Graduate School of Development Studies

Ethnic Minorities' Schooling Experiences in the Netherlands:
An Explorative Study of the Perceptions of Young Ghanaian-Dutch People in The Hague

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Special Dedication

This research paper is dedicated to my late Dad. Daddy I never I knew how much I love you till you left us to be with The Lord. I miss you greatly. Till we meet and never to part in the Kingdom of the Most High God, Rest in Peace Daddy.

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List of Acronyms

CBS   Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek
(Central Bureau for Statistics)

EU   European Union

EUMC   European Monitoring Centre for Racism and Xenophobia

HAVO   Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs
(Senior General Secondary School)

HBO   Hoger Beroeps-Onderwijs
(Higher Professional Education)

IPED   International Political Economy and Development

ISS   Institute of Social Studies

MBO   Middelbaar Beoeps-Onderwijs
(Upper- Secondary Vocational Education)

Minocw   Ministerie van Onderwijs Cultuur en Wetenschoolap
(Ministry of Education, Culture and Science)

OU   Open University, UK

PO   Primair Onderwijs (Primary Education)

PRO   Praktijk Onderwijs (Practical Training)

PTA   Parents Teachers Association

UK   United Kingdom

VMBO   Voorbereidend Middlebaar Beroeps Onderwijs
(Pre-Vocational Secondary Education)

VWO   Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs
(Pre-University Education)

WO   Universiteit Onderwijs
(University Education)

Abstract

Ethnic minority young people in the Netherlands experience school as a key interface with the wider society and as a place of cultural encounters. Even though contact between a dominant and dominated group does often involve the disruption of the minority culture and assimilation into the dominant culture, the process in the Netherlands experienced by church-going Ghanaian ethnic minority young people is found in this research much more complex.

This research explores the perceptions and identities of a group of second generation young Ghanaian-Dutch in The Hague, The Netherlands as they interact with the Dutch educational system and their Ghanaian church community. It examines the types of ethnic/national identities adopted by these young ethnic minority people as they interact and engage with both Dutch and Ghanaian social and cultural systems of their lives. The subjective understandings that these young people have of their ethnic identities and being Dutch are depicted. Three types of identities are evident among the second generation - a Ghanaian-Dutch identity, a Ghanaian identity and an immigrant identity. These different identities are related to the different perceptions and understandings of ethnic relations and schooling in the Netherlands. Findings show their identities are fluid, varied and contextual; underpinned by historical, social, political and economic process which related to the incorporation of their parents into the Dutch system. Most of the respondents have a relatively positive experience of schooling while a few were neutral. The model of combining both a dominant and subordinate culture in their identity formation seems conceptually useful, but may overstate the tension felt by most of the respondents. Parents' social network such as the church plays a major role in their lives and provides support for ethnic and immigrant aspects of identities. But overall, these findings indicate a sense of integration into the Dutch society.

Relevance to Development Studies

The situation of Western ethnic minority young people is a matter of policy concern. The adoption of different integration policies may affect these young people in diverse ways, sometimes not favourably. The findings of this research will hopefully contribute to the ongoing debates on ethnic minority young people and education. By focusing on a specific group of young people, rich/thick accounts can be given that can question general stereotypes of young ethnic minorities and reveal how integration works in practice for them. It distinctively emphasizes the importance of listening and providing a social space for the voices of young people.

Keywords

"Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps, instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished historical fact…we should think, instead of identity as a "production", which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation" (Stuart Hall 1996:210).

Chapter 1   Introduction to the Study

1.1   Introduction

This research attempts to contribute to issues around identities and migrants'[1] second generation education debates by listening to the voice of young minority ethnic people. The significance of this approach is well expressed in the words of one of the respondents when probed for the reason why she does not like some of her teachers, she replies '*because they don't listen when I am talking*' (Miranda, age 15). The focus is specifically on Ghanaian-Dutch young people aged 14-17 ethnic/national self-identification and perception of their educational[2] experience in the Netherlands. The education system in the lives of these young people represents a key interface with the wider Dutch society and to some extent contributes to their integration in the wider society. At the heart of this research is what these young Ghanaian-Dutch face in having to make choices between the ethos of their school – which generally reflects the ethos of "modernity" and the dominant culture- and of their ethnic group. Specifically, this research explores the complex relationship between young Ghanaian-Dutch ethnic identity and their schooling experiences and the role of the larger social structure in that relationship.

1.2   Background

The education of young ethnic minorities has become a cause for concern in recent years. The position of non-western[3] migrants in the educational system is generally not very favourable experientially (de Graaf and van Zenderen 2009:2). This is a pattern that can be observed throughout Europe, and also in the Netherlands. Young migrants in particular, i.e. second generation migrants, often leave school early and risk exclusion from the labour market and society at large (de Graaf and van Zenderen 2009:2). Education plays an essential role in preparing the children of immigrants for participation in the society (Nusche 2009:3). Giving these children opportunities to fully develop their potential is vital for future economic growth and social cohesion of any country.

A core aspect of globalization has been the increase in international migration. This has given rise to increased cultural diversity and the formation of ethnic communities which could become *ethnic minorities* in many countries (Castle and Davidson 2000:54). Although, immigration has always been a part of European and world history, immigration since the early 1960s, has been attributed particular significance, in both academic and vernacular discourse (including popular culture and the media) as contributing greatly to transformation of European societies. This has brought about changes that

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[1] the study group, used interchangeably with minority ethnic people in this paper
[2] Or schooling
[3] In Netherlands, refer to migrants from outside the EU and Indonesia

have impacted on communities and neighbourhoods as well as on the post-Westphalia nation-state. The recent immigration is generally understood in cultural and religious terms, putting in focus the issue of cultural and national identity and resistance to integration as the main concern. This questions the basis of belonging to a nation-state, which post-Westphalian means being part of a national community of common history and culture (Castle and Davidson 2000: viii). This is more so with the birth of the second generation (children of immigrants), and the "shift away from 'immigrant population' to a non-white population with full citizenship rights" (Giddens 2006:506).

For many years, the Dutch took pride in the inflow of people to their country because of its relative tolerance towards other cultures and religions. But, in recent decades it has been struggling with the incorporation of ethnic minorities into its society despite being a pluralistic nation historically (Scholten and Holzhacker 2009:81). Historically, Pillarization was the key way of defining Dutch political structure during much of the 19th and 20th centuries (*ibid*, Michalowski 2005:1). This meant that pluralism was informally institutionalised by seeing religious and other groupings as pillars in Dutch society *(ibid)*. This pillarization was however, challenged by consequent migration starting after World War II which increased the growth of immigrant 'ethnic' minorities (Scholten and Holzhacker 2009: 81). The result is a modern version of pillarization which means that various societal sub-groups could have their own state-sponsored and semi-autonomous institutions (e.g. educational institutions) which could be used to preserve their own culture and group integrity (Vasta 2006:5) and identity.

Since World War II the Netherlands has received substantial immigration from different countries, mostly from its former colonies and "guest workers" recruited from southern Europe, Turkey and Morocco (Vasta 2006:3). As a result of these "complex and sustained inflows, the Netherlands has moved from a fairly high level of ethnic and cultural homogeneity to a remarkable degree of diversity" (Vasta 2006:4). In 2009, immigrants and their direct descendants constitute almost 20 per cent of the total population, and in some of the major cities (The Hague, Amsterdam, Rotterdam), non-Western minorities constitute more than one-third of the population (Scholten and Holzhacker 2009:81). Thus, migration seemed to have turned the Netherlands from a pillarised nation into a complex multi-ethnic society. With this also is the growth in the number of minority ethnic children, in Netherlands, almost 50% of the minority ethnic population is second generation (Dutch Statistical Year Book 2009:194).

These second generation children need good schooling and educational qualifications to have a chance at a decent life in these industrialised countries when they grow up. But "compared with Dutch students, their ethnic minority counterparts in the Netherlands have substantial educational disadvantages" (Eldering 1997:330 and Schriemer 2004:9). A possible explanation may be that catering for these second generation educational needs is not easy.Possibly due to a number of reasons such as difference in language and culture especially between home (primary socialization) and school, and inadequate response of

schools and educational institutions. These may contribute to the unfavourable schooling experiences of these children.

Hence, this research focuses on issues of culture, identity and ethnicity as possible dynamic responses to the conditions minorities find themselves in contemporary cultural pluralistic societies of the global north, especially in light of the porous cultural borders resulting from processes of globalization

1.3   Ethnic Diversity and the Second Generation: Ghanaians Migrants in the Netherlands

Since the guest worker and migration from former colony periods peaked in the 1970s, there has been a number of "newcomer" migrants coming into the Netherlands who exhibit different dynamics and face different contextual factors than these older migrant groups (Mazzucato 2006:9). Amongst the new migrants, the Ghanaians are a small group with 18,000 recorded by the CBS[4] as at 2003 (Mazzucato 2007:4). But this has been regarded as a gross underestimation given the number of undocumented migrants. According to Mazzucato, based on Ghanaians who registered to vote at the Ghanaian High Commission for the Ghanaian presidential elections in 2000, a more reliable estimate of the total number of people with Ghanaian identity in the Netherlands was 40,000 (Mazzucato 2007).

Most of the Ghanaian migrants are "voluntary" economic migrants, as distinct from the case of Moroccan and Turkish "guest workers" recruited to The Netherlands in the 1960s to help the country deal with a labour shortfall during a period of economic boom. Unlike this "unplanned" newcomers group, the guest workers faced different conditions when they arrived. Firstly, they were given official status upon arrival and were part of the state system from the very beginning. Secondly, they are now of pension age, benefiting from the Dutch welfare state, and have children of working age that form a sizable second generation (Mazzucato 2007:5).

Another distinction between the Ghanaian migrants, and other new migrant groups, is that "they had to contend with a state that from the beginning albeit to varying degrees, has wanted to keep them out" (Mazzucato 2006:9 & 2007:5). They started arriving in the 1980s when the economies of Ghana as well as of Nigeria, where many were working, were experiencing an economic downturn. This created a drive to search for greener pasture and a resultant heavy migration to Europe, Australia and North America (Bump 2006)[5].

Most of the Ghanaian migrants still fall within working year's age group (Mazzucato 2007:5) and are concentrated in cities of the Netherlands, including The Hague. They consist of both women and men of almost equal

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[4] Central Bureau for Statistics

[5] http://www.migrationinformation.org/USFocus/display.cfm?ID=381

ratio with the eldest of the second generation now at post-secondary school levels[6]. Furthermore, due to stringent migration policies of the Netherlands, a large number of Ghanaian migrants have "illegal" status (Mazzucato 2007:5). Moreover, the difference between migrants with 'legal' (documented) and 'illegal' (undocumented) status is predominantly based on the timing of their entry into the Netherlands reflecting the shifts and trends in Dutch migration policies throughout the late 1980s and 1990s (Mazzucato2007).

Furthermore, the fact that they are a relatively "newcomer" group and that many do not have documented status, means they make relatively little use of the Dutch welfare state (Mazzucato 2006:9). This situation of undocumented status was exacerbated in 1996 when The Netherlands began implementing a restrictive visa policy with respect to Ghanaians by requiring birth certificates to be legalized before one could apply for a long-term (i.e. non-tourist) visa. This policy, in a country such as Ghana where the registration of births only recently became common practice, required applicants to amend and create documents and this made it much more difficult for Ghanaians to obtain legal status in The Netherlands (Mazzucato 2006:11).

Thus, Ghanaians find themselves having relatively little experience of dealing with the Dutch state and to negotiate policy barriers. This is attributed to the perception that the Dutch government tends only to recognize and make polices for immigrants or minority groups from their former colonies such as Surinam, the Dutch Antilles and those invited as guest workers such as Moroccans and Turks. All other immigrant groups are categorized as Refugees and Others. Ghanaians, unfortunately fall within the last group i.e. others (CBS classification).

1.4   Relevance of the Study

What is the importance of listening to young people's voices and specifically taking into account their views and ideas in issues of education? Aside from being the primary actors in the educational system, Young people (younger than 20 years)[7] also make up a large proportion (24% according to http://statline.cbs.nl) of the total population in the Netherlands. Moreover, when considering minority ethnic groups, the second generation[8] which is the focus of this research is almost 50% of the total population of migrants; 1,625,171 out of 3,932,759 as at 2009 (http://statline.cbs.nl). Also, in general, the position of ethnic minorities in schools differs substantially on a number of points from the position of native Dutch students (Schriemer 2004: 3 &9). "Their position is characterised by low performance levels, few transfers to

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[6] from parent's interview

[7] CBS classification & definition of young person

[8] http://statline.cbs.nl: Someone born in the Netherlands who has at least one parent born abroad.

higher types of education, truancy and discipline problems, drop-out and unqualified school leaving" (Driessen 2000:55).

The Ghanaian migrants relatively seem to be less researched qualitatively and with less focus[9]. Research done so far on Ghanaians were surveys and transnational studies (see Mazzucato 2006, 2007) on effects of remittances and the linkages between the livelihood of Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands and the families they left behind in Ghana. Whereas there is quite a substantial number of research papers and media debates and attention devoted to larger minority ethnic groups' education such as Moroccan, Turks, Suriname and Antillean in Netherlands (e.g. Driessen 2000, Wirnkar 2000, Eldering 1989 and 1997), little or no attention is given to ethnic Ghanaians. Even less is known about the subjective aspects of young Ghanaians' experiences within the educational system, including their modes of ethnic or national self-identification, perceptions of schooling, aspirations for their future, cultural preferences, and how these may be related to more objective aspects of their experience, such as their school performance and language shifts from the mother tongue to Dutch in given social contexts.

The research focus on Ghanaian migrants partially fills a gap in studies on migrants, particularly second generation educational participation in The Netherlands because most studies have focused on guest workers and people from former Dutch colonies and their children. This group is relatively less researched in the Netherlands context and there is almost no study that aims to consider the experiences of this minority ethnic young people in school. In the absence of data to date, it is not known how Ghanaian minority ethnic students perceive school, or how their parents perceive their education.

Furthermore, reflecting on possible reasons for this paucity of research and hence modest information about this group brings to the forefront questions such as "is it because of the perception of Ghanaians as unproblematic; the commonality in religion being Christians in a country where Christianity is almost a state religion particularly as Islam is such a concern in the Netherlands; or because the Ghanaians seem to have a more positive presence in Dutch society". Do these reasons indicate to some extent the cause for the relatively under-researched state of this group? In addition, studies on migrants education tend to focus on the educational participation in terms of enrolment, attainment and completion rates and trends (e.g. Schriemer 2004,) *analysis of education in Netherlands* and adjustment experiences of the larger migrants groups such as the Turks, Moroccans, Antilleans and Surinamese (e.g. Cruel and Vermeulen 2003). Also, literature reviewed indicates that methodology for these studies tended to be questionnaire surveys (e.g. van der Veen and Meijnen 2001) and rarely the qualitative approach adopted in this research.

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[9] Most of the Literature on migrants showed focus on the larger minority group

1.5   Research Objective

This research aims to obtain insights into minority peoples' education by exploring the educational perceptions and experiences of 14-17 year old Ghanaian-Dutch second generation by listening to their accounts. It will examine how their perception of schooling affects their self-identification as well as their social relations and interactions. It will further explore the 'silences' and 'nuances' in the educational system and how these relate to young people of ethnic minority using secondary data in chapter three. Another objective is to contribute to the larger debates around minority ethnic second generation education as embedded in issues of integration.

1.6   Research Questions

In order to address the above issues, I have formulated the following questions and sub-questions:

What are the "silences" and "nuances" in an educational system that impact on young minority people's identities?

What are the perceptions of schooling of second generation young minority ethnic Ghanaians in The Netherlands?

- What aspects of these perceptions can be attributed to specific identity characteristics of being in the frontier of Ghanaian and Dutch cultures?

- What is the relationship of ethnicity to these young people experiences in and response to schooling?

- How is success in school related to their identities (identification)?

- Are there indicative implications for (their schooling) adjusting the Dutch schooling system?

1.7   Methodology and Methods

Qualitative interviews and direct observation methods were adopted to explore and possibly arrive at answers to the above research questions. This research focused on the perceptions of schooling experiences of young Ghanaian-Dutch people. Experience, according to (Scott 1991: 793) can both confirm what we already know by seeing what we have learned to see as well as upset what has been taken for granted. This research is aware of values students are actively exercising within their constrained agency in issues that shape their lives; in this case by the ways they interact and perceive the educational system as they go through schooling processes. This methodology was used because of the nature of the group[10] being researched, the purpose and the questions of

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[10] Difficult to access because of their migrant status

the research[11]; and the effectiveness of these methods in collecting necessary data.

This research is qualitative in nature because it is the most appropriate means of accessing the perceptions and experiences of the respondents. This approach allows for data collection in a natural setting sensitive to respondents being studied and embraces the idea of multiple realities (Creswell 2007:37). Evidence of the multiple realities includes the use of multiple quotes based on the actual words of different respondents and presentation of the different perspectives from respondents (Creswell 2007). Furthermore, voicing their perceptions opens up the space for recognition that individual experience is not lived alone but within a socially and historically constituted discourse (Bourdieu, 1977), about ethnic minority status, culture and identity. Finally, situating these experiences within a broader social, political and cultural discourse about minority ethnic identity allows us to gain a fuller picture of the affective impact of different educational practices on the quality of their educational daily lives and their capacity to participate in private and public spheres. Churches were used as entry point for the research and four churches whose members were predominantly Ghanaians were used. These churches also had youth sections with membership composition of 12 to 21 years old.

Emphasis on this young ethnic minority people's educational perceptions does not presume homogeneity in shared experiences of schooling or accuracy in reporting of real experiences. Complexities within and across groups arising from diversity among young Ghanaian-Dutch from different schools, socio-economic background, parents characteristics was recognised and consciously integrated as dimensions that will have bearing on the nature of their perceptions. These differences are understood as varying across different determinants of power relations, class, shaped by history, political economy and culture and also across the gender and ages of respondents.

Furthermore, the research focused on just one urban area of the Netherlands, The Hague. The primary focus of the research was among Ghanaian teenagers in this city. Despite the fact that there are other cities with Ghanaian migrants, The Hague has one of the largest number of migrants from this group[12] and has a distinct description of being called a cosmopolitan city as a result of the huge presence of embassies and diplomats (appendix1). Another motivation of the choice of this area was the convenience it afforded the researcher. As a resident of the city, had some knowledge of the workings of the city and could easily move from one area to another to locate respondents.

As this research study was intended to be a case study within the framework of a master's thesis, it was not possible to contemplate ethnographic research of the kind explained by Delamont (2007). Because of limited resources, it was only possible to attempt a small-size enquiry of the

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[11] To yield insights and in-depth understanding
[12] according to the respondent's parents

young Ghanaian-Dutch people's perceptions. A foundational epistemological position is that the respondents are experts' on their own lives and are capable of speaking by and for themselves.

Semi-structured interviews are a widely used observation methods in qualitative studies (Mikkelsen 2005:169), and was selected as most appropriate because it allows for in depth probing. It also offered high possibility for engaging sensitively with young minority ethnic people in exploring the issues at the heart of this research. According to Seale (1998:209), this method has limitations as a resource for collecting data. However, these limitations were overcome by conducting the interviews in the form of a *conversation*. This provided a great deal of *flexibility* in how the participants responded, allowing free flow of information. Sixteen interviews were carried out following an indicative set of questions (appendix2) over a three weeks period.

Also, to elicit a range of different kind of information about the sampled young people's educational perceptions; the content of the areas of questioning was designed to give information about differing schooling experiences, in a way that explores how dimensions such as belonging, aspirations and perceived identity are interwoven in individual experiences. Prior to the interview process, I attended and participated actively at church service sessions with the youth to build a relation with them as well as rapport, trust and familiarity.

Direct observation techniques were also employed in the data collection process to complement the interviews. This method was used to note the group dynamics in church; interaction amongst the young people and between the young people and the youth-pastor. It was also a useful method to examine their home and neighbourhood characteristics as well as body language and silences during the interview process.

1.8   Scope, Methodological Issues and Challenges

The scope of this research was limited in several ways including time constraints. It focused only on church attending minority ethnic youth of Ghanaian descent age 14 - 17 years of secondary school level. Ethnic minority originating from Ghana is purposively chosen as the target population because they offer a different perspective being Christians, to the dominant study of ethnic minorities in Netherlands which tends to focus on the 'religion/Islam' question. There were a number of challenges and limitations in the course of this research, key ones being methodological issues, access and availability of target group. These constraints resulted in some changes to the whole project. Hence, this research drew on "Situated Methodology" (Seale et al 2007:8), a researcher-centered view of the place of methodological rules on research behavior meaning methodology being adapted to research situations (Seale et al 2007).

During the fieldwork, one factor offering an opportunity was my status as an insider. Insider in terms of similar shared past as migrants in the Netherlands, mine, though being temporary, of West African descent, religious beliefs (Christianity), of colonies of the same colonizer (Britain). Also attending church youth service (my entry point for the research) with the

respondents bridged the distance and created a rapport between us especially because during the bible studies and discussions I actively participated and the respondents had enough time to interact with me. This made it easier to gain their trust.

However, there were also challenges such as the age gap between the respondents and me which limits my ability to understand how they perceive the issue. Furthermore, this research due to resource constraints could not investigate the views of teachers, and other stakeholders of education. I also recognise the diversity within the researched group and inter-sectionality of youth (e.g. age, gender, disability, class,) and I acknowledge the 'power-relations' inherent in social research processes, e.g. between 'researchers' and 'researched'.

The issue of access and availability is connected to the fact that I had few Sundays to make contact with the different churches since they were my entry point. Within options of eight churches, a purposeful random sampling was used to arrive at the choice of four churches to be used as entry points. Visit actually entails participating/attending a full church programme/service. Two reasons for this are, one, to build a relationship and create a friendly situation with some sort of familiarity as first timers are usually welcomed and given audience after the service. Secondly, it gives me opportunity to worship with my primary target group i.e. young people between ages of 14- 17 in the youth service (separate from the main service) and to be able to get appointments with them. Meetings were held with the youths at home at their convenience. This sometimes involved going to see them at night for interview as some had paid jobs they were doing and so could not be available before night hours.

Although, I managed to get the interviews needed for this project, I reckon more time could have facilitated a more thorough investigation of the research questions. Lastly, background literature about the researched group in the Netherlands context is almost nonexistent. This made it impossible to validate the information given by the subject group especially that from their parents' interviews.

1.9 Ethical Issues

All research concerned with human beings can pose ethical dilemmas (Giddens 1997:550) and "ethical-moral dimension" which particularly comes up during fieldwork (Neuman 2003:116). Efforts were made to ensure the highest ethical standards in researching these young people's lives. Necessary permission was sought from their parents even where the religious gatekeeper (pastor) taking care of the youths had granted same. There were one-on-one meetings with parents to explain what the research was about and to seek permission to interview their children. They were also assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

1.10   Use of concepts and terms

The research recognised that a range of terms are used to describe members of minority ethnic groups, for example, 'foreigner', 'allochoton', 'ethnic minorities' and 'minority ethnic people'. This research has retained terms used by respondents, official documents or in published literature. However, as a technical concept this research uses the term 'minority ethnic' and except where it is stated otherwise, the term minority ethnic refers to the focus group of this research.

1.11   Organization of the paper

This chapter has provided the background to the research, introduced the problem and outlined the objectives, questions, methodology and limitation of the research. Chapter two explains the main concepts used in the research and situates the research in the larger issues around ethnic minorities by reviewing some key theoretical perspectives that are relevant to ethnic minorities in general and young people's experience in particular; with the aim of providing an overarching analytical framework for the research. Chapter three starts the analysis by attempting to answer the first research question using secondary data; it looks at the Netherlands educational system particularly the secondary level; and the situation of ethnic minority people in it. Chapter four presents the findings and provides an analysis of the primary research data collected for this study as well as attempts to answer the second research question and sub-questions. Chapter five draws conclusions from the research and sets forth some implications of the findings and areas of possible future research.

Chapter 2
Theories and Concepts towards an Analytical Framework

2.1   Introduction

This chapter attempts to position the study within the relevant theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of understanding ethnic minority identities in general, and identities of ethnic minority young people in particular and how this possibly plays out in the educational system. These theories and concepts are expected and could be helpful in explaining the situation of young people's educational experiences in chapters three and four, connect relevant contextual factors to their schooling experience and also give an analytical framework for this study.

This research thus will draw from the Open University Framework of ethnic minorities' experiences and John Ogbu's Cultural differences and cultural frame of reference tenets (Ogbu 1994). First a brief explanation of the main concepts as used in this research.

2.2   Analytical Concepts

2.2.1 Minority Ethnic

As a central concept within this research, the notion of minority ethnic people/groups goes beyond the numerical distinction. "An e*thnic minority* is characterized by a low social position over a long period, mostly several Generations" (Eldering 1997:336) .Ethnic minority relations points to difference in power relations between dominant[13] and subordinate groups in the society. In this context, minority ethnic groups are people disadvantaged in comparison with the dominant group and may have some sense of group solidarity and of belonging together. The "experience of being the subject of prejudice and discrimination heightens the feelings of common loyalty and interests" (Giddens 2006: 489).

Thus 'minority' is used to indicate a group's subordinate position within a society rather than the numerical representation, i.e. to capture their disadvantaged positions such as used with women, who through this conceptualization can be seen as a minority group because they tend to be disadvantaged compared to men. Ethnic minority may see themselves as having identities apart from the majority group. But unlike women, minority ethnic people may tend to be concentrated in certain neighbourhoods, cities or regions of a country.

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[13] a group possessing more power, wealth and prestige

2.2.2 Culture

The concept of culture will be used in the way conceptualised by Stuart Hall. He argues that "Culture in social science context is used to refer to whatever is distinctive about 'the way of life' of a people, community, nation or social group or the 'shared values' of a group or society. Also culture is about feelings, attachments and emotions as well as concepts and ideas. More importantly cultural meanings are not only 'in the head'; they organise and regulate social practices, influence our conduct and consequently have real, practical effects" (Hall 1997:2-3)

That is, culture as a social practice, is not something that individuals possess. Rather, it is a social process in which individuals participate, in the context of changing historical conditions. It is the participants in a culture who give meaning to people, objects and events. This is a dynamic process as things 'in themselves' rarely have one, single, fixed and unchanging meaning (Hall 1997:3). It is by our use of things, what we say, think and feel about them – how we represent them- that we give *them a meaning* as contributors to identity formation. These "meanings are produced at several different sites and circulated through several different processes and practices" (Hall 1997:3). What Hall referred to as the cultural circuit. According to Hall, "Meaning is what gives us a sense of our identity, of who we are and with whom we 'belong'-so it is tied up with questions of how culture is used to mark out and maintain identity within and difference between groups" (Hall 1997:3). In other words, the question of meaning arises in relation to all the different moments and practices in our 'cultural circuit' such as the construction of identity and making of difference.

2.2.3 Ethnicity and Identity

While race can have a biological and fixed notion, ethnicity has been conceptualised as "purely social in meaning" (Giddens 2006:487) and socially constructed. According to Giddens, "ethnicity refers to the cultural practices and outlooks of a given community of people that set them apart from others" (Giddens 2006:487). Members of ethnic groups see themselves as culturally distinct/different from other groups in the society, and are also seen by those other groups to be different in return (Giddens 2006). There are different markers which serve to distinguish the group such as language, history or real/imagined ancestry, religion and styles of dress or adornment (Giddens 2006). Ethnic differences are learned and socialised. There is nothing innate about ethnicity; it is purely a socially constructed phenomenon that is produced and reproduced over time (Giddens 2006). Through socialization the young generation assimilates the lifestyle, norms and beliefs of their self-identified ethnic groups.

Similarly, Hall posited that ethnicity in imaginary community such as migrant's defines a new space for identity which examine differences and on

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the fact that every identity is placed, positioned, in a culture, language and history (Hall 1996: 118). However, like all terrains of identification, it has inherently dimensions of power though not as framed by the extremes of power and aggression, violence and mobilization as older forms of nationalism (ibid: 119). To many people, ethnicity is central to individual and group identity, though significantly varies between individuals. It can provide an important thread of continuity with the past and is often given expression through distinctive languages and cultural events (e.g. carnivals).

2.2.4 Power

Given the characteristic of this group i.e. minority ethnic people; it is worth looking at this concept in analysing this research. Power is a concept approached from different theoretical perspectives in the social sciences. A common one is from a Weberian view of focusing on power as a zero-sum game relationship of 'power over' where an increase in A's power means a corresponding decrease in B's power (Heiskala 2001:243). In other words, the ability to impose one's will on others and to insist on conformity with majority practices. Though some also distinguish between "power over" of Max Weber and "power to" of Talcott Parsons, which is a non zero-sum game but an emerging resource from cooperation between A and B over C (Heiskala 2001:243), in the ability to do as one wants. The issue of power cannot be neglected or ignored as it is intrinsically or explicitly connected with critical studies of social institutions, education and identity as well as issues of minorities and majority (subordinate and dominant groups' relations and interactions), and cultural differences.

For purposes of this research, the analysis made by Lukes, (1974) would be used. Lukes talks about how authority operates through three dimensions of power. The first dimension considers **power as decision making**, where agent "A" influences the behaviour of agent "B", while registering resistance from agent "B" (Luke 1974 in Lorenzi 2006:88). This dimension of power could be necessarily limited in schools for all students. Lukes says this is the most public of the three dimensions and it is the manner in which many authorities want to be seen, that is the power to make policy decisions but after widespread consultation with opposition parties and the wider public. The second dimension, that all students experience, considers **power as agenda setting or non-decision making**, whereby "A" defines the agenda, preventing "B" to voice his/her agenda. The power in school is a good illustration of this dimension of power, the actions of deciding time-value, curriculum, and teacher training all involves agenda setting. This is the power that authorities use to control the agenda in debates and make certain issues unacceptable for discussion in moderate public forums. The third dimension considers **power as thought control or ideological power**, whereby "A" defines what counts as a grievance in such a way that "B" accepts that s/he has nothing relevant to raise (Luke 1974 in Lorenzi 2006:91-93). This is a key aspect of the three dimensions, which is the power to influence people's wishes

and thoughts and make them accept things opposed to what would benefit them.

This understanding of power dynamics could help explain the social relations that influence young Ghanaian migrants' views of their education especially understanding the mode of incorporation of these young people's ethnic group into the dominant society. This may also help in examining their perceptions of interactions of power relations such as interactions between teachers and students, relationship between schools and homes and that in intergroup interactions. How these perceptions of relationships have constrained or facilitated their participation in their schooling.

2.3   The Open University[14] Framework

The Open University (OU) minority experience framework (Open University 1982:) propose a   model of interacting systems for the study of ethnic relations which: Allows for the ongoing dialectic relationship between the dominant and subordinate groups; acknowledges the interaction between objective and subjective experiences and incorporates the relationship between individual interaction and collective mobilization. Though conceptualised for the relationship between the UK context and migrants from Asian context, it can also be used in explaining other ethnic relations between dominant and subordinate groups in other country settings, in this case the Dutch context and the Ghanaian minority (figure 1). For this research I will focus on the first two relationships of the OU model as more salient to the research purpose.

The OU model posits that ethnic minority relations between any dominant ethnic group and subordinate minorities can be conceptualised as an interaction between two socio-cultural systems within a common context. Whilst the understanding of this context involves an analysis of the historical processes which led to the migration and settlement of the particular minority into a particular setting in the host country. See, for instance, John Ogbu's classification of minority groups into 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' according to their migration history (Ogbu 1994:372-373). It therefore, situates these relationships within geographical, historical and political boundaries. It departs from the often rigid and reified notions of 'culture' and 'identity', to focus on the positive, dynamic and flexible nature of cultural processes (Open University 1982:125-126) which agents engage with as they create their realities.

What this may mean is that ethnic relations between the Dutch indigenous ethnic group and Ghanaian migrant minority can be conceptualised as an interaction between their socio-cultural systems within a common context of the Netherlands and one common context for the young Ghanaian-Dutch people will be school. Furthermore, each of the socio-cultural system represents a symbolic system comprising a distinct value system; constructed reality and a distinct set of economic, social and linguistic resources such as

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[14] Milton Keynes, UK

Ghanaian specialised products business, social network, language and same ethnic peer group. For instance, one possibility is the common thread in the friendship composition of the respondents – mainly minority ethnic people.

Figure 1: Identity Formation in the OU System[15]
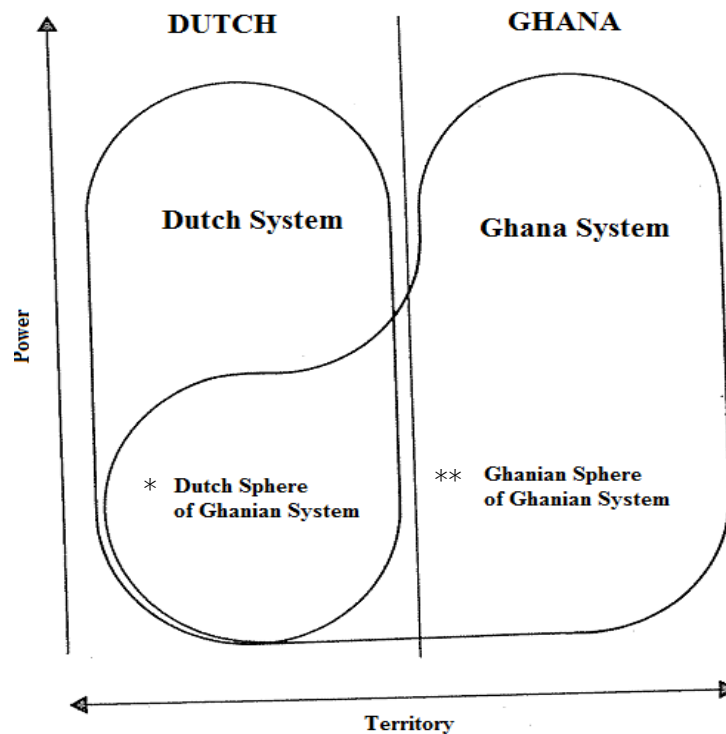
*Experienced by people with Ghanaian identity markers

 **Differing distinctive identity markers

Adapted from Open University Minority Experience framework 1982:126

Figure 1 shows the power (social) relations between the Dutch system and Ghanaian migrant system. The bottom – Dutch Sphere of the Ghanaian system represents their minority status as migrants and reflects their position in the Dutch system. This could be used to represent the possible objective determinants of the interaction between these two ethnic groups such as their historical, political, economic and social relations (OU 1982:127). It could

[15]The figure has been adapted to reflect the current research group of Dutch and Ghanaians from the original British -Asian relationship

represent the subjective perceptions of each collectively in their definition of the boundary between the two systems (e.g. religious, aspirations, social status). This subjective perception of the other person's or group's culture thus mediates objective experiences of difference between the cultures in contact. For the subjective exist in relation to the objective dimension in a dialectic relationship (Freire 1970:22). The interaction between these two dimensions, the objective and subjective, produces the 'reality' experienced by the individual in their daily lives (Freire 1970:22).This reality is dynamic and complex.

Moreover, each of the systems is made up of many non-ethnic identity systems interacting with each other, and these are most strongly influenced by their relationship with the systems they are in closest contact to/with. Thus, possible creation of relationship of complexities and multiple identities such as intersection between class, age, religion and ethnicity (figure 2). All individuals are hence, continually utilizing a mix of different identity 'markers' which change in importance over time and from one situation to another. New identity markers come to have greater personal meaning or are imposed externally while other identities are held temporarily and utilised only for instrumental purposes (OU 1982:127). The figure can also symbolize the different types of self- identification and to represent the individual's shift from one to another according to the constraints of the situation or change over time (OU 1982).

Figure 2: Markers of identity
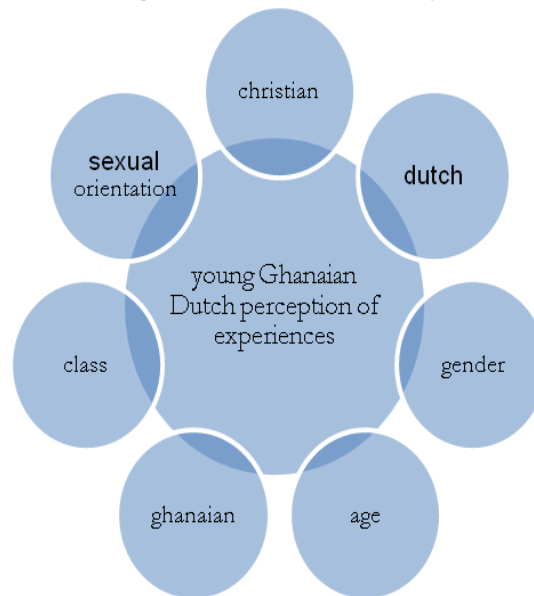
Source: research concentrates of ethnic markers by researcher

2.4   Dynamics of Ethnic Relations

The significance of ethnicity as identity marker grows when two cultures are in contact in a common context (such as a school). Perhaps, "political imbalance and cultural distinctiveness" (OU 1982:125) are two possible objective criteria that distinguish cultures in contact: This ethnicity then could involve changes in both the dominant and the subordinate cultures. Ethnic relations may therefore, be a dynamic, reactive relations between the two sides of the equation – both the majority and the minority- where the majority dominant group may play a   determining role such as the economic and political determinants of the position of the ethnic minorities.

Minority ethnic young people can be seen as attempting to balance the challenges that come from their self perception and identity construction which might come from the interactions of two socio-cultural ethnic systems. These ethnic young people may also try to maintain a consistent picture of themselves and the social relationships in which they are involved and like other young people may also encounter difficulties. However, "a potential difference which derives from the process of ethnicity is that minority young people are not just synthesising combinations of different part-identifications from two systems into a new mixture but are likely using any of the sets of cultural resources available to them such as meanings, values and manipulate their difference from one set of resources to another to maintain a consistent picture of themselves or deploy ethnic identity differently in different contexts" (OU 1982: 141). The space and situations where the two cultures meet that present the greatest potential for conflict and the greatest chance for creativity. In this case the schooling environment where both systems meet and the young people have to construct an identity for themselves.

2.5   Ogbu's Cultural Differences and Cultural Frames of Reference

Cultural differences as a key concept in today's multicultural society can help in understanding social interactions between dominant culture and the various other cultures in the society. This will also be helpful in understanding ethnic minority young people's social interactions in the context of their perception of educational experiences.

John Ogbu, in his study of minority education from both a comparative and cross – cultural perspectives found that there are differences in social and cultural adaptations that have implications for schooling of different population. According to Ogbu, the ethnic minority young people's school experiences and that of the dominant group arise in important part from the status of the minorities and what this implies (Ogbu 1994: 365 -6). In other words, for ethnic minorities, it is not "merely cultural differences" that distinguish minorities educational experiences. Their experiences could as well be influenced by other factors generated by their minority status such as their *cultural frame of reference* (Ogbu 1994: 366-7). Cultural frame of reference relates to "the correct or ideal way to behave within a culture –attitudes, beliefs,

preferences, and practices considered appropriate for members of the culture" (Ogbu: 375). In essence, how they may perceive and interpret the cultural differences between them and the dominant group; and how this impacts on their interactions" (Ogbu 1994: 367).

According to Ogbu, one needs to distinguish among the different types of minority status and cultural differences, to explain differential performance as well as in this case perception of schooling. The distinctions between *voluntary* and *involuntary minorities*[16] and between *primary* and *secondary cultural differences* he thus used as explanatory concepts. Ogbu posits that Voluntary minorities do not have experience persistent schooling difficulties, no matter what their primary cultural differences from the dominant majority and people who have the most difficulties with schooling are involuntary minorities (Ogbu 1994: 372-373). These difficulties potentially come from the responses of involuntary minorities to their forced incorporation and subsequent treatment, especially their formation of oppositional identity and oppositional cultural frame of reference. Such responses constitute secondary cultural differences. These are "qualitatively different and lie in the nature of the relationship between the dominant group culture and the culture of the minorities" (Ogbu 1994:375) unlike primary cultural differences, secondary cultural differences do not predate contact between the minority and the dominant groups; rather, they are responses to the difficult nature of the contact (Ogbu 1994: 376). While the primary cultural differences arise "because members of two populations had their own ways of behaving, thinking and feeling before they came in continuous contact with each other or before members of one population began to attend schools controlled by members of another population"(Ogbu 1994: 374).

Analysis of Cultural Difference such as those that minority children in urban industrialised societies and children from non-western societies attending western- type schools bring to educational experiences suggest that one should classify cultural differences in the educational context into three types: *universal, primary and secondary* (Ogbu 1994:374). Young people must make a transition from home culture to school culture, regardless of whether he or she comes from a Ghanaian or Dutch home. Transition involves adjusting to new cultural and language behavioural requirements: new social relations; new styles of language use or communication and new styles of thinking. Universal cultural differences are universal because every child that goes to school must necessarily leave a home culture for the school one. Voluntary migrants such as the Ghanaians have immigrated only relatively recently and mostly for economic reasons; tend to be more positive about their chances in society and about their children's schooling. They stimulate their children to adapt to

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[16] Voluntary minorities are people or/and their descends who had moved voluntarily to the Netherlands for e.g. economic purposes while involuntary are those incorporated into new society against their will e.g. American Mexicans incorporation by conquest

school culture, even if this means that they have to give up their own language and other cultural characteristics.

2.6   The Approach

This chapter has presented the frame for the research with special reference to the interactions between cultures in contact in the context of migrants groups. To address the research questions, a critical cultural framework was adopted rather than the race relations model that reifies race. This approach can allow for the exposition of issues of lived experiences related to making meanings and examine the recognition of identity as a significant aspect of young people's perceived 'belonging' as narrated from their lived experiences. Issues related to immigration, minority position, and ethnic-cultural backgrounds would be interrogated to identify the linkages. This framework also tends to show ethnic minorities as heterogeneous groups which construct their identity contextually. Such a theoretical gaze allows a more nuanced analysis of the stratified and tangled system of the experiences that affect the identities of these young people.

Chapter 3   An Interface with Society: the Netherlands Schooling System

3.1   Introduction

Prior to the empirical investigation, a focused literature review was undertaken to possibly provide a context for exploring the young Ghanaian-Dutch second generation perspectives on their participation in education in the Netherlands. Thus, since the Dutch educational system is a point of reference and in order to offer a deeper understanding of some of the issues discussed in the research, this chapter provides the schooling context of migrants in the Netherlands. It describes and interrogates some general facts and structure of the Dutch educational system particularly the secondary level which is the institution this study sample is involved. It also analyses minority ethnic educational situation and second generation participation. This hopefully will set the stage for the next chapters.

3.2   Schooling System in the Netherlands:

Aside from the universal basic culture of education, each country has its own specific culture which informs its educational system. The Netherlands has a unique schooling system (Maier 2002:1). The Dutch education system has its historical roots in the country's '1848 Constitution' (Dutch Eurydice 2007:1) and has always shown a variety of influences particularly religious ones (Eldering and Rijcke 1983:xxiii). Education in the Netherlands is generally State funded and under the overall coordination of the Ministerie van Onderwijs Cultuur en Wetenschoolap[17] (Minocw). Under the Compulsory Education Act, children are obliged to attend school full time from the age of 5 until they turn 16 (Dutch Eurydice:7). This means that it is 'mandatory for children to attend 8 years of primary school followed by a minimum of three years further education' (Dutch Youth Policy 2008: 23).

A distinctive feature of the Dutch education system is that it combines a centralised education policy with the decentralised administration and management of schools. With due regard for the provisions of the Constitution, central government creates enabling conditions for education through legislation, which applies to both publicly and privately run institutions. Other responsibilities are shared by the provincial and municipal authorities, in the form of statutory supervisory and judicial duties for both public and private schools but to different degrees. All schools, both public and private, are governed by a legally recognised competent authority and who is the body responsible for implementing legislation and regulations in schools. The competent authority or school board of publicly run schools is the

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[17] Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

municipal authority while the privately run schools is the board of the association or foundation that maintains it (Dutch Eurydice 2007:10-11).

Another feature of the system is the freedom of education and educational institution found under article 23 of the constitution (Dutch Youth Policy 2008: 25). This implies that civic organisations have the right to established educational institutions based on religion, lifestyle or pedagogical-didactic principles according to their own design and organisation methods. The Netherlands thus have a wide range of schools based on a broad variety of orientation and denomination. Funding of these schools by government is on equal footing without any distinction made between public (government promoted) and private (religious, lifestyle or pedagogical-didactic promoted) (Dutch Youth Policy 2007:25)

Notwithstanding the apparent positive outlook of the system, there are two important factors within the educational system worth mentioning. These are the concentration and segregation of ethnic minority students (Schriemer 2004:9). Concentration in schools means that at certain schools there is an overrepresentation of ethnic minority students. This overrepresentation has caused some parents, perhaps of native Dutch origin to decide not to place their children at such schools because of the 'imbalanced composition of the student population' (Schriemer 2004:9). This flight to schools with a more balanced composition has created segregation within the educational system, such that the schools are referred to as "white' and 'black' school (Schriemer 2004:9). A likely implication of this is the reinforcement of the inter-school differences but intra-school homogeneity outlook which the educational system emphasis.

3.3 Secondary Education in the Netherland

Secondary education follows on from ordinary and special primary education (Minocw 2009:2) and children can choose between four different types of secondary education. These different types either prepare them for work or for further education (Youth Policy 2008:24). Since 1999, the secondary system comprised schools providing four types of secondary education (Minocw 2009:8) namely, (I) VMBO[18]-pre-vocational secondary education; (II) HAVO[19]- Senior general education; (III) VWO[20] – Pre-university education; and (IV) PRO[21] – Practical Training.

Admission to any of these four routes is majorly determined by school boards from the students' performance and abilities established at the primary

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[18] Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroeps Onderwijs- 4 years studies
[19] Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs – 5 years studies
[20] Voorbereidend Wetenschoolappelijk Onderwijs – 6 years studies
[21] Praktijkonderwijs
These different type of routes can be found in mixtures in each school site except the PRO which stands alone

level (Dutch Eurydice 2007: 52) and to a lesser degree by students and parents' choice. The PRO route is the only terminal type of secondary education and prepares student for manual occupations; VMBO, HAVO and VWO prepare students for further education. The VWO have three strands: the Atheneum (modern secondary school with mathematics and economics preparing for scientific education); the Gymnasium (classical secondary school with emphasis on languages) and the Lyceum (education is either classical or modern). While the VMBO which was introduced in 1999/2000 to replace VBO and MAVO comprises four learning pathways: the basic vocational programme (BL), the middle management, vocational programme (KL), the combined theoretical and vocational programme (GL) and the theoretical programme (TL) (Dutch Eurydice 2007: 9).

Figure 3: Organisation of the Educational System in the Netherlands, 2007/08

= compulsory education
= partial education

1 primary education (PO)
2 pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO)
3 senior general secondary education (HAVO)
4 pre-university education (VWO)
5 practical training (PRO)
6 secondary vocational education (MBO): ½-4 yrs
7 higher professional education (HBO-bachelor)
8 university (WO-bachelor + -master)
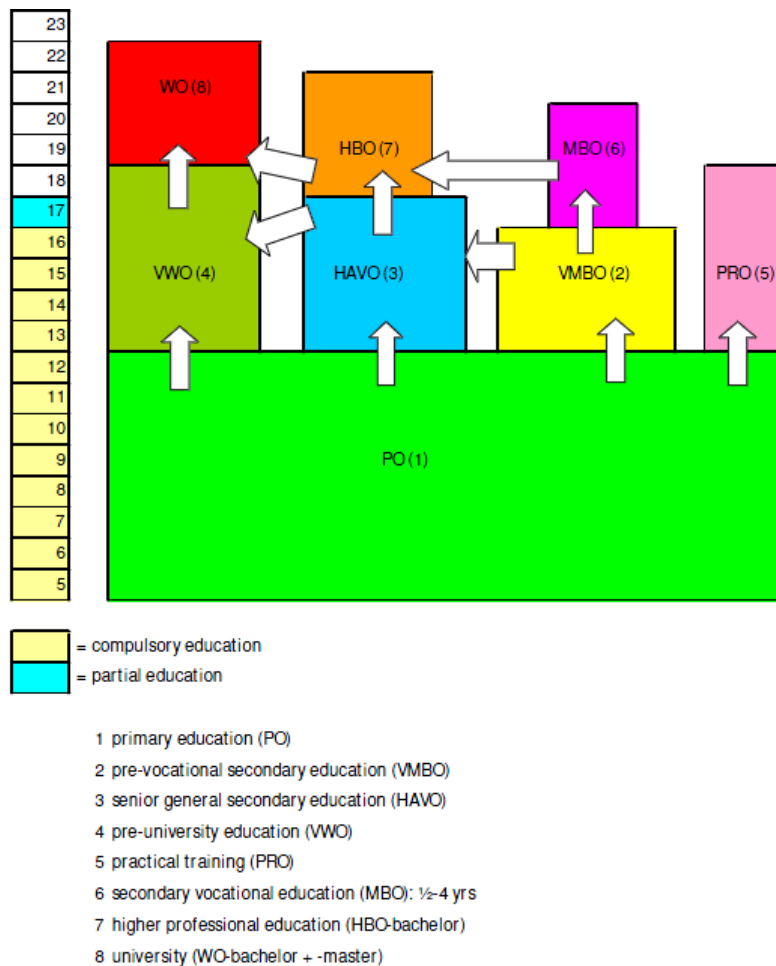
Source: Eurydice 2007: 158, The Hague, Netherlands

As figure 3 indicates, the Dutch secondary education is a layered system with the possibility of both vertical and horizontal movements within the system. This easy mobility between the different routes was the main aim of the Secondary School Act of 1968 and revised 1998 (Dutch Eurydice 2007:

50). Notwithstanding that there are different routes to move through the system, the most efficient and ideal would be to move from a primary education to a certain type of secondary education followed by either a vocational study (MBO), practical university (HBO) or an academic university (VWO).

Furthermore, the secondary education distinguishes between two stages of lower years which are of a foundational nature (basic education), the first two years of VMBO and the first three years of HAVO and VWO; and the upper years which prepares one for further and university education (Dutch Eurydice 2007: 9). The different type of secondary education all have the same minimally required number of periods in the lower years (*ibid*) meaning that the students, all things being equal have the same amount of time for other activities e.g. jobs or games. The emphasis at this time is on acquiring and applying knowledge and skills, and delivering an integrated curriculum. Teaching is based on attainment targets which specify the knowledge and skills pupils must acquire.

The upper years of secondary school encompass the 3rd and 4th years of VMBO, the 4th and 5th years of HAVO and the 4th, 5th and 6th years of VWO. The upper years of HAVO and VWO are also known as pre-higher education (VHO). In HAVO and VWO, teaching centres on the 'studiehuis', an approach to teaching where the emphasis is on independent learning where student work increasingly on their own, under the teacher's supervision. The amount of work pupils are expected to do is expressed in terms of study load (the time required by an average pupil to master a particular quantity of material). This includes preparation and self-study at home as well as attending lessons (Dutch Youth Policy 2008, Minocw 2009). This pressure arguably could have a 'downside' bias in terms of discouraging academic achievements by more socially challenged students who perceive themselves as academic failures.

3.4   Ethnic Minority Education in the Netherlands: Ethnicity and Types of Schools

Students distribution over the types of secondary schools according to group origin can best be compared on the basis of the school rolls in secondary year three (Minocw 2009:94). This is because the position in the third school year tends to provide a good indicator of the distribution of pupils across the different secondary school types. In the third year, most students would have made a final choice for the type of school they wish to continue in (Minocw 2009:94) In most cases, ethnic minority pupils are overrepresented in VMBO, and within this category, they are in the lower practical level (basic and general vocational education) aimed at basic occupations. Ethnic minority pupils are underrepresented in senior general secondary/pre-university education (HAVO/VWO), at around 10% (http://statline.cbs.nl). Also, "the distribution of ethnic minority children over the various forms of secondary education, appears to correlate with their parents' educational and employment level and length of stay in the Netherlands" (Tesser, Mulder, and Van der Werf 1991 in

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Eldering 1997:343). It also "depends mostly on their achievements in primary school and the teacher's advice on which secondary education to follow" (Eldering 1997:343).

Moreover, Pupils from non-Western foreign extraction tend to often enrol in a VMBO programme than native Dutch pupils and non-Dutch pupils of Western origin (Schriemer 2004:25). One explanation for this may be the issue of transition from primary to secondary where the primary school authorities advise students on secondary route to follow. According to Minocw (2009), within VMBO, non-Western minority people tend to opt for the lower level programmes and it seems they also likely qualify for learning support (LWOO) more often. Perhaps, this tendency could be related to their over-representation in the lower-level programmes, where a larger proportion of pupils qualify for learning support. In 2007/08 school year, 43% of non-western ethnic minority people in the third year of secondary school were enrolled in either the basic vocational programme or middle-management vocational programme.

An additional key aspect of minority students schooling is the type of recognition accorded them by the state in respect of those accepted as needing additional resources at school level. For instance, The Netherlands collects data on students with reference to "non-Dutch ethnic background", independent of citizenship status. Different terms, such as "ethnic minorities" or "cultural minorities" as well as "allochtonen" are used interchangeably (Luciak 2003/2004)[22]. An ethnic minority student is defined as someone, who was born in one of the target group countries or someone, who has at least one parent born in a target group country, a country from which most emigrants tend to be socially disadvantaged. Since not all countries of origin are regarded as criteria for disadvantage, certain countries have been selected as "target" countries (e.g. Turkey, Morocco, Surinam, and Netherlands Antilles) but not Ghana. The definition of target groups is part of the policy on disadvantaged peoples. This group are provided an extra school budget for purpose of overcoming collective learning lags (Luciak 2003/2004). Thus for the non-targeted but still vulnerable groups, this could create a net easy to fall through the system and perhaps to a non academic stream or being lost in the system.

3.5   Conclusion: Nuances and Silences in the system

Schools tend to be both a mixture of "universal modernity" as manifested in the seemingly sameness of schools globally and national cultural specifics. The main issue though is sorting out where the global ends and the local begins. A possible implication is that young people will be affected differently. For instance, compare to Moroccan-Dutch, Ghanaian-Dutch teenagers may well feel not as "alienated" by the local manifestations while on the other hand

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[22] http://www.inst.at/trans/15Nr/08_1/luciak15.htm

native Dutch teenagers may experience the global as somewhat "alienating" but not the local context.

In the local context of the Netherlands, the constitution has enshrined educational freedom by guaranteeing individuals and organizations the right to establish independent schools without prior approval from government or the church and by creating institutional limits on government intervention in that sphere (Dutch Eurydice 2007:14). This may have resulted in de-facto mono-cultural schools in a de jure multicultural system, with young minority ethnic people suffering from lack of sensitive recognition of an aspect of their identities.

The system seems to encourage and emphasize differences between schools but not within the schools themselves. Even though, there are substantial differences in educational level among the ethnic minority groups as well as between men and women (Eldering 1997:338). The issue then from a young Ghanaian's standpoint is whether the system is relatively poor in coping with intra-school diversity? An explanation may be that while other parts of society in the Netherlands have become more integrated, "pillarization" may still be a "prominent feature of the Dutch educational domain, despites strong secularising and post-modern tendencies" (Sturm et al 1998: 281). The Dutch pillarized educational system is reproduced in the sub-cultural segmentation/compartmentalization of education on the basis of different religious or philosophical Weltanschauungen[23] and this can be traced back to the 17th century (Sturm et al 1998: 283). There may still be school pillarization anchored on the Dutch history of religious and philosophical differences whereby multiple pillars representing the different groups were created in every sphere of the society including the educational sphere. Schools are thus approached as culturally homogeneous entities without worthy considerations given to the multiple complexities within each of these entities. A key challenge of this is the different cultural and ethnic background of the young people and their minority status. Young people are involved in a complex social interaction of creating their reality. The school, given the amount of time spent in/on it, seems to be a significant context where these young people are involved in various forms of social and power relations and interactions; and a possible arena for display of their identity(ies). Hence, the system needs to be flexible enough to accept difference within schools and within groups - minorities

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[23] World Views

Chapter 4   Ethnic Minorities' Schooling: Listening to Young Ghanaian –Dutch: Issues and Findings

4.1   Introduction

This chapter focuses on the narratives of young Dutch ethnic minorities of Ghanaian descent. It analyses these narratives in response to research question two and its related sub-questions. The analysis is based on the researcher's interpretation of the responses from the respondents using the conceptual framework outlined in chapter two. Thus, focus will be on the cultural differences and frame of reference of these respondents in the context of Ghanaian and Dutch socio-cultural systems while analysing this relationship within the process of their self- identification. However, schooling experience is a complex issue and cannot be reduced to a cause-effect argument. As the interviews indicate, there are variations in the identity(ies) formation, perceptions and opinions of these young people. Nonetheless these categorises of analysis: Ethnic identification, Cultural differences and influences; Structural issues and perception of schooling experiences; Cultural diversity and preferences; Attitude to Schools; and Dynamics of Power in Schools can help to understand the range of experiences of the respondents.

These identities formation of the respondents indicates a "process of becoming" by means of interactions within the schooling process. Schools are seen as sites of intercultural interface and encounters where these young people relate to their ethnic minority culture/group and the dominant culture/group as well as where identity transactions are likely to take place. However, this research tries to preserve the richness of what the respondents said by privileging their words in this paper. This is justifiable, since the research seeks to explore the experience/perceptions of young Ghanaian minority ethnic people in Dutch schooling system.

4.2   The importance of listening to the voices of minority ethnic students

The literature available is dominated by statistical studies of young people's lives from adult perspectives, For example, their performance in schools (van der Veen and Meijnen 2001); school dropout and unemployment (de Graaf and van Zenderen 2009), issues of discrimination in EU educational system (Gundara 2000 and Driessen 2000) and the experiences of Moroccan students (Aula Zero[24] 2006). These reports are written by adult researchers about young people. What is noticeable is the paucity of material owned by young people,

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[24] Swedish project on integration possibilities

gives prominence to their voices; in which 'they speak for themselves'. A similar point is made by various feminist scholars in respect of gender relations and women's social role and the lack of women's experiences from women themselves in discourses (e.g. Scott 1988, Harding 1992) and so the need to privilege their voices in research.

4.3   The Respondents/Interviewees

A total of 16 individual interviews were conducted in this research including 4 with parents. However, only 11 of the 12 from the young people will be used for the analysis as these have been found to be most relevant to meet the objectives of the research. The age range of the respondents is between 14-17years and were all born in the Netherlands with eleven of them born here in The Hague. Though it will be useful to give an in-depth description of the young people in this research, the possibility of a detailed description revealing their identities informs the need to maintain brevity and confidentiality in line with research   ethical responsibilities (see Ryen 2007), hence a moderate description (appendix 3) using their first names (for which consent was obtained) is provided.

4.4   Ethnic Identification

Although to a different degree, a common feature shared by the respondents both boys and girls, is their commitment to the values of ethnic social system. However, for some of them the duality of their socialization is clearly evident in their responses and body languages. The issue of ethnicity and their identity is important for the respondents. While some had a strong self-perception of their ethnicity, others seem to get this from how other people view them. When asked questions on this issue, most of the respondents responded first that they were Ghanaians. But after some probing two modes of identification were apparent: Ghanaian-Dutch and strongly Ghanaian. With further probing their responses indicated that they construct their identity contextually depending on where they are at a given time such as when they are with friends other than Ghanaians they feel Dutch and when they are at home they feel Ghanaian. How they perceive themselves while at school have mixed reactions as some only feel Dutch when they are at school while others feel more Ghanaian. This reflects identity fluidity across the two cultures they are in contact with and less on the issue of citizenship. They seem to be more committed to the norms and values of their ethnic system than the larger dominant system.

Strong ethnic identification was expressed by Anita, Bridget, Francis and Kelby. Anita with a big smile when she was talking about how she sees herself

> I am 100% Ghanaian. I feel proud of being Ghanaian I do not feel Dutch …… I do not think Dutch people feel Dutch as they also copying other culture (Anita, age 15)

I feel Ghanaian. Even though I live in the Netherlands I am Ghanaian …..
Only when I speak the language I feel Dutch (Bridget, age 16)

I see myself more as a Ghanaian. I talk mostly Ghanaian or English. I only
feel Dutch at school like when we were ask to do something Dutch and I do
not want to and my teacher told me that actually I am Dutch (Francis, age
15)

I see myself as a black boy. I am a Ghanaian (Kelby, age 14)

Strong Ghanaian-Dutch identification was expressed by three of them though they responded that they were neither fully Dutch nor fully Ghanaian but sees themselves in the middle range. Thus they construct their identities from the two different social systems.

I feel (laughs) both of them and that is something I like. I can't really feel I
am Ghanaian or Dutch as I just feel a bit of everything both of them so I
can't say one and I like this very much. And if I am somewhere I feel
attractive like a Ghanaian then I am Ghanaian and other place I feel Dutch
then I am Dutch. So depend on where I am so I am (Hannah, age 17)

I see myself as both, because I was born here, raised here so I have the
values of the Dutch culture. But my father is Ghanaian so he teaches me the
Ghanaian culture so I just think I have both of them (Sandra, age 16)

Some did express a middle range but favouring one over the other

I have both Ghanaian and Dutch but I feel myself more as a Ghanaian
(Miranda, age 15)

Another factor affecting their identity formation is how they are perceived by others such as in school by teachers. There were responses of how teachers approached them based on their ethnicity and the colour of their skin

I feel Ghanaian because of the way the teachers approach you. If you are not
white then they see you as a foreigner and approach you like that (Samuel, age
17).

These young minority ethnic people can be seen as attempting to balance the challenges that come from their self perception and identity formation/construction which might come from the interactions of two socio-cultural ethnic systems (OU 1982).

Hence, the significant issues of internalization and identification. These young Ghanaians internalize to a large extent the skills, language and values of the Dutch system. They identify with aspects of this system through effective participation in the context of schooling, involvement with particular people including their peers and role models. However, due to their strong primary socialization of their Ghanaian system in the culture of the Dutch sphere, the major conflicts of identification are with representatives (e.g. youth-pastor) of

their own ethnic group. In resolving these conflicts they often use the resources of the other system while only partially identifying with it.

4.5   Cultural differences and influences

In the context of this research, cultural differences and frame of reference in relation to the respondents' perception of their schooling experiences were reviewed. Issues of language, young people and parents' expectations and value placed on schooling were considered. However, it is noted that there is the danger of generalizing the effect of culture on schooling which may lead to stereotypes, which in turn may lead to erroneous conclusions about individual students' abilities and intelligence (Nieto 1996:137). "Culture in these instances is treated as a product and not a process and viewed as unchanging and unchangeable" (Nieto1996:137). Although culture is integral to schooling process, it affects every individual differently. For instance, it may be true that Ghanaians might share a heritage that includes a strong sense of ethnic kinship such as the church network, but this culture may not have the same effect on every child. Nevertheless, culture can be a primary means to understand differences amongst minority groups and issues of identity. This is emblematic in the divergence between the parents' orientation and social situation on one hand, and school and dominant societal ethos on the other. The mutual interdependence and connectivity between these factors have a critical influence on these young people's schooling experiences.

Cultural differences in schooling could be especially apparent in language differences. Language has been posited as a central component of culture and the key repository of cultural values and meanings (Hall 1997:1) and so interacts with it in numerous ways. Narratives show that these young Ghanaians live in distinct spheres (e.g. school, home, church) of social activity in which they employ different combinations of cultural resources according to context. For them school and home represent two distinct (sub) cultures the Dutch and the Ghanaian cultures respectively (see OU framework), but at this age they have become adept at switching their ways of interacting according to the setting and /or the person they are relating with. This is evident in the different languages as well as non-verbal communication resources of these cultures that they utilize. For instance, when they speak Twi and English at home and church, and speak Dutch in school and with friends.

However, since they are the only ones in their families with access to both systems, they are the only people also with direct knowledge of these skills and strategies. The places and situations where the two cultures meet that present the greatest potential for conflict and the greatest chance for creativity. In this case the schooling environment where both systems meet and the young people have to construct an identity for themselves.

Furthermore, their narratives also show that their cultural frame of reference is Ghana, for instance, when they talk about educational opportunities available and the differences between life there and in the Netherlands

When I am in Ghana I am Dutch when I am here I am Ghanaian. I can't really describe it just a feeling but I think it is because when I am there and see the poverty I see I have lots of money but when I am here 'I am just there' (Emmanuel, age 16)

I have got this opportunity, many Africans they can't go to school like back home in Ghana, in Asia and other poor countries children can't go to school. So, me sitting in class and can learn something is very good. I can give my child, my great grandchild this because my parents did not have this. When I go to Ghana and see my cousins no school so I feel so thankful for this opportunity to go to school (Anita)

This is also illustrated from responses from Bridget's Mom as she talks about the importance of involvement in the children live through participation in school activities such as the PTA and when the school invites parents, as means of checking on children

Anything they ask you as a mom or parent you should go. Sometimes if you do not go you won't know what they are doing over there and especially your child. Sometimes some children are very stubborn, they don't listen and they do whatever they want at school. Netherland School is not like Africa. Africa the teachers can use cane to whip the children but there it is not like that. So sometimes if you do not go to their meeting you will not hear anything as a parent. You will think everything is ok with the child but later you will see that it was not like that. So anything they will ask especially when they say they have meeting you have to go as parents.

Thus the participants have to constantly adapt themselves to the given environment they find themselves daily as they are members of two cultural systems with different values and culture which is aptly reflected in the differences between their home and school culture.

4.6 Structural Issues and Perception of Schooling Experiences

This explores areas of how respondents' schooling experience blocks or helps to enhance their aspirations, relationship with teacher and parent involvement with their schooling- meetings, homework. This will be presented in relation with (identified causes of shared and differing perceptions of schooling) range from relatively positive and relatively negative experiences.

4.6.1 Aspiration

Majority of them agreed in the affirmative that school helps them in their aspirations but attributed it to particular teachers not the whole school. As a respondent, who is repeating a grade expressed

Yea I have a few people like my class coordinator (class head teacher) that help. He also teaches me Nederlands and he is just one of the best teachers I think I have .I think that help me. You see I am doing 4 VWO the 2nd time

and he is just pushing me and just giving me the extra time to reach my goal If he push you, you have confidence and you can reach where you want to go (Hannah) .

Some though felt school helps a bit, one reason is because these respondents' expression was that they were not sure what they wanted to be or do and so cannot say if the school is necessarily helping or not.

I feel school help a little bit. Not really know what I want to do but I would like to study to sell houses. (Emmanuel)

I really don't know what I like to be but if God wills I would like to follow law and then I would like to study international law and like you (interviewer-me) do my masters degree like you doing now and just become someone especially here in Holland also international because here in Holland there a few people who really achieve something especially as a foreigner so we have to let them know we are here and we also have the ability to become something. And I am positive about life and just like my teacher (church youth teacher) said and I really love his words he says God made us for a purpose and gave us talents and if we do not make use of it, nature will destroy it (Samuel)

Do not really know but want to do something with computers and school helps, yea at school we do plenty with computers. They show you how to work with computer now. How do download, virus and antivirus, yes we learn a lot about computer (Francis)

Responses varied on whether school enhances and helps them to meet their aspirations. Quite a number from the younger age range are yet decide on their aspirations and were hesitant to respond but the older ones generally perceived school to be helpful in terms of meeting their aspirations. This referred help is not from the school as an institution but to specific teachers, who have had impact on them.

4.6.2 Student-Teacher Relations

Questions about relationship with teachers reflected a range of perceptions-relatively positive to/and negative experiences. A relatively positive experience is aptly reflected in Hannah's narrative about relationship with a Suriname teacher who she and her friend 'feel so free to talk with and ask questions' this came out in the conversation when she was asked what was important for her in her schooling experience.

My friend and I have a teacher, we love him so much because he just cares about us .He is Suriname but also watches Nollywood[25] films and things like

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[25] Nigerian 'Hollywood' industry for film production and most of the films watched by Africans and people in Diaspora

that and when he comes to school we can talk about it and we just free about him and we can talk with him . We real feel good about him ……… He helps me with our school work especially when my friend and I say we don't understand, he really takes time to explain and teaches us, he continues till we understand him.

Because a lot of white teachers the white people don't care about us they say he or she is in my class so I have to teach her but they don't maybe em em (how do I say it) they won't commune to you so you can feel free like those multicultural teacher do. So you feel free when you go to lesson and you can express yourself and you feel comfortable

You see when you ask a teacher for help they will help if you approach the right person……( ) the one who is nice, the one who can explain well because a lots of teachers I don't know where they get them from (laughs) yea they have studied for teaching but you don't see the fruit that come out of them is like they are not teachers. Yea my school has just fired a lot of teacher this last term before we went on holiday because they are not good enough to teach us. Yes 5 teachers were sacked. Sometimes they just chose the wrong person for example my history teacher he was so brilliant but he was drinking he had some alcoholic problem. But if u ask him about what happen in World War II, it is like his mind is just like a book he will just say it normal just from A – Z. we just think he is so smart and he has the ability to do this and he destroy it. There are also white teachers I relate to like my English teacher he is also white but I relate to him. I can talk to him but not like the foreign[26] ones. He is more like dominate teacher, but you can talk to him but he likes you feel you are the student he is the teacher but you can also speak to him because he likes me and my friend so it is like bonus. Also my mathematics teacher she also good (Hannah)

Teachers see me as good because I am quiet in class ….(). Yes in class I am quiet but play during the break. …..() I don't have fight with the teachers … () .. but Moroccans fight with them lots…. the class wants to be good and do homework but because they don't want to do homework a few of them disturb the class so they interrupt teachers in class and fight with the teachers (Emmanuel)

English teacher encourage me and when I did not speak good he helps me out (Kelby)

Some however feel a students' experience depends on their behaviour and put the responsibility of having a good teacher-student relationship on the students.

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[26] Way of referring to a teacher with a migrant background some other respondents used the term multicultural teacher

Teachers treat everybody the same way but depend on your behaviour in school. I feel the Dutch they humble themselves and are more serious so that is why teachers treat them better. So if multicultural people behave well they will be treated as good (Sandra).

My relationship with my teachers is very good because they all like me and they all talk about me. So I don't have problems with my teachers. I am fine with all my teachers. Yea they are really friendly to everyone but if you annoy them they will also annoy you, (Laugh). They will not hate you but they will not like you very much. But if they get angry but realise their mistake, they know how to apologise to a student so everything will be alright (Bridget[27])

Anita response may well throw light on Bridget's

I do not have any close relationship with my teachers but, what I know is that I can ask them questions. I am always serious and they say with me results are good and just last year I got the good student award "giving back" where I get a special mentor not that I am so friendly with teachers like those students who are close to teachers. If you student don't give respect to the teacher they won't give you as well like the Moroccans who want to show they are different from the other Muslims and always fighting. Moroccans have bad relationship with teachers because of being Muslims and always disturbing in school so teachers do not like them that much. Africans have good relations with teachers because they know what they are doing …….Moroccans, they have much more attention as if they want to show that we are the best we are the one. They want much more attention.

When we first started, in the beginning teachers treated us the same but Moroccans started saying you treat us less and so they fight and because they fight regularly they are so popular but those who are serious are not popular but they pay much more attention to those who do not want to learn. The exchange between teachers and Moroccans disturb class those who want to learn. Moroccans won't stop because they want to have the last conversation (word).The best best population let me say we have some Africans and Ghanaians they have good relationship with their teachers because they know what they are doing (Anita)

While the responses seemed to be more relatively positive perceptions of teacher-student relations, the onus for a good relationship is placed on the individual student. Teachers are perceived to have reactive responses to students (good student gets reward/goodness and bad ones no reward)

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[27] Maybe linked to her being one of the best students in her school indicated in recent awards and recognition such as the 'giving back' programme of schools

4.6.3 Parents-School Relations

On parents' involvement, some of the respondents' perception is that their parents have limited contact with school and only go to school to get their reports. Only four of the respondents' parents (2 mothers and 2 fathers) had other involvement with school. They attend PTA meetings and also go for other school activities they are invited for. Some when probed responded that the parents had to work while others attributed the little involvement with school to inadequacy of their parents Dutch language skills. Hence they tended not to involve themselves except at a minimal level when they go for the children's reports. In addition, the parents' inadequacy in the Dutch language makes their participation in terms of helping with homework also difficult as some of the respondent expressed. This could represent a source of disadvantage to these young people as what this means is that there is no academic support at home.

> Yes I discuss school with them but they can't help me with my school work because they don't understand Dutch so well so they don't understand what I learn. The English subjects they can help me with but not with stuff like Mathematics or Dutch they are not good. They were not born here so it is difficult for them so I do my homework myself but anything difficult I can just call Hammond (Sunday school teacher) and Hammond will help me (Bridget)

> My parents go for reports and meetings when school asks them to come so they come. My father goes because my Mom does not speak Dutch well though she understands well. For homework I do myself and when I have problems I meet friends or teachers (Emmanuel)

Respondents indicate that most of their parents have minimal relations with their schools. A key reason is the apparent poor/meagre Dutch language skills of the parents and not because of lack of interest on the parents' side. On the contrary, the parents tend to encourage these respondents in their schooling endeavours. Another possibility could be linked to the educational levels of the parents; as the four parents that have more relations have higher educational level (appendix4&5).This probably makes them more at ease/confident in relationship transaction with their children's schools.

4.7 Cultural Diversity and Preferences

The respondents do not only have a cultural self- perception but also of others with whom they interact at school and outside school. This is apparent in their verbal responses and behaviours which were sometimes strongly articulated when they were question on other issues especially when talking about their friends, Such as Hannah with a twinkle and opens arms saying *I love diversity* after stating all the ethnicity of her friends when she was talking in response to a question about friends.

Anita was very clear that the most important and interesting aspect of schooling for her was the multicultural school environment.

I think learning from different culture not teachers but learning with other students from different culture you learn from them. Because if it is one culture you feel bored but see Asians, yes different culture I learn from them like I can ask them their special day like Christmas like Muslims they have Ramadan so I learn from these different culture (Anita)

I really like making friends from other culture; I like new things, new culture and language (Tina, age 15)

The respondents appear to place high value on cultural diversity. This is evident in their peer relations, in and outside school interactions. Almost all of them have group friendships which have different ethnicities in the Netherlands represented. This is obvious in the way they refer to their friends and their body language when they talk about them.

4.8   Attitude to Schooling

Respondents' attitude to schooling was varied and generally relatively positive. Most of them were non verbal in expressing their feelings about schooling some with shrugs and a small smile but others were verbal and specific about how they feel about schooling.

(Laughs), yea I enjoy going to school I think (more laughs) I like to because you just learn a lot, yea you have something to do because if sit at home the whole day with friends is not interesting so it is good learn new things (Bridget)

I really enjoy going to school. I am like this freak every morning I say yes I am going to school to learn something new (Anita)

I like school a lot. My school is welcoming and my teachers are nice (Tina)

Sometimes it feels like home at school and sometimes I feel like what I am doing here (Hannah)

However, Miranda was an interesting case in that she struggles with the tension of the general ideal of need for an education and her own experiences of schooling in which she uses graphic terms

I don't enjoy learning; I just want to finish and get out. I like school but I have had enough from these teachers and I just want to go to another school and even when referring to some of her teachers: I ignore them I do not even listen to them because they are annoying. I don't like them, they teach me but they treat me bad and it's not fair……. the way they teach and they are nasty…. do not listen when I have a question or stuff they won't listen (Miranda)

A possible explanation for this relative positive attitude can be connected to the premium which the parents put on education (*he wants me to be someone, achieve something, Hannah* talking about her Dad support for education*)* and which is also stressed by the church. For instance from direct observation in

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one of the church services where the 'Evangelist' was teaching in the Sunday school about choosing a career and making sacrifices to achieve this career and the teacher being explicit to these young people that their career is going to school and coming out with good grades, buttressing his points with bible scriptures.

4.9   Dynamics of Power Relations in Schools

Undergirding all these views of experiences is the power relationships. Power here is more explicit in the form of agenda setting observable in school ethos and culture including the curriculum which is an expression of the dominant system. Three different levels of interactions such as teacher-student, school-home and student-student relationships are easily recognised. The teacher-student and home-school relationship seem to represent a more direct power relations arrangement. In schools, teaching-learning has evolved from the traditional one-directional mode to a more "dialogical relationship" (Freire 1970:67), where students are not just passive listeners but exercise their agency. There are varied responses of how the respondents transact power relations with their school through the teachers. While some tended to be comfortable being listeners and accepting,

I am quiet in class; I don't talk (Emmanuel).

Others, such as Hannah are not so accepting of the arrangement or willing to be passive listeners,

…I am a Christian and I do not believe in the big bang so when I just want to defend she (teacher) is feeling like it might be true she starts doing like crazy stuff yea like trying to shut me up yea just realised that's her attitude but I don't care because I know my stuff… she won't let you talk, she try and shut you up. And I am stubborn… so then when maybe she don't let me finish talking I just keep on talking or she raise her voice I just say you don't need to raise your voice you can speak like normal person. Why do you have to raise your voice I am just talking so let me finish (Hannah).

How the respondents handle power dynamics gives a discernible illustration of the interactions between the two cultural systems. In a Ghanaian setting, teachers-students relations is hierarchical where the teacher is suppose to know all and so a "narrator" and the student, "listener" (Freire 1970). Unlike the Dutch system which encourages a dialogical relationship. These young people have to negotiate this tension, which possibly affects their perception of schooling – constraining or participatory.

4.10   Young Ghanaian-Dutch Schooling Perception

To conclude this chapter, I will summarize the main findings and relate this to specifically research question 2 and sub-questions. Figure 4 seems apt in providing a sort of summary of the findings in terms of these young people's perceptions of schooling, their self-identification and how this is linked to their integration in society through a typology of success in schooling experience or
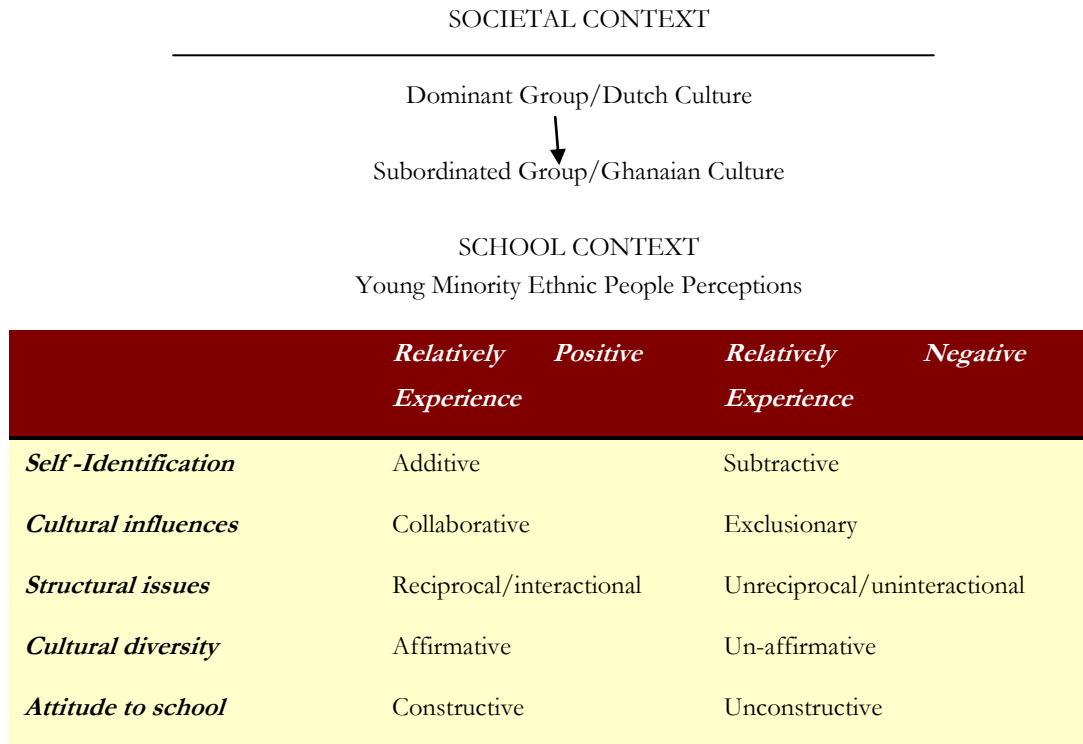
otherwise. The discussion above has focused attention on contexts and processes that may influence perception of schooling and ethnic self-definition of young Ghanaian-Dutch people. However, how they think and feel about themselves is significantly affected by how they identify with either or both the Ghanaian system and Dutch system in the overarching Dutch cultural/social system (see figure 1: OU framework).

Ethnic self-identity is, among other things, a measure of the degree of the children's sense of identification with their parents. The parental characteristics, cultural values and the quality of parent-child relationship has significant effects on their ethnic identification and self-perception especially the social network of the parents such as "Ghanaian" church which seems like little Ghana – a rallying point for this ethnic minority people. Direct observation during church attendance indicate that the church provides guidance, support and social contacts for these young people and also inculcate a strong sense of ethnic identification in them. This could explain perhaps the strong identification with the immigrant and ethnic identities as they tended to identify with the ethnicity and culture of their parents and less with the dominant group ethnicity and culture.

More so, an interesting finding has been the emphasis these young people place on respect which is well evident in their narratives on their relationship with their teachers; and their positive attitude to schooling. A possible interpretation could be the influence of "Ghanaian" church ethos and teachings which make them willing to accept discipline and authority as well as in their positive perception of schooling. This is evidenced from direct observation of group dynamics in church and the interaction between the minority young people and their religious gatekeeper/pastor. In the church context, the pastor is seen as a teacher but, of religious knowledge.

Also, as exemplified by Anita's narrative, it is apparent that there is likely danger in approaching students as "all the same" without recognising the importance of differences particularly cultural difference and frame of reference in learning and education experiences of students. Furthermore, these narratives show that more often than not the process of successful identity formation/construction is in how they combine and interact with the two cultures and this is also connected to how they feel about themselves and about schooling. These different issues indicate the respondents' sense of belonging in Dutch society. One interpretation is the discernible positive identification with the dominant system indicating an assimilative educational model.

Figure 4: Young Ghanaian-Dutch Perception of Schooling

SOCIETAL CONTEXT

Dominant Group/Dutch Culture

Subordinated Group/Ghanaian Culture

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Young Minority Ethnic People Perceptions

	Relatively Positive Experience	*Relatively Negative Experience*
Self -Identification	Additive	Subtractive
Cultural influences	Collaborative	Exclusionary
Structural issues	Reciprocal/interactional	Unreciprocal/uninteractional
Cultural diversity	Affirmative	Un-affirmative
Attitude to school	Constructive	Unconstructive

Adapted from Cummins 1996: Empowering Minority Students-A framework for Intervention

Chapter 5   Identification: Ghanaian or Dutch Question

5.1   Introduction

This chapter presents a reflection and brief summary of the findings and some possible implications of this research. As elaborated by the OU framework and tenets of John Ogbu, young minority ethnic people experiences cannot be understood in a vacuum but should be seen in their personal, cultural, social, historical and political contexts. This research has attempted to explore perceptions of church-going young Ghanaian-Dutch as they seek to define their dual relationship to the Ghanaian ethnic cultural system expressed in family and church; and the Dutch cultural system expressed in school. Accordingly, the research has explored the complex relationship between young Ghanaian-Dutch ethnic self-perception and ethnic identity and their schooling experiences and the role that the larger social structure plays in that relationship by situating their voices in these different contexts.

5.2   New Cultural Landscape

The educational system apart from teaching and learning serves other functions including students' acquisition of the relevant skills for the labour market (Westin 2003: 1001). More importantly, school not only reproduces common knowledge and skills in young people but also reproduces social structure by their mode of operation (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). This can also be argued to be correct when it comes to reproducing ethnic hierarchies. The system provides one of the most efficacious tools for the enterprise of inculcation the dominant culture and the value of that culture (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990: 142). The educational system thus plays a pivotal role as a space where identity transactions and identity negotiations take place.

However, despite facing particular challenges aside from those common to young people of this age group, these Ghanaian-Dutch young people are fully committed to their studies, *(Africans have good relationship with teachers because they know what they doing and do not cause trouble in school – Anita)* have high ambitions and aspire to get to higher levels. Their parents have positive attitudes and expectations for their children and strive to provide necessary support for them to achieve this. One reason for this can be drawn from John Ogbu's explanation about the type of cultural frame of reference adopted by voluntary minority such as this research group. Ogbu argued that the visions, hopes, dreams and experiences of minority groups have to be considered in understanding this positive attitude to education and dominant culture. According to Ogbu, most voluntary minorities have a "folk theory" of school success that sees the host country as a land of opportunities, where one gets ahead through education and hard work. In this perspective, even a newcomer with few skills and little education with hard work can succeed economically. "Their children can experience even more success if they work hard in school

and apply themselves. The fact that they have to undergo great sacrifices, including racism, economic hardships and working at several menial jobs at the same time, is understood and accepted". The process of schooling is perceived and interpreted as additive (Ogbu 1994:377-80).

In the case of the Ghanaians their cultural frame of reference for assessing school, is not the Netherlands but their country of origin, where there are fewer educational opportunities and lower infrastructures and even ethnic discrimination than the Netherlands. This comes out in the narratives of the participant as they tended to compare their situation in the Netherlands with their counterparts in Ghana and seeing their situation in the Netherlands as better off than if they were in Ghana. What Ogbu termed *"positive dual frame of reference"* (Ogbu 1994:379). This frame of reference also enhances the symbolic responses to schooling success. Namely, having a non oppositional cultural identity and frame of reference to that of the Dutch's enable them to respond to cultural differences they encounter at school as barriers to be overcome to succeed. Given their new situations these Ghanaians are willing to make great sacrifices for what they consider to be certain gains. They are more than willing to play the school game by the rules (Ogbu 1994:384-385).

Many of the young Ghanaians in this research to a larger extent internalize language and values of the Dutch system. They identify with aspects of this system through effective participation in schooling and involvement with particular people including their multicultural social networks and peers. However, due to their strong primary socialization of their Ghanaian system in the culture of the Dutch sphere, they also have strong affinity with the Ghanaian culture though experiencing tensions in this process. In resolving these tensions, and as most expedient they often use the resources of the dominant system while only partially identifying with it.

5.3   Implications of the study: Minimal Selves and New Ethnicities

As elucidated by Nigel Grant, "Culture contact, of whatever kind, involves the borrowing of artefacts, structures, even concepts and raises questions about assimilation, integration and resistance" (Grant 1997:19). He argued that though it is much more complex phenomena, contact often involves the disruption or assimilation of minority cultures and when cultures are in contact, some of their characteristics may take on an added significance (Grant 1997:19). from the findings of this research, an illustrative way of looking at the implications of young minority people's perceptions and identification in the context of schooling and how they deal with the resulting conflicts can be understood using Stuart Hall's viewpoint of the "minimal self and new ethnicities" (Hall 1996). These terms seems to fit the image of these young people's experiences.

Identity, according to Hall, has always created people who are "Minimal Selves", those whose identities are multiple and carry different identity markers. In addition to identity coming from specific historical experiences and a whole set of narratives, Hall writes, "I believe it is an immensely important

gain when one recognizes that all identity is constructed across difference and begins to live with the politics of difference." (Hall1996:117). He posits that we need to work towards understanding ourselves as "minimal selves" as Identities are not "armor-plated against other identities" or are "not tied to fixed, permanent, and unalterable oppositions" (Hall 1996:119). In other words, identities are not binaries/dualisms or antagonistic. What is involved is the need for positive conception of the margins (minorities).

This implies recognition that "we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by that position as 'ethnic artists'" (Hall 1996:169). In this sense, both the dominant and the minority ethnic groups, such as this young minority ethnic people are ethnically located and their ethnic identities are crucial to their subjective sense of who they are. But this is also a recognition that the survival of an ethnicity is not necessarily by marginalizing, dispossessing, or displacing other ethnicities. Thus conceptualizing ethnicity as cultural politics which engages rather than suppresses differences and which depends in part on the cultural construction of new ethnic identities. In other words, ethnicity based on difference and diversity but which shows the diversity even within a group. Hall calls for use of the word "ethnicity" in order to acknowledge " the place of history, language, and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual" (Hall 1996:168-9).

5.4 Identity (ies) and Difference (s): Embracing Complexities

Existing societal inequities, the structure of the schools, the culture of these young people and their ethnic group need to be understood in a holistic manner. Children of different backgrounds are educated differently by/in schools, and the differences children bring to school have a profound effect on what they gain from their educational experiences. As the daily schooling experiences of these young Ghanaian-Dutch people show; the type of ethnic and cultural socialization they receive at home including from their parents' social network, the understandings of ethnicity and culture they develop in their social interactions and relations at school affect to a large extent how they react to Dutch society and construct and develop their identities.

Even though cultural contact does often involve the disruption of the minority culture and assimilation into the dominant culture, the process is very complex. Individuals or groups may operate in more than one culture, without moving totally from one to the other. This does not necessarily mean that the two are equal or interchangeable but both have their own spheres of operation (Grant 1997:19-20). Each of these cultures has its own uneven and changeable sub-spheres. However, the culture of the home may extend into other social relationships, schools and other public spheres are for the dominant culture. In other words, it is possible to live in two cultures without rejecting either and the ways of doing this take different form according to the circumstances of

the cultures themselves and the particular individual. In essence, the ways in which these young people perceive their experiences influences the cultural system they adopt and the type of ethnic identity they develop.

5.4   Summary

In this research, the perception of young Ghanaian- Dutch schooling experiences within a particular urban area – The Hague in the Netherlands, has been explored in relation to issues raised in the conceptual chapter, and associated constructs within dominant and subordinate groups in their different and interactional socio-cultural systems. The silences and nuances in Dutch educational system were also examined. This showed that despite the seemingly inter-schools multicultural emphasis, there is no recognition of intra-school cultural pluralism. This was done to interrogate the situations of this particular minority ethnic group in the Netherlands with the aim of contributing to the debates of minority ethnic education as embedded in integration issues. Nevertheless, this research was intended to explore rather than evaluate.

To recap, unequal power relations between the minority and dominant group which is typified in teachers-students; and home school relations as well as factors in the two cultural systems, Ghanaian system being home and church and Dutch system being school/educational context contribute to these sampled Dutch-Ghanaian young people's self-identification and perception of schooling experience. Although their parents and religious gatekeepers have a positive attitude toward Dutch system-schooling, differences between home and church sphere such as language, parent's cultural orientation and their awareness of cultural differences between groups, all have great influence on the respondents experience and perception. It also seems that the gap between the educational and cultural, despite school positive ethos and government investments have not been bridged (Eldering 1997:340). There seems to be a lack of ability to overcome this gap by both the Dutch educational system and ethnic minority parents. One reason may be parents' lack of Dutch proficiency and low educational levels; and possible teachers' lack of "Dutch-second-language-teaching skills" (Eldering 1997:340).

5.5   Conclusion

The findings emerging from this research are not necessarily general to all young Ghanaian-Dutch people. The data were produced from a small sample of the larger group of young Ghanaian-Dutch people who attend church. Thus in order to formulate a generalization of the perceptions of young Ghanaians educational experience, research should be conducted in a variety of ways and different settings such as different types of school and young Ghanaian-Dutch from a cross-sectional socio-economic class. The significance of this research is that it provides insight into the researched social issue that should be examined to understand fully minority ethnic young people schooling/educational experiences in the Netherlands.

The perceptions of their schooling experiences and self-identification seem to indicate a continuum from relatively positive experience to negative experience with more on the positive end of the continuum. Their positivity can be linked to their "voluntary migrants" status. The Ghanaians having immigrated only relatively recently voluntarily and mostly for economic reasons, tend to be more positive about their chances in society and about their children's schooling. They stimulate their children to adapt to school culture, even if this means that they have to give up their own language and other cultural characteristics.

These young people's self-identification and perception is strongly shaped by socio-cultural interactions as they move between two cultural systems and by contexts. Schools are one of such context and site for socio-cultural interactions from which their subjective perceptions creates a dynamic process of identification resulting in multiple identities under the different markers such as *figure 2: Markers of Identity,* of which any is utilised at particular times and spaces as most convenient and advantageous for them. This is exemplified in the way they utilise their Dutch cultural resources when in school and with friends as well as using their Ghanaian resources at home or church.

These young Ghanaian-Dutch's self-perception and identification is a dynamic process that takes different forms as they move between two cultural systems. This is a complex process that is produced in a broader historical, social and political context maybe unaware of but part of the Netherlands and identities creation. These young people have met the challenges of becoming Dutch while valuing being Ghanaian.

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Appendix 1: Map of The Hague
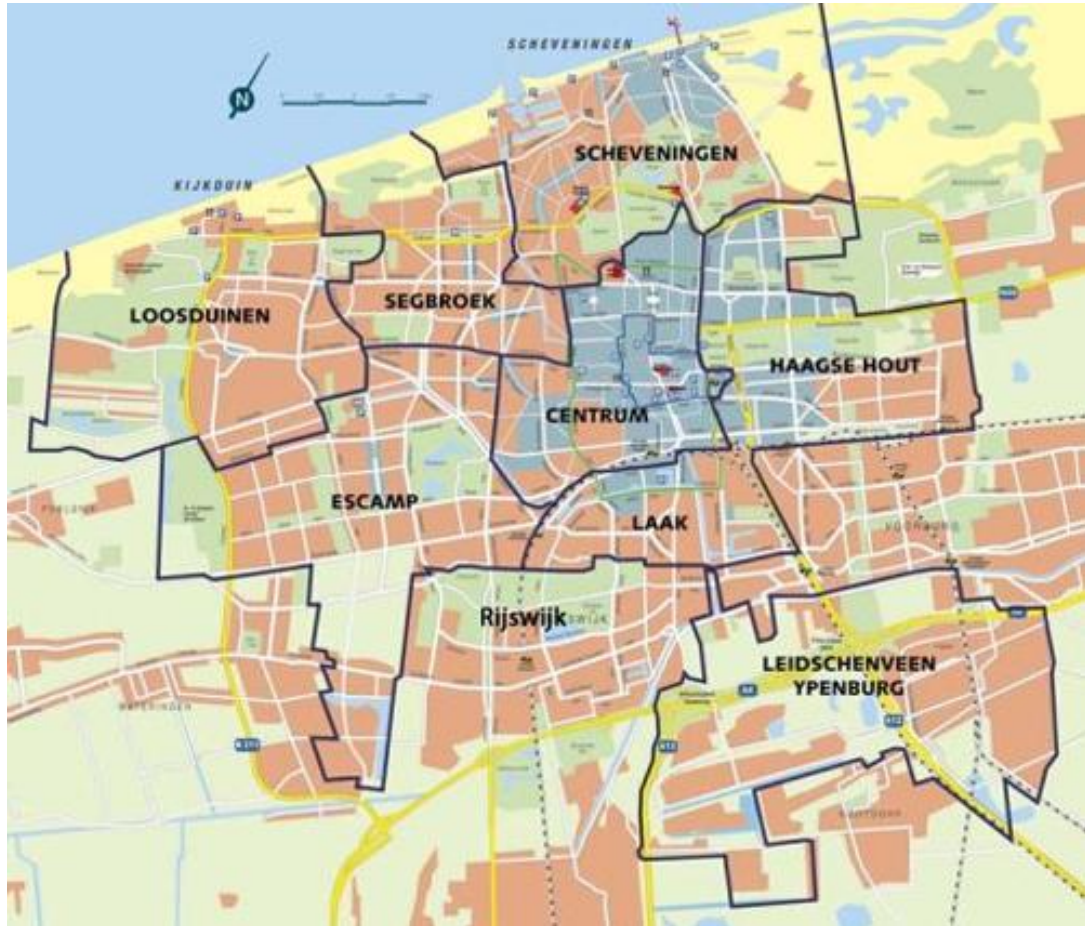
Source: http://www.woningenhuur.nl/images/wijkendenhaag.jpg accessed November 9,,2009

The map represents areas covered during the fieldwork- the locations of the churches, homes and schools of the respondents. With the exception of Scheveningen, the fieldwork for this research involved going to the different areas displayed. The schools of the respondents are located in and around Segbroek, Rijswijk, Ypenburg and Escamp. They also live around the school areas in addition to Laak and Centrum.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

The interview gathered data on respondents' demographic characteristics, citizenship of both the respondents and their parents, family size and structure, socioeconomic status (parents' education and occupation), the respondents' self perceptions and ethnic self-identities, and respondents' peer relationships, language use and proficiency, educational and occupational aspirations, schooling perceptions and experiences.

Young people's schedule

1. Please tell me about yourself, (covers their demography, school and friends)
2. How do you think about or see yourself
3. Does this affect the way you interact with others – friends, teachers, classmates
4. What is a typical day like in school?
5. How is your relationship with your teachers? Other school staff/personnel
6. How do the teachers relate to students?
7. Do you meet your teachers when you have difficulties with school-class work, and extra curricula activities?
8. Is there particular experience (s) that has had impact in your life?
9. What are do you hope for in future – your aspirations (aim)
10. Is school helping you to meet your aspirations
11. Do you take pleasure in your schooling? How?

Questions about Parents (where parents were not available)

12. What kind of work do your parents do (also level of education)
13. Do your parents participate in any school events or activities?
14. Do you discuss school and/or schoolwork with them? Report difficulties or problems at school to them?
15. Do they help you with school work – assignment and others (is there any reason why, where they give a No and did not elaborate)
16. How long have they been in the Netherlands (when did they come)
17. Do your parents have Dutch citizenship (passport)

Parents Interview schedule [28]

1. Do you work (what kind of job?)
2. Do you participate in your daughter/son schooling (why question, depending on the response)
3. How you member of any committee - PTA?
4. How often do you attend meetings?
5. They belong to any other school community – sports, creative arts and so on
6. They do participate in any other school events or activities
7. How do they do this? Depending on answer from previous questions
8. Do you report any complaints or dissatisfaction about your child's education to the school?
9. How the school do responds to your reports (Why do you think)
10. From your experience, do other parents have the same problems?
11. What about your education (diplomatically probe to get their level)

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[28] Was only able to interview 4 parents because of timing and availability of parents

Appendix 3: Profile of Respondents

Church 1

Anita: HAVO

She is born in Schiedam, part of Rotterdam metropolis. Family moved to The Hague when she was four because of father's job. She is first of 3 siblings. She does not really have friends. Like to study and during the break in school try to prepare for the next classes. She does not believe in "needless chitchat". Her parents have minimal education and have been in the Netherlands since the 1980s. Mom is hair-dresser, dad works in road construction. She aspires to work in the medical field and possibly in Psychology. She speaks Twi and English at home and church and Dutch in school and with her peers. (I also interviewed her Mom). Parents are not so involve in her schooling.

Bridget: HAVO

She is born in Rotterdam. She is the third of 5 siblings. She has an older brother and sister who live in Ghana. Have a number of friends –Ghanaians, Surinam, Moroccans, Antilleans, Turks and native Dutch. Her parents are averagely educated, her Mom more than her Dad. Her Mom works as a Carer (term used by her Mom during my interview with her). She works in elderly people's home. Her Dad is self-employed and works in imports and exports. She aspires to be an Administrator. She speaks Twi and English at home and church and Dutch at school and with friends including with her Ghanaian friends. Parents are involved but more of the Mom. Dad only gets into her schooling issues when the Mom is unavailable.

Kelby: VMBO

He is born in The Hague and has live here all his life. His Dad has university degree (I interviewed him). His Mom has Post-secondary school diploma. He is the first of 4 siblings – 2 sisters and a brother. He has a number of friends also but mostly his team mates. He plays football; in fact the practice schedule meant we could not do the interview before 8pm at night. He wants to be a Medical Doctor. The Dad works as a supervisor in a computer firm. He just changed school as they just moved from an immigrant neighbourhood to a non-migrant neighbourhood in a suburb of The Hague. He speaks Twi, English and Dutch, But he speaks Twi and Dutch More. According to both parents who were in the same room with us during the interview, they speak Dutch to the children a lot to strengthen their language skills. Parents are very involved in his schooling

Church 2

Emmanuel[29]: Just Finished VMBO, first week of MBO

He was born in The Hague. His Dad has university degree and his Mom secondary school. He is the last of his 4 siblings, 2 older sisters and 1 brother. He has many friends. Loves and play football. He wants to going into Real Estate business (selling of houses). Though he has many friends (mostly from school), he is very quiet in class he says because he does not want any problems with the teachers. The Dad is actually the Head pastor of his church and the one that participate in his schooling. Mom does not participate because her Dutch skills are not so good – she understands very well but can't speak well. Both parents have been in the Netherlands since the late 1970s. Speaks Twi, English and Dutch but speak more of the last two. He likes and plays football and basket ball

Francis: VMBO

He is also born in The Hague. He is doing VMBO with learning support. Explains that learning support is for people who are not so smart and wants to do something practical. He is very interested in computers and hangs out with his uncle who is into computers. The uncle also helps him with his assignments sometimes if the sister or father cannot handle it. Father helps him with Maths especially because the Dad is good in it. He has a part time job, saves his money and only spends on things like buying a new football boots. Football is his passion and aside from working with computers he would like to be a footballer. He is the last of 5 siblings. Parents have been in the Netherlands over 25 years. Parents speak Twi or English at home. Mom works in a government ministry as a cleaner and Dad is a metal fabricator. Parents participate in school only to collect reports. Mom does not speak Dutch well but father is better.

Rachel: VMBO

She is also born in The Hague. Both Parents have university degree and are Dutch citizens. She is the last and only girl of 3 siblings. I had chatted for a long time with the Dad without knowing their relationship. He was trying to convince me to get a plate of food (there was a wedding ceremony the first day I went to the church) and afterwards we got talking before I met the daughter through youth-pastor. Mom is a private nurse and Dad an Administrator in his work place. Parents seem socio-economically higher than the other respondents. She speaks Twi, English and Dutch. Parents usually go to school

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[29] He also happened to have done his VMBO in the same school as Anita and of all the respondents, only the two of them made reference to the Moroccans and in similar way in terms of disturbing the class/school.

to collect report and sometimes her Mom goes for PTA. She does not know yet what she would like to be so cannot say how helpful school is being. Although, overall she enjoys schooling, she is not very chatty so the interview was not very long. She did not know when her parents came to the Netherlands.

Church 3

Hannah: VWO

She is born in The Hague. Live with both of her parents and her younger sister. Her Mom though has other 2 children much older than her and base in Ghana. She is very popular at school. Have friends from all the ethnicity in the Netherlands including native Dutch. Reason for popularity is her large network of friends and most of her friends she met as early as when she was in the cradle and during pre-school. They all strangely enough have always gone to the same school and her friends' friends increase her network of friends. She will turn 18 years this November. She also works. Her Mom has been in the Netherlands for 22 years and she is taking classes to do her citizenship test. Her Dad has been here longer than her Mom and is a citizen. Her parents are church elders (Dad, one of the pastors and Mom lead singer). Dad speak Dutch well but Mom very little. She is good in other languages as she has always done German and French in school. Recently she dropped German to do Biology. Reason, she says French and English are spoken on the planes but not German. She would like to be a lawyer but is also very interested in Economics. She likes dancing and going to the cinema with her friends.

Sandra: VMBO

She is also born in The Hague. Live with just his Dad and younger sister. She lost her Mom when she was four and this affected her schooling. She explained that for a while she was not serious about school, always playing. This affected her grades which made her end up in a VMBO programme. She changed though when she realised that if her Dad gets old and retires who will care for her and the sister (turning point in her life). She also lost her best friend not to death but the friend's Mom decided to relocate back to Antilles. They were always together 24/7[30]. This hit her hard too. Now her sister is best friend. She does not have other friends as much (when probe about her church mates), she replied that the friendship is more at church so not really friends because they don't come over to house and she does not go over to theirs. Her Dad has another wife but she is based in Ghana. She would like to work in the Tourist industry.

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[30] Her words meaning they are together 24 hours, seven days a week. Seems exaggerated but I think she is trying to illustrate how close they were.

Samuel: VWO

He is born here in The Hague. He aspires to be a lawyer, preferably an international lawyer. Parents only go to school for reports purposes. He speaks Twi, English and Dutch in similar setting as the other respondents. He is not sure when his parents came to the Netherlands but he knows they have been here a while. Both parents have post secondary diploma. They run a produce shop. He likes bowling and hanging out with his friends, who are also quite a number. He also works. His Dad speaks Dutch more than his Mom, who also has poor Dutch skills like most of the other Moms. (Also not very chatty)

Church 4

Kenny- HAVO

Taping did not turn out clear or transcribe able. He likes football as well and this also interrupted our interview appointments. He is catholic and also attends a catholic school. Speak Twi, English and Dutch. He speaks Twi at home and Dutch and English with friends and in school. He has a number of friends too from different ethnicity. He is not sure yet what he wants to be and so cannot say if school is helping him. (Information from my field notes). He does not know when his parents came to the Netherlands.

Miranda –VMBO finals

She is born here in The Hague. Parents are separated and she lives with her Mom. She is the second of five siblings. She has 2 sisters and 2 brothers. The older sister lives in Ghana. Uncle-in-law is the pastor of her church. She loves to be an Air Hostess. She is happiest when she goes to Schipol airport. She is also interested in modelling and football. Dad lives close to her school though so sometimes he goes to school to get her reports. She is Very interesting, laughed most part of the interview especially when I probe her about specific words she uses (e.g. nasty teachers). She is does not know much about her parents educational levels or when they came to the Netherlands. She was able to say though that her Mom has secondary school level of education.

Tina: VMBO 3

She lives with both parents and she is also born in The Hague. Parents have been here a long time but do not know the precise period they came to the Netherlands. She is the third of 4 siblings. She has one older sister and brother each and a younger sister. She has many friends but see them more like just general friends as she likes meeting people and making friends because she likes learning new things and new culture. For instance, her response to a question on an interesting thing that happen the previous term was that she

made a new friend – a Portuguese boy. She only has one friend in terms of being very close. She would like to work in advertisements. She knows that both parents did secondary school at least but do not know how high in education they are. Mom is a cleaner and Dad works but do not knows precisely his position.

Appendix 4:

Summary of Respondents Profile-alphabetically

Name	School route	School Type	Grade	Gender	Age
Anita	HAVO	"Black school"[31]	4	Female	16
Bridget	HAVO	"White school"	5	Female	16
Emmanuel	VMBO	"Black school"	Just finish	Male	16
Francis	VMBO	"Black school"	Final year	Male	15
Hannah	VWO	"Black school"	4	Female	17
Kelby	HAVO	Mixed	2	Male	14
Kenny[32]	HAVO	Mixed	2	Male	14
Miranda	VMBO	Mixed	Final year	Female	15
Rachel	VMBO	Mixed	2	Female	14
Sandra	VMBO	"Black school"	Final year	Female	16
Samuel	VWO	Mixed	5	Male	17
Tina	VMBO	Mixed	3	Female	15

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[31] 'Black' schools, if more than 50 % of the students have migrant background and 'White' schools if this percentage is low (less than 20 %), (Maier 2002:3); the ethnic composition of the neighbourhood (Schriemer 2004:19).

[32] Tape not very clear, bad recording so was not used in the analysis

Appendix 5: Respondent's Parents' Profile: Mother

Respondents	Education	Occupation	Dutch language skills	Length of stay (years)	Legal/political status
Anita	Primary	Hair-dresser	Meagre	Over 18	No citizenship
Bridget	Post-sec Dip[33].	Carer [34]	Well	20	Citizen
Emmanuel	Secondary	Hotel Housekeeping	Meagre	30	Citizen
Francis	Primary	Ministry Cleaner	Above meagre	Over 25	Citizen
Hannah	Secondary	Church worker	Average	22	No citizenship
Kelby	Post-sec Dip.	N/A[35]	Well	Over 18	Citizen
Miranda	Secondary	N/A	Average	N/A	
Rachel	University	Nurse[36]	Well	N/A	Citizen
Sandra	Mom is late				
Samuel	Post-sec. Dip.	Self-employed	Meagre	Not sure	N/A
Tina	Secondary	cleaner	Average	N/A	N/A

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[33] Post Secondary School Diploma

[34] Work in old people's home

[35] Not Available – respondent do not know

[36] Private nurse

Appendix 6: Respondent's Parents' Profile: Father

Respondents	Education	Occupation	Dutch language skills	Length of stay (years)	Legal/political status
Anita	Secondary	Construction worker	Average	Over 20	Not sure
Bridget	Secondary	Self-employed	Average	Over 20	N/A
Emmanuel	University		Well	31	Citizen
Francis	Post–sec Dip.	Metal Fabricator		Over 25	Citizen
Hannah	Post-sec. Dip.	Also pastor	Well	27	Citizen
Kelby	University	Admin.	Well	Over 20	Citizen
Miranda	At least secondary	Not sure	Average	Over 15	N/A
Rachel	University	Admin. Staff	Well	N/A	Citizen
Sandra	Secondary	Self-employed	Average	Over 20	Citizen
Samuel	Post-sec. Dip.	Self-employed	Above average	Over 18	N/A
Tina	Secondary	Not sure	Average	N/A	N/A

Appendix 7: Data collection Matrix: Type of Information

Info/info source	interview	observation	document
Young people	yes	yes	no
Parents	yes	yes	no
Min. of Education	no	no	yes
Municipality	no	no	yes