when speaking to elders. This was where the young person context in the different cultures came to some sort of clash. In their ethnic cultures it is important for the young person to listen and always know that the elder has the authority. This is not necessarily the case in the Dutch culture where young people are seen as more of equals. Arin who is 27 told me this is something she would like to help the older people in her Kurdish community, in using her western education to guide the older people to the certain government establishments to seek the help they need. Though it is difficult because the older people do not take to lightly to seek advice from someone who is much younger than them.

This whole notion of not really belonging anywhere serves as a good argument to Glissant’s metaphorical use of the rhizome plant system, where identity is created rootless; yet all parts are interconnected (1990:11). Afeera, a 25-year-old female with half Turkish half Kurdish descent sees her identity as something fluid. This links to Glissant’s metaphor but also adds to identity being made up of many layers like Yuval-Davis argues as a multi-layered citizen (2010:122). Ghorashi and Ponzoni find out in their study, similar patterns reflect that participants see their identity as the outsider as something to their advantage (2013:169). The next chapter is where I use this whole notion of many layers as an advantage through social and cultural capital. It is where all these elements create the individual as a whole who sat across from me during the interviews.

## Chapter 6 “Who I am now is because of my experiences”

Diana’s narrative with the above quote resonates with all my participants. During each interview, I immediately noticed that when they came to that realisation within themselves they are much more than only their features, they are forces to be reckoned with. “Its [Relation] always approximate truth is given in a narrative” (Glissant 1990:27). They are unapologetic about who they are: I’m me before anything else.

They celebrate all their many layers: “I’m very proud being Moroccan. I embrace it. I put it out there. I don’t hide it” (Kenza Personal Interview, July 2019). Younes with a Moroccan background and David with a Bengali background said that their migrant background is part of their identity, they cannot get rid of and should never be forgotten where they came from. In parallel with that they also added sentiments of being Dutch as this is the place “where I learnt my first words” (Sadiq Personal Interview, August 2019). The Netherlands is their frame of reference, it is a large part of who they are and an identity they associate with “I am Dutch first and Bengali second” (David Personal Interview, August 2019).

### **The Rhizome root system**

Sadiq has a Moroccan background says: “You can still integrate with your background in tact”. This sums up perfectly that being a multi-layered citizen is something natural. It proves that an individual can be both a citizen of one country and still be connected to another (Yuval-Davis 2010:121). This adds to Glissant’s argument that beings are transient, that identity is complex and interconnected (1990:14). “We are not prompted solely by the defining of our identities but by their relation to everything possible as well” (Glissant 1990). The root system used by Glissant as a metaphor to Relation, it can also be a way of portraying intersectionality within this story.

Intersectionality definitely played a large role in how my participants perceived themselves. They used their many layers as an advantage. It is how they redefine social capital, where someone with a migrant background has much more variation in context and in relation with others. Younes spoke of how better it would be to hire someone who has these resources to make the company better. One example was if the company has someone who knows of the Arab culture and can speak another language then you as the company can use

that employee to be able to relate better with prospective Arab clients. Samira is currently busy with a part-time job where she deals with citizen complaints. She is glad when she can receive the complaints of someone on the other line who has a migrant background. She is able to understand their problems and also understand their Dutch accents. Although participants did not feel wholly part of their ethnic community, there was some relational sentiment. Arin spoke of this through the connection between language and stories that were passed down from her parents and grandparents. Diana spoke of her mother's journey being Kurdish and had to flee their hometown in Iraq. When she spoke of the story, I saw how much she felt part of the story, the relational sentiment that was passed down from generations. It gave the sense that being related to such a strong woman figure, Diana was able to handle anything that life would throw at her.

Another way intersectionality presented itself in these participants is that they took the best from both worlds. They looked to the positives from each culture they identified with. Arin and Diana decided to take a course in Kurdish history and Samina is maintaining her Arabic in order to better understand a part of their identities. By doing so these women add to their social cultural capital; they are well-versed in many languages and they are educated in multiple cultures and history which lets them connect to more people (Claridge 2015). With that that they can reach into more social spaces (Bourdieu 1985); their identity becomes more transient (Glissant 1990:14). Thus, they are redefining social capital (Bourdieu 1985:200). All this they still keep intact with their Dutch identities: "I made sure I know the history of the Netherlands in order to connect" (David August, 2019). In some way to not forget that Dutch constructs a large part of who they are. It is not a juggle between identities, as for Sadiq, he is both Dutch and Moroccan.

### **“I know I am more than those discriminations”: The breaking status quo**

I use David's words to describe that status quo has been reproducing discriminations but as social and cultural capital is redefined, he is more than that image. Each individual regard that there is pressure they put on themselves to excel but also because of the spaces they are in. They are closely watched and one foot out of step ethnic Dutch say its 'typical' and the image is once again reproduced in a negative context. This relates to what Glissant called "All human cultures have experienced a classicism, an age of dogmatic certitude, one that henceforth all must transcend together" (Glissant 1990:79).

Some participants were part of much smaller diaspora like South Asians: “you’re a minority within a minority within a minority” (David August, 2019). Both David and Abdul mentioned that this negative image did not necessarily fit them because neither of the others with migrant backgrounds nor the ethnic Dutch could place them within this image. Although you feel even more left out because there is no sense of community within the Netherlands. Abdul even felt as strongly as saying that he would like to immigrate to the UK where he has family and there is a much larger Pakistani community. David who has a Bengali background said that: “We are in a weird position because we are neither black, Arab, white etc”. When David was younger, he felt like there were few role models in his community to look up to because of this position. Now, looking back he feels like he was brought up in two cultures because he was able to go to any social group and make friends, there was a connection in some way. There were more commonalities than one thinks, it just took the courage to get to know a group. He used his many cultures as an ice breaker.

Mustafah who is 25 years old with a Kurdish background referred to the relation between highly-educated second-generation migrant youth says that “outside our own views there is already a subculture. When you gravitate to those who are more diverse”. Friend circles consist mainly other students who also have a migrant background, participants felt they can relate best with them. There is a necessity for intellectual conversation but also understanding the parameters of one another. Afeera says: “I’m new Dutch”. Being Dutch should be defined as a togetherness of feelings and thoughts instead of physical features; The ‘us’ and them’ perspective needs to disappear, rather there needs to be a general ‘us’. This is exactly what the parliament document about integration speaks of, a shared Dutch identity. This separation between the autochthon and the allotchon is outdated and these second-generation migrant youth are an example thereof; they participate just as much in Dutch society. David shared his hope for a better Netherlands: “I have hope in my generation the definition of who is Dutch is becoming vaguer, the perspective if Dutch is changing”.

Some participants have become outspoken about these issues of discrimination that have impacted their lives directly or indirectly. They have been using platforms like Young Global People which is a recruiting agency which has a top priority of celebrating multiculturalism in the Dutch workplace (YGP 2019). Kenza a 24 year-old female is affiliated with this agency and explained to me the work they do. It is almost like an aide to inform companies about diversity and that it goes much further than putting a disclaimer that they

encourage ethnic minorities to apply. The atmosphere within the office that needs to be created to be able to include minorities.

On a university level Yasemine spoke of another initiative called ECHO which was a platform that used various initiatives to bring diversity policies to universities, companies and organisations within the Netherlands (ECHO 2019). The aim for ECHO is to give everybody the right to feel safe in certain spaces and for the space to be open to diversity.

Through these various platforms that some of my participants are involved in and through their own narrative it proves that they are changing the status quo. They are using their own social and cultural capital as resources and with the support of these initiatives mentioned, there is a silver lining and that change has been in motion.

## Chapter 7 “If I didn’t own a mirror, I would be Dutch.”

I open this chapter with something that really struck me when speaking to Ahmad, as it conclude this research with one sentence. I have no doubt that each of these fifteen stories will continue to be success stories. I do believe that with their narrative and their insight to their lives opens discussion in which it shows that spaces do need to become neutral. I hope that this research has been able to word these fifteen voices in a positive way.

My first research question was to gain understanding in what are the narratives of these fifteen people’s belonging and how has it changed over space in time. In answering this question I have led you through this main story in a way which shows how their narratives were when growing up, particularly in a school setting, the moment where these fifteen stories are disillusioned and realise they do not fully belong. The chapters evolve into how these fifteen individuals deal with these discriminations and turn the negative image into a positive one for themselves. They learn how to deal with both cultures within the various spaces, like their homes, ethnic community, the ethnic country, university and workplace. It is a space of relationships (Bourdieu 1985:198). By dealing with plural cultures shows their relation between others; what Glissant (1990) speaks of identities being transient and fluid. The story shows the journey of their narratives but also how it is positioned within the reality of the Dutch context. It gives rise to how their narratives of belonging are important to study because of the negative associations of the immigrant. Politics of belonging gives a deeper account of the interplay of integration (Yuval-Davis 2006).

The second research question has been answered through the secondary analysis of how Dutch integration framework has created the realities in general and how much of an impact it does have on second-generation migrants who should on paper be as integrated as an ethnic Dutch. “We’re fighting for something that is our right” (Kenza, July 2019). These fifteen stories have concluded that integration policies do play an integral part especially when it comes to those spaces like school where integration should be the main aim to alleviate social deprivation but rather exacerbates it through the influence of teachers and fellow pupils. It also extends the notion of what can be done in order to bridge this gap? How to deal with the practices of integration policies in order for the aim to be successful. In accepting identity as something with many layers, it gives account to succeed in the multicultural approach, the Netherlands says on paper (Yuval-Davis 2010).



“I want to be known as a person not just my parents’ background” (Afeera August, 2019). This shows that there are so many more layers that contribute to the individual, it deepens the meaning of what identity is. “Everyone should feel safe” (Diana August, 2019). These young people want to be seen as the human, the person who is unapologetically them, that differences should be seen as an advantage and a benefit within the workplace. Bourdieu (1985) speaks of the social world that can be moulded and reshaped, this is what these young people are doing; to construct the social world to be accepting, to see the individual as a whole. It brings the ‘us and ‘them’ to a genera ‘us’ (Yuval-Davis 2006:204).

“We have a long way to go, there needs to be changes” (Afeera August, 2019). Despite what has been through specific politicians and the general negative image of the immigrant in the Netherlands, there has been a wind of change when looking into the diversification of university and the workplace. Like Afeera says, there still is a long way to go, as the Netherlands is only starting to come to the realisation that there is a large part of their population who is misrepresented in certain spaces. Although much work still needs to be done regarding diversity. For now, it is only seen as a promotional tool and has not changed what goes on in the workplace and the preconceived ideas about ethnic minorities. Though it may be from an ‘achievement narrative’ which has shown that these fifteen stories show that, this has not stopped them from stepping into these spaces which have been dominated by ethnic Dutch or rather have taken the stand to almost boycott the system and use their expertise in other spaces or created new spaces. By doing so they have redefined social and cultural capital to their advantage, as they can reach and understand more contexts (Bourdieu 1985).

## **(Not yet) The End**

For now, this story comes to a close, but it does not mean that there is an ending. There is still much work which needs to be done in the Netherlands and to change an image of a certain ethnic minority is going to take some time to fix. The Dutch Integration framework addresses the issues but the in practice; acceptance needs to be improved. I have great faith in the fifteen individuals who have created this story that they will go far in life and succeed in whichever direction they set their minds to. I hope that this story contributes to the voices of change within the Netherlands and changes the practices of acceptance. With that the story is not finished due to the limitations mentioned in chapter two. Should it may continue, I hope that someone takes this story further and extend to the social participation aspect of the individuals’ narrative through observation. Furthermore, extend it to the diversity policies

of the Netherlands so that the dichotomy of the allochthon and autochthon can sing a different tune in where all is accepted, and a new Dutch is celebrated. By opening the space and be all-accepting, more people will be able to have the confidence to access social protection services. It could provide a happily-ever-after story to the future youth; to be confident about their migrant backgrounds and the importance of education. Additionally, looking into the education curriculum from a social policy perspective and create awareness of diversity from the beginning. Also, to deepen the understanding from those second-generation migrants coming from South Asia, in which this image does not conform to them but in somewhat way still discriminates. To extend this story with a further life course approach and look into these individual's lives in the future and to look back onto this story.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

<b>Changed name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Migrant Background</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>
Younes	Male	22	Moroccan	23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2019
Arin	Female	27	Kurdish	25 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Abdul	Male	24	Pakistani	25 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Kenza	Female	24	Moroccan	28 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Ahmad	Male	24	Afghani	30 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Diana	Female	23	Kurdish	2 <sup>nd</sup> August 2019
Afeera	Female	25	Turkish/Kurdish	2 <sup>nd</sup> August 2019
Sadiq	Male	25	Moroccan	7 <sup>th</sup> August 2019
David	Male	23	Bangladeshi	8 <sup>th</sup> August 2019
Mustafah	Male	28	Kurdish	20 <sup>th</sup> August 2019
Samina	Female	27	Afghani	27 <sup>th</sup> August 2019
Ali	Male	20	Afghani	27 <sup>th</sup> August 2019
Yasemine	Female	23	Tunisian/Surinamese	31 <sup>st</sup> August 2019
Ademo	Male	24	Turkish/Kurdish	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
Samira	Female	23	Moroccan	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2019

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